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# TROOP TOPICS

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THE  
ARMY  
GREEN  
UNIFORM

# NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER AND SPECIALIST GRADE INSIGNIA

## U. S. ARMY



**MASTER  
SERGEANT**



**FIRST  
SERGEANT**



**SERGEANT  
FIRST CLASS**



**SERGEANT**



**CORPORAL**



**SPECIALIST  
SECOND CLASS**



**SPECIALIST  
THIRD CLASS**



**MASTER  
SPECIALIST**



**SPECIALIST  
FIRST CLASS**



**PRIVATE  
FIRST CLASS**

## THE ARMY GREEN UNIFORM

Our new Army Green uniform is a top-quality product that we can wear with pride, not only because it is good looking and in the "latest style," but even more important because it identifies us as members of America's oldest fighting force—the United States Army.

This *Troop Topics* explains why the Army needed a new uniform and how it was developed, and reviews the several steps by which the new uniform is gradually replacing the old one. It also looks briefly at other uniforms that Army men before us have been proud to wear from the time of George Washington to our own day.

### Why a New Uniform?

The need for a new general duty uniform became especially clear at the end of World War II in 1945. During the war, and for several years afterward, the number of Army olive drab uniforms in use naturally increased by many millions. More than 12 million men served in the Army and Army Air Forces during the war period. Large stocks of olive drab uniforms were also used to clothe displaced persons and other needy people in the liberated and occupied countries. A number of countries also bought or were furnished U. S. Army uniforms to meet emergency needs of their military forces. Several million uniforms passed from Army control as a normal part of the great demobilization of 1946-47 when most of the soldiers returned to civilian life. Surplus stocks of Army clothing began to appear in civilian stores all over the United States.

Some of these non-Army uses of the Army uniform served humanitarian and other worthwhile purposes. But they also had the effect of reducing the value of olive drab as the "trade mark" of an American soldier. Thus one of the essential qualities of any military uniform—distinctiveness—was no longer true; the American soldier needed a new identifying shade in his clothing in order to distinguish him from soldiers of other countries and from the many private citizens who were wearing olive drab at work and play.

Another reason for considering a new uniform was that the old uniform had never been entirely satisfactory. From its inception, the olive drab uniform was meant to serve two purposes. In the huge Army of the war years it made

good sense to have a uniform suitable for wear both in the field and in garrison or other general duty situations. However, some of the qualities needed in a field uniform do not at the same time make for the smartness of appearance that soldiers ought to have on general duty, in ceremonial formations, or when off-duty. No single uniform can entirely satisfy both of these requirements. The olive drab uniform of World War II was a reasonable compromise. It was a good field uniform at a time when millions of soldiers were serving in the field; and even though it was not the most handsome attire for other purposes, several million Americans wore it proudly. It is no reflection against the genuine merits of the olive drab uniform to say that it went "out of style," and that the Army needed a general purpose uniform capable of enhancing the prestige of the Army and inspiring renewed pride of service in its members.

## **How Was the New Army Green Uniform Developed?**

It's no simple job to put a whole Army into a new-style uniform. It takes a lot of time, thinking, planning, testing, and money.

First there are the complicated problems of selecting the best fabric and color and deciding upon many points of design and styling. Then comes the job of making and testing samples of actual uniforms, followed by production of the required stocks of new clothing for issue to troops.

This final step, however, can't be made all at once as soon as the supply of new uniforms is available. Because many old-style uniforms are still in serviceable condition, it would be wasteful of money and materials to replace them immediately with the new model. This is why the long range plan for introducing the Army Green uniform includes a "wear out" period for the old uniform.

Between now and October 1960, both the olive drab and the new Army Green uniforms will be authorized for wear as provided in current regulations. At that time the olive drab uniform will be finally "phased out" of the active Army, and the Army Green will become the *only* general purpose winter uniform.

The new uniform project really got under way in 1949, when the Secretary of the Army established the Army Uniform Board. The board was assigned to study the whole problem and come up with recommendations for a new uniform, including its introduction into the Army over a 10-year period, and such other matters as design and styling, rules for proper wear, and selection of accessories.

In its work the board relied primarily upon the experience and knowledge of various Army agencies, especially the Research and Development Division of the Office of the Quartermaster General. It also got the expert help and advice of prominent leaders in the clothing industry who are members of the National Advisory Council to the Army. From these and other sources the

first models of the new uniform were developed. Many test uniforms were made in the search for the best fabric, color, and design.

