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Personal Kit And Equipment

The Basic Cadre



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INTRODUCTION

The subject of personal kit and equipment for the Sniper is a controversial one. Should a Sniper take this or that on operations, what if I need this, what about that? This article will cover what I as an individual carry and the reasons why. The article is meant to be of interest giving you an insight to the ideas thoughts of a British Para Sniper.

BACKGROUND

I joined the Army Cadet force aged 12 in 1976, here I learned to shoot, initially using the Martini Henry .22 underlever. I then progressed onto the Lee Enfield No 8 .22 bolt action rifle. We spent hours dry training prior to being allowed to fire a live rifle. Once qualified on the .22 we then progressed to the Lee Enfield Mk 4, .303 bolt action rifle. All the prior training was to ensure this beast didn't hurt us nippers, it paid off. In 1980 I joined the Army and adopted the SLR 7.62mm (FN) as my personal weapon. In 1984 I volunteered to attend a basic Sniper cadre using the L42 (Lee Enfield 7.62mm with x 3 optics. In 1995 I attended the Sniper Instructor Course and gained a distinction. I was then posted to the SF Sniper Division in 1997 to teach potential Sniper Instructors. I am now the Bn master Sniper.

GENERIC EQUIPMENT

In this article I will cover the equipment I would take on all operations, if you like the basic must go load. I will not cover special to theatre equipment such as ECW kit (Extreme Cold weather)

CLOTHING

On operations Infantry Snipers often travel and are co-located with the remainder of the Bn. It is important that you don't look different from the other members of the unit. The ability to blend in prevents Snipers from being singled out by any Enemy surveillance assets. This can still be achieved wearing part of your Sniper Ops kit.



Trousers are based on Soviet Spetnez design Double lined seat and legs, waterproof knee patches and D - Ring attachment point, made in rip stop DPM (Disruptive pattern material)



Shirt/Jacket: The majority of the

Worlds hotspots (of British Interest) are warm climates, Balkans 50% of year, Middle East, Africa etc...

This said I decided to turn an issued tropical shirt into a Sniper Shirt. I've added extra pockets (our shirts don't have lower pockets) Also note the sewn on velcro loop on left arm this is to keep the weapon sling in place whilst firing)



To fit in with other troops we have to dress the same, boots are no exception! Black military boots 'have' to be worn unless we have Ghillie suits on. This causes a dilemma when going into theatre lightly equipped. I take Altberg boots for general conditions and a pair of jungle or desert boots because they pack flat and also rest feet when in rear areas. Black is not good I know (but I'm in the Army) Note Hessian/Burlap on boots at beginning of Article!

GHILLIE SUIT

Being in an Airborne unit means that you are always looking to keep your equipment weight to a minimum. We have to insert into theatre via Parachute, Helicopter or TALO (Tactical Air Land Operations). This limits individuals to what is essential and not what is nice to have. For this reason the Ghillie suit can fall into the realms of nice to have! Hence we are consistently looking for light materials and new ideas to make carriage more possible.

I have a number of Ghillie suits, a heavy Ghillie made during my Sniper Instructors course, made from a heavy jacket and covered in various burlap strips. I have a net design suit that is extremely easy to pack and very light. This is covered in Realtree type camouflage. I also have an ASAT 3D suit

that I've worked on to make a Savannah/Desert Ghillie. Added to this are Urban Ghillie (See [Photo Gallery](#)) and Artic cam suits.

However my bog standard suit is made how my basic students are taught. We take an NBC suit and cut out the charcoal lining to make it light and cool. The hood is cut off and a collar sewn in its place. Elastic is sewn around the cuffs and a draw cord sewn into the bottom of the jacket. Across the back we sew lengths of green Para cord for attaching camouflage of both a permanent and temporary nature (natural Cam with elastics). We also sew a variety of pockets on the jacket to suit our own needs.



