

BOOT CRITTERS

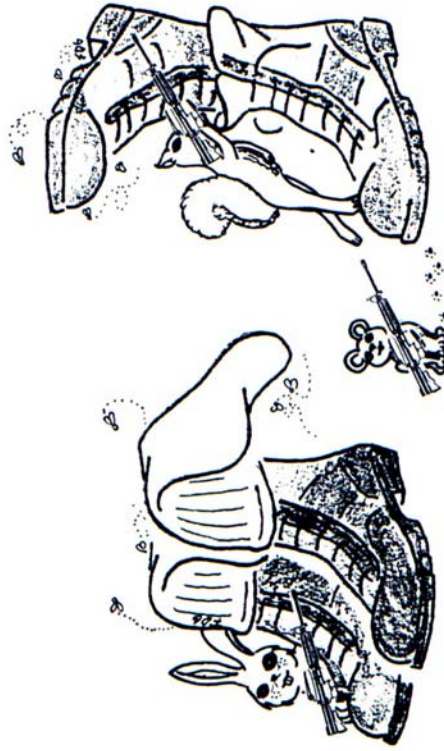
Submitted By: Sgt. Charles Robinson

Dear Ranger Rick,

"Back in my old jungle days," Sgt. Charles Robinson writes. "Before we went to bed at night we use to roll up our socks and place them inside our boots to keep the little night critters out. And it worked pretty well too, but it wasn't always 100% anti-critter proof."

Then one day while out in the field with my unit, I saw a PFC Jessica Cuckler take a pair of socks and place them over the tops of her boots. She said she learned this trick back in A.I.T., it not only kept out the critters, but it helped air and dry out the socks too.

RANGER RICK'S COMMENTS: Another technique in keeping those pesky flying and crawling little critters out of your boots at night, is to spray some insect repellent inside of them. Or, tie the tops of your boots closed or place one boot inside/over the top of the other.

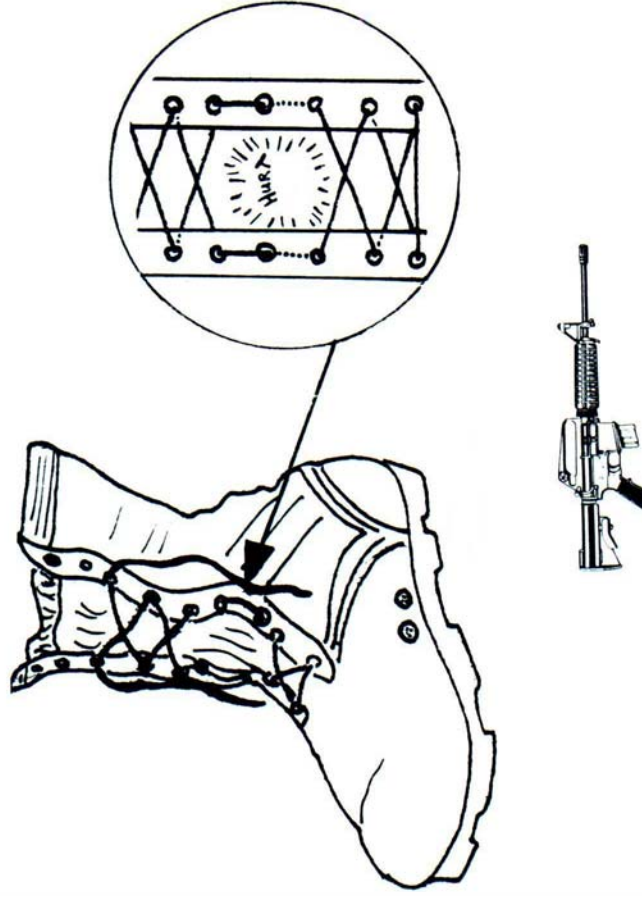


FIELD BOOT LACING

Submitted by: Devin A. Gillis

Do you have problems with your field boots hurting where the laces cross? Particularly in the center portion just below the fourth hole? Well, why not do as Devin A. Gillis does, don't cross that area with the laces, go on to the next set of holes.

Lace your boots as you would normally from the bottom up. When you get to the set of holes where it hurts, don't cross 'em. Just go to the next set of holes and then continue your crisscross lacing. If this isn't the part that bothers you, try another set of holes.





FIELD EXPEDIENT BOOT DRYING



Wet boots can be a pain in the ass, and especially cold "wet" boots in a cold winter environment. Most of us field grunts know how valuable our feet are and how badly we depend on our dry warm feet to get us to where we need to go. For some, their brains are located there and when that brain gets cold - that's it baby, close up shop and quit!

It's almost always impossible to dry boots without a campfire or a hot running vehicle. Trench foot will surely set in if immediate care is not taken. If you are a light infantry grunt soldier, you know you can't afford to carry the extra weight such as a second pair of leather combat boots. But it could benefit you to carry and use a pair of rubber overshoes. Carrying a set of old tennis shoes with those overshoes will give you a perfect set of dry footwear (mentioned earlier in this book). Don't knock it until you've tried it.

Now that you're wearing wet boots and decided it's time you tried to dry them out, you need to prepare several things. You will need a small camp fire (or some heat source) and approximately two narrow 12 inch strips of cardboard. The cardboard from a MRE box will do fine. Trim along the cardboard edges so they are frail all around. Cutting with a sharp knife will do the job.

Next, ensure that all the laces are removed and the top portions of the boots are rolled down as far as they will go. Take those strips of cardboard and place them inside the boots until it touches the inside portion of the toes. Making sure the other end of the cardboard reaches the outside of the boots, bend it if you have to, but don't tear it. Now all you have to do is set the boots near a fire (not *too* close) and wait.

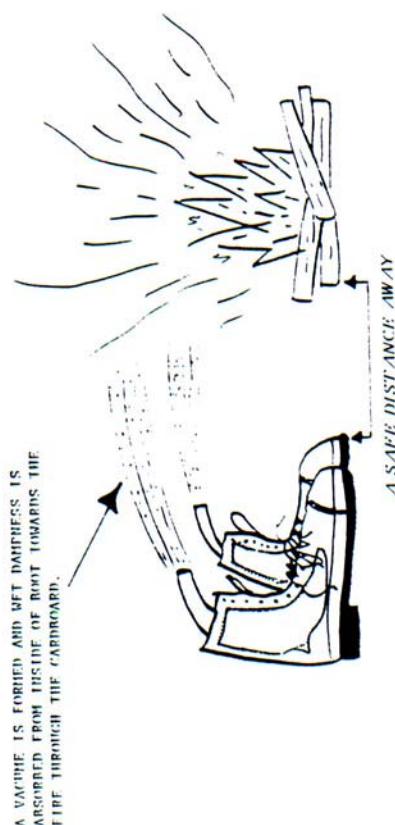
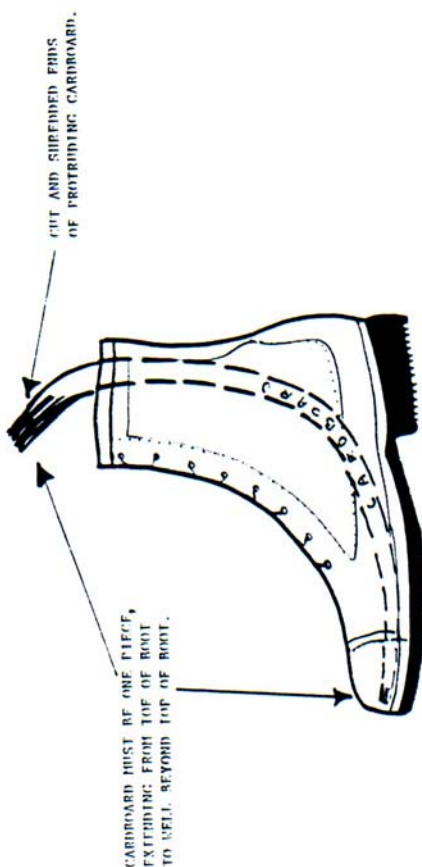
What this does is form a vacuum that absorbs the dampness through the cardboard to the heat source or fire. This method won't dry the boots in minutes, but it will dry the inside of the boots a lot faster than if you didn't try it at all.

While your drying out your boots, you might as well dry out your socks along side of them. Cut out a few more narrow strips of cardboard and insert them inside the socks so they are stretched out a bit. And very carefully place them near the fire, *but* don't make the mistake most troops make while drying out those boots and socks. If you stick them too near the fire, you will over-dry portions of the boots and socks causing damage to the material. The results will be socks disintegrating and ripping apart as you put them on, and the boots stitching coming apart at the sewn seams as you are walking.

Even though you may be in a hurry to dry out those boots and socks, putting



them too close to the fire will not dry them correctly without causing immediate damage. It takes time and a little bit of patience to dry those boots and socks correctly.



Blisters LET'S GO ON!

BOOT WEAR & CARE



The main transportation system of a field soldier is his feet. It is critically important that you take proper care of your feet or you may find yourself laid up in a hospital. Follow these simple tips and you will survive any field exercise or road march.

NEW BOOTS: Never break in new boots in the field or on a road march. Wear only broken-in boots to the field or on any foot movement. New boots need to be broken-in when you are in a garrison environment.

CUSHIONS: Add sole cushions to the inside of the boot to make walking a bit more comfortable. There will be less of a chance of you getting blisters on those tender places on the bottoms of your feet if you add a cushion.

FOOT POWDER: Always add foot powder to your feet prior to starting a move, on breaks, and after a foot movement is over.

LACING: Tie your boots comfortably - too tight and your blood circulation will be cut off, too loose and you will experience unnecessary blistering.

WET SOCKS: During breaks in fast movements, change those socks if they are damp with sweat. By changing sweaty socks you will reduce the chance of getting swollen feet and blisters.

COOLING: When possible, cool your feet in water during breaks and after foot marches. This will keep feet from swelling. If water is not available, elevate your feet higher than the rest of your body. This will reduce foot swelling by keeping the blood pressure from building up in those sore spots.

SERVICEABLE SOCKS: Always wear clean, serviceable socks when on foot movements. Worn parts of socks or holes in socks serve as no cushion against boot leather. In a short time, worn socks will cause pain and blisters.

FIRST AID: Never 'put off' or delay in taking care of hurting feet. The longer it's prolonged the worse it will become. **TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION!**

Take a little time to prepare and care for your feet and you will be surprised at how well they hold up (and hold you up!)



KNOTS OF THINGS

Submitted By David H. Mele

Hey Ranger Rick...

Everyone in the military knows you have to keep your boot laces from being shown, so here's a tip on how to keep them more easily hidden.



Stop when you get to the top of the boot....



Pull tight & bring the ends back thru the holes....

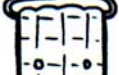
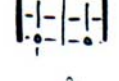
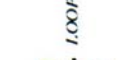


Then tuck lace ends down nice and neat inside boot itself.

Got a problem keeping your boot laces even?? Take your boot laces and just tie a simple knot in the center and then lace them back up. This will not only keep your laces nice and even, but it will also prevent them from coming out should you have to untie your boots all the way down to the last few holes.



Did you ever get issued one of those old LBE web belts? You know, the ones with the metal links? Well, a simple modification that you can easily add to it, is a piece of 550 parachute cord. (See below.) This will not only stop the metal links from making clicking sounds, but it will also enable you to adjust the web belt more easily without having to take it entirely off. Not to mention easier on your waist when you have to crouch low or bend over something.



"By the way....That knot you described on page 41 of your Ranger Digest IV Handbook, it's called a "Chimney Knot." I'm a professional Fire Fighter and also an instructor at the Fire Academy, and this is one of the knots that we teach our new recruits."



TENNIS SHOES & OVERSHOES

One of the simplest ways to save and rest your "dog tired" feet in the field is to remove your heavy combat boots. The way to keep them rested until the next day is to put on something light and soft. The tennis shoe is an ideal field foot gear to use after a long, hard road march. It can be used as a "field slipper". Tennis shoes are small, lightweight and will save your feet a lot of unnecessary pain.

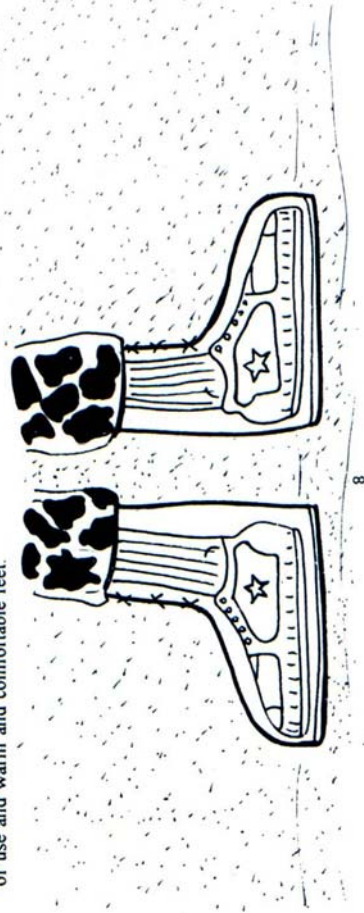
The overshoes should be worn over your tennis shoes when your chain of command or supervisor will not let you wear just the tennis shoes. By putting the overshoes on top of the tennis shoes you will be in uniform and hide that little bit of civilian equipment that you are unauthorized to display.

If you wear the tennis shoes and the overshoes together during rainy weather conditions, you will not only find it easier to walk around in, but a lot quieter for walking over the terrain. It will also save your feet and boots from being bruised up by rain water getting absorbed in the leather. It is better to carry dry boots in the rain and have them ready for wear later, than to wear wet boots in the rain and wet boots after the rain.

Another excellent reason for wearing tennis shoes and overshoes is cold weather. Two pair of socks worn with the tennis shoes and overshoes, and what you have is an excellent "cold weather insulated boot". Your feet will stay warm and toasty as long as you do not tie the laces too tight and walk long distances. They should be used only for standing around and short distance walks. If you have to walk long distances, you should remove one pair of socks and unbutton a few links on the overshoes. This will allow moisture and air to escape and not build up condensation inside, which will produce sweat.

The sweat inside the foot gear is what causes body temperature to lower during non-movements. The sweat cools the skin making the feet cold which in turn stop it from releasing body heat. Keeping damp or wet socks on will definitely cool the feet.

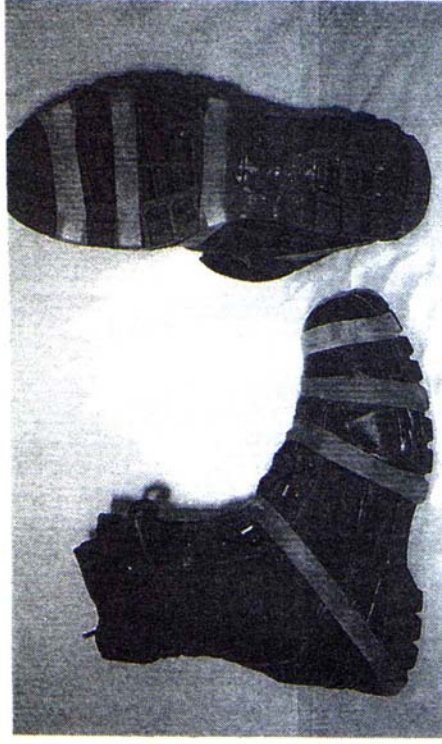
With the tennis shoe and overshoe method, all you need to do is dry the inside of the overshoe with a cloth and put on a dry pair of socks. And you will be satisfied with many hours of use and warm and comfortable feet.



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YEP, ANOTHER RANGER BAND USE

Oh mama, mama, mama. Am I on the roll or what when it comes to Ranger Band uses? Check this out....



I discovered this technique by accident when I went to a ski resort here in Italy and slipped and fell on some ice while wearing my ol' military combat boots. So I had a couple of these Ranger Bands in my pocket (because I use 'em to attach my skis together) and slid them over the bottom of my boots. And guess what? Yep, they worked, I didn't slip or fall on my ass anymore.

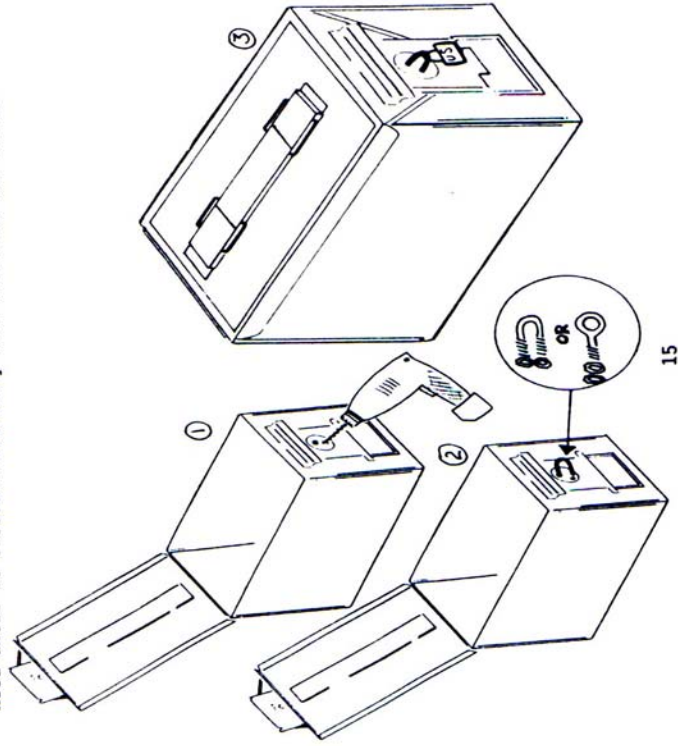
But, but, but, be advised this technique is good only for short walking distances on "solid ice" and or "snow & ice." Because if you wear 'em over your boots on a hardball or dirt road where there's some "exposed" rocks or small pebbles. They'll create holes in the (rubber) Ranger Bands and cause 'em to split & rip apart. So if you use this technique, use 'em only for short walking distances, and when you get off the ice - take 'em off. Hooah!

SECURITY CONTAINER

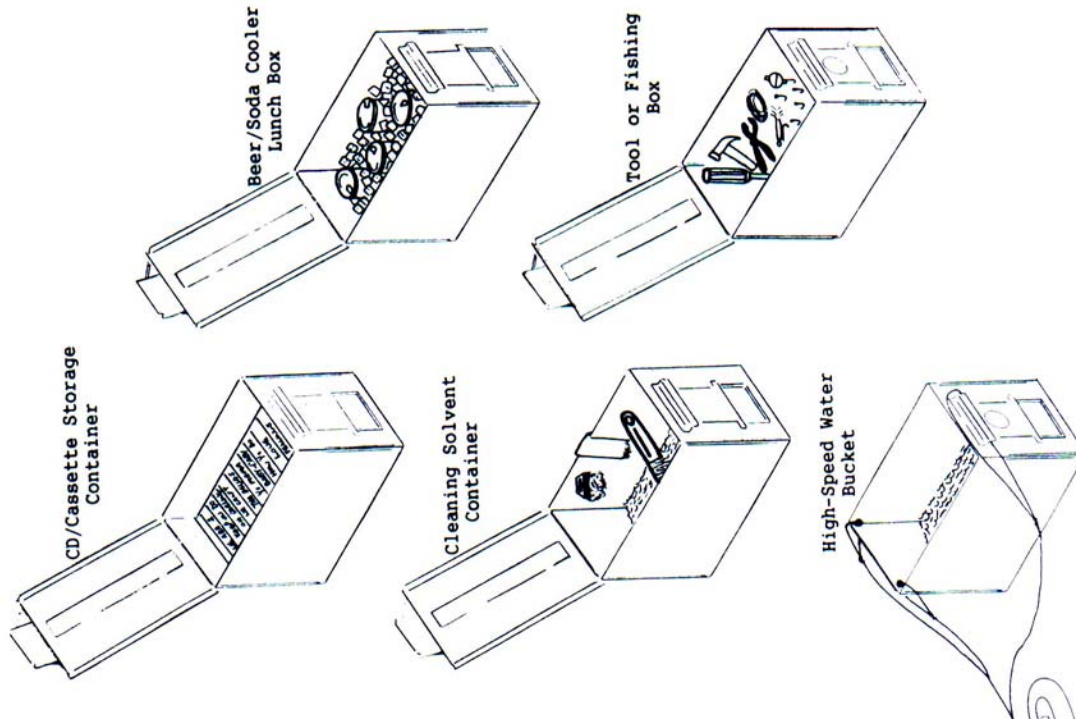
Now before you can convert it into a security container, you will need to get yourself one of those "loop bolts" with 2-3 nuts and two washers. Measure the "loop" portion of the bolt to the hole that is already in the ammo can latch (see drawing) to make sure it will fit through and over it, which it probably won't. No problem, just take a hammer and whack the "loop" a couple of times to make it narrower so it'll fit through the hole.

IMPORTANT: Before whacking and making the loop narrower, place your lock through it so you won't make it too narrower that your lock won't fit inside of it.

Then take your drill and make a hole directly in the center of this latch hole and place the loop bolt inside and fasten it in place with the nuts and washers and then test it out. If it doesn't close snugly, just bend the loop bolt whichever way you need until it closes comfortably over the ammo can latch.



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AMMO CAN FIELD STOVES, HEATERS, & B-B-Qs

One of my favorites and mother-of-all-uses, is the "Mini BBQ / Field Stove Ammo Can," or the Infantryman's Poor Man Field Stove.

I came up with this idea after reading about a company buying a bunch of old 20mm Ammo Cans, converting 'em into portable field stoves and selling 'em at a real expensive price.

To modify and convert a 5.56 ammo can into a Mini BBQ / Field Stove, all you need is a drill, a small drill bit, pliers, wire cutters, a pencil, ruler, and five (5) "wire" coat hangers.

Take your pencil and ruler and make two straight lines along the two wide sides of the ammo can about 2 and 4 inches below the top edge. Then measure and make a small visible mark about every 2 1/2 inches along these lines on both sides of the can. Then take your drill and make a series of holes where you've made these marks.

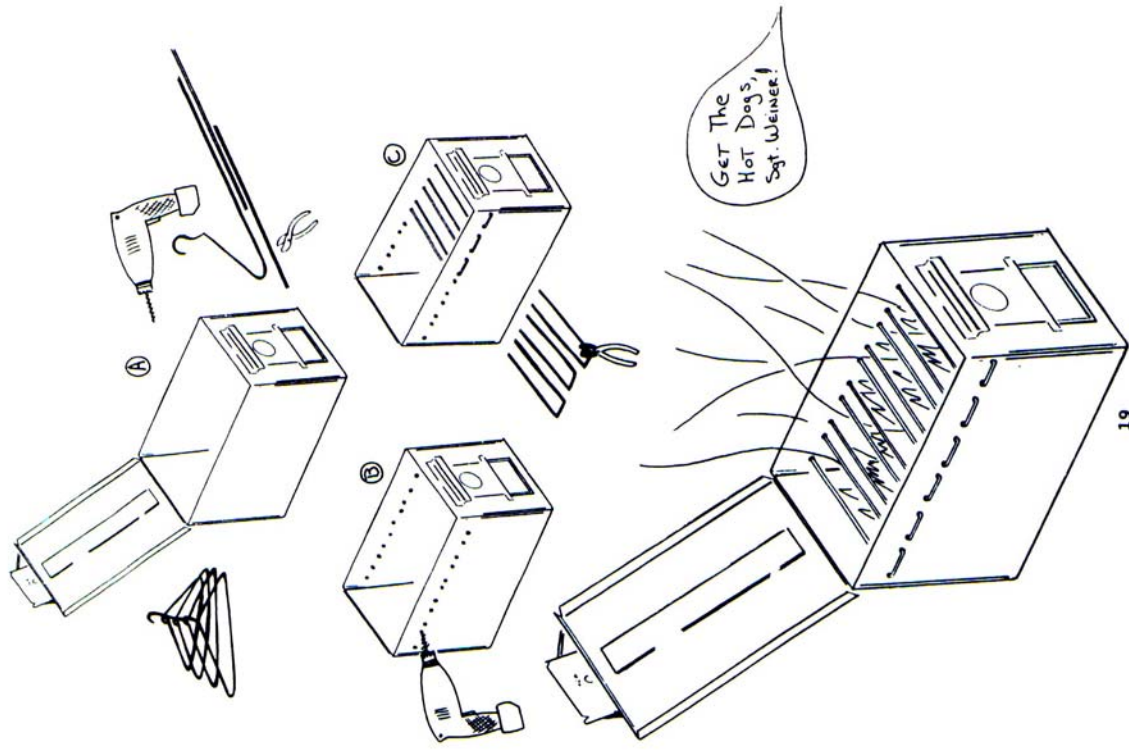
IMPORTANT: As you're drilling the holes, try to make them as straight and parallel with one another as you possibly can so you can easily insert & remove the coat hanger wires (when they're cut, bent, & shaped) from the side of the can.