To select only the color, for example, the board carefully considered samples of 31 different shades. These included 3 different grays, 5 blues, 16 greens, 2 olive drabs, a taupe, and the colors now used in uniforms of the Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and the United States Military Academy. Eventually the choice narrowed to 4 colors, one of which was finally agreed to be best—the gray-green which is now officially called “Army Green shade 44.”

Similar procedures were followed in choosing the best fabric and design. Moreover, each factor (color, fabric, and design) had to be studied not only as a separate problem but also as part of the whole effect being sought. For example, a certain color may have an excellent appearance in one type of cloth, but proves entirely unsuitable when used with another fabric. Thus the choice of color was affected by the choice of fabric and vice versa.

By late 1950 the Army Green uniform was ready for the next stage of testing—actual wear by Army personnel. Three thousand uniforms and caps were issued to troops of the 3d Infantry Regiment, stationed at Fort Myer, Virginia and Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D. C. The main purpose was to gather opinions of soldiers about the new uniform. The opinions proved to be overwhelmingly favorable. Most of the 3d Infantry men proudly wore the new uniform during off-duty hours although they were authorized to wear civilian clothes if they wished.

During this period additional sampling of Army opinion was conducted by showing various types of proposed uniforms to selected units of the active Army and Reserve forces. The Army Green rated highest in all these opinion surveys. Based on the extensive study and testing, the final decision was made to begin “phasing in” the new uniform. Limited issue to inductees began on 1 July 1957.

## **Is Green a New Color in the Army?**

Like the olive drab when it was first adopted, the particular color called Army Green shade 44 is new to the Army. However, the Army’s history does include some use of green in its uniforms. During the Revolutionary War several of the rifle companies raised on the frontier wore uniforms of “forest green.” While this was a “greener green” than that of our new uniform, the color of green does have a place in Army tradition. From 1808 to 1812, the United States Rifle Regiment wore green uniforms faced with black and trimmed with yellow. The gold insignia of the new uniform provides a green-yellow combination quite similar to that uniform of a century-and-a-half ago.

When we wear the Army Green, therefore, we represent the “new” Army of today and tomorrow, and also the “old” Army—the long parade of generations of Americans who have worn U. S. Army uniforms of many different colors and designs.

Let's look back along the line of march at this long Army parade that began before there was a United States of America.

### **Colonial Militia to Continental Army**

It should be kept in mind that our military uniforms in the Colonial and Revolutionary War periods were *not* standard items of issue like our uniforms today. In those times, the clothing actually worn by most troops had little resemblance to the officially prescribed uniform. For example, most of the Continental Army soldiers under General Washington never wore a uniform exactly like the one pictured on page 6. The reason is quite simple: lack of money, lack of cloth-making facilities, lack of almost everything an Army



*Continental Army, 1776-1779.*

needs to sustain itself. As we all know, Washington's Army won the long fight for independence despite serious shortages of everything except courage and rock-like faith in its cause. Thus the Continental Army uniform was official but not standard; *some* of Washington's men wore it, the rest wore a great variety of uniform and nonuniform clothing, as will be seen later. Not for many years after the birth of the United States would American soldiers be dressed in what could truly be called a uniform—that is, standard garb actually issued to all troops.

Our colonial forefathers were quick to learn one particular military lesson in the strange new world of the North American wilderness. In defending their homes against hostile Indians, just as in hunting the wild game essential for survival, *concealment* often meant the difference between life and death. They soon developed clothing suited to this need—the frontiersman's typical hunting dress whose color and design blended perfectly with the foliage and terrain of the forests and prairies in which the fighting and hunting took place. Twice during his military career, George Washington recommended this hunting dress as a uniform for American troops. The first time was in 1755 when he was engaged in repelling Indian invasions on the Virginia frontier. He repeated the recommendation 20 years later when he was Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army. The design of this clothing was entirely practical for the purpose. Besides its "camouflage" qualities, it was a good all-weather dress, because layers of undergarments could easily be added or removed according to climatic changes. It also had acquired prestige—the frontiersmen who wore this distinctive clothing were widely known as expert marksmen and masters of all the tricks of survival in the rough wilderness. The British troops had good reason to know that this reputation was deserved, and Washington is said to have recognized these psychological advantages in his recommendation to clothe the Continental Army in this rustic uniform.

