

The idea behind a ghillie suit is to

provide a foundation to which you attach natural vegetation. Doing so will break up your outline, which is easily recognizable to the human eye. But you don't want to look like a bush — if you look into a field that has two trees, your eyes are drawn to the two trees. You want to look like the rest of the area, i.e. the field.

For example, when training for my second Iraq deployment, I took too long to get to my final firing position, and I was worried about running out of time. So I just crawled out from behind the bush that was concealing me, hastily set up my rifle, and fired. My objective was to get shots on target without being seen by my instructor. He was unable to locate me even after my second shot.

Almost everything you need for a ghillie suit can be found at your local craft store. But when the walker in the field revealed my location, the instructor could clearly see where I was. He had been focused so intently on the two bushes bracketing me that he didn't even notice my poor position and camouflage.

A sniper platoon is one of the few places where being good at stalking is considered a good thing. However, since I was a machine-gunner rather





than a sniper when I built my first ghillie, I knew absolutely nothing about the art. So I proceeded to build my suit like the ones in the movies or those you see in the big retail catalogs. It was a ghillie monster and stuck out like an officer's hot daughter.

I did just about everything wrong. When I first showed up to sniper school, where everyone has been in platoons for years, not only was I laughed at, but as penance I was made to dance around in my furry-legged ghillie bottoms in front of everyone. It was rough. Here's how to avoid making the mistakes I did.

CLOTHES

First, you'll need to pick a uniform to start with — this can be either a shirt or jacket and pants, or a one-piece like a flight suit. The jacket and pants give you more flexibility, but a coverall-type makes it easier to crawl backwards out of position as there's no way it can be dragged over your head. Tan is better than green, because it is always easier to make light things darker than to make dark things lighter (this is the theme of camouflage in general).

It should be a size larger than you usually wear because when you start sewing on pads and netting, the suit will "shrink" and you will want the extra room when you are stalking. In the movies and in old war stories from Vietnam, you always hear about snipers crawling on their bellies for days. So I initially put most of my padding on my chest and thighs. Don't do that.

There will be times where you will be skull dragging, but the majority of your time will be spent on your hands and knees either in a high or low crawl. This provides for relatively good cover, but also allows you to move quickly. If your jacket buttons in the front, you'll need to sew a piece of cloth over it so that it doesn't open constantly, but I'd focus the padding on the elbows and knees.

Dye your suit to match your environment with water-based dyes.



5 Lay out netting on base garment and cut to size.

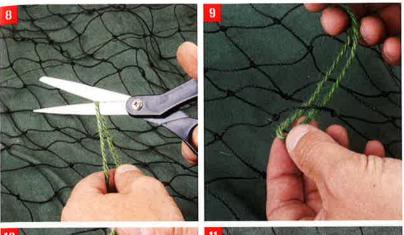


or sew at the knots using dental floss.









- Cut jute into 12-18-inch-long chunks:
- Form a loop and thread through netting.







- Add different colors to break up outline...
- ... but don't go overboard.





14-15 Untwist strands to get more volume.



If you don't have experience running a sewing machine, buy some decent wine and flowers and get someone who knows what they're doing to sew it for you. Otherwise you'll be wrestling with it for hours. Ask me how I know this.

NETTING

Lay out netting on the suit and cut it to size. The netting placed on the back should have openings of around 1 to 1.5 inches. This will be large enough to attach jute and shove in vegetation. It can be attached quickly with Shoe Goo, or you can sew each knot with dental floss. The netting should cover the back, shoulders, triceps, ass, thighs, and calves.

Worthwhile additions to the suit include a piece of 550 cord on the cuffs as thumb loops to keep the sleeves from riding up your arms and annoying the crap out of you, as well as possibly cutting out the back of the jacket and inletting mesh to help keep you cool.

JUTE

Once you have attached your netting, you can then tie on jute as a base layer, dyed to match your area of operations. Do *not* go overboard with the jute, as the majority of your camo should come from natural vegetation. Find vegetation from low on the ground — things that look like nothing special, such as grass or weeds.

VEIL

The veil is arguably the most important part of the suit. It usually starts as a boonie cover with the bill cut off to avoid casting a shadow on your face, an unnatural dark area that is a dead giveaway. Netting should be placed on the veil in much the same way as on the ghillie top, and mesh can be placed in the top for cooling.



16-19 The ghillie's real job is to carry natural vegetation from the area you're working in.

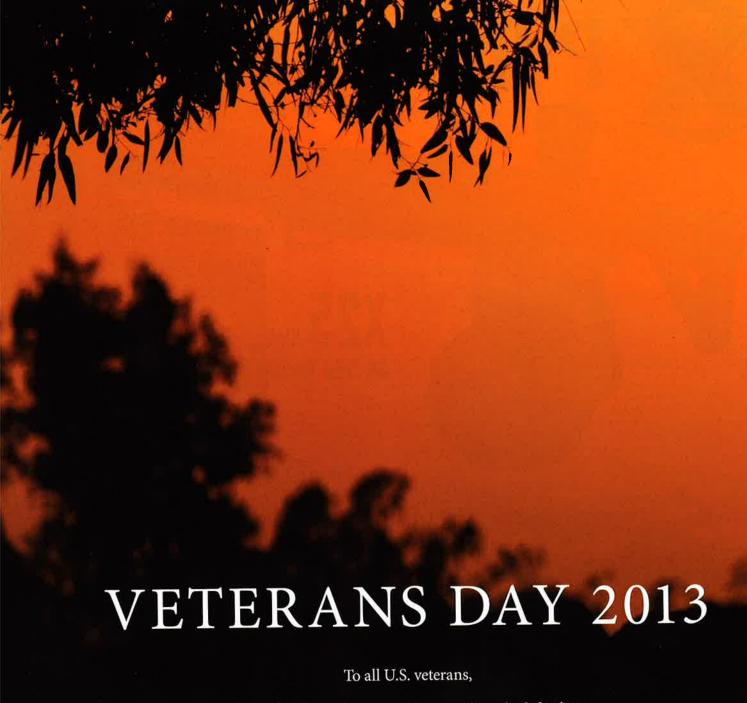


20-22 Don't have jute cord? Cut strips from sandbags and tie them to the netting instead.



There is more to sniping and stalking than the ghille suit. I have known people who, for a bet, have done perfect stalks buck-ass naked, simply using proper movement and concealment. There is no one way to make a ghillie. If you lined up 100 snipers, you'd see 100 different ghillies and every sniper would immediately recognize his own suit. Follow the steps above, use good principles of camouflage and concealment, and make your suit your own. It is a matter of pride to create and modify your ghillie. And it will evolve with you — as you refine your skills, you will refine your ghillie. 🗟





For selflessly serving our nation and bravely defending our freedoms and liberty, we are eternally thankful. Your dedication, courage, and sacrifice will always be honored.

Respectfully, RECOIL Magazine