Now take your wire cutters and snip off all the "hooks" from the coat hangers and straighten 'em all out the best you can with a pair of pliers. Then take one of the wires and run one end through both of the holes (across from each other) in the ammo can and bend the wire over to the next hole beside it.

Place a mark on the wire where it touches the next hole and remove it. Where you've made this mark, now bend the wire over and make it the same length as the other side of the wire. Now test it out for size by inserting it in "all" the holes in the ammo can.

Continue making these rectangle shaped wires until you have filled up all the holes in the ammo can. If they fail to slide easily in & out, then you screwed up (Bozo) and either didn't bend the wires correctly, or the holes were not drilled evenly spaced apart and or straight across from one another. (Dummy!)

When you have finished measuring, cutting, and bending the wires, bend slightly up or down only the tips/ends of these wires so they'll stay firmly in place without moving and sliding around. Now all ya gotta do is get some wood, charcoal, paper, etc and you're ready to do some serious cooking.

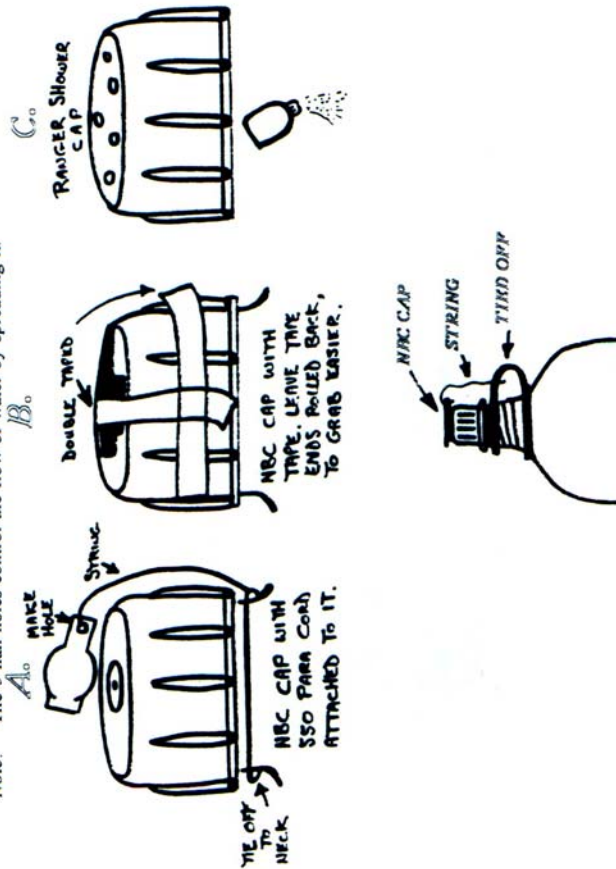


CANTEEN CAP TIPS

Here's a few tips you may want to try out with your NBC or regular canteen caps.

- If your NBC cap keeps coming unsnapped or off, cut the connecting plastic stem off from the NBC cap top itself. Smooth the edges, drill or melt a hole through the NBC cap top and canteen cap retainer. Slide a small piece of 550 parachute cord through both holes, cut and then melt the ends of the parachute cord. If the hole is too big, tie a knot at each of the running ends. This will prevent future losses or unsnapping the next time you go to the field.
- If you don't want to go through all this trouble, take a short piece of 100 OD green MPH tape and tape the NBC cap top down.
- Have you ever heard of a Ranger Bath? It's where you grab a bucket or container of water no matter what the temperature is and wash yourself. Well, if you ever get a hold of an extra canteen cap, try drilling or melting about 5 nail holes in it and use it for a 'canteen shower' when nothing else is available.

Note: The 5 nail holes control the flow of water by spreading it.



CANTEEN MODIFICATIONS

Submitted By: SGT KEITH WINDHAM

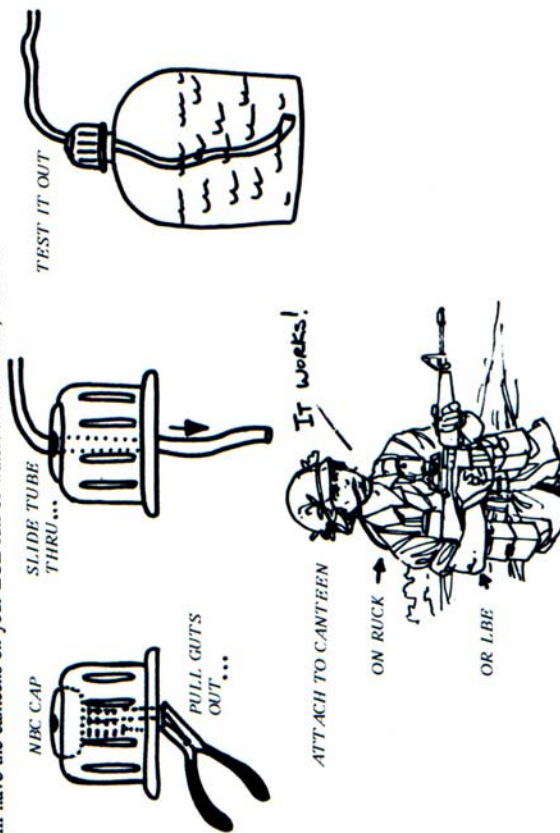
Now I've been getting a lot of mail lately about a canteen that is worn on the ruck (or LBE) and has a drinking tube connected to it. And thanks to Sgt Windham, he's told me how it's done. So for those of you have written to me asking how it's done, here's how you do it.

Get hold of an extra NBC CANTEEN CAP from your friendly NBC NCO. Grab a pair of needle nose pliers or a screwdriver, and tear the "guts" out of the cap. Make sure you don't damage the rubber seal portion of the cap.

Find (or buy) a small narrow thin tube that will fit snugly inside the hole of the NBC cap, such as a clean IV tube or an aquarium filter hose. Place the tube inside the hole of the NBC cap, pull it through giving it plenty of slack. Fill the canteen full of water, place the tube inside of it and screw the cap back onto the canteen. Now test it out, it should work fine.

Now you can walk, talk, suck and drink all at the same time without ever having to remove the canteen(s) from the pouch, except to fill it, of course. Works best with a 2 quart canteen attached to your rucksack.

NOTE: According to the con.bat experienced Viet Nam vets (LRRPS, Rangers and Special Forces soldiers), always drink the canteen water from your rucksack first. Because; (A) it will lighten the load of the ruck, and (B) if you ever have to ditch your ruck in an emergency, you still have the canteens on your LCE full of water. Makes sense, don't it.



CANTEEN CUP TIPS

One of the worst things that I hated to clean for an inspection was my damn F---en canteen cup. "Who in the hell gives a shit if it's clean and shining or not, I'm the only one drinking from the damn thing, right? So if it's not clean... then I'll suffer the consequences with the G.I. Shits, right?"

That was my ol' response that I would give to my squad leader when he didn't like the way I cleaned my canteen cup for an upcoming IG inspection. Yep, Private Tachorne (me, Ranger Rick) was not a very popular soldier in his young, dumb, and naive years in the Army.

So to get my damn squad leader off my ass, I just bought me another canteen cup and used it strictly for inspections. Come to think of it, I bought a complete set of everything just for inspections, that's why I kept re-enlisting. I figured if I already invested this much money in the Army, I'd may as well stay in for the long haul.

Now where was I? Oh yea.... the canteen cup. Most young troopers and some ol' die hard leaders still prefer to use their canteen cups for everything. From cooking their meals, heating up coffee to digging "cat holes." They simply take out their cup, dump in their food or coffee and heat it up over a fire. The ol' cup gets burnt on the outside and filthy on the inside (Yum-Yum!).

To clean a canteen cup in the field "Grunt Style," just dump in some dirt or sand, add a little water, mix and rinse. To see if you cleaned your cup correctly, just wait until the next time you use it. If you can eat or drink from it without getting the G.I. Shits - then it's clean. And if you believe this, boy are you a dumb shit.

Seriously speakin....if you want to keep your canteen cup clean in the field;

A. Try carrying a few feet of aluminum foil folded neatly between your canteen and canteen pouch. So when your ready to use the ol' cup, wrap some aluminum foil around the bottom portion first before placing it over a flame. The aluminum foil will absorb the heat and become discolored and NOT the canteen cup itself.

B. Only use your canteen cup strictly for heating water, never dump or mix food, coffee or cocoa powder inside of it. Instead, when the water is hot, simply mix the food or beverage powder inside of a M258 NBC plastic container, coke can, or plastic MRE wrapper. Plastic is much easier to clean than metal.

By using what you have available in the field, it will not only reduce getting your canteen cup dirty, but it will also reduce your chances of catching the shits.



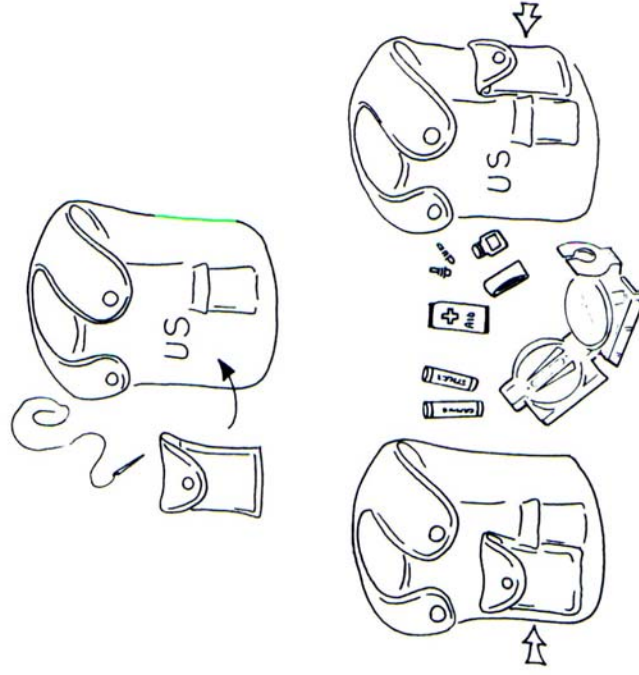
FIRST AID POUCH TIP OR TRICK

Submitted By: PFC Ben Donaldson

Don't have enough pockets to store all your nice-to-have little goodies? Then buy yourself a couple of extra first aid/compass pouches and sew 'em to the side of your canteen covers.

What can ya store in 'em? Extra s--- like first aid dressings, water purification tabs, camouflage sticks, ear plugs, compact emergency space blanket, and whatever else you can think of to carry in 'em.

NOTE: When attaching the first aid/compass pouch to the side of a canteen cover, DO NOT sew it in place along the edges. This will cause the pouch to become too flat, tight, and flush against the canteen cover and you'll lose a lot of the storage space. Instead, sew it in place along the back side where the belt clip is located





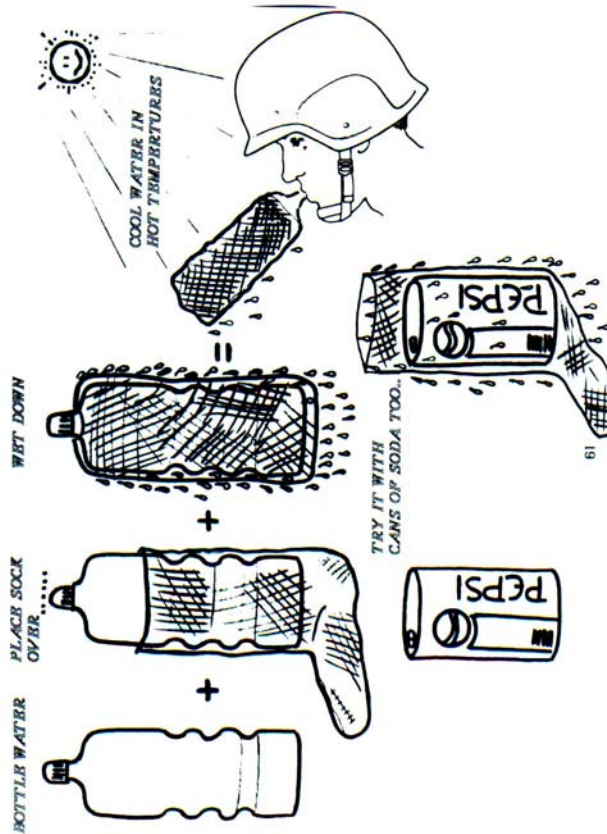
ALWAYS COOL WATER

Submitted By: Leo W. Ford III
USAF Security Police

"Hey Ranger Rick!" Here's my idea for a chilled bottle of water. This was used by myself and a few other fellow airmen in the "Storm." And it really worked well.

What you do is take a (full) plastic bottle of water, put a sock over it, tie it off around the neck with some 550 para-cord and then soak it in some water. Now you'll be able to keep your water nice and cool, at least for a few hours. Works great in a desert environment too. But remember guys.....use a clean sock and not one from your nasty laundry bag.

Ranger Rick's Comments: For those of you "Rambo Cowboys" who laugh and say "where the fuck you gonna find a plastic water bottle in the field? If you shittheads have not yet seen a water resupply mission made of cases of (civilian) plastic water bottles, what Army are you in? All my past deployments to the far away places of the world, the only water resupply I ever got (well, almost...) came in plastic water bottles. I guess the Army is DXing the old water buffalo trailer, unless now a days it's much more cheaper and easier to purchase civilian water bottles. You tell me....



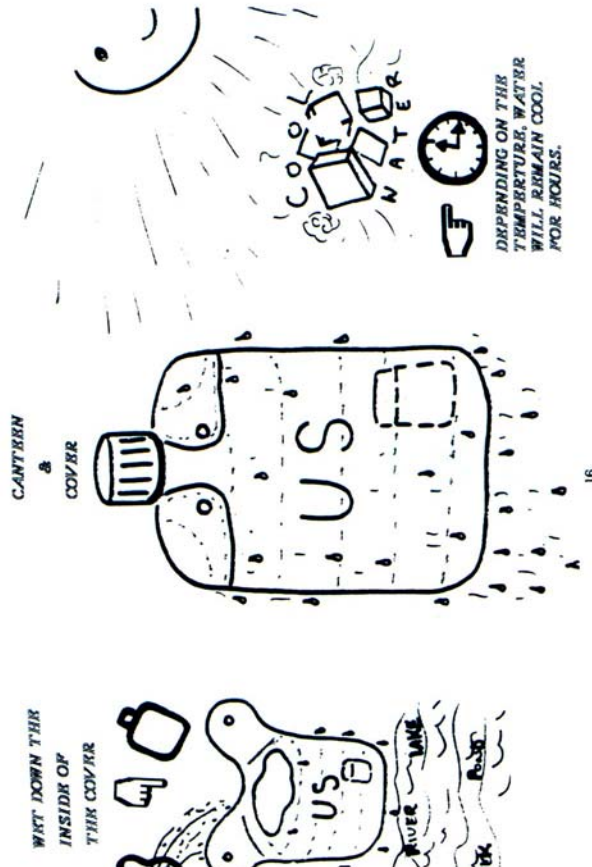
COOL CANTEEN WATER

One time back in 1979 when I was a PSG in the 1st Ranger Bn, we went on one of those month long deployments to 29 Palms, California to do desert training "Ranger-style." It was also my first time in the desert.

There was a Ranger medic named Doc Donovan who was super sharp and had his shit together. Everyone looked up to him. He was our unit's John Wayne and I mean this respectfully. He taught me a trick about how to keep canteen water cool while in the desert when you have excess water available to use.

The trick is to keep the fur lining inside the canteen cover soaked. The more soaked it is, the longer it will keep cool the water inside the canteen. Of course the length of time will depend on how hot it is outside. This tip will also work very well outside of a desert environment, such as in jungles and forests. When available, use non-drinkable water from creeks, rivers, ponds, etc. to keep the inside of the canteen cover wet.

Oh, and by the way, if anyone should ever run into Doc Donovan, tell him Ranger Rick of the AT Platoon (1st/75th Rangers) said "Hi!"



CANTEEN WATER HEATER

Yours truly, "ol'Mcgyver" has done it again. I came up with another handy-dandy idea, I call it a CANTEEN WATER HEATER.

Now I wonder who's gonna steal this idea and send it to the Department of the Army or to an Army publication and claim it was their idea. Or market and make a profit from it. To name only a few of my ideas that have been stolen from my Ranger Digests...

A. My poncho liner with a zipper - a company that makes and sells'em calls it a "D---- Liner".

B. My disposable MRE shit box - the Army Times published it in one of their editions back in 1995 and someone else took credit for it. Even though it was published in my Ranger Digest V "years before" they printed it.

C. My disposable MRE water container - as you can see from the previous page, some captain wrote an article to a military magazine claiming it was his idea. Again, even though it was published in my Ranger Digest V years before he got wind of it.

D. My BDU patrol hat with a hidden interior pocket - a company that makes and sells'em calls it a "M-- P----- BDU Cap."

These were only a few of my ideas that were stolen and taken out of my Ranger Digests. Should I be mad and sad because someone stole'em? Well, I don't mind anyone using my ideas, nor profiting from them. Provided; (a) they ask my permission to use them, or (b) they mention the source as to where they got the idea(s). And that's all I ask, "give credit where credit is due."

So now, before publishing any of my tips, tricks, & ideas in future Ranger Digests, I forward the best ones to BRIGADE QUARTERMASTER to review. And if they like any of them, I give them permission to use'em. But as to this day, I have never, ever, profited from any tips, tricks, and or ideas that my readers have sent to me, NEVER! Nor will I ever take credit or money for an idea that wasn't mine.

Fear not my fellow readers, honesty and integrity are my strongest trademarks, and I challenge anyone, ANYONE to prove differently.

OK, enough BSing around, now about my canteen water heater. What you'll need is an "aluminum cigar container," which is what special and expensive cigars come in. A tube of "clear silicone" and preferably an "NBC" canteen cap. But if an NBC cap ain't available, you can get away with using a regular ol'canteen cap instead. Though an NBC canteen cap would be much better to use because it's more durable, etc, here's what ya gotta do to it...

(a) After removing the "inner guts" of an NBC cap, get yourself a drill bit about the same size as the cigar container and drill a hole right through the center of the cap. If you can't find one, no problem, just grab a "round" file and file it out until you can slide inside the cigar container.

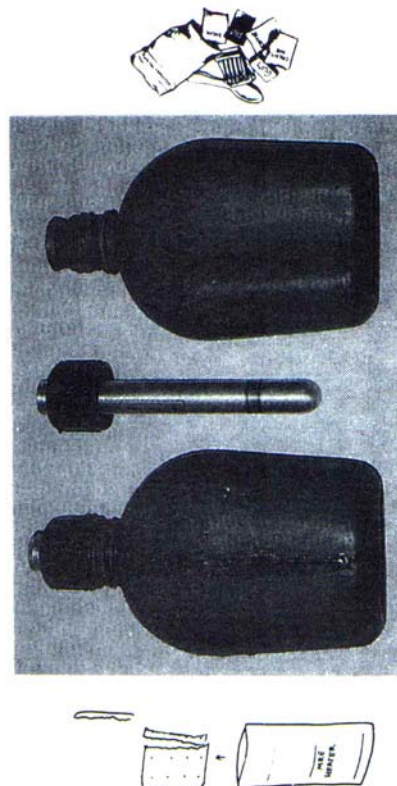
(b) Grab the tube of silicone and seal the cigar container in place inside the cap. BUT! Only squeeze out enough to hold it securely in place. Not too little and definitely not too much, or you won't be able to screw the cap back onto the canteen.

Now all ya gotta do is fill the canteen with water, screw on this water heater, place inside some fuel, and wait for it to heat up.

If you notice, I didn't say anything about "igniting the fuel." Because though I recommend that you only use the flameless fuel from the MRE "food heating packets." As an alternative, you can also use some "crushed" heat tabs or b-b-q charcoal fuel too.

If you do use one of these fuels, to avoid burning and damaging the plastic, the canteen should be completely full of water up to the rim "after inserting in" this water heater. And then place and burn only a "small amount" of fuel at a time. (Ya gotta experiment)

In a military tactical environment where fires are not permitted, the fuel from an MRE food heating packet is the best to use. Why? Because it doesn't give off any smoke or flame. Which means you can use this handy-dandy canteen water heater at a clandestine (ambush, recon, etc) site to make coffee, soup, or hot chocolate without compromising your position. Is this neat or what? Huh?



A FLASHLITE AS A FIRE STARTER?

Do you know how many ways there are to start a fire? Let's see, you can start a fire with matches, a lighter, a magnifying glass, a flashlight reflector.... Huh? What? You've never heard of starting a fire with a flashlight reflector?

Well, ya can't start a fire with any ol' flashlight reflector. It's gotta be a good one and not some worn out, scratched up, or f----- up reflector neither. Provided you also got some really dry tinder and some strong sun rays too.

First, remove the reflector from the flashlight.....

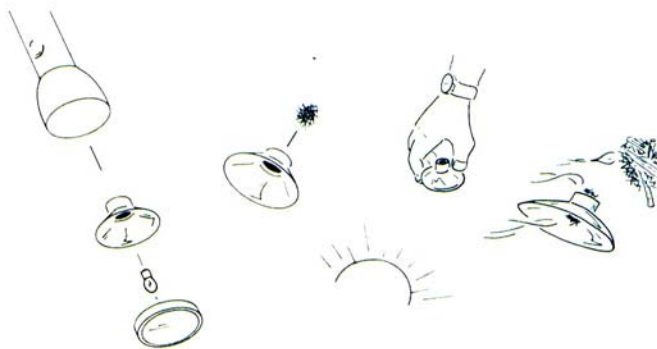
Then go ahead and remove the bulb from the reflector.....

Then place some really dry tinder in the center where the bulb use to be, pushed up from the back side.....

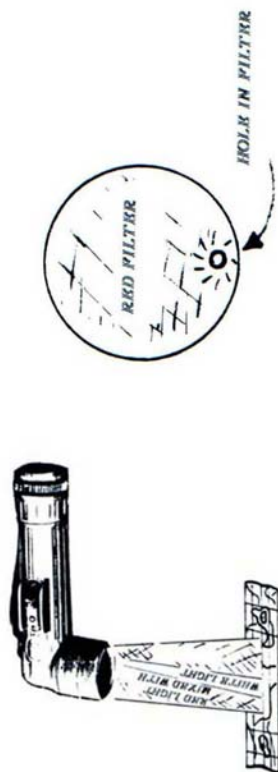
Face the reflector in the direction of the sun to get the strongest and hottest sun light/rays on the end of the tinder.....

And when it starts to smoke, blow on it very lightly to increase the burning of the tinder. Then remove it, place some more dry tinder around it and continue to lightly blow on it until it burns into a flame.

HOT TIP: Got a few extra rounds? Remove the lead bullet from the shell casing, pour a few grams of gun powder on the dry tinder and then place it in the reflector - helps get it burning faster.



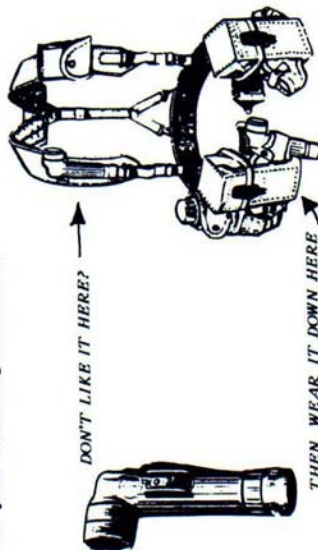
ANOTHER TAC LIGHT TIP



In reference to "Tactical Flashlight Tips" on page 34 of your Ranger Digest III handbook. Instead of putting a piece of tape over the small hole to prevent water or dirt from entering the flashlight, just install a "clear" lens cover over the red lens (or vice-versa).



Instead of hooking your military angle flashlight to the upper portion of your LBE suspenders, just drop it in one of your grenade pouch slots that's built into your ammo pouch. It will not only be easier to grab when you need it, but it will also be out of the way of your shooting shoulder.



MAKING A PARA-GRIP FOR YOUR KNIFE



While breezing through some military supply catalogs I couldn't help notice that some of the knives come with 550 paracord already pre-wrapped around the handles. Though this is a great idea, I just wonder how much it increases the price of the knife. (Hmmm....)

The purpose of having paracord wrapped around a knife handle is not only for emergency survival needs, (snare, fishing line, etc). But so that you can hold it more securely in your hand. Provided of course, it's wrapped firmly around it.