The uniform finally selected for the Continental Army, however, was of more conventional design. Of basic blue color with facings varying from red to tan or white, it was patterned after the uniform of English and other European armies of that era. The design featured breeches, cutaway coat, and the familiar three-cornered hat. It was intended to serve both field and parade uses, but as already mentioned, not many of Washington's soldiers actually were equipped with it. The majority wore homespun "civilian-type" clothing, hunting-dress, or more elegant town clothes.

For a short time after the Revolutionary War, clothing the Army was quite a simple problem, mainly because there was almost no Army. It was reduced at one period to 25 men at Fort Pitt and 55 at West Point. Their duty was to guard military stores. The highest ranking officer was a captain. By 1785, however, the Army had grown to a regiment of 700 men for service on the frontier.

In 1796, because of trouble brewing between the United States and France, Congress authorized a further strength increase to 10,000 men. At this time



*Infantry, Continental Army, 1779-1783.*

some marked changes were made in the trimming and accoutrements of the uniform but blue remained the basic color. Not until 1813 did the more prominent features of the Revolutionary uniform give way to new forms.

### **War of 1812**

This period saw a definite step toward the military dress of today. The coats of blue, for both infantry and artillery troops, were shortened and trimmings of tape added to the collar. The old flat buttons began to disappear in favor



of rounded buttons bearing corps insignia. The wearing of epaulettes by sergeants and corporals, which had begun during the Revolutionary War, now became fairly standard. Knee breeches and shoes were worn on special occasions; an order of 1813 directs that "where etiquette requires shoes, breeches agreeable to the uniform are to be worn with yellow knee-buckles instead of strings, yellow buckles in the shoes and a chapeau instead of the cap. No plumes." Enlisted men and officers wore similar uniforms except for certain differences of ornamentation. This precedent of similar uniforms for all ranks has been revived in the new Army Green uniform.



*Representative U. S. Army Uniforms, 1813-1821.*

Army Regulations of 1821 prescribed dark blue as the national color, "when a different one is not prescribed." Blue was used for all dress uniforms. Fatigue jackets and winter trousers for enlisted men were gray, as were the dress uniforms of the Corps of Cadets at West Point. The "Kaydet Gray" still worn by West Point cadets commemorates the victory of General Winfield Scott's gray-clad forces over the British in the Battle of Chippewa in 1814. The 1821 Regulations also introduced the chevron to designate rank in the Artillery and Infantry.