View of rear of NBC Jacket made into Ghillie suit. Note pockets for Kestrel Wind meter and Spotting Scope (I prefer to carry it in my front pocket for easy access. I use it all the time, Stalks, observation etc..) The wind meter takes away some of the guess work, I compare my position's wind to the wind en route to the target. I also have crib cards of various wind calculations and wind effects, so I don't have to try and remember everything on Ops, this way I can concentrate on the task in hand. Also note Sock and Small sling for use in Hawkins position. The Sock is full of split peas (waterproofed) they've been in there 3 years now. (Could eat in an emergency)

The best material I have found for making the fuzz of the Ghillie is Rope, an old Tug of War rope to be exact. Simply cut it, unravel it, dye it and attach it. (The fuzz is easily achieved and is harder for optics to focus in on at distance. It is also light and easy to work)



View of Headdress and Net trousers
Headdress shows clearly the effect achieved using the Rope. The Boonie is of Real tree origin. I find that figures tend to look darker at distance so we attempt to lighten the Sniper to blend in with the foliage and the light. The trousers are part of a full net suit that simply clips around the body

WEBBING AND EQUIPMENT

When deployed with other troops we wear normal webbing, when tasked forward or in the Sniper role our 'belt kit' is tailored to the individuals needs. (Note our normal webbing is also tailored to individual requirements but not ghillied, most of us wear ops vests)



The picture above shows my Sniper belt kit laid out. The items are as follows:

- 1. Silva Compass, pencil and crib sheet book. The book includes wind, elevation and angled shooting charts. It also includes Stalk orders, Arty Mortar info, notes on Air photography and radio codes. It also has room to add more cards or info. Note the orange flash card, used for signalling Aircraft in daylight hours (a system we use for Heli pick-up). The compass is in mils, lighter and quicker to use than the issued prismatic, however on Ops the prismatic is also taken as it is more accurate and durable (the Silva compass would still be taken)**
- 2. A masked Maglite torch, spare torch and secateurs. Torches masked to minimise white light for reading Maps and A.P. at night. Spare torch is carried in case one goes down. Secateurs are used for cutting natural camouflage to attach to Ghillie suit, weapon or Hide etc.. It is also used for finalising a fire position, cutting that one annoying twig that obscures the target area.**
- 3. Cheek rest, made by Hunters of England, good comfortable cheek piece made of neoprene helps ensure spot weld when firing.**
- 4. Camelbac Mule, Sits well in centre of back, allows Sniper to stay in position and take fluid. This system has enough stowage space to carry basic survival food, Med kit, Weapon cleaning kit and Notebooks etc.. it**

is camouflaged with a ghillie net covered in ghillie to match Jacket.

5. **Personal medical Kit, Field dressings, crepe bandages, tublar grip, triangular bandages to stem bleeding and dress wounds. Airway, tourniquet and haemostat, Airway for buddy (can't put it in yourself) tourniquet and haemostat to stem bleeding, these are preferred options in battle, I have many friends in 2 & 3 Para who died because tourniquets were a No, No! during the Falklands campaign. On many peace keeping Ops you are close to medical aid (although if you follow the progress of the 1st British soldier to die in Macedonia you'd think differently) On Ops such as the one I was deployed on in Sierra Leone it would've be down to the Sniper pair to keep each other alive. A friend of mine lay for 12 hours in the open with a severe head injury in the Falklands, no one could get to him due to Enemy fire. This is why we teach self-help, the man must get himself into cover, try and remain calm. Lying down helps to slow the metabolism and calm the casualty reducing the heart rate hence slowing the pumping of the blood. The individual then applies direct pressure to any open wounds and applies dressings. Each man carries morphine, this can be used so long as the guy carries out the SOP of leaving the used syrete in view.**
6. **Nikon 800 Laser Range finders. I carry these as another aid to judging distance. They are temperamental dependant on light conditions. I also use Mil-dots in my scope, the range stadia in my scope and My Map to work out the most probable range. Range estimation is the biggest factor that results in a miss, on operations I want every edge possible to ensure a hit. We are issued Leica Vector with the .338 these are excellent but bulky, heavy and if you're buying your own way too expensive. The Nikons keep the weight down and I will carry them at all times without thinking twice.**
7. **British issued Sniper Pocket book, small containing enough information to remind the Sniper and shooting record sheets, so logged shots information can be carried.**
8. **Water bottle and metal mug, U.S. bottle is smaller then ours so suits compact belt kit better. The Mug can be used for cooking in emergency situations or between deployments when you cannot get to your bergan.**
9. **Civi Bum/Butt bag type pouch cammed to hide the black. Used for carrying Binoculars. I tend to use Spotting Scope when on the move, the Bino's have reticule pattern so are a must when directing Arty/Mor fire or observing for longer periods. On the side of pouch is the tripod for my Spotting Scope. Ammo pouches for Magazines, Grenades carried**