It's not all that difficult to wrap, really? In fact, it's pretty damn easy if you got the right knife (handle) and some 550 od parachute cord.

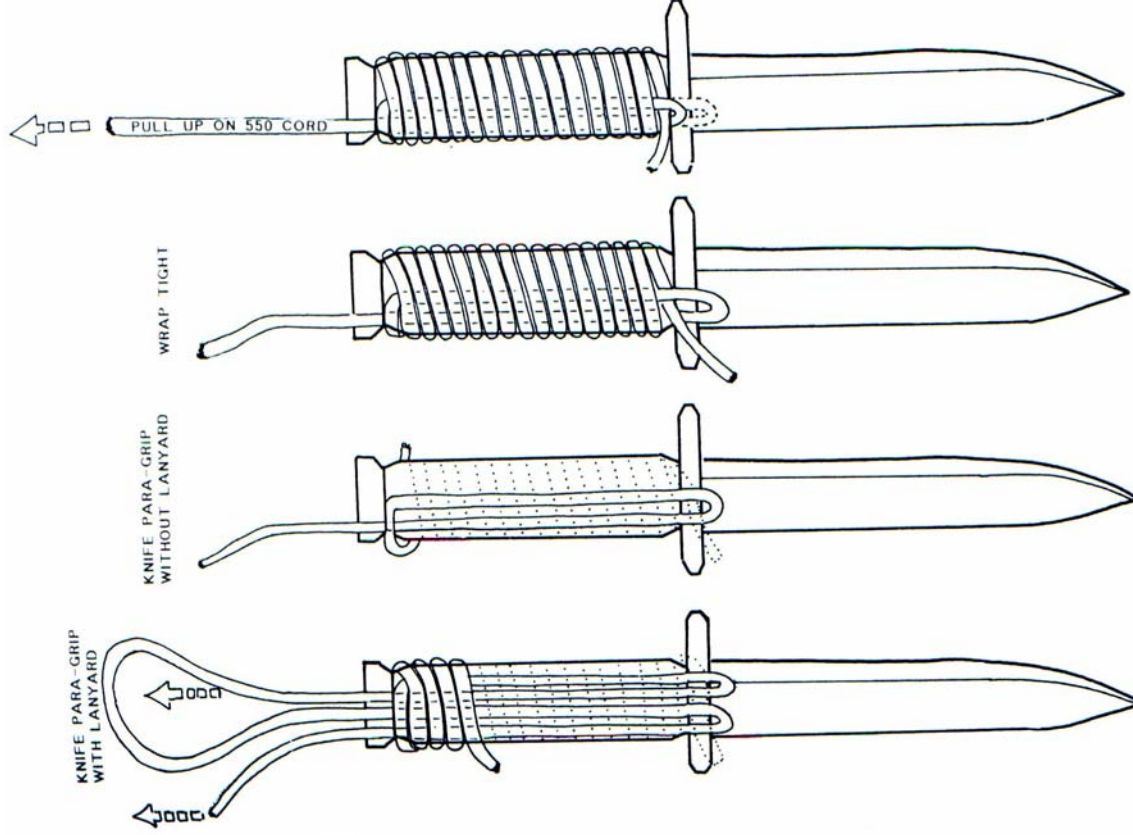
Now most of the "Wanna Be Killers" and "Rambo Cowboys" that I've known usually tied the cord to the handle first and then began wrapping it either from top-to-bottom or vice-versa. And after a short period of time, it would eventually slide off unexpectedly.

Though I only know of one smart way to wrap it, you have a choice of having a knife para-grip handle "with" or "without" a lanyard. The only purpose of a lanyard is so that you can place it around your wrist while using it and so that you don't drop it. Like when you're fighting a couple of bad guys, (yea, right, huh-uh, sure, dream on...).

The first thing you need to do before wrapping the paracord around the handle, is melt the ends of the cord so it won't unravel. Then allow it to soak in some water for about 15-30 minutes. The reason why you soak it in water, is so that it will stretch as you're wrapping it around the knife handle. Then as it dries it will tighten-up and become more firmly secure in place around the handle.

Now instead of me trying to explain to you in so many words how to wrap it around a knife handle, just follow the drawings on the next page. When you've finished wrapping 550 paracord around the handle, if you want to speed up the drying process, just use a hair blow dryer. But don't turn up the blow dryer too high or you might melt some of the cord and then you'll have to start all over again.

Before wrapping the paracord around the handle, if you so desire, you can wrap some survival fishing line, a couple of small hooks, and some od green booby trap wire around it. But don't add too much around it or you'll make the handle a bit too bulky.



RANGER BAND WEAPON HAND GUARDS

Not too long ago I saw an advertisement (see below) in a military mail order supply catalog. What is it? It's a set of specially designed rubber hand guards for an M-16 or AR-15 rifle, they're called "Rub Kits."

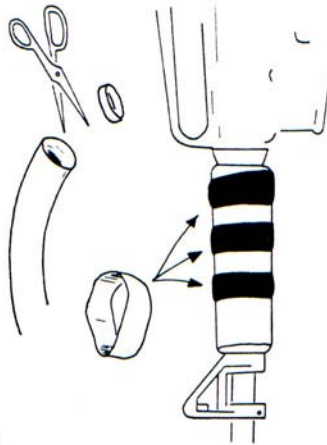


NEW! Highly dependable products for military and law enforcement personnel, these kits allow users to customize their weapons. The Ranger Band Weapon Hand Guards (CAR-15 and AR-15) are specifically designed to retain the important lines and aesthetics of the weapon. Each kit features a grip and a forearm take-up device. The grip is highlighted by a contoured, non-slip rubber. The grip is made of a high quality, hand-molded OverMolded™ with modern durable rubber. It is unaffected by oil and solvents often found around firearms. The accuracy-enhancing, non-slip rubber grip is designed to provide a firm, with a rubber gripping area that isolates the hand from the heat and shock associated with rapid fire. Includes installation instructions, however essential tools are not included. 10A, Wt. 2 lbs. **Black \$79**

According to the ad (quote), "allows the user to achieve a comfortable, non-slip shooting grip." Big f----- deal!

Now who's gonna be that damn dumb to pay \$99 for a pair of custom made non-slip rubber hand guards when you can purchase a bag of "ranger bands" for a buck or two and slide 'em over the hand guards to achieve the same thing - a comfortable, non-slip shooting grip.

Duuuuh, you don't need to be a rocket scientist to figure this out, bozo.



THE POOR MAN'S NIGHT SIGHT

Submitted By: Richard Seales

Now this next idea is really something special, it was sent to me by a "Washington National Guard Marksmanship Coordinator." When I first read and saw this tip, I thought "Man, that's a pretty smart idea."

He calls it a "Poor Man's Night Sight." What you need is a chem-lite, some 100 MPH masking tape, a sharp knife and your M16 rifle.

Step 1: Take a chem-lite out of the wrapper, bend and break it until it starts to glow.

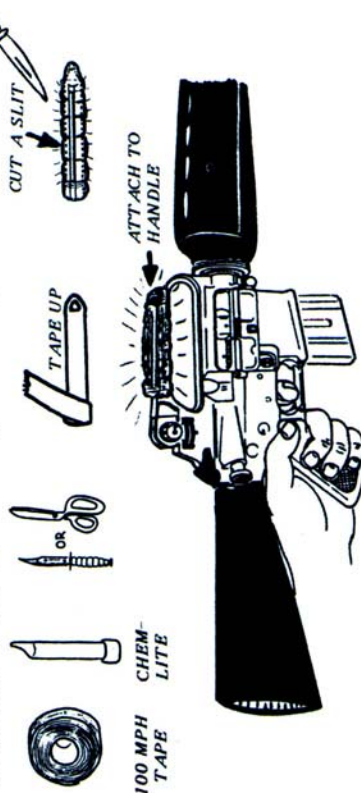
Step 2: Carefully tape up the entire chem-lite with "one layer of tape" so that no glow light shows through it.

Step 3: Place it in the sight handle groove of the weapon and then tape it securely in place.

Step 4: Take a sharp knife or razor and CUT A THIN NARROW SLIT across the entire length of the chem-lite. Peel away the small strip of tape until you can see a straight "glowing line."

Hold the weapon slightly lower than normal when aiming, look over the top of the carrying handle where you can see the "glow line," point in the desired direction and fire.

IMPORTANT: Prepare and use the Poor Man's Night Sight only during limited visible (darkness) when regular weapon sights become ineffective to use. When cutting a long, thin, straight, narrow slit across the top portion of the chem-lite, don't cut too deep or too wide. Too deep and you'll cut into the chem-lite itself, too wide and you'll be exposing too much glow light where it will not only be seen clearly by you, but also by the ENEMY too. Being in a stationery night defensive position is no doubt probably the best and only time it should ever be used, NOT during tactical movements. I think you can figure out why....



"V" METHOD RIVER CROSSING

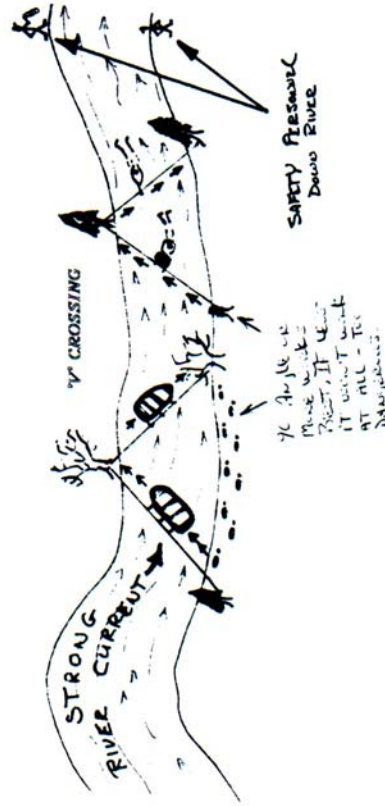
Here's a trick I learned in the Belgium Commando School in 1974, or was it 1975? The Belgium commando School instructors taught us this super river crossing trick.

Due to money constraints in the Belgium military, only the bare necessities that are needed are purchased. So the majority of the time they improvised, and they always come up with a technique for getting things done. Once we had to do a river crossing, in which the water was somewhat fast and rough. To get the rope across the river was standard: you tied a rope to the strongest swimmer and he swam across, just like Ranger School or anywhere else.

Once the swimmer made it safely across the river, and before the rope is tied off at his end, the rope was stretched as far down stream as possible so that the rope lay at an angle from the far side party. The party on the other end must pull on the rope and take up the slack and tie it off securely.

Depending on whether you're using poncho rafts or RBs (rubber boats), all you need to add to it is a snap link, or another rope to the rope. Step off the shore line and let the water current take your boat or poncho raft across to the other side.

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT: Rope must be kept very tight, either just above the water line (no less) or no higher than 1/2 meter above the water. Send across one raft or rubber boat at a time and ensure that you have life guards posted on both sides of the crossing site.

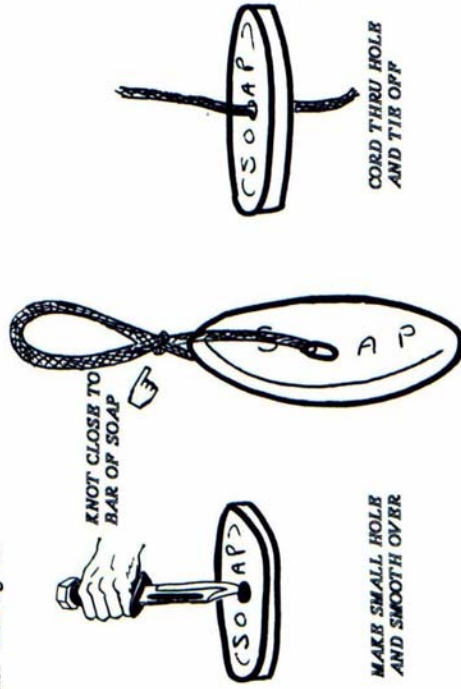


ROPE-A-SOAP

Well anyway, to help prevent a bar of soap from being dropped and full of dirt or (Ughh!). Take a bar of soap, a sharp pointed knife and carefully drill a small hole through the center of the bar.

Take some 550 para-cord, run it through the hole, and then tie the ends together. Now, make another knot as close to the bar of soap to prevent or reduce the cord from running, rubbing or cutting through the soft soap. Failure to keep this knot as close to the bar of soap will cause the cord to slice or break through the soap.

Now your ready to hang your bar of soap around your wrist, a tree limb, nail or shower facet handle. Works great!



SHARPEN THAT E-TOOL

Another important item that always seems to get abused or overlooked when going to the field, and that's the E-Tool. That's right, I said the "E-Tool." How many times have you or your unit ever sharpened the blades of an E-Tool? Never! Right?

Before you go to the field next time, take your E-Tool and find yourself a good off-post knife sharpener. You won't believe how sharp this baby can really get, almost as sharp as a small axe or machete. But don't take my word for it, once, just once try it!

CHOOSING A BED SPOT IN THE FIELD

When selecting a location in the field to bed down for the night, you may not always have much of a choice. If you're in a tactical situation, you may have to bed down where your leader positions you for the sake of security. But if you're lucky enough to have some control over where you can sleep, here are some things to consider when selecting a spot.

OVERHEAD COVER: Choose an area with natural overhead cover, such as trees. The lower the branches and leaves are to the ground, the more it will provide you protection against the sun and weather (as well as camouflage).

INSECTS: Before laying down your bed roll, insure that there are no holes or insect nests in the immediate area. Never lay out your bed roll without first checking out the area. If it's dark out, take out a flashlight and inspect the area thoroughly.

INCLINES: Avoid laying on an incline. If you can't move to more level ground due to the tactical situation, insure that your feet are facing down the incline and your head facing upward.

WET & DAMP GROUND: Naturally, no one in their right mind wants to bed down on wet ground. But if you have no other choice due to the tactical situation, pile a large amount of leaves and brush (approx 12" inches thick) on the wet/damp ground before laying down out any ground cloth or mattress. This will at least provide some form of insulation between you and the wet/damp ground and should keep you a bit dry under most conditions.

SLEEPING POSITION: If you can't sleep on level ground at least try to sleep with your head slightly higher than the rest of your body (as mentioned above). If your head and body are lower than your feet, the blood will rush more towards your head than your feet, causing the feet to become cold and chilly, especially in cold weather climates.

COLD WEATHER TIPS: Never sleep with your head entirely inside of your sleeping bag, it's very unhealthy. If you insist on keeping your head tucked inside the sleeping bag, at least keep your mouth and nose exposed and out of the bag.

DID YOU KNOW.....

That 80% of your body's heat is lost from around the neck area? It's true! The more layers of clothing you wear, the more body heat is trapped underneath those layers of clothing. And the only way it can escape is either through the opening neck area or when the jacket is finally opened. If too much body heat is produced and trapped underneath the clothing, it will form into body sweat. And sweat in turn will cool the body temperature, making you more chilly or cold. To avoid this, if you start to feel too warm, remove a layer of clothing or simply open up your jacket.



MILITARY ISSUED OD WATER PROOF BAGS

USES: The military issue olive drab (OD) water proof bag has an assortment of uses. But, as you probably know, it's used primarily for water proofing military gear. Other uses are:

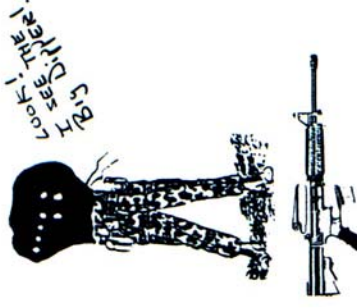
Waterproofing Clothes in a Rucksack.
A Carry-All General Purpose Bag
Transporting Large Amounts of Water
Protecting Sleeping & Other Gear

You can even use it as extra insulation in cold weather climates. Just slide the bag over the bottom portion of your sleeping bag and it will provide your feet extra warmth. Or you can use it for keeping the inside of your sleeping bag clean when you don't want to take off your boots. Simply slide the waterproof bag over your dirty or muddy boots and then step or slide into your sleeping bag. Not only will you be able to keep the inside of your sleeping bag clean, you'll be combat ready and all set to jump out of the sack in a matter of seconds.

REMEMBER: There are two sides to a military issued waterproof bag, the olive drab (OD) nylon side and the rubber (black) coated side. The olive drab nylon side blends best with the woods, but when it comes to bad rainy weather, it "ABSORBS and SOAKS UP too much water." The black rubber coated side, even though it was not originally intended to be worn "inside out" or on the outside, definitely repels water a lot better than the nylon side.

Most experience soldiers prefer to use the black rubber side for bad rainy weather and the OD green nylon side for good weather. That way you get max use out of the bag without having to risk getting it water logged or soaked and adding more weight to the rucksack.

MAINTENANCE: Check your water proof bags on a regular basis, don't wait until your things get wet before figuring out you have a hole in them. The best way to inspect your bag for holes is to place it over your head in broad daylight and look for little "star" holes. When you locate some, use a tire patch kit to repair it or patch it with some military 100 MPH green tape. NEVER, NEVER, NEVER sew up these holes, you'll only create a much bigger hole later on.



COLD WEATHER TIPS

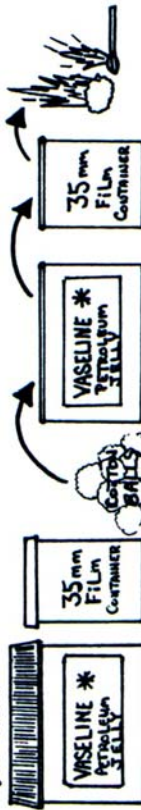
Submitted By: SKA Mike Tipton

Hey Ranger Rick:

I'm stationed at Elmendorf AFB with the 3rd Security Police Squadron and recently purchased your Ranger Digest I, II, & III. A couple of ideas that I didn't see mentioned in any of your books were...

COTTON BALL FIRE STARTERS: These are very simple to make. First, you get yourself a bunch of cotton balls and a container of petroleum jelly (Vaseline). Then take the cotton balls and dip them into the container of vaseline until they are thoroughly soaked and covered.

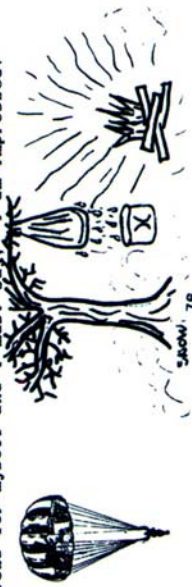
Get yourself an empty 35mm film container and place as many of these vaseline covered cotton balls inside as possible, about 25 or so. Then, whenever you need to start a fire or you just want to warm yourself up for a few minutes like you mentioned on page 3 of the Ranger Digest I. Just pull out one of these cotton ball fire starters. Light it up and presto! Instant fire and heat. They'll easily burn for about 10 (+/-) minutes depending on how much jelly you used.



WATER GENERATOR: Take a clean large piece of cloth (parachute, sheet, etc.) and fill it full of snow, then tie up the corners or sides so it's like a bag. With the use of some 550 parachute cord, find a tree with a thick low lying branch and hoist it up above the ground at least a few feet so that it's not touching the ground.

Now place your empty canteen cup directly under it, build yourself a fire no further than a meter or so away from it and wait for the snow to melt. As the heat from the fire melts the snow, the water will run down and through the material and into the canteen cup itself. The material also acts as a filtering system for filtering out leaves, twigs and dirt. Of course, the larger the material you use, the more snow it will hold and the more water it will produce.

Ranger Rick's Comments: Super Great Ideas! I recently tried these tips & tricks for myself and I must say, "I am impressed!"



CANDLES

There are many uses for candles when you are in the field. No matter which of the four seasons it is, they come in handy in many situations. A few of these situations are:

LIGHT SOURCE - in non-tactical situations

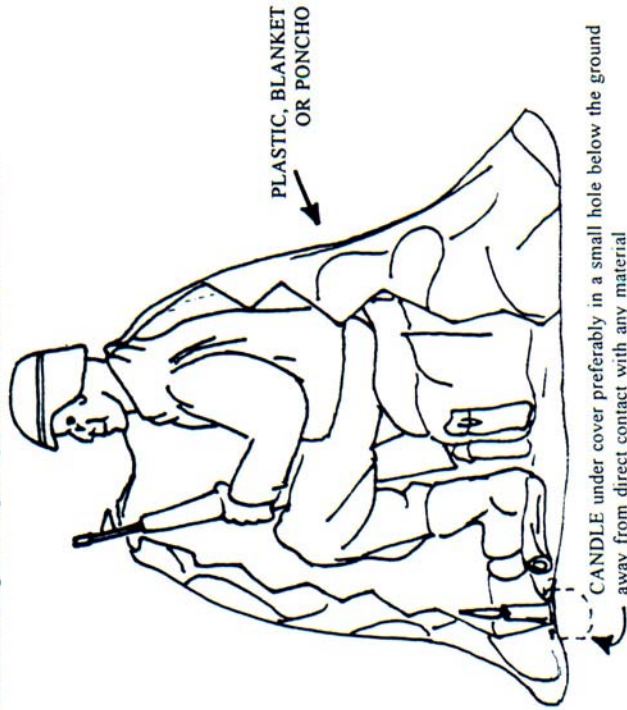
FIRE STARTER - for wood fires.

STOVE - for heating food.

BOY WARMER - when used with a poncho

Carry several small candles in your rucksack when you go to the field. They are lightweight and do not take up much space. Pack a small candle in your LCE you never know what emergency use it will have.

Don't forget to pack a butane lighter or waterproof matches. A butane disposable lighter is the better choice because of its size and weight. It will also last longer, is waterproof and can be used as a mini strobe light for signaling (when the gas is off or finished).





One day I was playing around with a candle and I accidentally dripped some wax on some paper matches. And when I lit one of them, I noticed the match burned a lot longer than normal. So naturally I began experimenting.

I went to McDonald's and got me a handful of plastic drinking straws and then I bought me a box of wooden matches. If you find and buy the type of wooden matches that light when you strike'em against a rock or a piece of metal, good. If not, the wooden matches that come in a little box will do just fine.

Next, I got me a small pair of scissors (a razor blade will work too), an empty plastic 35mm film container, and a candle. I took about 10-15 wooden matches and cut'em down to the same size and length as the 35mm container. I then grabbed the straws and cut them down to the same size and length as the matches and 35mm container.

Most of the plastic drinking straws have a colored line that runs down the entire length of the straw. After you have cut these straws down to size, slit'em along this line.

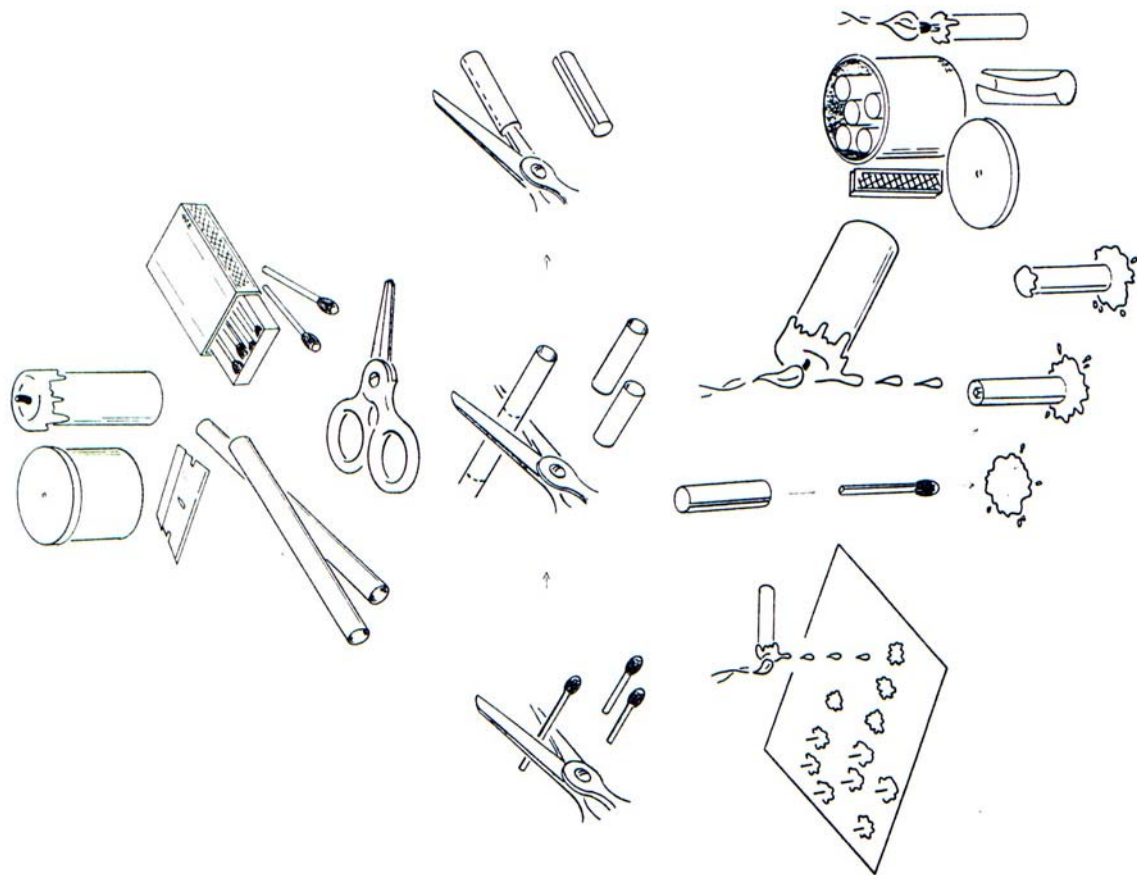
Now take your candle, light it, and allow some wax to build up on a flat surface. Then take the head of the wooden matches and place them into wax and hold'em in place until they can stand straight up on their own. Then grab the short straws and slide'em over each of the wooden matches.

