

What does the term "Optical Brighteners" mean?

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Talking Paper on Laundry Additives known as "Optical Brighteners" and the Airman Battle Uniform Laundry instructions for the Airman Battle Uniform specify not using any laundry detergents that contain "optical brighteners." Optical Brighteners make the ABU more detectable

by night vision equipment Optical Brighteners make the ABU more visible in a low-light environment of any kind, by reflecting more of any available light Optical brighteners are chemicals that absorb the ultraviolet and violet region of colors in a fabric They "trick" the eye into seeing a brighter shade & reflect more light Near Infrared (nIR) capability of the ABU is degraded when washed with optical brighteners (see attached sample photo). Most commercial detergents contain optical brighteners. There is generally no indication on the packaging (there is no way to tell whether a product has optical brighteners alone by the labeling). Impact of optical brighteners is permanent, it cannot be "washed out." Photo shows impact to Army Combat Uniform fabric. ABU would be similar. LAUNDRY DETERGENT BRANDS THAT DO NOT CONTAIN OPTICAL BRIGHTENERS (OKAY FOR USE WITH AIRMAN BATTLE UNIFORM)

Cheer (liquid and powder)
Cheer Free Exchange Select Cold Water WashAll Detergent Free Clear
Country Save Liquid Detergent
Allens Laundry detergent (power and liquid)
Bi-O-Kleen Laundry Detergent (powder and liquid)
Charlie's Soap (powder and liquid)
ECOS Free and Clear Laundry Detergent
Mountain Green Liquid Laundry Detergent
Nature Clean (liquid and powder)
Oxy-Prime Powder
Planet Ultra (liquid and powder)
Seventh Generation Laundry detergents
Sportwash
Sun and Earth Liquid
Surf Powder (not Surf Liquid)
Washeze
Woolite, original and dark