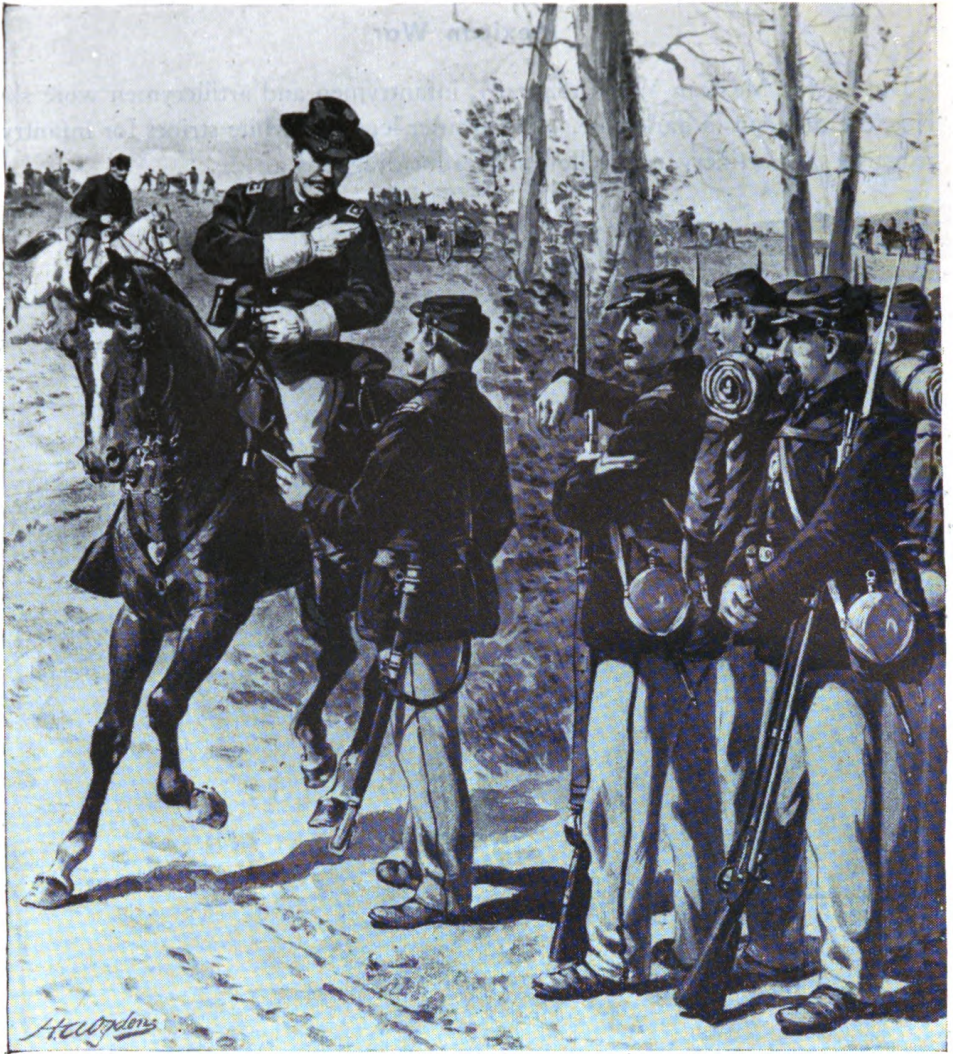
*Full Dress Uniform, 1835-1850.*

## Mexican War

During the Mexican War (1847-48), infantrymen and artillerymen wore sky blue, the dragoons a dark blue. The trouser legs had white stripes for infantry, red stripes for artillery, and yellow stripes for dragoons.



*Typical Campaign Uniform, 1841-1851.*



*Union Army Uniform, 1861-1866.*

## **Civil War**

The beginning of the Civil War, in which a great number of volunteer units joined the regular forces in response to the call to arms, introduced a wide assortment of uniform styles and colors into the rapidly expanding Army. At the same time there was a prescribed Regular Army Uniform which, as the war progressed, was worn by more and more Union soldiers. It consisted of a blue coat and sky blue trousers. Coat collars and cuffs were edged in scarlet for artillery, sky blue for infantry, yellow for engineers, and crimson for ordnance. The Confederate Army uniform consisted of a short gray blouse and trousers with a comparable system of colors to distinguish the several arms.

## Spanish-American War

This brief conflict brought olive drab into the Army. The United States was not the first major power to use this color. Great Britain had outfitted its forces in India with olive drab or khaki as early as 1860. The word khaki itself (meaning dust-colored) is of Indian origin. Several of the United States volunteer regiments were authorized to wear khaki in 1898 during the fighting in Cuba and Puerto Rico. However, blue remained the officially prescribed color for the uniform.