Then take your candle and melt some wax inside each of these straws. When all the straws are full of wax, stop. Then very carefully remove the straws & matches from the flat surface and rub off any excess wax from around the plastic straws. Then smooth off the ends with your fingers and place'em inside the 35mm film container for safe keeping.

OK boys & girls, now when you need to use these, all ya gotta do is "peel off" the plastic straws (where you have slit it along the colored line) and light'em up.

What can you use these waxed matches for? As survival matches, you bonehead! They'll burn 5 X times longer than regular matches. Try it and see for yourself.

NOTE: Before lighting a candle-match, make sure you remove the plastic straw. If you forget, the wooden matches, wax, and plastic straw will burn up very rapidly. Also, if you're using the wooden matches that come in a box. Don't forget to remove the "sandpaper" from the side of the box and place it inside the 35mm container. Or else you won't have anything to ignite the matches with.



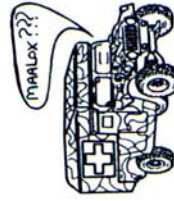
THE MANY USES OF MAALOX

Submitted By: Dr.David A. Williams

One of the safest and best all around medicines to carry to the field is liquid **Maalox**, either regular or extra strength. And a few of the many illnesses and discomforts it can relieve....

1. Poison Ivy - rub a small amount of maalox on the affected areas and it will neutralize the poison, dry it, and stop the itching within minutes.
2. Jocky Rash or "Great Balls of Fire" - rub some maalox on the affected area and you'll soon be relieved of the burning, itching, and discomfort.
3. Athlete's Foot or "Swamp Foot" - rub a small amount of maalox on the foot, including in between the toes, and the itching, irritation, and odor will soon be neutralized.
4. Blisters, Scalds, Abrasions, & Cuts - will heal quicker if treated daily with a little bit of maalox, just rub on a small amount and let it dry.
5. Sunburns & Windburns - rub maalox on like a lotion and it will quickly relieve the pain, discomfort, and irritation.
6. Hemorrhoids & Rectal Irritation (Due to Diarrhea) - pour a small amount of maalox on a piece of toilet paper, wipe or rub on the affected area and the bleeding, itching, and irritation should subside within minutes.
7. Feeling Constipated? - take several (3-5) teaspoons of maalox and your stomach should settle down in no time, also works as a laxative too.
8. Got a Cut That Just Won't Stop Bleeding? - put a few drops of maalox on it and cover with a bandaid or bandage.

Ranger Rick's Comments: Attention Readers - Use At Your Own Risk.



EMERGENCY PROTECTION

Submitted By: Dr. David A. Williams

Always carry in your rucksack a small bottle of "olive oil," the type that comes with an eye or noise dropper. Because it can always be used....

a) To prevent foreign matter from entering the eyes and ears should you need to swim or dive in salty or filthy water and you don't have a mask or a pair of ear plugs for protection.

Just place a few drops in the eyes and ears before entering the water and the salt and foreign matter won't stick to the surface of the eyes nor enter the sensitive areas of the inner ear.



b) Works great for relieving earaches. Simply warm up the bottle of olive oil with a match or lighter, just slightly above body temperature, and place a drop or two in the affected ear. To keep it in place, use a piece of cotton, tissue, and or even a gun cleaning patch. Should it become infected and very painful, just add 1 x drop of iodine to 5 x drops of olive oil and you have an excellent field remedy.





Submitted by Sgt. Dale Sheldon

Now, here's a smart idea on how to make pace counters that won't break or make any noise during tactical movements, and cost a lot less than the store-bought ones too.

All you need is about 15 small rubber pipe washers that you can find in any good hardware store. Make sure that the holes are very small, about 1/8 of an inch or so. If they are too large, you bought 15 washers for nothing. If too small, you can modify the holes.

Then get yourself about 3 feet or so of OD green 550 parachute cord. Find the middle of the string and fold it in half. Tie the open ends closed together with a figure 8 knot and keep the middle of the cord marked with a finger or a pen mark. Next, get a small piece of string and tie it temporarily to the middle.

Take 9 washers, one by one, and run them through the string and down over the 550 cord all the way to the knot. They must go all the way down touching the knot and each other. When all 9 rubber washers are in place, tie another knot approximately 3 to 4 finger widths above the last rubber washers you slid down.

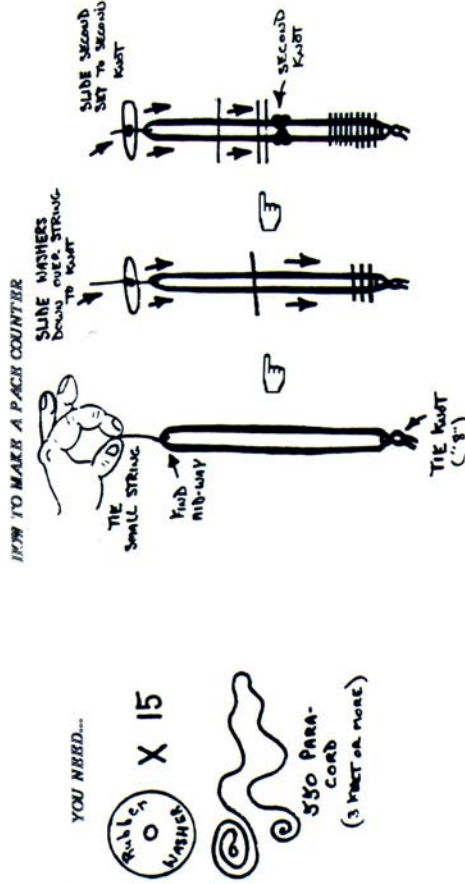
Take the 6 or so remaining washers and slide them through and over the 550 cord all the way to the second knot. Again, they must be touching the knot and each other. Then like before, approximately 3 to 4 finger widths above the last rubber washer, tie in the final knot.

Each of the 9 rubber washers will represent a standard 100 meter pace count. When you have used all 9 washers, 900 meters, you move to the second set of rubber washers. Don't forget to move the 9 washers back to the bottom and start over again. The second set of rubber washers will represent 1 click or kilometer (1000 meters).

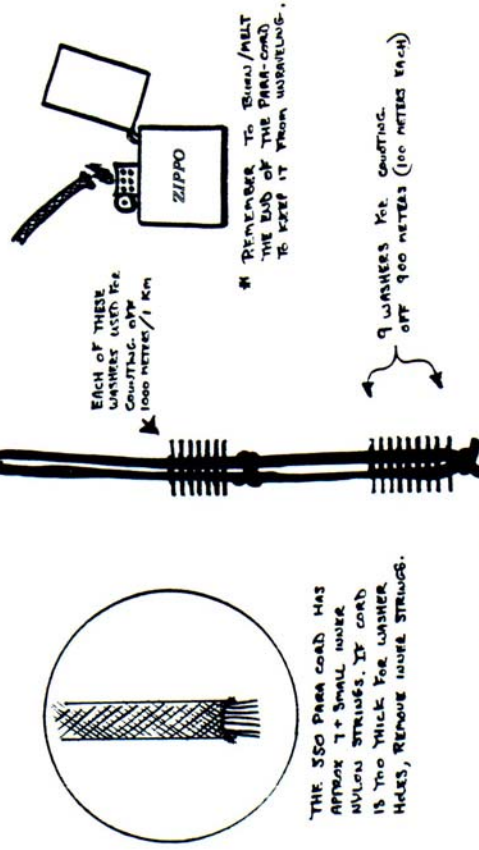
Make sure you fasten this securely to your LBE, and remember to slide the washers forward for each 100 meters and 1000 meters you travel.

NOTE: If the rubber washers slide or move around too much, or too easily, on the 550 parachute cord then you either have to replace the washers with smaller ones or add more parachute cord.

You might want to take the cord with you to the hardware store to figure out what size you need.



YOU CAN EITHER TIE A KNOT HERE OR ADD A STRING LOOP.



SPECIAL NOTE: Tie The Pace Counter To Your LBB, Belt, or Shirt. Somewhere Will It Can Be Easily Get At In The Field

550 CORD PACE COUNTER

Submitted By: Spc. Mary W. Mathews

Specialist Mathews sent me this trick, it's a Pace Counter made out of 550 (Nylon) parachute cord. She said she learned it from a Special Forces Instructor at SFAS and "It Really Does Work!"

ITEMS NEEDED: 550 Parachute Cord cut into lengths of one 36" inch long piece and another piece about 2 X feet in length. And of course, a zippro lighter.

Step 1 - Fold (double) the 36 inch para-cord in half and tie one non-slip knot at the open/loose end. Take your zippro lighter and start burning the ends until it begins to melt. Blow it out and then press the ends together against a hard surface. This will keep the nylon cord from unraveling, (of course).

Step 2 - Take the 2 X foot long 550 para-cord and tie a single prusik around the doubled 36 inch para-cord. Cut off the prusik from the rest of the 2 X foot piece, take your zippro light and start burning the ends until they begin to melt. Quickly blow it out and press them together against a hard surface.

Repeat this same procedure until you have 9 X prusik/loops attached to the 36 inch (doubled) para-cord.

Step 3 - Take the 9 X loops and slide all of them to the bottom portion of the 36 inch (doubled) para-cord where the first knot is located. Then tie another non-slip knot, except this time right in the middle of the doubled para-cord.

Note: A non-slip knot is a figure "8" or "square knot."

There should be a sufficient amount of distance between the 9 X knots at the bottom of the cord and the non-slip knot located in the middle. If not, readjust the non-slip knot and move it higher up on the cord.

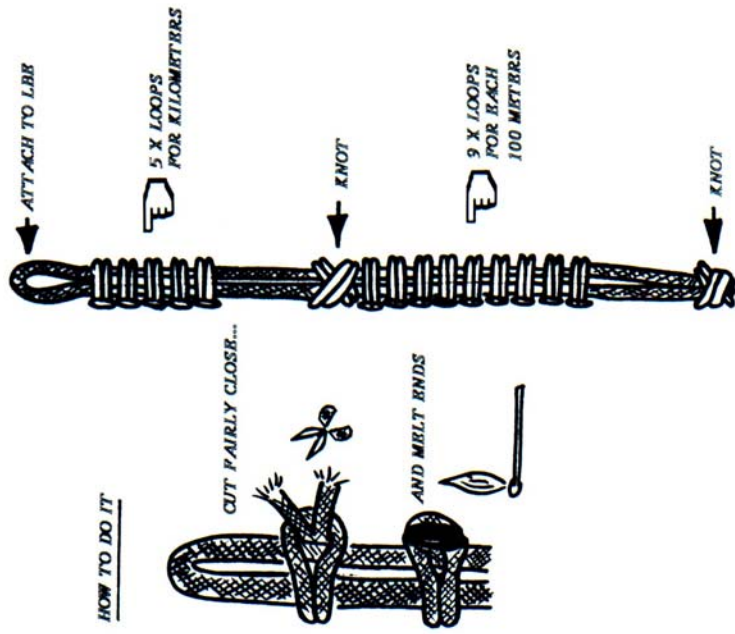
Step 4 - As you did before in tying and melting the 9 X prusik/loops to the 36 inch doubled para-cord. Add 5 more of these knots to the upper portion of the para-cord just above the middle knot.

When you have finished, you should have 9 X loops/knots tied below the "middle" non-slip knot and 5 X loops/knots tied above it. Now all you have to do is attach it to your LBE.



TO USE: Each of the 9 X loops in the lower portion of the para-cord represent a 100 meters. And the 5 X loops in the upper portion each represent 1000 meters or 1 kilometer. As you pace off a 100 meters, slide one (1) of the 100 meters loops away from the others. When you reach 1000 meters, slide one (1) of the 1000m/1 Km loops away from the other loops. Then start over again using the 100 meter loops.

Important: Ensure all 14 loops are connected to the 550 cord very securely. They must not slide so easily up and down para-cord, it should take some effort to move them. If any are too loose, you will need to replace them.



550 PARA-CORD PACE COUNTER COMPLETE



101 USES FOR A TRASH BAG

(and not just for trash...)

Every time we deployed to the field, I always made sure I grabbed a couple of large trash bags and stuck them in my ruck or canteen pouch. In fact, I use to make everyone in my squad or platoon carry a couple of trash bags just prior to moving out. Why? We because they have a number of uses besides being used for trash such as...

TRASH BAG APRON - With your knife, cut open the bottom closed portion of the trash bag, step inside and either tuck the excess portion into your belt or twist and tie it in place. If you get one of those trash bags with the pull string, great! Just pull the string so it wraps tightly around your waist and you now have an apron to protect your pants from the oil, grease, dirt, carbon while working or cleaning your vehicle, weapon, or other military equipment.

LAUNDRY/WATER PROOF BAG - If you got any stinky, smelly, dirty, wet clothes, why mix them up with the dry, clean, fresh ones in your ruck? All you need to do is pop 'em in the plastic trash bag and you can keep your dirty clothes separated from your clean ones.

GROUND & RUCK COVER - A large trash bag can also be used as ground cover, ruck cover or sleeping bag cover. To use as a ground cover, just cut open two of the three closed sides and open it up. If your rucksack or sleeping bag sticks out beyond your poncho shelter in the rain, just place a large trash bag over the end of the sleeping bag or the ruck itself. Remember: "A wet ruck sleeping bag adds extra carrying weight."

EMERGENCY RAIN COVER - How many times have you ever been standing in a hot chow line in the field and suddenly got caught in unexpected downpour without a rain jacket or poncho? Well, didn't run back to my ruck or position to get my wet weather gear hell no, I didn't want to lose my place in line.

Instead, I either grabbed an empty trash bag from the mess line one of the two I usually carried inside my canteen pouch. Some of the troops shook their heads and laughed at me when they saw me wearing a trash bag, but guess who was dryer and didn't get wet much? Yours truly, Ranger Rick. When making a trash bag rain jacket or poncho cover, cut or pop a couple of holes into the trash bag just big enough for your head and arms to stick out.

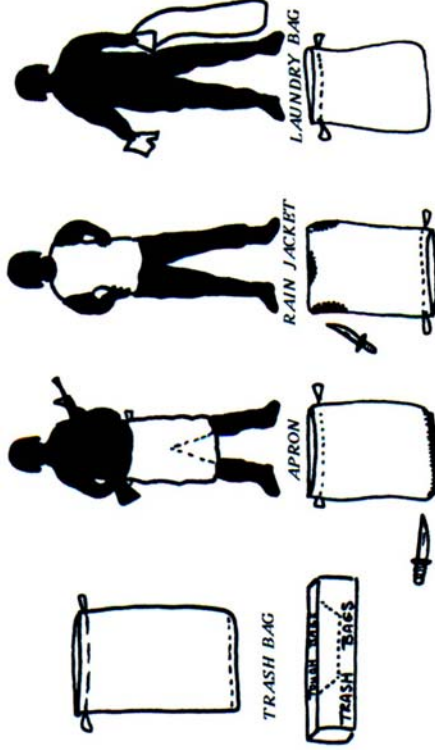
Did you know that a large trash bag can also be used as emergency survival item? For example...

SUN SOLAR STILL - Cut your trash bag open on two of the three sides so it's one large piece of plastic. Dig a hole about 1 foot deep and three feet wide, take your canteen cup and place it in the center of the hole. Add some shredded pieces of green vegetation around the cup, and then place the plastic bag over the hole. Take your excess dirt & rocks and place it just along the outer section of the plastic to make the hole tightly sealed.

Don't place the dirt too close to the edge of the hole or it will run down into the center of the plastic. Now take a good size rock and place it in the center of the plastic so that it collapsible it downward but NOT resting on the canteen cup itself.

When the sun's rays heat it up, it will cause moisture and droplets to form on the other enclosed side. The downward incline of the plastic will cause the moisture droplets to slide down and off into the canteen cup located in the center of the hole. That is "if" you have done it right. Now don't expect miracles, it's not going to fill up your cup all the way. If you leave it there all day long in the scorching sunlight and heat, you should get about a quarter of cup of water by the end of the day. I know your saying, "hell, that's not much!" It's better a little water than no drinking water at all. Right?

Now if your lucky enough to get a desert rain shower, and it does rain in the desert... Remove your canteen cup from underneath and let the plastic fill up with water. Once it has filled up with a sufficient amount, take your canteen cup and "scoop up the water." That's right boys and girls, it's not only a solar still, but it's a rain catcher too. I'll bet most of you bad ass Rangers, SP, and Rambo Cowboys didn't know this little trick neither, did you? Well, Surprise! Surprise! Surprise!



PRODUCING WATER FROM EMPTY TRASH BAGS

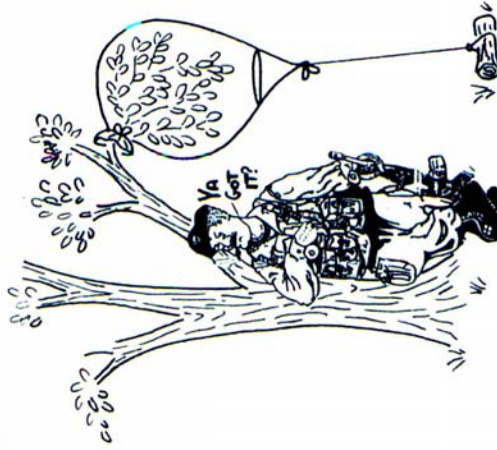
As I mentioned in previous Ranger Digests, you should always pack and carry a few trash bags in your rucksack and or on your lbe, as they will always come in handy for something out in the field. And one such use, is for producing water in an emergency "life & death" survival situation.

These techniques are nothing new, in fact, almost every military and civilian survival manual shows you how to make'em. But what they fail to tell ya, is how much water they can produce in a day, which depends entirely on the type of terrain, climate, temperature, and the sun's ultraviolet rays.

Now if you only have "one" trash bag, you can only use it for "one" water producing method. But if you got "two" trash bags, you can use'em for "two" water producing methods. "Three" trash bags, "three" water producing methods, etc.

The bottom line.... the more trash bags you use, the more drinking water you can produce. Duh! Makes sense, don't ya think? If so, then how come all these high-speed survival handbooks don't teach ya this? Huh?

NOTE: An excellent place to store trash bags, is inside your canteen covers.



75

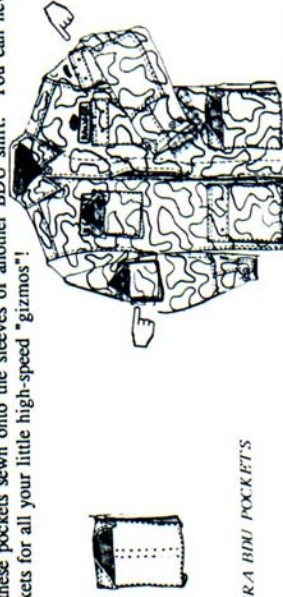


MODIFYING BDUs

Submitted By: SSG CRAIG MARTS &
SGT KEITH WINDHAM

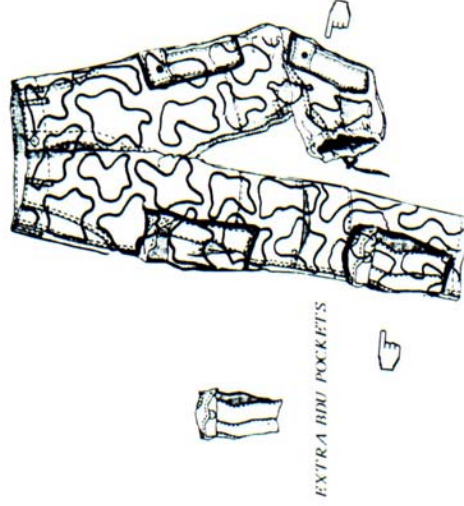
"Hey Ranger Rick," Ssg. Marts writes. "Here's another BDU idea you may want to use in your next Ranger Digest book. I wore and tried it myself when I was in Saudi Arabia as an SOF operator."

Take an old worn out set of BDUs (woodland or desert camouflage) and cutoff the pockets. Then have these pockets sewn onto the sleeves of another BDU shirt. You can never have enough pockets for all your little high-speed "gizmos"!



EXTRA BDU POCKETS

Ssg. Windham had the same idea, except he went a "leg" further ("Aaah, Get it? Leg, Step further..."). He added the extra pockets to his BDU pants.



EXTRA BDU POCKETS

27



SURVIVAL BDU/PATROL CAP

This survival cap has three distinct features: (1) a hidden zipper pocket in the ear flap which can be utilized to store whatever your imagination desires, (2) a bright orange material/panel sewn in the inside top portion of the cap which can be used to signal fellow soldiers over short distances by opening and closing the cap or by turning it inside out, and (3) storage of fishing line/snare-wire in the half inch seam on the outside of the cap. To modify your cap, all you will need is a narrow zipper or velcro stripping of about 4 inches long and a bright fabric panel 6" X 6".

FIRST: Cut either the inside top or bottom seam of the ear flap to equal the length of the zipper or velcro strip. Then single stitch the zipper or velcro into place. Don't position the zipper/velcro where it can be seen if the ear flap covers are worn down. And avoid placing it inside where the ears may come into contact with it. This could be uncomfortable when you need to use the ear flaps.

NEXT: Take the bright orange material and either round or square it off so it will be sewn only to the *inside* top portion of the hat without touching the sides. You can leave a gap on one of the sides to serve as the opening to an additional pocket.

FINALLY: Cut a few stitches loose, directly to the rear of the hat where the two seams come together horizontally. Secure the corners of the open seam with a few stitches to keep the seam from unraveling. Stuff fishing line/snare-wire into the seam either entirely or half way around the cap. Use a straightened coat hanger to help feed it through. The open end of the seam does not have to be sewn because it will be so small that no one will notice.

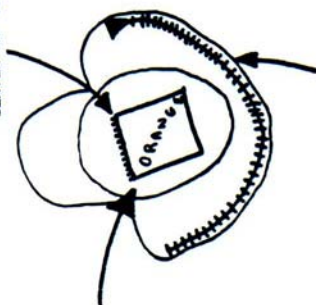
SPECIAL TIPS: You should not over-stuff the survival hat to make it look bulky or feel uncomfortable. Pack it with a few small items that will go unnoticed when worn. You can store many items in the hat without making it look over-stuffed. Put a flat metal signal mirror or pad and pencil in the sewn-in orange panel-pocket. Sew strips of luminous tape on the inside sides of the hat to write call-signs and pass-words with a grease pencil. You will be able to read them at night without a flashlight.

Rambo himself would be proud to wear this cap!



4

ZIPPER POCKET IN
CENTER OF HAT

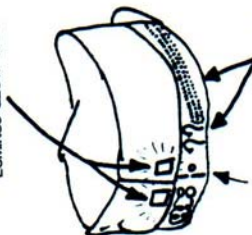


ORANGE PANEL
FOR SIGNALING

ZIPPER SEWN ALONG
EAR FLAP EDGES

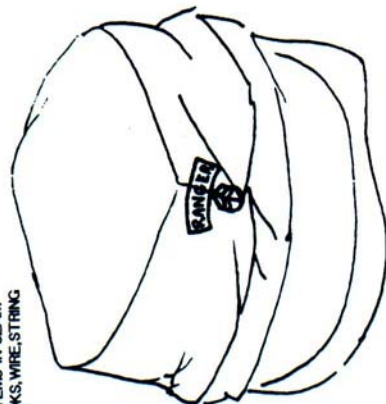
NOTE: Thin Small Zipper

LUMINOUS GLOW TAPE



HIDDEN ITEMS IN SEAM
FISH HOOKS, WIRE, STRING

IE ITEMS THRU HERE



SURVIVAL BDU/PATROL CAP

(Items Stored in Hat
Should Not Be Bulky
or Overweight)

5



DRYING CLOTHES

Clothes that become wet in the field due to weather or water-crossing can be a hassle to dry, especially if you can't build a fire because of the tactical situation. However, there are several ways to dry clothes in the field other than using clothes lines. If time is taken to use the tricks below, you should have no problem drying your clothes.

