



GREAT BRITISH CAMOUFLAGE

We've seen PenCott camo patterns in these pages before, and this month Lawrence Holsworth tells us about the British company behind them

Hydre Definition was founded in 2008 by Dominic Hyde. Today it is the only British company designing camouflage patterns that operates internationally.

Besides the successful PenCott family of patterns, Dominic has designed more than 2,000 camouflage patterns for clothing and gear, vehicles, aircraft, watercraft, buildings and structures.

The PenCott family includes GreenZone for verdant terrain, Badlands for semi-arid terrain, Sandstorm for arid terrain, and Snowdrift for snowy landscapes. A pattern for operations in low-light urban terrain called Metropolis is also in the pipeline.

PenCott patterns are now in use with a growing number of police tactical teams, military special operations forces and civilian enthusiasts.

The original PenCott pattern for verdant terrain, GreenZone, was first trial-launched on a very limited scale in the UK in late 2009. It wasn't until summer 2010, however, that the company found Duro Industries, a fabric printer that could help take the PenCott family of camouflage patterns to full-scale production across a wide range of clothing and gear fabrics (including both civilian and military-spec fabrics). All of the PenCott patterns are printed at Duro's facilities in Fall River, Massachusetts.

Early days

PenCott is named after two influential WWII British camouflage experts, Sir Roland Penrose and Hugh Cott. Penrose and Cott differed radically in their approach toward camouflage; Penrose, an artist, used his training and design talents to produce 'artistic' camouflage schemes through a process of trial and error. Cott, on the other hand, felt that camouflage was essentially a scientific process, and effective schemes could be developed without the need for artistic training by studying examples of camouflage in nature.

Camouflage prevents the observer detecting or recognising the wearer – and a



split-second reduction in detection can quite literally mean the difference between life and death. Hyde Definition aims to provide the most effective multi-environment camouflage schemes possible.

Back in 2005 Dominic reached the conclusion that there were serious problems with existing camouflage patterns:

- Woodland camouflage schemes were too dark for all other types of terrain or environments (and even many woodland environments)

- Desert camouflage schemes are often just a hastily recoloured version of a woodland scheme, and often a sub-standard match for many types of desert

- Universal and 'all-terrain' camouflage schemes are often such a compromise that they are ineffective in many environments

- Mismatched patterns on clothing and individual equipment

- Many new 'pixelated' camouflage patterns are simply following a fashion trend and not well-researched or terrain-matched

Dominic set about re-examining the problem with an innovative design, rather than an imitative approach. Hyde Definition looked at the challenges of concealment from many different angles: natural camouflage of living creatures, recent design and market trends, and a look back at effective historical patterns to identify key elements that work particularly well.

Painstaking process

The PenCott pattern went through several hundred iterations, trialling more than two dozen samples in natural environments.





The PenCott Snowdrift pattern in action



Creating an entirely new and effective concealment pattern from scratch was a painstaking task.

What came out of this entirely independent and self-funded research was a ground-breaking, natural-looking, hybrid digital pattern.

It uses a complex mixture of blending and disrupting techniques to more effectively conceal the wearer. The resulting PenCott Multi-Environment Camouflage pattern family shares common fractal-based, multi-scalar pattern geometry with separate, colour-optimised environmental variations.

The benefits of PenCott can be simply stated as:

- It conceals more effectively at all typical engagement distances
- It conceals more effectively at much closer distances than other patterns
- It conceals more effectively in multiple environments and terrains
- It looks far more 'natural' than other pixilated digital patterns

PenCott patterns have been tested and proven by users in the UK, US, Canada, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and New Zealand. They are in use with a growing number of special law enforcement teams in Europe, the Americas and Asia. It has even been reported that some US and Coalition Special Forces units have been using the Badlands variant in Afghanistan. ■

WHERE TO GET IT

There are now many manufacturers of tactical clothing and kit that have added PenCott to their range. Many of these manufacturers deal direct with special operations forces so their choice of the PenCott patterns makes a statement in itself.

You can find a list of gear and clothing makers and retailers specialising in PenCott on the Hyde Definition website. *Airsoft Action* can personally recommend SpecOpShop (www.specopshop.com), which supplied kit in PenCott Greenzone pattern for our British Shooting Show competition earlier this year. **VISIT:** www.hydedefinition.com