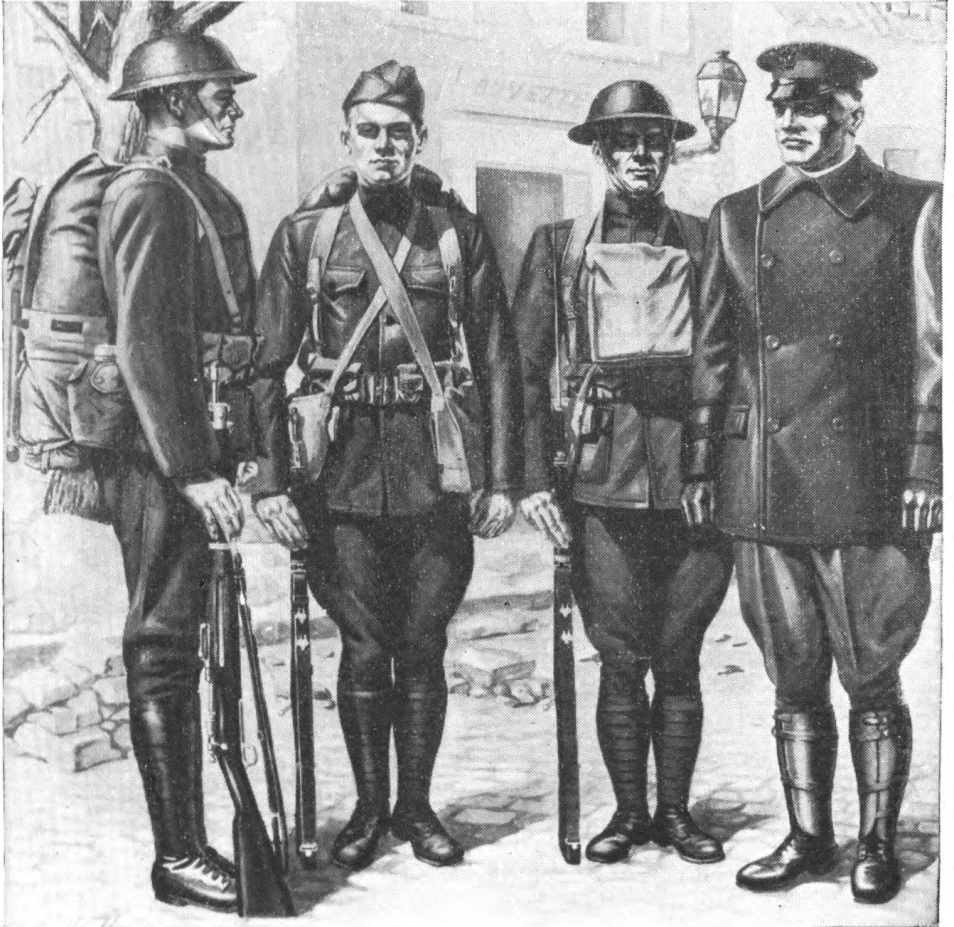
*The First Olive Drab, 1898-1907.*

## World War I

At the beginning of this Century most of the major nations were already clothing their armies in colors chosen for their quality of making the soldier less conspicuous on the battlefield. This trend was a natural outgrowth of advances in the range, accuracy, and hitting power of weapons. Not for many years had troops marched against enemy positions in parade-ground formation; for the same reason, armies had gradually discarded such brilliant hues as the scarlet that British forces had worn during the 18th Century.

As late as 1914, however, some French Army units entered battle wearing scarlet trousers. They had not yet been outfitted with the horizon blue field uniforms which the French had recently adopted. German machine-gunners found that the scarlet trousers made excellent targets and the high casualties in these French units once again testified to the soundness of General Washington's recommendations made more than 100 years earlier.

The combat conditions during World War I established beyond any question the necessity for clothing troops in dull, low-key shades that blend with earth,



*World War I Uniforms, 1917-1918.*

rock, and foliage. To survive on the modern battlefield the soldier must be able to remain relatively inconspicuous; his uniform must help him do so. When he is not in the field, on the other hand, he is much less interested in being inconspicuous. To the contrary—he wants a uniform that will be noticed, one that he can be proud to wear, and that identifies him with a proud and honored Service. Both in the field and in garrison, in other words, he wants to be well dressed for the occasion.

The Army Green uniform answers one of these needs, just as the various types of field and combat clothing answer other specific needs. When we say that the Army Green is a “general purpose” uniform this what we mean: it is a winter uniform for wear (1) on garrison duty, (2) when traveling, and (3) when off-duty. (This pamphlet does *not* cover various local regulations that may be in effect during the transition from olive drab to mandatory wearing of Army Green by all personnel. You will find, however, that local uniform regulations are always based upon the general Army-wide provisions.)

## **Wearing the Army Green**

Army Green shade 44 is a well styled and accurately tailored uniform. It is being manufactured in a wide range of sizes in order to insure that its basically good design will contribute to the soldierly appearance of all its wearers, regardless of the many individual differences of height, weight, and other bodily attributes. To look good in the new uniform, in other words, you don't have to be a perfect specimen of manly beauty. The fact that you are in the Army proves your general physical fitness. The new uniform has been designed to enhance your natural or acquired habits of bearing and posture. If these are already good, the new uniform will make you look even better. At the same time, it is not a magic cloak; your personal appearance will still depend primarily upon your own efforts. It won't hide poor posture; it won't keep itself cleaned and pressed.

If *your* uniform doesn't fit *you*, you're not a well-dressed soldier. The Army has done its part to insure that you *can* be properly fitted. The new uniform has been manufactured in 5 different models with 65 different variations of sizes. Almost everyone can be properly fitted from these standard stocks. For the few who cannot, special measurement uniforms can be obtained—tailor made service at no additional charge. (For this special service, officers are charged 20% above the basic cost of the uniform.)