If the clothes are wet from sweat, they will not dry properly unless rinsed in water first. They will dry "sticky" and "stiff". This is due to the body salt in the material. Rinse the clothes in any clear water, wring out as much of the water as possible, and dry using one of the methods below. Here are a few reliable methods of drying clothes in the field.

WAIST/ARMPIT METHOD: This is an easy way to do small pieces of clothing, such as socks or gloves by using body heat. Place these pieces of clothing under your armpits or around your waist. They should not come in direct contact with the skin, only the under garment. After a few hours they should dry. This will not work if you are making long distance foot movements due to sweating.

CAUTION: Clothes should be wrung out as much as possible to prevent too much dampness from cooling your body temperature. If over a short period of time you become cold (especially in a cold weather environment) remove wet clothing from these locations.

TREE-BRUSH METHOD: Simply lay clothes above ground on tree and brush branches. The sun and air will dry clothing quickly. In cold weather insure clothes are shaken and wrung out as much as possible. Too much water left in the clothing may cause the clothes to freeze instead of drying.

RUCKSACK DRYING METHOD: If you are on the move a lot and can't stop to dry your clothes, you can attach them to the outside of your rucksack. Tie or lash them securely. The sun and open air during a movement should dry them in a short time. Before putting the clothes away or on, ensure that you shake them out well to remove any insects or tree branches that have gotten inside during your movement.

THE SLEEPING BAG DRYING METHOD: This is one of the best night time methods. Wring out as much water as possible from the wet clothes and spread them out inside the sleeping bag. Don't just dump them inside or they will not dry evenly and you will not sleep comfortably. Without removing the clothes you are wearing, lay down on top of the wet clothes. The clothes you are wearing will keep you separated from the wet ones and act as insulation. Unbutton as many buttons as you can and sleep with your shirt, pants, and pockets open. This will help release a flow of body heat, which in turn will dry the wet clothes while you sleep.

CAUTION: This method should not be used by an individual who is suffering from an illness or abnormal body temperature.



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BDU LAUNDRY BAG AND POCKETS

Submitted by Pfc. Matthew D. Hohman

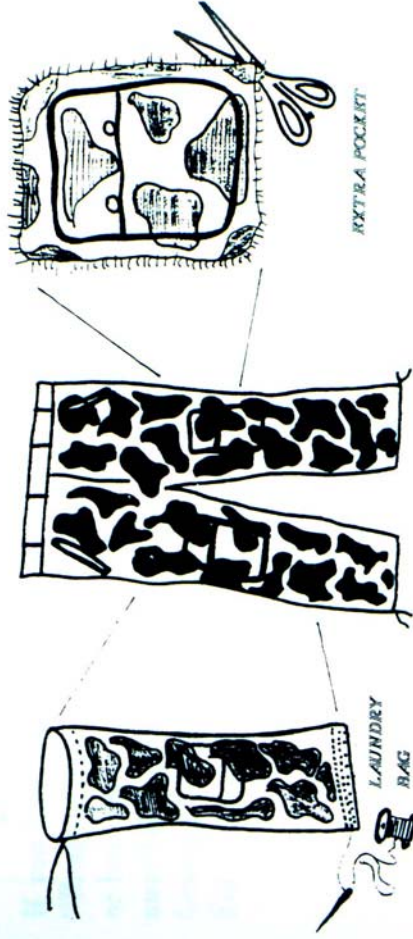
Hey, guys and gals: are you throwing away some BDUs? Not so fast, you can still get some use out of them, or at least certain parts of them....

If you cut off the pant legs at the crotch, they can be made into great little handy laundry bags or a general utility bag.

All you do is sew up the wide, cut-off portion of the pant legs, and on the other end add a "draw string" to the bottom seam of the pants and it's complete.

Also, anytime the BDU pants or shirt get too worn out to wear, at least cut out the cargo pocket portion before you trash them. Add a few stitches to the seam edges to keep 'em from unravelling and you can use them as little storage bags. Or have them re-sewn/attached to other items, like the poncho liner, uniforms, laundry bags, etc.

So the next time you're getting ready to trash some uniforms, cannibalize the pockets, pant legs and buttons. Never just trash them.



FIELD UNIFORM COVERALLS

We grunts (Infantry) waste a lot of money on extra uniforms for the field. The more you go the field, the more uniforms you wear out. I personally think that soldiers who are either in a Combat Arms MOS such as Infantry, Artillery, Armor, or those assigned to a unit that go to the field on a regular basis, should be given "MOMONEY" for uniforms. Why? They wear'em out faster, that's why. Faster than all you REMFS sitting back in the rear. You don't agree? Well that's my opinion and opinions are like assholes - "Everyone Has One." Right?

But one way I learned how to save on wear & tear and pocket more of that clothing allowance money is by coming up with one or two extra sets of uniforms strictly for the field. Now back in the old days (1972 -1980) we used to get issued a set of coveralls with our TA-50 that were strictly worn for the field. You just slipped them on over your regular uniform and got them dirty and torn. When they were no longer repairable, you just turned them in to supply for a new set.

When they stopped issuing these, I bought a couple of sets of oversized BDU pants and shirts and used them as my field uniform. They were used mostly in the winter time though, or during real nasty weather. You shouldn't get in trouble wearing these field coveralls because you'll still be in uniform with the rest of the unit. Here's what you do:

Go to your local Military Clothing Sales Store (MCSS) and try on a set of BDU's one or two sizes larger than what you normally wear. Put them on over your uniform, move around a little and bend over to insure that they fit nice and loose. Too loose - they'll feel bulky, too tight - you'll feel stiff. Don't forget to take into consideration that you will also be wearing your rucksack, LBE, a sweater, etc.

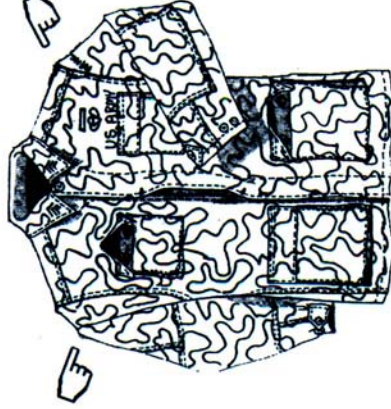
Next, find some OD 550 para-cord or an OD/green strap. You need to add a few leg straps to the uniform to prevent the pants from feeling bulky around the legs near the crotch. Those old field uniforms that I mentioned earlier all came with these straps. They kept them from being "too baggy" when worn during movements.

The best way to install them to the pants is by running the straps or 550 para-cord through the pant's cargo pocket and then sewing them in place. I recommend you punch a hole or two, either at the base of the pocket or at the sides, and then slip in the strap or cord. You should sew them securely in place in order to prevent them from becoming loose during movements.

Now all you have to do is put'em on, tie the straps around your legs, and try them out.

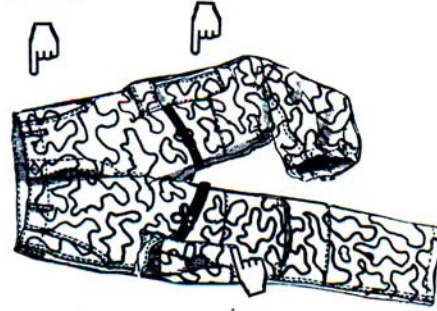
COVERALL BDU FIELD UNIFORM

BDU SHIRT SHOULD BE
2 3 SIZES LARGER FOR
COMFORTABLE MOVEMENT.



COVERALL BDU SHIRT
WORN OVER UNIFORM

BDU PANTS SHOULD BE
2 3 SIZES LARGER FOR
COMFORTABLE MOVEMENT.



COVERALL BDU PANTS
WORN OVER UNIFORM

TIE DOWN LEG STRAPS
INSTALLED THRU POCKET



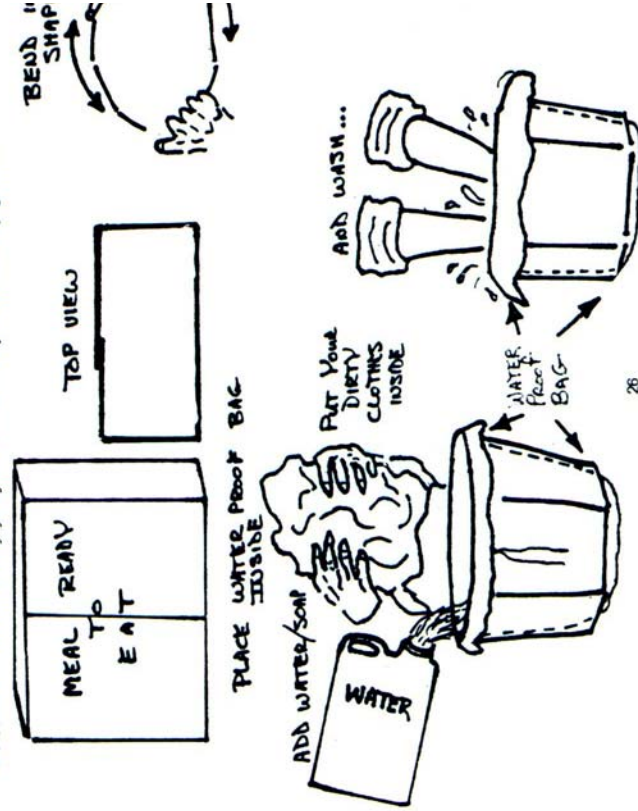
FIELD WASHING MACHINE

Submitted by: Matthew D. Holtman

There are several ways you can wash clothes in the field or rear area when there are no mechanical washing machines around. You can either wear your clothes in the shower or creek (don't forget to soap), wash them in a container (if available) or give them to your unit XO/supply sgt (good luck if they come back). Or you can make yourself a field expedient washing machine.

All you need to do is get yourself 2 MRE cardboard boxes, slide the covers off of them, grab hold of the covers and bend or fold them until you form a circular or square pattern shape stand. Place one cover over the other either by folding or cutting slits into them, so they will stand up by themselves one on top of the other.

Then place them inside one of the two boxes you have not used yet. Take your OD waterproof bag or a medium size trash bag and place it inside the box covers that are standing up-right. Carefully fold back the ends of the bag over the box covers and secure. You can either cut medium size slits into the box edges and slide the bag's ends into these slits, or secure the bag with 100 MPH tape or a pongy cord. Then all you need to do is add water and soap. Use the other box for the laundry you just washed to keep it off the dirty ground.



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ANOTHER FIELD WASHING MACHINE

Submitted by: Lt. John S. Wilson

Well, I've heard a lot of neat tips, ideas and field expedient know-how during my military career, but those soldiers who were on Operation Desert Shield and Storm really came back with some great ones. Here's one of them, it's a field expedient washing machine.

Items needed? Just a good ol' military water proof bag, water and soap and, of course, your dirty clothes.

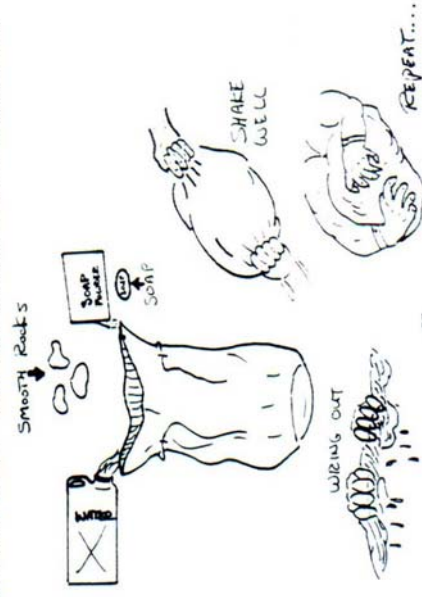
Place no more than one set of dirty BDUs, socks and underclothes inside the bag, add enough water to thoroughly soak the clothes and then add some soap powder. Or if you don't have any, place your bar of soap inside the bag. Hell, it's a lot better than just using plain water...

Twist and tie the bag closed, and then "Shake it like hell, baby!" You need to keep this up for at least 5 minutes or so, squeezing and shaking, squeezing and shaking for the whole 5 minutes. Then let it sit for a few minutes. Empty out the soapy water, wring out the clothes, put 'em back into the bag and add clean water.

Again, shake and squeeze, shake and squeeze. Wait again for a few minutes and empty the water out again and wring out the clothes.

Do this until you are satisfied that the clothes are either clean and all the soap is out. Then hang them up and let them air dry.

If you desire, you can add a few flat rounded stones to add agitation to it, but be careful, you don't want to smack your hand or head. A big no-no is to whack the bag against a solid object like a tree, rock or vehicle. You'll only destroy your field washing machine.



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MAKING A LIGHTWEIGHT FIELD JACKET

Everyone in the Army knows the BDU field jacket is a heavy, bulky jacket to field. It is too hot in mild temperatures and not warm enough in freezing temperatures. We really need is an all season lightweight jacket, right? Well, Ranger Rick has just

What you need is: one oversize BDU shirt, a field jacket liner, one or two jacket and 18" inches of velcro. You can buy the BDU shirt and field jacket liner at your local Clothing Sales Store (MCSS) or in any off-post Army & Navy Supply Store. The jacket and velcro can be found in the PX or any sewing supply center. Be advised that it should be approx 30" inches in length.

First - Sew the zippers on the BDU shirt and field jacket liner. It should be and sewn slightly on the inside so that it can not be seen when worn. You can leave it on the shirt if you like as they shouldn't interfere with functioning of the zipper.

Second - After sewing the second zipper on the field jacket liner, place it inside the shirt. With an ink pen or set of pins, mark or pin on the inside of both the BDU shirt. Four (4) spots on the left side and four (4) spots on the right side of the jacket's opening zippers. Go to the cuff of the sleeves and mark down two spots on the inside. On section, mark or pin down three spots approx 5" inches apart. Now remove the liner shirt.

Third - Take the velcro and cut out 15 square pieces approx 1 X 1 inches. The velcro comes in two parts, the "stiff" male part and the "hairy" female part. If you have the two pieces from each other, you will have a total of 30 pieces in all.

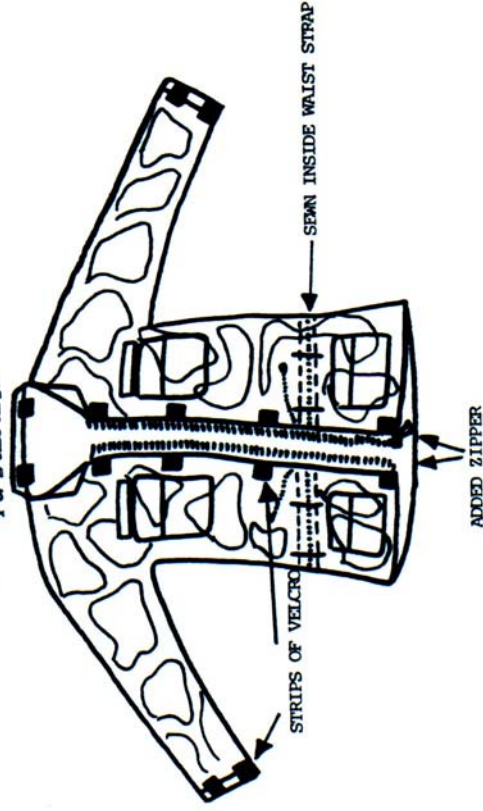
Fourth - Sew the velcro's "stiff" male pieces to all the marked/pinned area on the shirt, and the "hairy" female pieces to the liner. Sew the velcro on securely and as possible so that they won't come off. Don't do a rush job!

When you've finished sewing, place the liner inside the BDU shirt and match up the male and female velcro pieces. Don't be surprised if some of the pieces are not perfectly matched. If they are obviously a total mismatch, take the time and resew it.

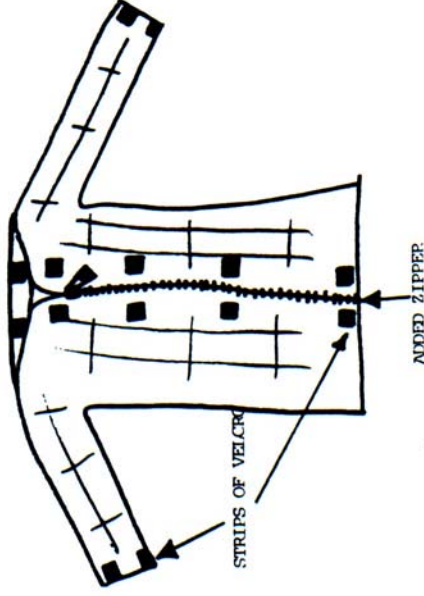
You can add a waist strap/string simply by sewing a few belt loops on the portion of the shirt and then running some string through them. Don't forget to tie a large knot to the ends of the string to prevent it from coming out. And there you have it, a lightweight BDU jacket.



BDU SHIRT or RAIN JACKET
1 or 2 size larger



JACKET LINER





PADDED BDU PANTS

How many times have you banged or cut the hell out of your knees in the field? A whole bunch, right? And how many times have you taken up a kneeling or sitting position on either a hard, wet, or cold piece of ground. Pretty uncomfortable, huh? Well, you'll love the hell out of this next trick.

Take an old pair of BDU's, cut out all the pockets either from the shirt or pants (or both), and then sew a pocket over each of the knees. Measure the pockets for size, take some foam padding similar to your military sleeping pad, and cut out a few square pieces the same size as the pockets. Now, take those foam padded squares, slide them inside the pockets and PRESTO! You now have a set of BDU pants with padded knees.

What? You don't like the idea of sewing these pockets over the outside portion of the knees? You don't want to ruin the uniform? Well, first of all, it should be a field uniform, not a uniform your going to wear everyday back in garrison.

If you still want knee pads and you don't want to sew the pockets over the outside portion of the knees, there's another alternative.

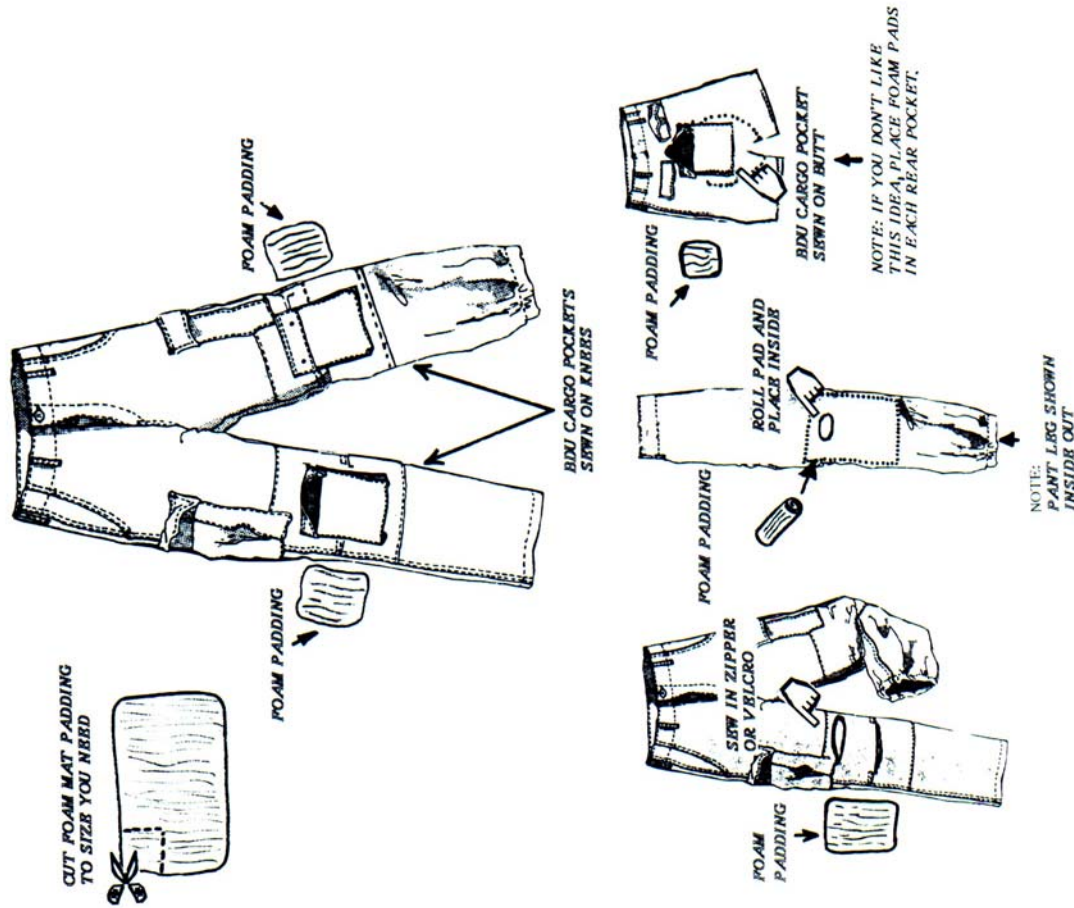
Look closely at your BDU pants about knee level and tell me what you see..... RIGHT! You see that it's "Double Padded" with extra material. Now take those pair of BDU pants and reverse them inside out. Grab a pair of scissors or a razor blade and cut across the upper portion (and only one layer) of the material to form a pocket. Cut out some foam mattress squares the same size as the knee pocket and then slide 'em inside. Now try on those pair of pants and see how they feel. I'd also suggest that either you sew in a button or a strip of velcro to keep the padding from jumping out of the pockets during movements.

What? Now you tell me you don't like to sew? OK, then try this....

With the BDU pants inside out, make a small opening slit just wide enough so that you can slide in a tightly rolled up piece of foam mattress. Then cut out a couple of pieces of foam about the same size as the knee area, roll it up tight and then slide it in. Once it's inside, unroll it and adjust it into place. Now (finally) you have a pair of BDU pants with knee pads. Every time you need to wash or wear these pants in garrison, don't forget to remove the foam padding.

Well, I'll even take this trick a little further.... Take one or two of those cut out pockets and have 'em sewn right across the cheek portion of your BDU pants. Cut out a few pieces of foam mattress the same size as the pocket, slide them inside and try on the pants. Now take a seat on the ground. Nice, huh? You'll appreciate this trick a little more in the winter time, as it will no doubt protect your butt from the cold, wet, or hard ground.

NOTE: Due to the overlapping and sewing of these extra sets of pockets, it may cause some interference in being able to store items in your rear pockets, such as your wallet.



GORTEX JACKET MODIFICATIONS

Submitted By: Spc. Chris C. Rush

Dear Ranger Rick,

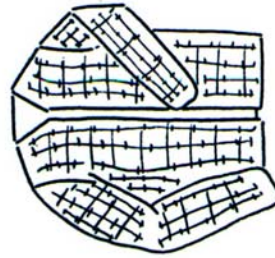
Ever since the military issued us the GORTEX EXTREME COLD WEATHER PARKER, living in the field has been a bit more comfortable and bearable. But, there's still a small problem with this Gortex Parker. When it's really, really cold, you start to get really, really chilly too. Especially if your not moving around much or you got issued an "old, used & worn out" Gortex Parker.

But I came up with a solution to this problem. Go to your nearest Wal-Mart or K-Mart store and purchase four pairs of round velcro tabs from the sewing section.

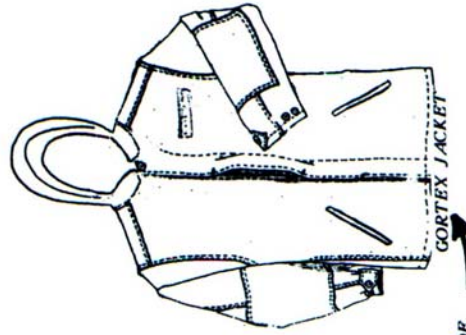
Then take your military issued field jacket liner and place it inside your Gortex Extreme Cold Weather Parker. Locate where the velcro tabs that are already sewn into the Gortex Parker and mark down where they touch on field jacket liner. Remove the field jacket liner, sew in the velcro tabs and then try it on.

It works great! You'll notice the difference right away as it will retain more body heat.

