

Ghillie_Suit_2004.txt

How to Make a Ghillie Suit

A "Ghillie" is a Scottish game-keeper. Pronounce the word "Gee' lee", starting with the glutteral gee (guh), not a jay sound (jee). These guys found that they could sew strips of burlap to their clothes, then wait patiently for poachers to come by -- as long as they remained still, their game would nearly step on them.

The real professionals at making Ghillie Suits are military snipers. Making a suit and using it to stalk your instructors is part of the graduation from sniper school. I was once stalked by a special forces sniper from 500 meters across a field of grass, bushes, and general scrub -- at the end of 4 hours, he stood up TEN METERS BEHIND ME! -- I never saw him -- even though I knew he was out there somewhere.

Good, professional-looking Ghillies can be seen in the movies "Sniper" and "Clear and Present Danger".

In most lighting conditions, detection is a result of both brightness and shape contrasts with the background. Most camouflage fatigues do a pretty good job of matching the general brightness level of foliage, desert, etc. The camouflage pattern printed onto the material attempts to match the shapes inherent in the background as well. Unfortunately, all camouflage fatigues follow the human form pretty closely -- resulting in an overall shape that looks like a human, not natural background. The problem lies in the fact that the fatigues are trying to duplicate a three-dimensional pattern of shapes (foliage, usually) with a two-dimensional camouflage pattern applied to a sheet of fabric. In most lighting conditions, it don't work very well. Now, camouflage fatigues and jackets and such certainly blend in much better than blue jeans and T-shirts, but they aren't totally effective -- and cannot be without adding three-dimensional noise to the essentially two-dimensional form of a human.

A Ghillie Suit is a very effective camouflage technique that uses strips of material to break up the outline of

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the wearer. This fools the eye of the enemy -- the brain sees no recognizable shapes. By adding strips of burlap, or camouflage netting, or branches off bushes to your clothing, you create the three-dimensional pattern disruption I was talking about above. The advantage comes from creating patches that are nearly the same color as the environment, while simultaneously creating ultra-dark shadows alongside. Printed fabric cannot create black patches as dark as real shadows the shadow is about 2 orders of magnitude darker than the darkest printed black fabric.

How to make a Ghillie Suit:

1. Obtain an old pair of coveralls -- this is called the foundation of the suit. In a pinch a fatigue blouse and pants will suffice.
2. Get some burlap from your local fabric store (about 4 yards). The more burlap you use the more effective (up to a point) will be the Ghillie Suit -- however, it will rapidly become heavy (Army and Marine sniper suits weigh up to 20 pounds or more).
3. Dye the burlap some dark to medium green (Rit dye -- try to match foliage greens). Instructions are on the dye package), Dye a little (half a yard) brown (use sparingly).
4. Cut the burlap into strips 2-3" wide and anywhere from 6" to 12" long (mix up the widths and lengths)
5. Sew one end of each strip to the outside of your foundation -- all over it. Space them so that the ends of the upper strips will overlap the attachment points of strips lower down. The sides do not need to overlap. Fill in by tying vines, small foliated branches, grass, etc. to the suit by knotting the strips around it, or sew strings or cord at random over the suit to tie these material in.
6. Crawl and enjoy!

TACTICS:

Ghillie Suits are used for stealth -- move as slowly as possible, if at all. If one hides in bushes, and uses single shots, the enemy won't be able to find you unless they are looking almost directly at you when you fire. Be careful that muzzle blast doesn't disturb foliage or raise dust.

An effective technique is to hide in the base of bushes near a path, let the enemy go past, then pick them off with single shots from the rear. A gun cover can be made using the same techniques and should be used to disrupt the shape of the weapon.