“Concerned American” over at WRSA has asked me numerous times to post something about the upgraded suspension system available for the older PASGT kevlar helmet, which are generally still available on the surplus market. The reason he wanted me to do this is simple. Most people into preparedness (especially if you’ve done it for a while) probably already bought a PASGT helmet a while back, and it just makes sense to perform an upgrade to the suspension, rather than go buy a new ACH type (or worse, a MICH) kevlar helmet that is on the market these days.

Having started out in the type of Airborne units that usually don’t use helmets after the jump in, I didn’t use one a lot for a number of years other than on jumps and on some ranges.
Early on, certain units I was in required us to use helmets when we conducted certain types of training. When I eventually ended up in an Infantry Company, that became an "All the time" affair while in the field.
When we transitioned to the ACH (Advanced Combat Helmet) helmet, it was hard to believe that it could be that much more comfortable. The only downside I ever had with the ACH was during cold weather. The pads have a gel that has to warm up from body heat (a minute or two) before they stop feeling like rocks.

The upgrade I used on one of my old PASGT’s was from Oregon Aero, and it’s called the “BLSS Kit”. The BLSS is available on Amazon, but it’s definitely cheaper when you can get it off of Ebay.
The upgrade was done to a standard PASGT kevlar helmet with the Parachutist pad and retention straps (Bunny Ears)
This is the original suspension system. One advantage I found the PASGT had after we transitioned to the ACH was the PASGT’s ability to carry items, that could be immediately useful to a Team or Squad Leader, tucked above the suspension system.

The BLSS kit comes with instructions that are easy to understand and follow. It took me about 30 mins. to do the transition on the helmet. What I can tell you is that this system is as comfortable as the suspension system that came in my ACH helmet. I can also tell you the pads are the same as the ACH, so the cold weather “warm up” issue I mentioned above, is there with the BLSS too.

As you can see from the pics, both helmets have practically an identical suspension system now. If I had bought both helmet and BLSS off of Ebay, it would have cost me about $130. If you already have a PASGT helmet, it costs you $40 from Ebay, and your PASGT is now as comfortable as an ACH.
ACH on the left, PASGT with BLSS on the right
PASGT on left, ACH on right. I usually don’t use the cloth cover unless it’s for snow. Krylon is the paint of choice.
ACH on left, PASGT on right. Note how the parachute straps help retain the goggle strap.

ACH on left, PASGT on right. Note that the PASGT has more coverage over the ears than the ACH. The PASGT also has a short brim on the front, and the ACH does not.
If I’m going to camouflage my helmet, I will use a bit of camo netting, not a cloth cover.
I just use earth toned shock cord to keep the camo net on. If need be, I can untie the cord and lace it through the camo net.

I know there are those out there who will say, “But the ACH is level IIIA and the PASGT is only II in ballistic protection. Sure, that is absolutely correct. Here’s my question, how many of you know of or have talked to someone who was SHOT IN THE HEAD BY SOMEONE WITH A RIFLE while wearing a helmet, and if you do, did it matter what “level” it was?

Those protection levels mentioned above (level 2 and 3A) are only supposed to stop pistol rounds, but there are examples of soldiers in Grenada (when the PASGT first was fielded in
combat) being hit in the head by 7.62x39S bullets from AKs, and it stopped those bullets. Here’s the deal, helmets are designed to stop shrapnel, not bullets from rifles. If you’re lookin’ for a helmet that is guaranteed to stop a rifle round, good luck on your search. We’ll wait………….

Something else to note. Where does the Spec Ops community appear to be going in the coverage department? A lot less side coverage, that’s where. It kinda seems like it’s a diminishing returns kinda thing when you look at what the helmet is meant to do, but…it’s their skull. On another note, helmets will protect you from a lot more than just bullets and shrapnel in a real world encounter, especially if you’re in a vehicle.

When do I plan on using a helmet? First would be during Defensive Operations such as a vehicle check point or overt observation post. The second would be while moving by vehicle. Those are also the only times I’d be using my Interceptor Body Armor or my plate carrier.

I hope this was helpful. If you’ve got a PASGT helmet and you plan on using it, I’d recommend you get the BLSS for it. Is comfort important in something like a helmet? You bet it is. Just like a holster that is comfortable to wear, you are more apt to use/wear it when you need it if it’s not like putting on a “masochist special” every time you wear it.

JCD

“Parata Vivere”-Live Prepared.

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