## **Army Green Is for Army Only**

As already mentioned, one reason for developing the Army Green uniform was the fact that the olive drab color was no longer identified *exclusively* with our Army. Steps have been taken to insure that Army Green will remain an exclusive “trade mark” of the United States Army. The wearing of distinctive items of the Army Green uniform by unauthorized persons is already prohibited by law. Congress is also considering a law prohibiting anyone from selling items of the Army Green uniform to persons not authorized to wear them.

## Quality Control

Measures also have been taken to maintain the *quality* of the new uniform—to protect *you* against unknowingly buying substandard uniform items. The Quartermaster General has established a Quality Control Office to examine samples of uniform items submitted by textile manufacturers, custom tailors, military tailors, and others engaged in the fabrication of Army clothing. When these samples meet or exceed the minimum standards set by The Quartermaster General, official approval is indicated in the form of a certificate number covering each type of garment. Whenever you purchase any item of uniform from a source other than the Army, make sure that it bears a label reading substantially as follows:

This garment is warranted to meet or exceed the standards of specification(s) No. \_\_\_\_\_ and was produced under Certificate No. \_\_\_\_\_ from basic material warranted by the manufacturer to have been produced in accordance with sample under current certificate.

If the item doesn't have such a label, don't buy it.

## Women's Uniforms

The Army Green Uniform program has not yet been completed with respect to the female members of the Army. However, the Chief of Staff and Secretary of the Army have recently approved Army Green as the color to be used in the future uniform for women. It will probably be introduced within several years, but exact dates have not yet been determined.

The three Army elements to which women are generally assigned (Army Nurse Corps, Women's Army Corps, and Army Medical Specialist Corps) originated at different times during the last half-century. Although each of these corps developed its own distinctive uniform, a single uniform for all three was adopted when they were integrated into the Regular Army in 1948. This is the uniform of taupe color which will continue to be used until replaced by the Army Green uniform.

## The Importance of Insignia

U. S. Army insignia are integral parts of the uniform. Your various items of insignia tell a great deal about you as an individual soldier. Combined with your decorations and awards (discussed below) they are a kind of "visible service record."

Insignia are provided for several reasons, practical and intangible. The practical reason can be summed up in one word—identification. Without your insignia, your uniform identifies you only as a member of the Army. It is your insignia that distinguishes you from other soldiers, or the members of your outfit from those of other outfits. Army insignia are visible signs of your grade, your branch, your capacity or duty assignment, your present outfit, and (when appropriate) the outfit you served with overseas in wartime.



The intangible value of insignia is closely related to the function of identification. Your pride in yourself as a soldier and in your present and past outfits is symbolized by the fact of wearing all this information in the form of insignia. From this feeling of pride is developed most of your other soldierly qualities. This same feeling by groups of soldiers becomes pride of unit and the feeling of oneness that is so vital in all military life. Once this is understood we can see immediately why the proper wearing of insignia is very much a part of the broader subject of proper wearing of the uniform.

## Decorations and Awards

On all occasions when it is proper for you to wear them, your decorations and awards become part of your uniform. Wearing them properly is part of your individual responsibility for proper wearing of the uniform. To wear a decoration or award in an incorrect position, for example, means that you are not properly uniformed in that respect. To know and observe the regulations on this subject is an important mark of a good soldier. It is not hard to imagine what would happen if there were no regulations covering this matter, or if the existing regulations were widely ignored. The purpose of the regulations is merely to insure *uniformity*; you promote this purpose by carefully obeying all the provisions that pertain to *your* particular decorations and awards.

An extremely important caution should be kept in mind: Never wear *any* decoration or award until you are certain of two points—(1) That it is an award authorized in regulations for wear by Army personnel, and (2) that *you* have been specifically authorized by competent orders to wear it. If in doubt, consult your service record and file. Serious penalties are provided for knowingly wearing an unauthorized decoration or award. *First be sure you are entitled to wear it; then be sure to wear it correctly on all proper occasions.*

## Olive Drab's Last Tour of Duty

As mentioned earlier, 1 October 1960 is the target date when Army Green will become the *only* winter service uniform for all Army personnel. Olive drab, therefore, is now serving its final hitch of a long and honorable Army career that has included two world wars and the Korean conflict. Like the old soldier of song and legend, it is not dying but “just fading away”—in several definite stages.