in pockets

10. **French hexi stove, spoon and brew kit, French cooker very compact good emergency stove. Tea, Coffee, beef stock and sugar for morale infusion when situation allows. Never underestimate the power a hot brew can muster, especially in colder climates. The Sniper however would not brew up when deployed, but this kit is still carried in case you are split from your kit between deployments.**
11. **Enough Rifle cleaning kit to keep weapon on the road, pull through for 5.56mm and 7.62mm Rifles. Flannelette, Shaving brush for cleaning purposes, Small screwdriver to tighten wpn parts, issued rifle oil and break free oil. Also a sweat rag for wpn cleaning tasks. Also carried Camouflage cream, spare elastic bands, lighter and whistle. (Elastic band for cam attachment, lighter for fire! and whistle for exercises/international distress signal)**



Our Daysacks carry our living kit, its around 30 liters in capacity:

1. **Daysack, Note the sides have zips on; these are used to add side pouches to increase capacity or to add drag bag.**
2. **Gloves for warmth not Sniping, used when resting.**

- 3. Barbour w/proof jacket, light and cotton, I prefer this to Gore-Tex when Sniping, less noise!**
- 4. Real tree Mesh Cam Jkt, light and allows another option, works well in Mud and wooded areas**
- 5. Pack-it cubes to divide kit in Daysack, so you know where items are**
- 6. Field towel and battery razor (add tooth brush not shown) very compact towel eventually on Ops someone will make you wash and shave, so you need to take the kit to do it with, the whole Sierra Leone trip 22 days we lived off what we carried this was it in the way of Hygiene.**
- 7. Head-torch and spare Maglite, for writing reports etc.. when situation allows you to use white light (i.e. in rear areas between ops).**
- 8. Thermal Top, Bottoms and Mask, used when at rest to keep warm or under kit if the weather is cold. Top and bottoms are Helly Hanson Lifa, light and warm, only draw back is that they are not fire proof.**
- 9. Small Flask, remember daysack is normally carried as far as the LBP, hence a pre-prepared brew again infuses morale**
- 10. Lightweight poncho, bungee cord and pegs, ideal for making quick belly hides. Used quite often in our anchor O.P.'s. Good for offensive Ops as can be erected and cammed within 15 mins.**
- 11. Mosquito Head net to keep out them pesky little critters also breaks up shape of head**
- 12. Collapsible Water bottle for more fluid, spent four days in S.L. with just Camelback and one water bottle, fairly dehydrated by end of the deployment hence added this to kit to carry just a little more. Note I've also spent four days under a bush in N.I. with just one bottle and a lump of cheese (but that's another story) The climate meant one was adequate and I didn't feel afterwards that I should have had more. Also below is a small sewing kit for repairs.**
- 13. Info Pad and O.P. board. Info pad is an A5 sized board with blank paper clipped to it. The blank paper has carbon paper between the sheets and is stapled together. When taking notes or drawing sketches during a CTR (Close target Recce) or other information gathering task you immediately produce a copy for each member of your team. Once in the FRV (Final Rendezvous point) the paper can be split so each team member has the information. This way if something goes wrong there is more chance of the info reaching your own forces.
The O.P. (Observation Post as opposed to Ops - Operations) board is similar to the one shown in the 'Basic Cadre' article, it contains A4 paper and sketching equipment.**

- 14. A Para silk zoot suit style top, this is pertex lined and folds into fist**

size. It is my main piece of warm kit when on operations.

