

Army to Field New Type of Parachute

by [Brendan McGarry](#) on December 9, 2013 · [Comments \(53\)](#)



The U.S. Army and other services will soon begin fielding the first new type of parachute in decades, the service said.

The product is known as the Military Free Fall Advanced Ram-Air Parachute System, or RA-1. In coming months, it will start to replace the two-decades-old MC-4 design as the service's primary tactical parachute.

The new rig is made by Airborne Systems, part of Solon, Ohio-based HDT Global, and commercially marketed as the Intruder. Consisting of a main parachute, reserve parachute, harness and container, it's designed to give troops more maneuverability.

“This parachute allows you to land everybody within a 25 to 30 meter circle, instead of having all your guys spread out wherever the wind carried them along the drop zone,” Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Ford said in a recent [Army video](#).

Ford is the air detachment platoon sergeant at Fort Hood, Texas, for Company C, 2nd Squadron, 38th Cavalry Regiment, 504th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, III Corps.

His soldiers recently tested the parachute in static-line jumps from UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters. Previous evaluations involved paratroopers jumping from such aircraft as the C-127 and C-23.

The parachute is also designed to give troops more carrying capacity. The RA-1 can carry upwards of 450 pounds — 100 pounds more than its predecessor — and safely deploy from 3,500 feet to 25,000 feet, according to a recent [article](#) on the website of the base's newspaper, the Fort Hood Sentinel.

The Army has previously said it plans to begin fielding the product in April 2014. It wasn't immediately clear how much the new system costs and how many units the service plans to buy.