Two of these stages are already past. Since 1 July 1957, men entering the Army are issued one olive drab and one Army Green uniform. After 1 October 1957, Army Green becomes the *only* authorized winter service uniform for commissioned and warrant officers.

The remaining stages are as follows—

*Beginning 1 October 1958*, men entering the Army will be issued *two* Army Green uniforms. There will be *no* initial issue of the olive drab uniform. *All* enlisted men will be required to own at least *one* Army Green uniform.

*Beginning 1 October 1960, wearing of the olive drab uniform (including its garrison and service caps) will be prohibited.*

*During the transition period (1 July 1957 to 1 October 1960), enlisted men will have the individual option of wearing (in the proper season) any of the uniforms that have been issued to them or that they are required to purchase. This means that both olive drab and Army Green will be in evidence in most formations and normal duty situations.*

In order that local commanders may be able to present a uniformly dressed command on various ceremonial occasions during this period, they are authorized to prescribe *one* of these uniforms for such formations. *Before 1 October 1958* they can prescribe only the olive drab because some men will not yet be required by regulations to own an Army Green uniform. *After 1 October 1958*, only Army Green can be prescribed, because some men will no longer have an olive drab uniform.

It is important to keep in mind that until olive drab is finally and officially retired in 1960, the regulations governing its proper wear remain in effect. In no sense has olive drab become "old clothes"—*it is still a uniform of the United States Army*. To most Americans, in fact, olive drab is the uniform they or their sons, brothers, and husbands once wore. To other millions around the world, olive drab calls up memories of American fighting men in World War II and Korea.

During the next few years, therefore, both the "old" Army and the "new" will be on display in our uniforms. Each man's behavior while wearing one of these uniforms will affect the Army's reputation for better or worse.

When you wear the olive drab, part of the Army's glorious past is entrusted to your care. When you wear the Army Green, you symbolize the Army of today and tomorrow. Your duty is the same in both cases—to conduct yourself, on duty and off, in a manner that reflects credit on the uniform of the United States Army.

[AG 461 (5 Aug 57)]

By Order of *Wilber M. Brucker*, Secretary of the Army:

MAXWELL D. TAYLOR,  
*General, United States Army,*  
*Chief of Staff.*

Official:

HERBERT M. JONES,  
*Major General, United States Army,*  
*The Adjutant General.*

Distribution:

*Active Army:*

Ten (10) copies per 100 Military Personnel.

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## ARMY GREEN AND THE CLOTHING ALLOWANCE

In planning the several steps of the Army Green Uniform program, the Department of the Army has recognized that the monthly clothing allowance will be a most important factor during the change-over period. It will enable each soldier to make the shift from Olive drab to Army Green at no greater expense for purchase and upkeep of uniforms than he would have incurred even if a new Army uniform had not been adopted.

A main purpose in planning the change-over has been to spread over a period of time the purchase of items of the new uniform. By this means, the purchase of needed replacement items to maintain proper uniform becomes a normal part of the orderly transition of the Army from its old uniform to the new.

The announcement of the program in DA Circular 102, 1954, gave the career soldier in service at that time a four-year advance notice that he would be required to own *one* Army Green uniform by 1 October 1958. This notice has remained in effect for those entering the Army since 1954. The elapsed time has provided an opportunity to build up the allowance and plan the purchase of the new uniform. By October 1960, additional clothing allowances will have accrued for the purchase of the required *second* Army Green uniform.

Soldiers entering the Army between 1 July 1957 and 1 October 1958 will receive *one* Army Green uniform as part of their initial issue of clothing. The clothing allowance they accumulate by 1 October 1960 will purchase their required *second* Army Green uniform at that time.

Soldiers entering the Army after 1 October 1958 will receive *two* Army Green uniforms as initial issue. When 1 October 1960 rolls around, they will have accumulated enough clothing allowance for the normal expense of replacing a worn-out uniform.

In a matter that affects so many people over a long period of time, it isn't possible to establish a plan that will have exactly the same financial effect on each individual. This is particularly true since wearing habits, thrift, and other factors differ widely. Consideration of the overall plan described above will show that the Department of the Army has been as fair as possible in working out a method of introducing the Army Green uniform.

