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## SECNAV Approves Uniform Changes, Prototypes Coming

*By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jules Stobaugh, Defense Media Activity*

“Don’t simply put us in men’s uniforms...”

That’s the message Vice Adm. Bill Moran said he heard from female Sailors across the fleet when he asked them via a survey in May about improving their uniforms.

As the chief of naval personnel, Moran has been tasked by the Secretary of the Navy to explore overhauling female uniforms.

By May 2014, Sailors will see prototypes of new female enlisted and officer uniforms going through a fit evaluation in fleet concentration areas. Some of the uniform items being evaluated are E-1 through E-6 female service dress blue uniforms, which look like the male service dress blues, with a jumper-style top and a white hat. The white hat will also be evaluated with the service dress white uniform.

Female chief petty officers and officers will test a redesigned combination cover, which resembles the male cover, but is tailored more for a female’s head to better accommodate female hairstyles.

The fit evaluation for these changes is scheduled to begin no later than May 2014, and the Navy’s uniform board will evaluate these prototypes and most likely make additional changes based on feedback, according to Navy officials. Fleet introduction will occur after approval of a final design. Specific dates for fleet

implementation will depend on the results of the evaluation.

“We are taking the needed time to develop and test uniforms that more closely resemble their male shipmates, but are designed to fit female Sailors,” said Moran.

Fleet Master Chief April Beldo, fleet master chief for Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education said the Navy is taking steps to make sure that these uniform updates will be tailored to females.

“We are not going to put our females in a male uniform,” said Beldo. “We want to make sure that when we update this uniform and put our female Sailors in it that it fits them like it’s suppose to.”

Navy leaders said one of the driving factors for changing female uniforms is to improve uniformity and equality across the force.

“As you look out across a group of Sailors, you ought to see, not female and male Sailors, but Sailors,” said Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus.

Approval of the final female service dress blue uniform design will follow the completion of the fit evaluation and will be similar in fit to the E-1 through E-6 female white summer dress uniform. Navy officials emphasized exact fleet introduction dates and costs will depend on the results of the fit evaluation.