15. DPM folder, carries spare paper, reports and returns and overlays etc...
16. An Ortlieb waterproof bag, these canoe bags are excellent for keeping equipment dry. I converted to them after falling into a rather deep river in the Pyrenees, my kit was double bagged but still got wet. We then lay around for 12 hours in the cold before it was time to take the shot! (Only just noticeable on photo)

RUCKSACK AND DRAG BAG

We tend to call our Rucksacks Bergans, mine is the standard issue PLCE (Personal load carrying equipment) Bergan. However I've added extra pouches around the base, similar to the configuration on the Alice pack. The Bergan also has zips on the side to except add on pouches and the drag bag.



Note the drag bag is basic, no extra pouches, clip sides and zips to attach to Daysack or Bergan. The Bag is padded and has anchor points at the top and hand holds top and bottom.



Shoulder carrying straps can be added to allow the bag to be carried on its own. A karabiner helps secure it to the top of the bergan or Daysack and minimises free movement.

The Bergan is carried between AO's (Areas of Operations) it contains

luxury items such as a sleeping bag and gore-tex bivi bag (the Bivi bag is often added to Daysack) It also contains additional water, rations batteries for radios etc.

OTHER ITEMS CARRIED

The following items are also carried, some due to articles on the [Duty Roster](#).

- 1. Notebook and penholder, also contains protractor for Map reading, carried in trouser pocket.**
- 2. Sibar Spotting Scope, 20 -50, note cam draped over front cover tripod as well.**
- 3. 7 x 50 Bressner Binoculars, good quality lenses from Germany, compass built in but is in degrees (We use mils). Also note green tape around bino's to camouflage, this is the same method used on our rifles. Also note the face veil covering on the lenses.**
- 4. Mini-bino's now often left behind since I purchased the Spotting Scope, I personally will always use a scope over Binos when searching for Enemy O.P's on a Stalk.**
- 5. Ortlieb Map Case, excellent waterproof case, saves on fablon and preparation time.**
- 6. Spare watch and button compass. I carry a spare watch (timings are often crucial, don't chance it) the wrist compass is good for quick direction checking during Stalks or Navigation.**



7. **Angled shooting cosine indicator, purchased after browsing the web, has yet to use it but believe it has potential.**
8. **Stereoscope for use with Air photographs, shows relief and intervisability.**
9. **TRGT Data log, again noted this on the site and have just started using it, fine piece of work very valuable information inside.**
10. **Survival tin, Matches, cotton wool, Fuel tablets (Hexi) Wire saw, condom, needles, blades, button compass, Vitamin tablets and painkillers. Something for Fire, Water, cutting and direction finding. Combat survival is not about fishing it's about avoiding detection and making your way back to friendly forces. This is carried on body for dire situations.**
11. **Building recognition codes, color code system for Planes, trains and buildings to aid indication when carrying out a coordinated shoot or logging and reporting.**
12. **Gloves, worn when sniping, help conceal hands, enhances Ghillie effect. I'm a bad boy I use a black one on my firing hand!**
13. **Mil-dot Master, another item purchased due to the site, need I say more!**
14. **Slope doper, yet another site responsibility, like I said earlier I want every possible advantage available when taking the shot, My Life May depend on it.**
15. **Not shown, Shemagh, Arab scarf type headdress. This is used (Two sewn together, to make thicker) to cover head at night when carrying out map check, hides the use of white light.**

16. Not shown, Improvised tripod, made in theatre, as seen on pictures in the [Basic Cadre](#) article.

CONCLUSION

Remember this is what I carry as SOP; add to this Ammunition, Radios and weapons and you still arrive at a considerable load. However when deployed forward I sometimes only take the webbing gear. When I was at the Sniper school we used to teach the carrying of all sorts of kit. This was based on the SAS instructor's recommendations. I now understand these guys have back up the normal green Army just don't get. Its not that they were wrong it's just that they operate different to us. We get what we're given and need great flexibility to deal with conventional type warfare tasks. They taught what they know failing to note the difference in tasks.

The point being, this is what I carry, it works for me, I know I've spent years trying to discover what best suits my needs. The article is meant to be an insight, maybe it will give you some ideas, maybe it won't, but hey you just don't know until you try!

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