Ranger Rick's Comments: Sounds like a winner! But don't forget to remove some of your cold weather clothing such as your liner and heavy jacket just prior to making a long tactical foot movement. Because...."The More Clothing You Wear On A Tactical Foot Movement, The More You Will Sweat. And The More You Sweat, - The Colder You Will Get When You Finally Come To A Rest."



FIELD JACKET LINER



PLACE INSIDE

GORTEX JACKET

TENT POLE MODIFICATIONS

Submitted By Ssg. Craig A. Mart's

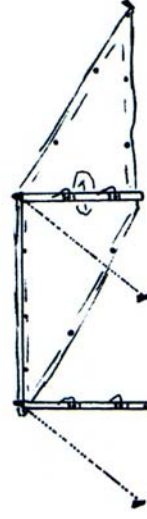
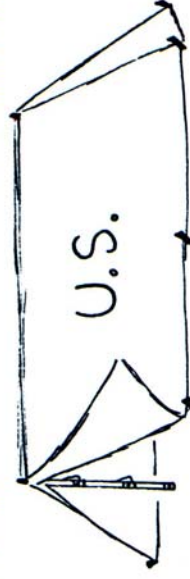
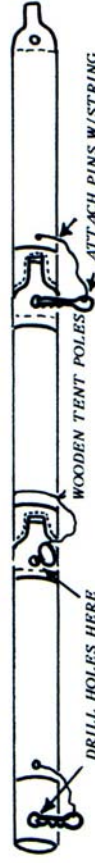
Hey Ranger Rick!

I'm writing to share a few more tips and tricks with you, hopefully you can use them in your next Ranger Digest Handbook. I sure hope you keep on publishing these books, as I look forward to learning something new from each and every one of them. Most of your tips & tricks are so common sense and simple to do, it's hard to believe how easy we overlook them.

Have you ever had a hard time keeping your 3 X piece Wooden Tent Pole set together in the field? You know, for such things as erecting a pup tent or poncho shelter? Well, the solution to this problem is simple.

First, find or buy yourself a couple (3) of cotter pins or used grenade pins & rings. Second, put all three tent pole pieces together and then drill a couple of small holes about the same size as the pins at the "top and bottom" portion of each tent pole (see drawing). When drilling the holes, insure the holes are drilled "exactly" the same distance apart on each pole, so that when you pop them together it won't make a difference which one is first, last or in the middle.

Should you screw up and make a mistake in drilling these holes, then simply mark and number the poles 1-2-3 so that you'll be able to put them together more easily in the field.

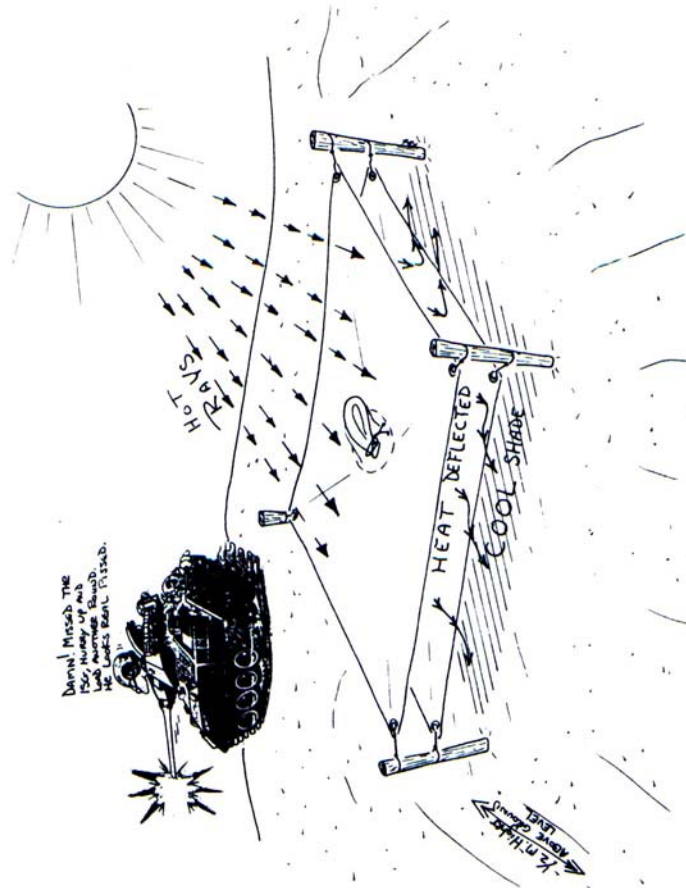


Hey, wanna know how to keep a bit more cooler or less hotter out in the desert? Build a double-decker covered shelter with either two ponchos or two poncho liners.

The top cover protects you from the sun's rays, and the second cover deflects the heat from the first cover away from you.

And if you place the floor of the shelter a 1/2 meter "above" or "below" the desert surface, it'll make it a bit more cooler. Try it!

NOTE: Don't have two poncho's or two poncho liners to use? If ya use only one, the higher it's erected - the less heat you'll feel and deflected off of it. The lower to the ground it's erected - the more heat that'll be deflected and felt. Go figure!



REPAIRING PONCHOS

Submitted By Chris Ayers

How many times have you turned in a rain poncho for a serviceable one just because it leaked a few drops of water when you used it in the field as a shelter? A bunch of times, right? I'll bet ya have.

Did you have to wait in a line a long time to turn it in? If not, I'll bet when you handed it over to the supply clerk he or she probably asked ya, "So what's f----- wrong with it?" And when you told'em, "It f----- leaks." They probably said, "I don't see any f----- holes." Right?

Unless, of course, you did what everyone else does today. You took out your trusty ol' pocket knife and made a few more holes so the supply clerk could obviously see what's wrong with it, right? Yep.

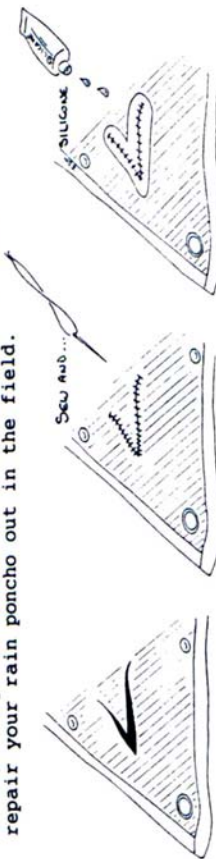
Well, it's not that damn difficult to repair a rain poncho today. All ya need is a sewing needle, some thread, and a small tube of "rubber" or "silicone" glue. Yep, that's all.

To locate every single hole or tear in your poncho, hang it on a wash line outside in the direction of the sun. And with the poncho fully open and stretched between you and the sun, you shouldn't have any problems seeing all the pin holes and tears.

To repair small and tiny holes, wipe the area clean and place a small amount of rubber/silicone glue directly on the hole and smear in with your finger. Then go to the other side of the poncho and repeat the same procedure. NOTE: It doesn't do any good to do just one side, you need to do "both sides" to insure the hole is completely closed.

To repair small rips and tears, take a needle and thread and sew it up the best you can. Then wipe the area clean, place some rubber or silicone glue directly on the stitches and smear it in. Then go to the other side of the poncho and repeat this same procedure.

Because rubber and silicone glue can be purchased in very small tubes, always carry some in your rucksack in case you need to repair your rain poncho out in the field.



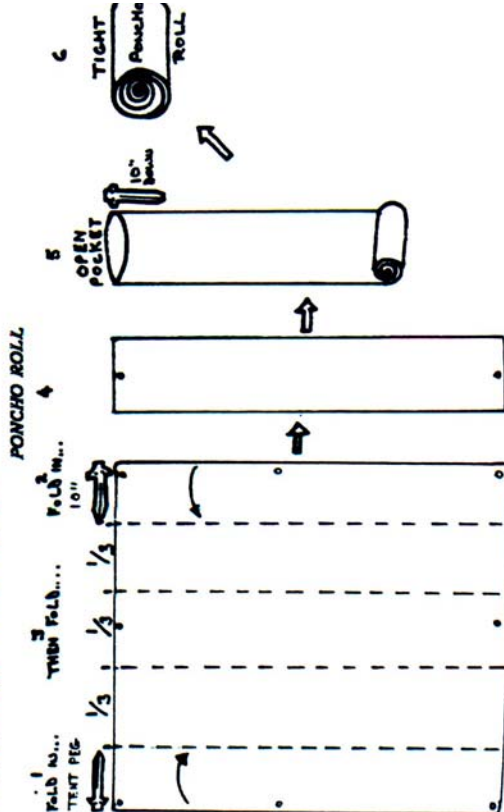
PONCHO ROLLING

Submitted by: Spc Robert G. Warmack

The military poncho when not folded or rolled correctly, is a bulky piece of plastic. It's sort of like trying to stuff an unrolled sleeping bag in a rucksack. It's better to take a little time to practice rolling or folding it than slam dunking it in your ruck.

One rolling technique/tip that Spc Robert G. Warmack sent goes like this:

- 1st Roll out your poncho on a flat clean surface. Then fold in the long sides of the poncho by approximately 10 inches or tent peg length.
 - 2nd Fold the long sides into thirds until it is 1/3 in length.
 - 3rd Start on one end and begin rolling, not folding, it up tightly and evenly and stop at approximately 10 inches from the other end.
 - 4th Fold back and open the end to form an open pocket.
 - 5th Roll the main portion into the pocket and tuck in any loose ends. If the rolled poncho appears loose in the pocket, try again. Except, unroll slightly and reroll tighter.
- And there you have it, a nice, neat, rolled poncho ready to be attached to your pistol belt or tucked into your rucksack cargo pocket.



PONCHO VILLA MODIFICATIONS

Submitted By: LTC GRANT BARR

In 1987, I came up with an idea on how to modify a poncho liner into a light weight sleeping bag, carry-all-bag, and Poncho Villa blanket. I sent the idea to US Cavalry, they liked it and asked if they could use my idea.

Of course I said "yes." And the next thing I knew it's advertised in their catalog as a "DELTA LINER" selling for \$60 bucks. The Delta Liner had a zipper installed all around the sides, a draw string at the top and a velcro slit in the center. They did exactly what I suggested on how to modify the poncho liner. It no doubt was beautifully made, no question about that. And they even paid me a commission of \$1.50 per each Delta Liner sold.

Now the bad news....They only sold about 5 delta liners a month and it only lasted about a year before they discontinued it. The only reason it was a flop (my personal opinion, not theirs) was because they charged too much for it. Who the hell is going to pay \$60 for a liner that sells for \$20 in the Military Clothing Sales Store? The 18 inch piece of velcro or zipper only costs a buck in a sewing store, the draw string costs 25 cents, and the long zipper that was ordered from a sleeping bag manufacturer cost them probably only about \$5.00. So no wonder it didn't last long in US Cavalry. But they gave it a shot anyway, and I respect them for this (but I still wouldn't pay \$60 for it, and I was the inventor).

Well, in my Ranger Digest I Handbook, I showed how to make the poncho liner into a sleeping bag. And in the Ranger Digest II, I showed how to add a space blanket to the poncho liner to make it more warmer. But I forgot to show how to make the poncho liner more adaptable for poncho use. Really, what good is it if a poncho liner can't be worn under the poncho? Right?

And thanks to LTC (Doctor) Grant Barr, he reminded me just how to do it. (Thank you, Sir!)

Well, all you need to do is go to any sewing store and either buy an 18 inch strip of velcro or a zipper. Once you have that, lay the poncho out on the floor. Take the liner (or blanket) and lay it down over the poncho. Locate the poncho's opening hood through the liner and place a mark on the liner. Grab a razor and cut a slit about the same size as the opening of the poncho hood. Take your pieces of velcro (or zipper) and then sew it into the liner. Now try it on.... Works, don't it?

NOTE: Ensure you make the hole in the liner big enough for your "fat head" to fit through before adding and sewing in the zipper or velcro.



HOW TO MAKE A LIGHTWEIGHT SLEEPING BAG.

Getting used to an outdoor military field environment is not easy, it takes time before you become accustomed to it. You look forward to only a few things at the end of a long hard day: a nice warm meal, a nice long shit, and a good night's sleep. That's if you don't have security or guard watch.....

If you're an elite Paratrooper, Ranger, SF or Recon trooper, you're not always going have a nice, warm sleeping bag along with you. Sometimes, depending on the mission, you may have to sacrifice some gear. And yep, that's when you'll be forced to either ditch your rucksack, sleeping bag or both. The choice may not always be yours. But as a general rule, if you can carry it inside or attached to your butt pack - you can take it along with you. If you can't - it's left behind.

During my 16 years in the military (so far), I have only been caught once or twice without some sort of a sleeping roll. After freezing my ass off a few too many times than what I care to remember, I said, "that's it!" And then from there on out, I ALWAYS carried a modified poncho and poncho liner wherever I went. Here's what I did,

I bought an extra poncho liner and two 96" inch long zippers. The poncho liner was easily purchased from the base Military Clothing Sales Store (MCSS), but the 96 inch zipper was hard to find. I called a few local off-post sporting goods stores asking if it's possible to buy a sleeping bag zipper separately. They said "NO," I had to buy the entire bag or nothing at all.

So I went to my local sporting good store, found a few popular brand name sleeping bags and copied down the manufacturer's addresses that were on the boxes. I then sent a couple of letters to these companies stating that I recently purchased one of their products, but that the zipper was defective. I also BS'd them a little and said I really liked their products and have been buying their camping equipment for years. (I lied.)

I then asked if I could purchase a zipper to replace the defective one, and guess what? It worked! I received a free zipper from one company, no response from another, and a third company sent me a zipper but charged me \$10.00 for it.

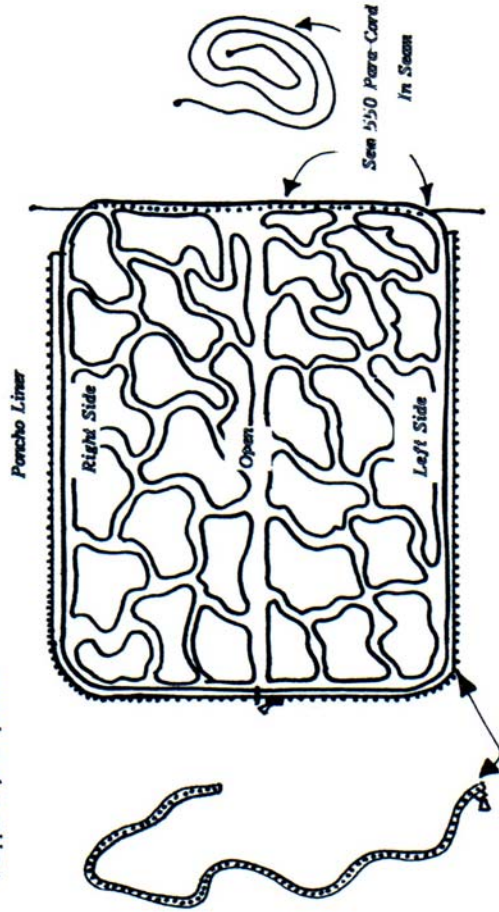
Here's how you install the zipper onto your liner or poncho.

The first thing you need to do is fold the poncho liner in half the long way. Take the 96 inch long zipper and measure where it will start and end on the liner, mark it with a pen or a couple of pins. Separate the two parts of the zipper and sew them into the left and right side of the poncho liner. I highly encourage you to use a sewing machine rather than doing it all by hand. Or better yet, just take it to a local sewing shop and have them do it.

You can also add a draw string at the top of the liner. Simply poke two holes at the two

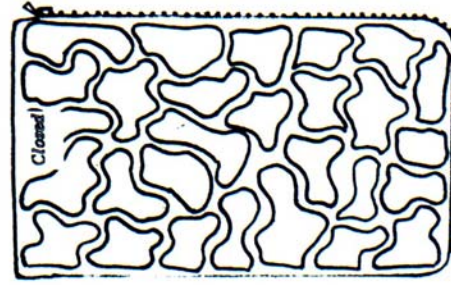
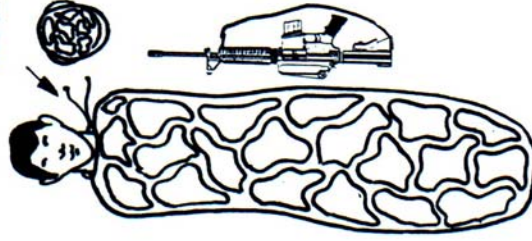


top corners of the liner's seam, take a metal coat hanger, stretch it out all the way, tape the string securely to the end of the wire coat hanger and run it through one hole until it comes out the other hole. Then tie a couple of large knots at the end of the string to prevent it from coming out of the holes. And there you have it, a lightweight, compact sleeping bag that can be packed easily inside your little butt pack. And for additional protection against bad weather, try adding a zipper to your "poncho."



96 inch Zipper 550 Para-Cord

Draw String



Zippered Up



DO-IT-YOURSELF BALKAN SLEEPING BAG

Submitted By: PFC KEVIN DUQUETTE
UN Operation "ABLE SENTRY"

Just before our unit deployed on a UN peace keeping mission into Macedonia, I made a high-speed sleeping bag. Unfortunately I never got to test it out. But what better way to test it than on the mountainous borders of Serbia, Macedonia and Albania.

And guess what, Ranger Rick? It worked great as a compact, lightweight, intermediate cold weather sleeping bag. It can easily be attached to the bottom portion of your butt pack. It's so simple to make that any motivated soldier can do it. All you need is 2 X poncho liners, 1 X OD green space blanket, and either a long sleeping bag zipper or some velcro.

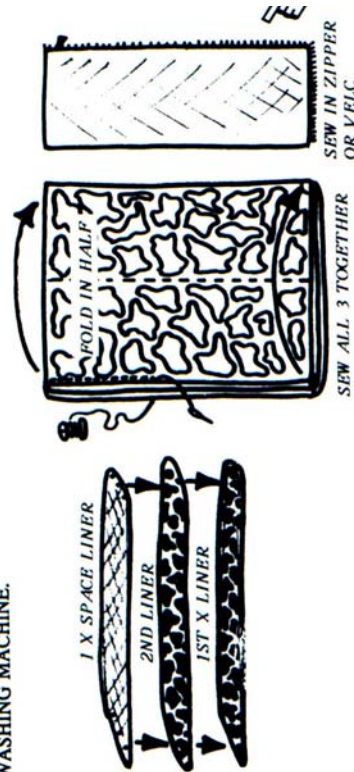
STEP 1: Lay out both poncho liners, one on top of the other. Then lay the OD green space blanket (silver part down) on the very top of the liners.

STEP 2: Using either black, green, or brown thread. Sew all three of the items/layers together all along the entire edges and then across the front.

STEP 3: Find the middle of the poncho liner/space blanket and fold in the left and right sides to this middle point. Now, sew it completely closed across the top and bottom portion of the liner.

STEP 4: Finally, sew in a zipper (or some velcro) down the open middle portion of the liner. And what you now have is a "Balkan Sleeping Bag."

If you desire, you can modify and trim the corners of the bag by making it more circular. Either cut off the corners, or fold & sew the corners inward. Add a couple of draw strings to the bottom portion of the bag and you'll be able to roll and tie it up more easily to your butt pack. To clean it, you will need to take it to a dry cleaner, NEVER WASH IT IN A WASHING MACHINE.



FIELD EXPEDIENT PONCHO SHELTERS

The poncho is an excellent piece of equipment that is easily molded to fit your shelter needs. There are a vast number of shelters that can be easily erected with the poncho. Each has its advantages and disadvantages, depending on weather and season. Construct your shelter to suit weather and living conditions.

It is recommended that you pack two ponchos: one to be used as overhead cover and the other as a ground cover. Modify each poncho by adding a length of strong string (nylon parachute cord is ideal) to all four corners and all four sides. Tie them to the grommets in the poncho. The strings should be at least 18 inches long or longer. These will be used as tie downs to lash the poncho to trees and branches when forming a shelter. The strings may not all be needed all of the time, but they are there when needed.

The designs shown are for one man shelters; two or more man shelters can easily be constructed by adding additional ponchos and a little bit of imagination.

SIMPLE PONCHO SHELTERS



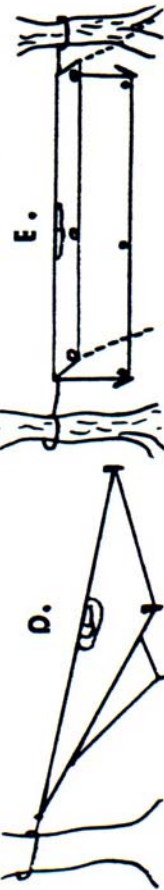
A.) EXCELLENT FOR WINTER AND WINDY WEATHER

B.) GREAT FOR TROPICAL OR LIGHT RAIN WEATHER. PROVIDES SHADE.

C.) FOR STORAGE OF EXTRA EQUIPMENT OR SHEARING WITH A BUDDY WHEN EXTRA ROOM IS NEEDED.

D.) LOW PROFILE SHELTER IS GREAT FOR ADDITIONAL COVER FROM ROCKS!

E.) THIS STYLE IS USED FOR KEEPING TO WARM WHEN A FIRE IS EFFECTED TO THE FRONT, REFLECTS HEAT.



RANGER RICK'S MULTI-PURPOSE ALL WEATHER PONCHO SHELTER

In my first Ranger Digest Handbook, I showed you the five basic poncho shelters that most troops erect when they go to the field. Each type of shelter serves a different purpose, which of course, depends on the type of weather and climate your operating in. But one special shelter that I forgot to show you, is the Mother Of All Poncho Shelters, it's called the "Multi-Purpose All Weather Poncho Shelter."

The only bad thing about making this shelter, is that it takes a lot of extra work and time to build. But it's well worth it if...

- A. Your going to be in one location for a long period of time (48+ hrs) and the weather is really shitty. (Windy, Rainy, Snow,)
- B. You have plenty of 550 Para-Cord or WD1 Commo Wire and a very good "holeless" poncho.

NOTE: If your not going to use 550 para-cord or commo wire, then you better make sure your using something that is equally strong and will withstand a lot of twisting and stretching without breaking.

OK, once you have these items, here's what you do....

Step 1: Find yourself 6 X good strong sticks just a little bit longer than the length of the poncho. Not too thick and not too thin.

Step 2: Lay open your poncho down on the ground, place all four sticks along the sides of the poncho end-to-end forming a large square frame. With the remaining two sticks, you can either criss-cross them in the center of the square so that all four ends of the sticks rest on the corners of the square. Or you can lay them across the center of the square so that the ends rest on the long sides of the square.

Step 3: Take some tie-down and wrap it loosely around the corners of the sticks and where the sticks crisscross each other. Don't waste a lot of tie-down cord or wire, just enough so it wraps once or twice (X style) around both ends of the sticks and then tie it off with a good but "loose" sturdy knot.

Step 4: Once all 6 X sticks are loosely attached to one another by tie-down, take 4 - 6 smaller & thinner sticks (approximately 8" in length) and place them underneath and between the tie down.

Now for you good'ol country "farm boys." Just twist these smaller sticks like your tightening loose barbwire on your farm. And for you "city boys," twist these sticks like your putting a tournique on a bleeding gang member's arm who just got stabbed or shot. Twist the small sticks until it tightens & locks securely in place

If your tie-down should break while tightening, then you screwed up and used the wrong shit, dumb butt! As I stated before...USE 550 PAKA-CORD or WD1 COMMO WIRE, it's stronger and will withstand alot more twisting and stretching.



Step 5: If you twist and bend the "tie-down sticks" slightly over to one side or at an angle, it should hold in place and not unravel or untie itself. But if you are having some difficulty, then simply take another piece of cord or wire and tie the small stick down and in place.

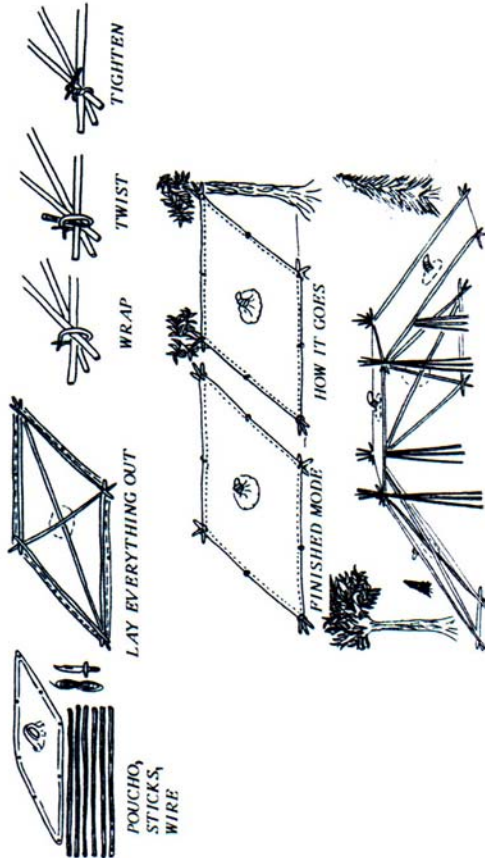
SUGGESTION: If you find it easier to tie down the four ends of the sticks first and then tie down the other two supporting "X" sticks separately, then do so. The only advantage this has is that it makes the poncho frame more sturdy. The disadvantage? The use of more tie down cord or wire.

