

Wayward Warriors - Organic Camouflage

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Organic Camouflage

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Experiment Conducted:

As some of you may know, you have to complete a four-year degree to be eligible for TSAROTC. Well, mine was biology. I'm serious, damn it. Anyway, if there's one thing I learned from my college major, it's that many of nature's finest rely on camouflage for survival. This idea formed the basis of the SCUAF (Self-Concealment Under Alien Foliage) project. Dr. Jackson originally scoffed at the idea, but in time I convinced him that the TSA marines defiantly needed a way to mask themselves during combat.

I commissioned Rhoads and Comprox as fellow staff for this committee, and, despite fierce protests, got them to agree to help me design and test this organic camouflage. However, if I didn't know better, I'd think the TSA was incompetent. When I approached Corporal McDougal, he looked at me with that same idiotic look he gives all of us when we suggest an experiment.

Then he said, "Well, uh, we don't really worry about capturing alien structures, Rob…"

After a bit of prodding, and promising to write his essay for application an upgrade to Sergeant, I finally coerced him to recover at least a medium sized piece of alien flora to study. Come to think of it, I don't know why McDougal wants a promotion, that would move him from the PR division to the frontlines, I believe. Anyway, a few weeks later, a squad of marines carried in a chest high tree stump with four spiked plates at its top.

They slammed it on the table and grunted at me, "Here you are, bud."

The alien tree quivered, prompting on of the marines to shoot it ferociously with his pistol, "God damn thing just keeps trying to grow back. We shoulda blew it up when we had a 'nade spammer!"

McDougal thanked the kind gentlemen and walked out of the room. A short while later, I heard roaring laughter. That McDougal sure is good at calming people down.

With my specimen secured, I called in Rhoads and Comprox. We sprayed the tree down with formaldehyde and hollowed it, then cut a slit out of one side to allow the wearer to maneuver. With that complete, it was time to test it. Results:

Before we boarded the dropship, McDougal handed me a form to sign. This took me by surprise, and I told him in a firm voice that I had not taken any controlled substances in the last twenty-four hours. He squinted at me and backed off, saying it was only for TSA records. Knowing I'd won the battle, I signed it, not even taking care to read. I only got a few words, something along the lines of "the TSA is not responsible for any personal injury that results from these tests…" etc etc, blah blah blah. I had better things to do than read shallow drug test forms.

Much to my dismay, we returned to almost the exact spot of Rhoads' previous experiment. This time, however, I got to sit on the perch while Rhoads donned our prototype camouflage. Comprox had the only weapon, Rhoads' BAW (Badass Alien Whomper), and only because Rhoads couldn't fit it into his jacket.

First alien contact was made by a Gorge, which ran up to the fake tree and stared at it for a long second. Then, it promptly regurgitated it's lunch onto Rhoads' covering and began to emit some sort of spray from its mouth. Rhoads screamed obscenity and moved back several paces. The Gorge, shocked, squealed and ran away.

Next, a fully-grown Skulk approached Rhoads. It cocked its head sideways and shot a short spine at the tree. Rhoads screamed in pain and stood up, running towards the Skulk, which fell over. After a brief examination, Rhoads asked if Skulks could have heart attacks. I told him to reset himself.

Finally, a Fade entered the room and searched it. It was especially interested in Rhoads, but made no hostile gesture. As it stumbled around, it fell through a drainage grate in the floor, sustaining extreme pain. Some time later, it resurfaced and stood directly in front of Rhoads. Then, it pushed the tree a few feet forward, and then swiped it. The whole show

made me think of a teenager trying to get a vending machine to materialize his soda. The Fade continued its assault until it had removed Rhoads' cover. At that point it yelped in surprise and stepped backward, giving Comprox enough time to put it down with BAW.

My findings defiantly show the potential of such a project if it were to be continued. However, it may fair better with a different choice of alien structure, as the aliens seem to be attracted to our first attempt.