

Defeating Shine

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SWAP SHOP: OPTICAL CAMOUFLAGE

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The shine from binoculars, scopes, infrared viewers, night vision goggles, and even individual sun, wind, dust goggles (SWDGs) can give away your presence, especially in the open expanse of the desert, and draw enemy fire. Glint from an officer's binoculars gave away the Confederate attack at Gettysburg, killed the German Army's top sniper in WWII, cost an Israeli general an eye, and allowed a Marine gunnery sergeant to take out the Viet Cong's top sniper.

Visiting paratroopers from the former Soviet Union said recently that looking for reflections from our optics was a major scouting tactic in the Cold War. And during major U.S. Army exercises, at least one scout helicopter is usually assigned the sole mission of looking for optic reflections from ground forces.

You can shield binoculars by cupping your fingers around the outer lenses. But you can't cup your fingers around a weapon scope or around the SWDGs you're wearing or resting on your helmet.

A field expedient solution is to make lens covers from a pair of women's brown nylon pantyhose, preferably a pair with the thicker nylon in the upper part. This technique will give you immediate camouflage for your optics while preserving their normal use.

FOR BINOCULARS AND SCOPES:

1. Cut off the ends (toes).
2. Stretch fabric over the lenses.
3. Secure with a rubber band and tape.

FOR THE SWDG LENS:

1. Lay the lens on the thicker nylon.
2. Outline shape with a pen and cut out.
3. Stretch fabric over the lens as you return it to the frame, leaving a little overhang.
4. When lens is back in place, trim excess nylon from inside the goggles.

Industry has developed special lens covers that can be retrofitted to issue binoculars, vehicle headlights, sunglasses, sniper scopes, and infrared thermal sights such as those used on the Dragon and Javelin missiles.

Hopefully, similar covers will also be developed for use on SWDGs and prescription eyeglasses.