Step 6: Take the "head cover" of the poncho and tie it securely closed. Once you have done this, take the poncho and place it over the square frame and tie it down. Now all you gotta do is lash and secure the frame to a nearby supporting trees).

What? You ain't got any trees nearby? Oh Shit. What are ya gonna do now? Quick! Jump through your ass and panic....

Relax. No Problem! Just find yourself six more sturdy poles about the same length as the poncho and stand three of them side-by-side teepee style. Then wrap some tie-down cord/wire around the upper portion of the poles to hold them in place. Do the same with the second set of poles too. Now open both of these sets of poles so they stand up on their own. Locate where you want to erect this shelter, place the tee-pee poles in place and then lean the poncho frame onto the poles and tie it in place.

All this may seem like a lot of hassles for just one lousy poncho shelter. But if your going to be in one location for a period of time and the weather is definitely "nasty and shitty." Then no doubt this poncho shelter is for you.



FIRE TEAM or SQUAD SHELTER

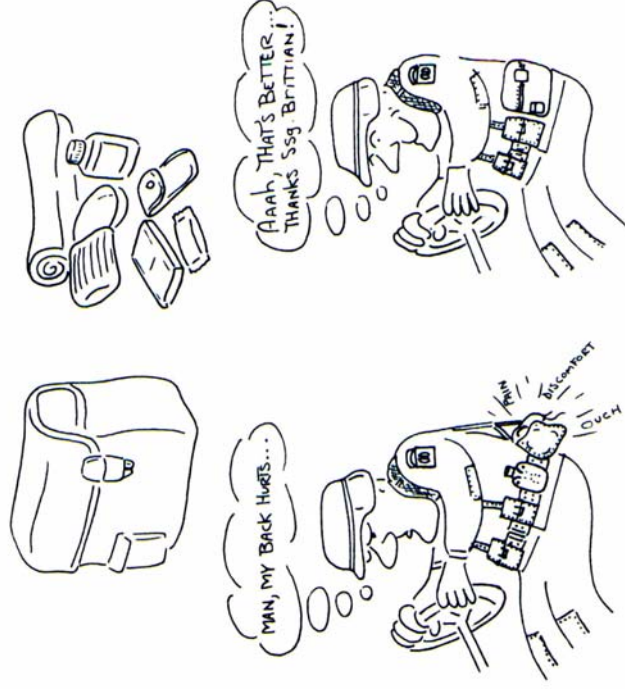
TWO QUART SIDE-PACKS

Submitted By: Ssg.Steve Brittian

For those of you who are assigned to a mechanized infantry or wheeled vehicle unit, I'm sure you'll appreciate this next tip. Are ya tired of getting in & out and sitting uncomfortably in your track or HMMVEE because of that damn f----- butt pack keeps poking ya in your back?

Well, Ssg.Steve Brittian got fed up with it too, so he doesn't wear one anymore. Instead, he bought himself a two quart "canteen cover" and attached it to the side of his pistol belt and carries about the same amount of stuff he would normally carry in his butt pack.

For those of you who like to carry a bit more stuff, buy 2 x two quart canteen covers and attach them to the left and right side of your pistol belt. Not only will it be a lot more comfortable getting in & out and sitting in your track or vehicle, but carrying a rucksack on your back too. Smart idea, uh?



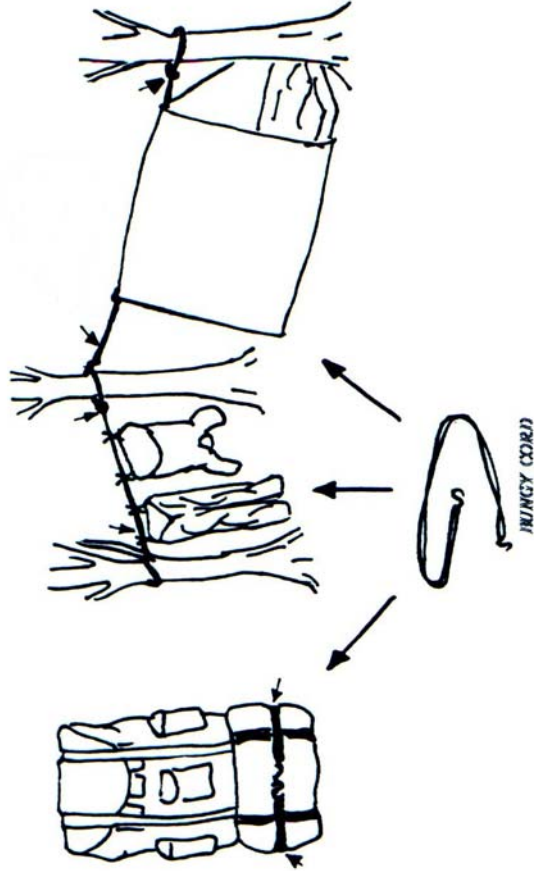
TIE DOWN STRAPS (BUNGY CORD)

One piece of civilian car equipment that has proved an excellent accessory with many uses is the bungee cord. Originally designed for lashing down luggage on car roofs, it popped up in the military market a few years ago. It can be used as an all purpose tie down for rucksacks, shelters, clothes lines, and whatever else your imagination invents.

The color of the bungee cord should be black or dark green for tactical reasons. If you can't locate the color on the store shelf, you can easily dye or paint the cord without first stretching it. A shoe dye/polish or spray paint will do the trick. But keep it camouflaged (black or green in vegetated area, white in alpine areas).

You can add extra hooks made from wire cut from coat hangers. These can be used as hooks for hanging clothes or as extra hooks for securing the bungee cord to the rucksack or shelter tie-down. Get yourself a wire coat hanger and cut it into 4-6 inch pieces. Grab a pair of needle nose pliers and bend/wrap the wire around the cord. Form hooks at the end. Hooks wrapped around bungee cord should be able to move freely back and forth.

The most useful length of bungee cord is 2 to 3 feet. It is recommended that you get 2 or more and attach them to your rucksack.





WEB BELT QUICK RELEASE

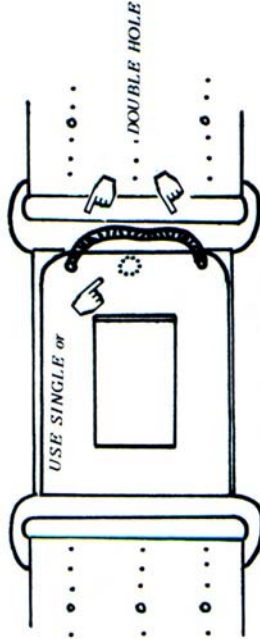
For all of you guys and gals who were fortunate enough to be issued a plastic buckle with their web belt, you'll appreciate this next little trick. It's called a "550 Para-Cord Quick Release."

Take the plastic belt buckle in your hand, drill a medium size hole clean through the outer lip portion of the plastic buckle with either a "red hot" nail or a very sharp "pointed" knife, (see drawing). Then take some 550 para-cord, feed it through the hole and "melt the ends" of the cord securely to the plastic buckle.

WARNING: Do Not Tie A Knot, just melt it FLAT against the plastic belt buckle surface. Tying a knot will only interfere with the opening and closing of the belt. When melting the ends of the nylon para-cord, wait a few minutes for it to cool before testing it out.

Put on the web belt, buckle it up, and now pull on the cord. The buckle should open quickly and easily. If the par-cord comes out of the hole, burn and let the 550 para-cord melt a little bit longer. Then test it out again. You may even add a loop to the single "quick release" para-cord to make it easier to grab.

If you desire, you can make two (2) holes in the belt buckle, run a single piece of para-cord through both of the holes and then melt the ends securely to the buckle.



NOTE: DO NOT MAKE HOLES TOO CLOSE TO EDGE OR THE PLASTIC BUCKLE WILL CRACK & BREAK OFF.

BUTT PACK MODIFICATIONS

Submitted By Spec. Bradley Nelson

"Whenever I wanted something out of my butt pack," Specialist Nelson writes, "it was such a hassle and a pain in the ass to open and close it. Only because of the long straps and metal belt buckles."

So one day I got fed up with it, I took out my knife, cut the damn things off and replaced them with a set of plastic buckles called FASTEX FASTENERS.

Now all I have to do is just reach behind, press, open and close my butt pack, no more problems or hassles. It's not only a lot easier to take things out and put 'em away, but it's also a lot quicker too.

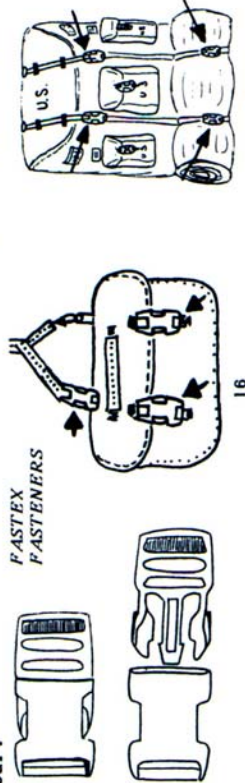
Ranger Rick's Comments: A great idea, especially if you happen to have one of those old butt packs with the long straps and metal buckles. But in looking through a few military supply catalogs recently, I see they have already started to make butt packs with these Fastex Fasteners. If your butt pack or other military gear does not yet have these hi-speed fasteners, you can purchase them separately from any well known hiking & camping supply store or catalog. One such place is called CAMPMOR (810 Route 17 N., P.O. Box# 997-D, Paramus, N.J. 07653-0997).

A few other modifications and improvements that I have personally made to my LBE and Butt Pack ...

A. I had fastex fasteners sewn and attached to the two short hook-up straps on the butt pack itself and also to the end of the LBE harness "Y-strap" where the metal links go. To me, these were a "pain in the ass" too. They either made little "clinking" sounds during night movements, and or they dug into your back whenever you put on a rucksack. Ouch!

B. I also had two fastex fasteners added to the top portion of my LBE harness. So that if I wanted to, I could wear the butt pack higher up on my back rucksack style.

There's no doubt these hi-speed fasteners are handy and have an assortment of uses. The only drawback is "wear & tear" and overloading your butt pack with too much weight. If and or when this happens, they will pop apart unexpectedly. When using fastex fasteners, periodically inspect them for serviceability and wear & tear.



BUTT PACK LIFE SAVERS

One of the most critical mistakes the military made to the supply system, was the removal of the good ol' butt pack from the supply inventory list. This little pack served as an "all purpose" carry case for all sorts of equipment. From personal "poggy bait" to clothing and ammunition. These little packs served many uses, and those who remember them most are those who served in Vietnam.

Only some special units today can still acquire these little butt packs through the military supply system. And even though they may be hard to acquire through normal military channels, you can still purchase these butt packs for your own personal use through any military surplus store or catalog. They are not very difficult to find, and you can easily attach it to your normal everyday field equipment. Not even your chain of command should mind you wearing this little pack. They come in one standard size, but they come in many different colors and patterns. If you are on active duty in the military service, I suggest you buy OD green or camouflage, as these will blend in best with other military equipment that you are issued. Even if your unit thrives on uniformity and your leaders enforce these policies, you shouldn't have much of a problem using or wearing one of these butt packs.

One of the major uses of the butt pack is to store critically needed equipment inside of it. Understand that the butt pack should always be attached to your LBE or temporarily slung across your ruck sack. For if you ever have to leave your ruck behind, you already have it attached or can quickly grab it off your ruck sack. Suggested items of equipment that should normally be stored in the butt pack are:

- *1. Poncho Liner
- *2. Rain Jacket/Pants
- 3. Sweater
- 4. Overshoes
- 5. Gloves/Socks/Underclothes
- *6. One (1) meal & Ammo

(*Represents the minimum needed in all types of climate survival)

These are considered critically needed items only when a ruck sack cannot be taken or when only bare necessities can be carried on a mission. If you have ever experienced in the past a typical troop movement in the field via vehicle or aircraft, you will know what I am talking about. By hearing those last famous words from your fearless leaders, "put your ruck on the truck and we'll link up with them later on!" **WRONG!** Murphy's Law may take it's toll and you may not see that rucksack again for many hours, or even days later. And if it's the cold weather season, you will definitely "freeze your ass off" waiting for that ruck or truck to link back up with you. (Believe me! I know by personal experience.) Regardless of how convincing your leaders are - keep those bare necessities packed in your butt pack - and keep that butt pack with you at **ALL TIMES!** If you follow this advice, you will find yourself better prepared for any



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future problems that may come along in the field.

One last tip on this subject, if you carry your overshoes - tie them on the bottom outside portion of the pack. This will give you much more room to store other items inside the pack.



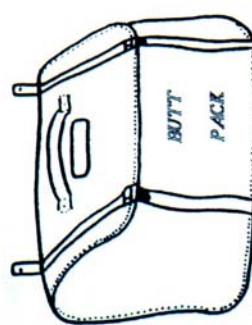
EXTRA UNDER CLOTHES



RAIN JACKET & PANTS



EXTRA SOCKS



AMMO AND EXPLOSIVES



FOOD AND RATIONS



LEATHER GLOVES

RAIN BOOTS/OVERSHOES TIED ON THE BOTTOM OF BUTT PACK



PONCHO LINER



PONCHO OR CAMMIE COVER



WOOL SWEATER

NOTICE: These are only some of the standard items needed to be carried in a butt pack and separated from a rucksack. For if you need to abandon your ruck, these items will help you to survive the four seasons. Of course, not all of these items will fit into the pack. You must decide which are more important and needed based on the climate and weather you are operating in.



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CHICKEN WIRE

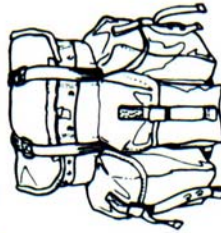
Here's an interesting trick. I learned this from a few Ranger Medics assigned to my unit. Have you ever seen the inside of a medic's aid bag? A good medic will have it organized and packed to the max with pills, cream, medicine, bandages, etc. How can they carry so much shit without getting it messed up? Most of the ones I've known can't, but these two medics did. How did they do it? Here's how...

They took cut-out sections of "Chicken Wire" and emplaced it along the inside portion of their aid bags. What this does is expand and keeps the sides of the bag erect so it does not collapse. Then they simply replaced their medical supplies back inside of it.

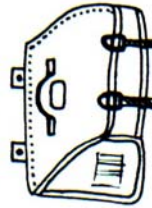
Not only does it make it much more easier to pack and store the items inside of it, but it helps protect the articles from being crushed or broken. Weighs very little and cost only pennies to make. Plus it's easy to cut, mold, and shape into place. Here's what else you can do with it, you can Cut, Shape, and Place some of it inside of your....



Duffel bag....



Rucksack....



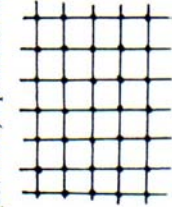
Butt Pack...



FOAM PADDING CAN ALSO BE USED IN PLACE OF CHICKEN WIRE.



Don't forget to trim the sharp, protruding, pointed edges before placing it inside any of these items. You don't want to poke holes in the material. To protect it even more, try taping heavy duty (100 MPH) tape around the entire edges of the chicken wire.



THIS WIRE



NOT THIS TYPE



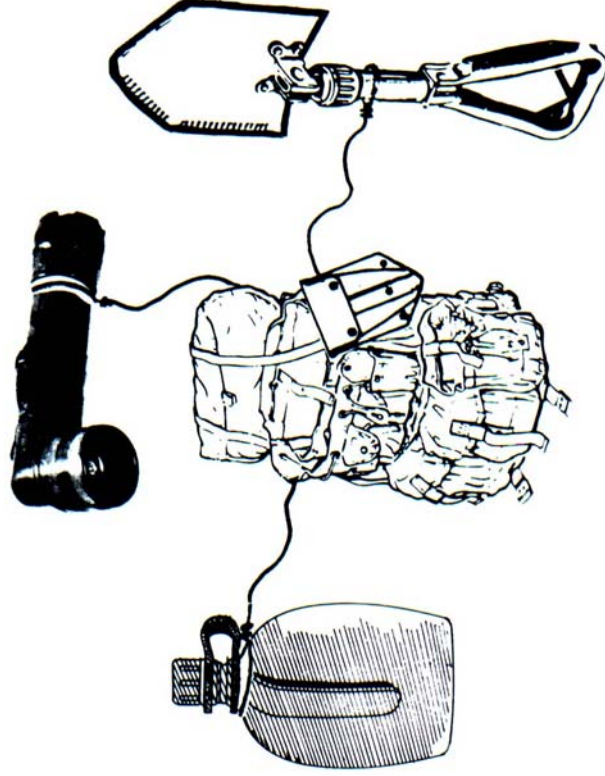
ADJUSTABLE SLIP KNOT

I don't know the correct technical name for it, but I call it an Adjustable "Slip & slide" Knot. I learned it from a French instructor at the French Commando School back in 1983. What I like most about this particular knot, is that it's adjustable.

I use it quite often for tying or attaching equipment to vehicles or rucksacks. You only have to "slip & slide" the loop and knot over the item you're securing, and "slip & slide" it right off. Saves you time and the hassles of tying a knot for each item you want to secure in place. It's a little difficult for me to try to explain how to tie this kind of a knot, so I'll just draw it instead.



SLIP & SLIDE YOUR THINGS ON & OFF YOUR RUCK OR LBE.



MODIFYING THE LBE HARNESS

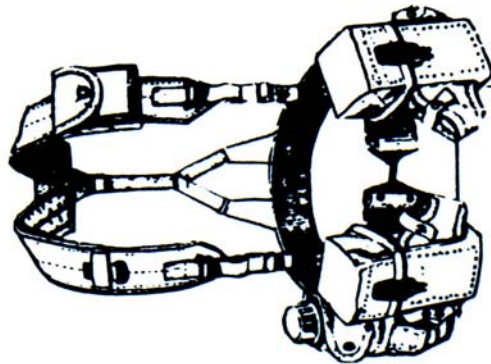
This tip will probably save your back a lot of unwanted pain, but it may cause your leaders to give you *other* pains in *other* places (get my drift?) But I am going to pass along this tip to you anyway, but don't say I didn't warn you!

Have you ever suffered sharp back pains due to carrying a rucksack that keeps rubbing or jabbing you in the same spot where your rear LBE adjustment links are located? Even after you adjusted and taped them a hundred times or so they still keep on jabbing you? Well, this tip will help ease most of the pain.

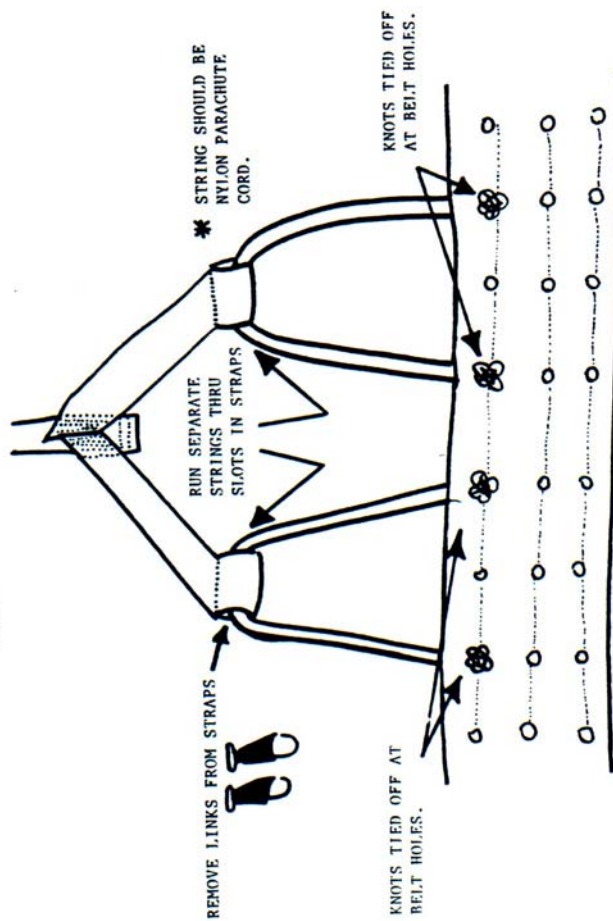
Acquire some nylon parachute cord, OD green preferred. You can either get some from a well-known military surplus store or acquire it from your supply SGT. Remove the two metal links from the back of the LBE with a screw driver or a pair of pliers. Run a 24" (approximately) nylon parachute cord through each harness loop (where the links were). Now run the ends through two of the many small 'washer holes' located on the pistol belt. Select two holes approximately 2 inches apart to the left and right of the center of the belt. If you can't figure out the center - just fold the belt in half and that will show you the center.

Put on the LBE and adjust it to a comfortable length. Now tie the ends off only at the pistol belt holes, and not too big of a knot or it will also cause rubbing and jabbing as well when it is worn. Repeat the same process for the other harness loop, if necessary readjust it until you are satisfied that it feels comfortable. If you wish, you can do the same with the front portion of the LBE harness straps. But be advised that this may be too much exposure, especially if you have a chain of command who thrives on uniformity needs - instead of comfort needs! The back portion of the LBE will not be too noticeable as the front will, but if you can get away with it - go for it!

Oh, don't throw away or lose track of those metal links you removed. You may have to put them back on later whenever you have to participate in a formal military ceremony (uniformity). Or when you are about ready to PCS or ETS and need to turn in that LBE and equipment to the supply SGT. As you should already know by now, he won't accept it unless it's completely intact.



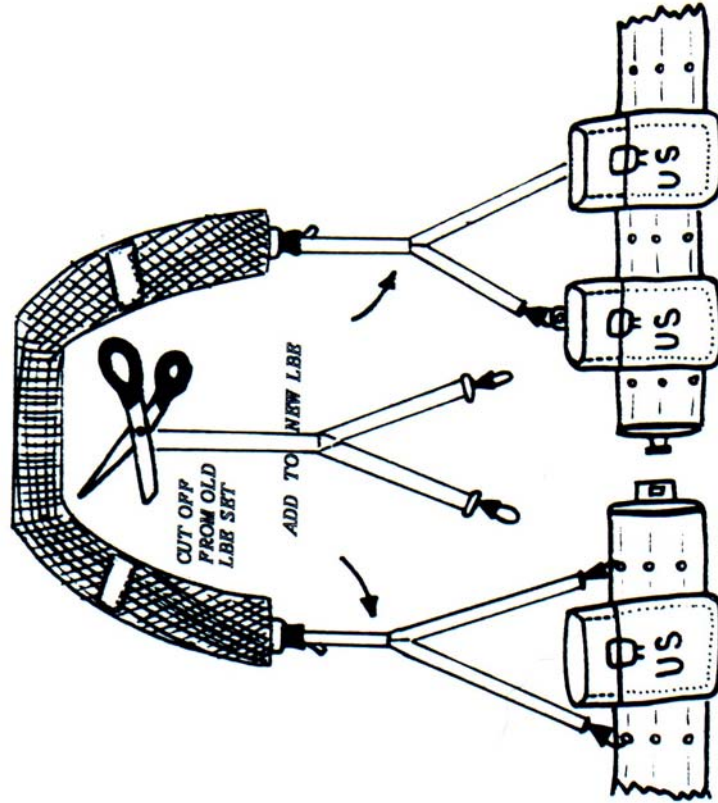
MODIFIED LBE WITH STRING ATTACHED.



CANNIBALIZE THOSE LBE STRAPS

Submitted by: Ssg Patrick Finley

If you run into someone trashing or turning in an extra LBE/LCE harness strap, do what Ssg Finley did. He found two harnesses and cut off the Y back portion of the strap and then removed or cut off the single LBE straps (off the front) of his good LBE, leaving the links connected. He then replaced them with the 'Y' back straps (from the other LBE) through the links. Then he adjusted and linked them up to the ammo pouch. This enables him to wear four ammo pouches comfortably by having the weight of the ammo distributed equally across the web belt and shoulder straps.



