



Randolph Sunglasses Product Review

KiwiFlyer's Editor has been test flying a pair of Randolph Raptor sunglasses for nearly two months now and it's fair to say that I like them a lot. And that I'm keeping them! Subscribers need not suddenly worry though, as we still have two more pairs to give away to lucky winners.

Impressions

The experience starts when you open the box. As expected, you will find your sunglasses and a hard case to keep them in. Also included is an "Equipment Maintenance Kit" consisting of 4 spare screws, 2 spare nose pads and a tiny keyring screwdriver. It's a nice touch.

On to the sunglasses themselves. They are beautifully made. The solder joints have a lifetime warranty and the mineral glass lenses don't distort colours or images. It may not be intentional, but the Raptors nose bridge is a one piece bar that has been shaped in such a way that you can tweak the amount of 'wrap around' effect the sunglasses have. I adjusted mine slightly for a closer fit. It also means that anyone who accidentally bends their sunglasses will have a good chance of straightening them again without any damage. My pair have the traditional 'skull' temple type arms (the bits over your ears) and these are sprung (with dual action hinges) from the lens frames so that they always have just the right amount of compression against your head to hold them comfortably in place.

A variety of lenses are offered and mine have the most popular

AGX grey/green versions. These have a very slight green tint compared to the neutral grey version, though it's hard to notice it. The advantage is that the AGX lenses filter 100% of harmful UV light whereas the neutral grey lenses (which reduce light intensity without shifting colours at all) filter 98%. I found that I could comfortably wear them at the end of the day and in twilight without losing visibility and they also offered enough light reduction to have relaxed eyes and avoid squinting in all but the brightest sunlight. In terms of comfort, the Raptors can be worn all day without a seconds thought. They are very comfortable to wear under headsets or with helmets, as the temple arms have a very flat and smooth profile.

My positive impressions would have to be an expected result, given that Randolph sunglasses are already the choice of the USAF, RNZAF and many other military organisations worldwide. Pricing is of course subject to the USD exchange rate but at the time of printing, a pair of Raptors could be purchased from the Randolph website for NZ\$249. They are fine value for money at this price and beyond.



Specifications and Options

Randolph mineral lenses are the most scratch resistant lens material available. Tints are a consistent density and will not fade. The glass has zero distortion and is chemically tempered and impact resistant to ANSI Z-803 standards.

Lenses are available in neutral grey (standard military issue) which offers light intensity reduction without shifting colours. They are ideal for flying, driving and all round general use. Grey/green AGX lenses are an option for those who are more glare sensitive. High contrast tan lenses are perfect for bright overcast days or hazy conditions. This lens absorbs blue light and is perfect for winter conditions, glider pilots, skiers and driving in hazy conditions.

Temple type selections include bayonet (straight), skull (slightly curved, traditional) and cable (fully rounded).

Six different frame styles are offered and several styles are available with black, silver or gold frames. See the examples here or view the Randolph website for more details.

What to look for

There are several important factors for pilots to consider in their choice of sunglasses.

Don't get polarised lenses. Polarisation of the cockpit or instrument panel can cause dangerous visual black patches for a pilot who is also wearing polarised lenses.

Photochromic lenses which darken with increased UV light aren't cockpit friendly either as polycarbonate aircraft canopies shield many of the UV rays and can interfere with proper darkening of the lenses.

Look for temple fittings that will be comfortable to wear under headsets or helmets. And if purchasing for practical more than cosmetic purposes, look for larger lenses to offer as much light protection as possible.

If you've looked at the Randolph advertising in the past and wondered about getting yourself a pair, then don't hesitate any longer. You won't be disappointed.

simply superior!

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