TIE IT DOWN

Submitted by: Sgt E. Coup

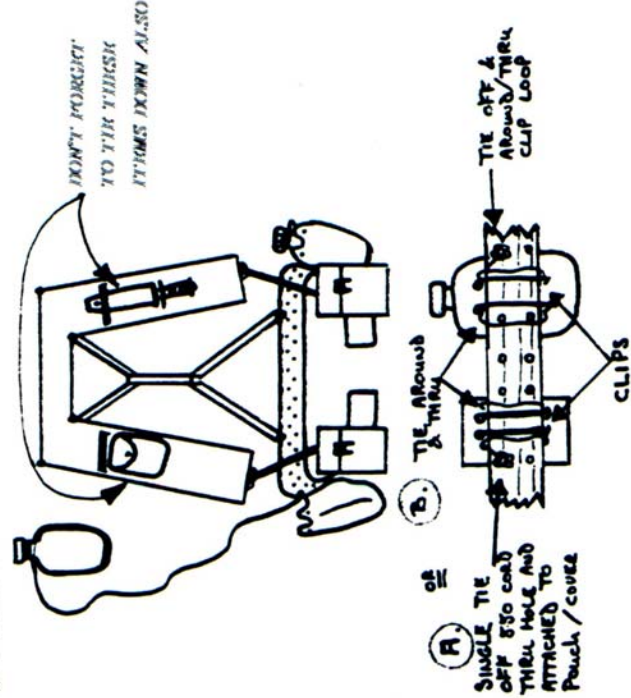
Have you ever lost any military gear in the field, such as your canteen, first-aid pouch or compass? The solution is simple: Tie It Down!

It doesn't take much to figure out how to secure the simplest items. For example, let's take the plastic canteen.

The best way to secure it is by attaching 550 parachute cord to the canteen's neck and the other end to the LBE web belt. Make sure you have at least three feet of cord as too little and you can't reach your mouth, too much and it gets hung up and in your way. Then simply take the tie down and either wrap it around the canteen's neck or tuck it in the canteen pouch.

NOTE: There should be at least one quick release or slip knot tied to one of the ends, either at the canteen neck or web belt so that you can easily remove it in order to fill your canteens at the stream or water point.

Ammo, first-aid, E-tool and compass pouches should be tied down through the pouch link's loops directly to the web belt, and not the metal belt link. You may have to remove some inner strings from the 550 parachute cord so it will pass more easily through the loop or holes. When tying the cord off, if you want to make sure it doesn't untie itself, melt the ends together with a lighter or match.



BUNGY QUICK RELEASE

Submitted By Chris Ayers

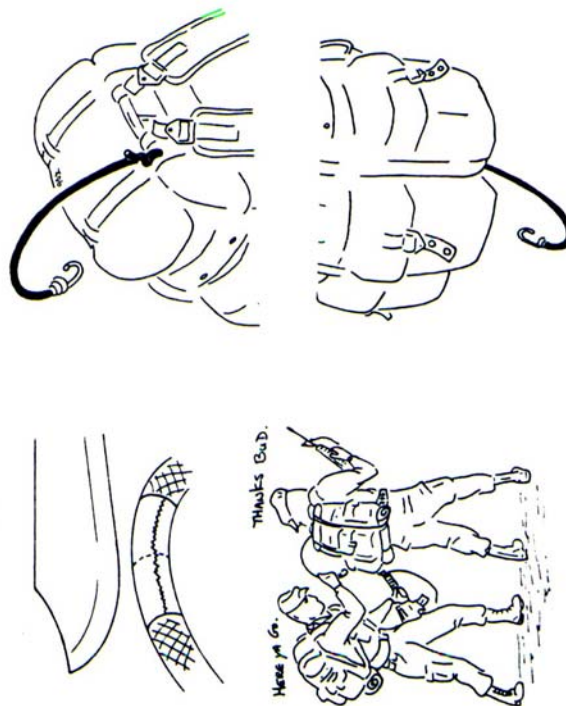
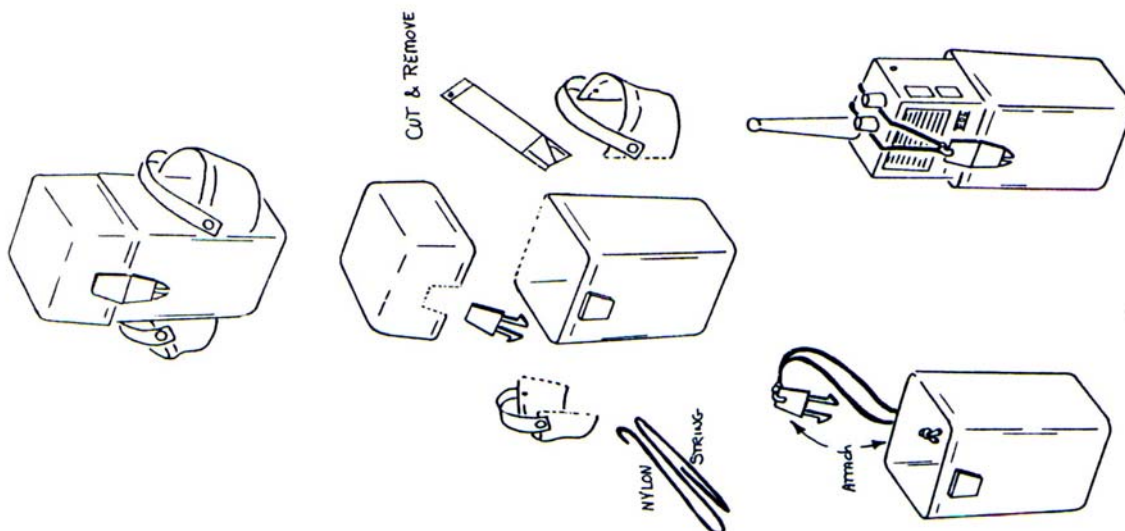
Some bungee cord attached to the outside portion of a rucksack can come in pretty handy for attaching all sorts of things, like jackets, poncho liners, aiming stakes, foam mattresses, etc.

Instead of stopping to open up a rucksack to place something inside, you only have to lift up on the bungee cord and slide it underneath to hold it in place. Hell, even your buddy can attach something to your rucksack while you're still on the move.

There's several ways you can attach a bungee cord to a rucksack. Either by wrapping it around the aluminum part of the frame, or by cutting the bungee cord in half and permanently tying it to the top or bottom portion of the frame.

But before cutting a bungee cord in half, wrap some 100 mph tape around the cord where you intend to cut it. This will prevent the outside material (that's wrapped around the rubber cord) from unraveling. Then burn and melt both the ends where the tape is wrapped to prevent it from further unraveling.

NOTE: Never remove the 100 mph tape from the bungee cord, or the material that's wrapped around the rubber cord could unexpectedly unravel, leave it in place.



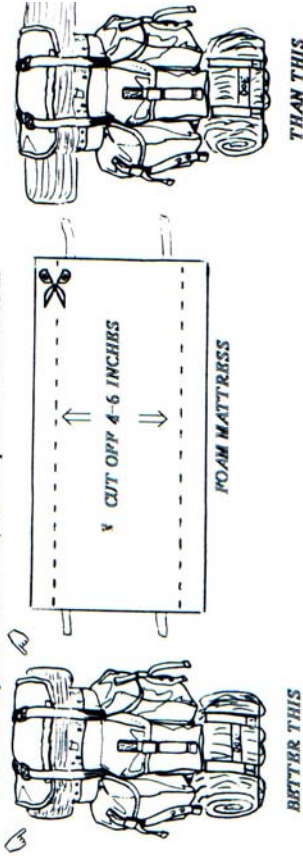


MODIFYING FOAM MATTRESSES

I received some mail from quite a few readers saying, "Hey Ranger Rick, you forgot to mention how to modify the foam mattress." Sorry, I thought I touched on this subject in one of my other Ranger Digest handbooks.

It's really very simple and easy to do. I, myself always used a cut down modified version for the field. When carried or attached to a ruck, it's less bulky and easier to move through the woods without getting hung up on branches or "wait-a-minute-veins."

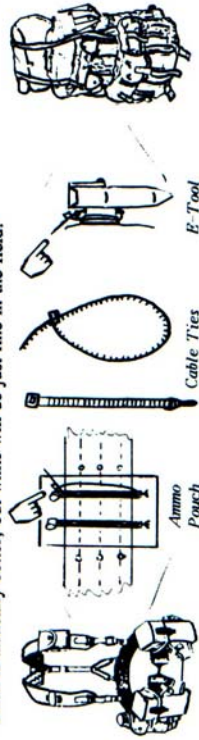
For those of you who can't read, here's a picture on how to do it.



CABLE TIES

Submitted By: SSG. CRAIG MARTS

Instead of using 550 parachute cord to secure or tie down web gear or equipment, try using "Cable Ties." They are not only cheap to buy, \$2 per package of 50 from "Radio Shack," or from any auto parts store. But they are easier to use and replace than the 550 Parachute cord. Plus they come in a variety of sizes and in two different colors, black or white. Of course, black is tactically better, but white will do just fine in the field.



RUCK COMFORT TIPS

Submitted by: Pfc Matthew D. Hohman

Here's a rucksack comfort tip that's not a bad idea to try. Pfc Matthew D. Hohman recommends that you find yourself a second padded rucksack hip belt either by scrounging or purchasing one from your local Army Surplus Store.

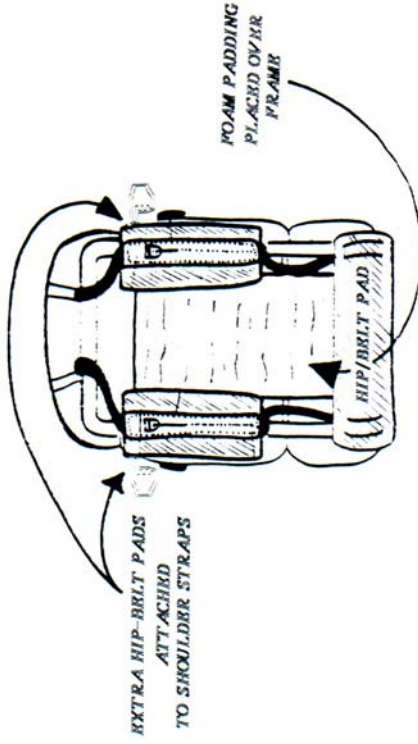
Remove the strap and belt buckle of the 2nd padded hip belt and attach it to the other padded hip belt of your ruck with 100 MPH tape. Don't try to tie it or sew it or you'll be wasting you time. Get the good military OD green tape or good hardware store duct tape and then carefully tape it very securely to the other pad.

If you do not tape it tight, secure and at least several times around, it will either tear, bunch up or the sticky portion of the tape will unravel and cause big time discomfort.

He also suggests that you try adding some foam mattress padding across the metal frame of the ruck. Either wrap it around the center, left and right side of the frame or just one large piece across the entire frame backing. Again, use strong duct tape or military 100 MPH tape.

AUTHOR'S TIP: I have personally modified my rucks by adding the foam pad entirely across the back of the ruck as suggested above. Acquire two rucksack hip belts, remove the belt buckles and just leave the D-rings attached. Then undo the rucksack's shoulder straps and run the strap ends through the extra pair of hip belts, padded portion facing. Then reattach the running ends back to the ruck frame.

Talk about comfort. Man, it beats the old hard core Army way any day. I know, you hard core Ranger and Delta guys think this is the wimp way, but come look me up when you're 50 years old and we'll see who's back and shoulders are in better condition.



RAIN COVERS FOR RUCKSACKS

The purpose of using a rain cover for rucksacks is to keep the ruck and its contents as dry as possible. The military rucksack is made of nylon and is waterproof to a degree, but not enough. A rucksack cover will help keep the rucksack dry, as well as the equipment inside. If you keep the rucksack from absorbing water, you will also keep the weight of the water from increasing the load of the ruck. A rucksack cover can be worn on the ruck during moves or when laying it down on the ground. Most shelters you will spend the night in will not have much room for you to store your ruck. If you have a cover for it, you can leave it outside without worrying about the weather.

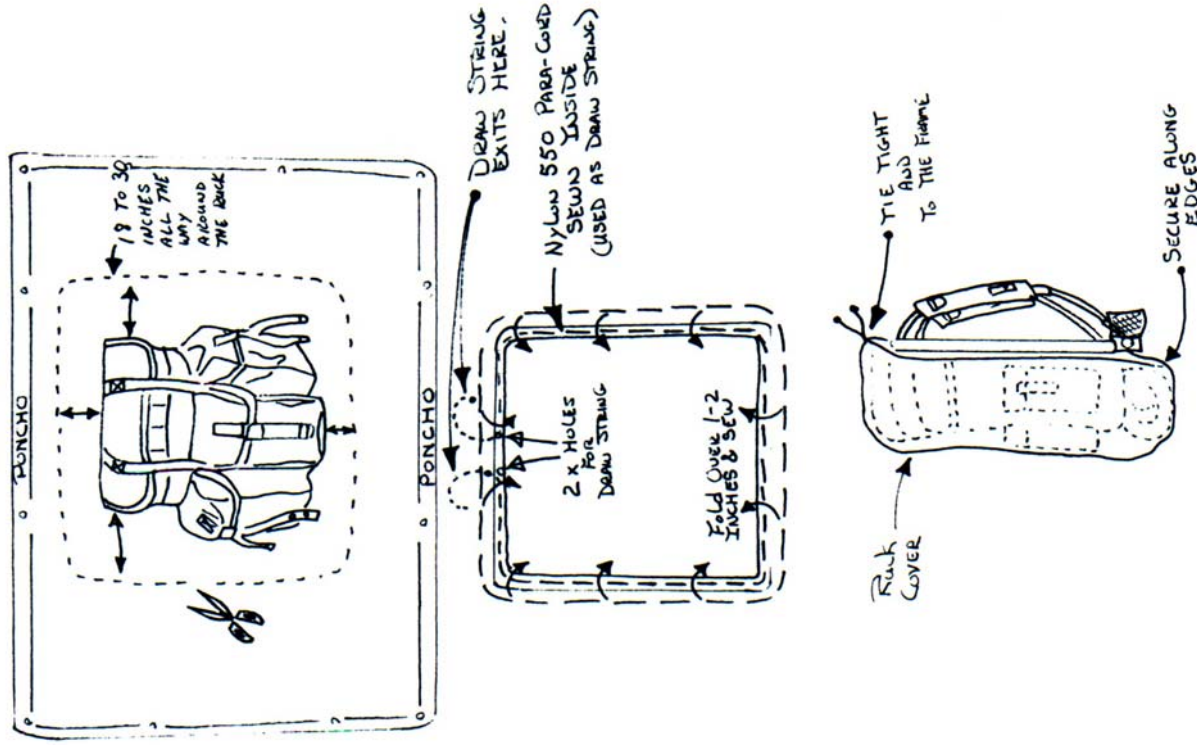
TO MAKE A SIMPLE COVER:

1. Get a new or used military issue waterproof bag or poncho. The poncho is made of thinner material than the bag, but it's much easier to fold and work with. Cut and lay out the material so it is fully open. Take a fully packed ruck and place it in the center of the material. Starting from the ruck, mark approximately 18 to 30 inches from all around its sides. Distance from sides will depend on how bulky your ruck is. Then cut out that portion of the material. Corners don't have to reach the ruck frame. (Two-thirds covering of the ruck is sufficient for waterproofing).
2. Mark the inside of the waterproof material one half inch all around. Fold inside, placing a strong string or elastic cord in the fold and sew in place, double stitching. Leave a gap or hole at the top or bottom of the covering when completing your work. This will be where the leading and trailing end of a cord will start and finish. Don't stitch the cord to the waterproof material! The cord must be able to move freely. Finally, place the finished cover over the ruck. To adjust for fit on the ruck, simply pull or loosen the cord to meet the size of the ruck, then pull tight.

SPECIAL TIP: Add a few extra stitches around the adjustment hole to prevent the material from being torn when tightened. And place knots on the leading and trailing ends of the cord so it will not slip through the hole. Excess string should be secured to the ruck's frame to prevent it from being lost during fast movements through brush and trees.



RUCK COVER



RUCK PACKING

Packing your ruck sack is like furnishing your home. You want to arrange it in a certain way to fit your needs. There are many ways that a ruck can be packed, but there is a right way and a wrong way. The difference is a choice between being comfortable and convenient versus being uncomfortable and dealing with a lot of unnecessary hassles.

Today's soldier does not have a choice on what can be taken to the field, but he does have a choice in where the required items are packed. If you take the time and separate your field equipment by daily use and occasional use, it will be much easier to pack and locate without dumping everything. A simple way of dividing and packing should go something like this:

DAILY USAGE

SLEEPING GEAR: Tied outside, located on top or bottom of ruck.
SHELTER COVER: Tied or packed with sleeping gear or if small enough, in outside pocket of ruck.
STOVE: Packed/tied outside of ruck. (Use a canteen case).
SHAVING KIT: Packed in outside pocket of ruck.
FOOT POWDER/CHAPSTICK: Packed with shaving kit.
SWEATER/JACKET: Inside of ruck, packed toward the very top.
FOOD ARTICLES: Pack no more than one or two meals in one of the outside pockets. If there are additional meals, pack them deep inside of ruck.

OCCASIONAL USAGE:

RAIN SUIT: Outer top ruck pocket or inside ruck toward the top.
SOCKS/UNDERCLOTHES: One set toward the top inside of the ruck.
OVERSHOES: Tied outside of ruck, possibly strapped to sleeping gear.

Any additional clothing or equipment that must be taken can be packed toward the bottom of the ruck. An example of this is additional uniforms, blankets, boots, socks, etc. Keep the majority of the weight toward the top so it will be better balanced for walking and easier to carry.

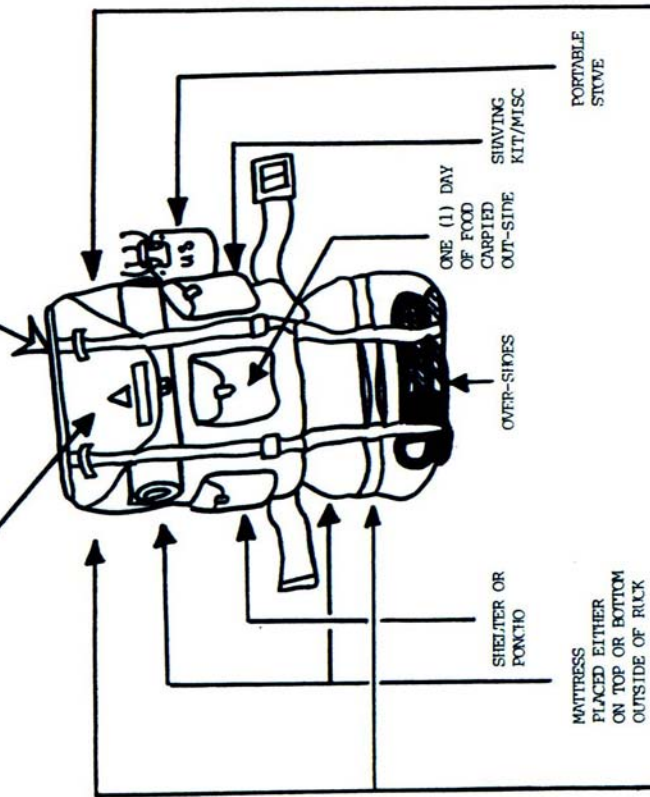
SPECIAL TIP: Put as many items as possible inside plastic bags. Small trash bags or zip-lock sandwich bags are ideal. They keep items clean, fresh and dry in all types of weather conditions. And they can be used as mini-laundry bags to prevent other items from becoming dirty and smelly.



PACK AS MUCH CLOTHING IN SMALL PLASTIC BAGS TO KEEP DRY AND FRESH, AND SEAL WATER TIGHT.

KEEP WEIGHT TOWARDS THE TOP FOR EASY CARRY. KEEP NEEDED ITEMS OF USE FIRST.

RAIN SUIT PLACED IN TOP FLAP OR ON TOP.



SLEEPING BAG PACKED ON TOP OR BOTTOM OF RUCK.

MATTRESS PLACED EITHER ON TOP OR BOTTOM OUTSIDE OF RUCK

OVER-SHOES

ONE (1) DAY OF FOOD CARRIED OUT-SIDE

SHAVING KIT/MISC

PORTABLE STOVE

COLD WEATHER SEASON KEEP JACKET NEAR TOP.

IMPORTANT! Use The Waste Strap That Comes With The Ruck. Wear It Comfortably Tight Around The Waist/Hip.

The Weight Rest On The Hips, NOT ON THE SHOULDERS

SOF RUCK TIPS

Submitted By: Ssg.Craig Marts

"If you take care of your ruck, your ruck will take care of you." Easy words to say, but not many will do it. Most, if not all of you will probably treat your rucksack like it's a piece of shit. And then when it does finally fall apart on you, you'll bitch about the hassles of having to go turn it in for a new one. Right? But, if you take a little bit of time to perform some simple preventive maintenance on it, you'll minimize future "wear & tear."

Ssg Craig Marts, a Special Forces trooper, sent me a few of his favorite SOF rucksack tips. He says, "rucksack frames tend to wear out and shine after a period of time." To remedy this problem, get yourself some OD green or camouflage 100 mph tape that can be found in almost any hunting/sporting goods store. And then simply wrap the tape not only where it shines, but also around all the other parts of the frame too.

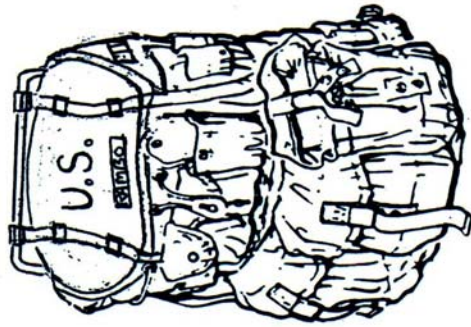
Need to attach a few more items onto the outside of your ruck? Take a sling (weapon, 2qt canteen or other type) and guide it through the lower rucksack "snap keepers" and then attach it either to the frame itself or to the lower ruck strap "buckle" (see drawing). Then take up the slack by tighten up the strap. This will not only allow you to carry more items on your ruck, but it will also tighten up any loose bulky items you have either on the outside or the inside of the ruck. Such as your E-tool & canteens.

With the heavy loads we're required to carry in SF, the rivets that keep the rucksack frame together sometimes pop out on us. When this happens, we don't turn them back in for a new one, we just redrill the hole and replace it with a nut & bolt. Which by the way, appears to make the rucksack frame a bit more stronger than what it was before, it even lasts longer too.

NOTE: If the bolt is too long or sticks out, cut or file it down to size so it's "flush" against the bolt itself. When tightening the nut to the bolt, DON'T tighten it too tight where it starts to "bend in" part of the frame. The more the frame is bent, the weaker it will come.

When your M17 Mask Carrier is no longer serviceable, before turning it back in for a new one, cut-off and remove the leg & waist straps. These straps can then be reused for attaching small items to the rucksack such as your E-tool, canteen, rope, bino's, night devices, etc.

Ranger Ricks Comments: On my ruck, instead of running a strap through the snap keepers, I always ran an extra elastic "bungee cord" through it. It not only kept my E-tool and canteen from bouncing around on the outside, but I was able to slide and attach a few other items to the ruck as well. Saves the hassles of always having to tighten up the strap.



STRAP or
BUNGY CORD



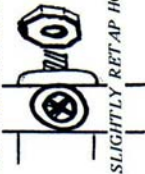
RUN THRU SNAP KEEPERS



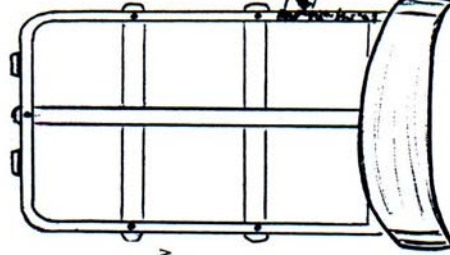
TAKE UP SLACK



BOLT, NUT, & 2 WASHERS



SLIGHTLY RETAP HOLE



WRAP TAPE ALL
AROUND FRAME

NOTE: IF THE HOLE IS TAPPED or
DRILLED TOO WIDE, IT WILL WEAKEN
THAT PORTION OF THE FRAME AND
BREAK OR BEND MORE EASILY.

SPECIAL OPS MINI PACK

Submitted By: Sgt. Frank Gilliland

Items needed; 2 x shoulder straps from a LC2 ruck, 1 x butt pack, 1 x canteen w/cover, and 24 inches of 550 paracord.

Attach the shoulder straps to the top and lower portion of the butt pack (as shown in the drawing) by the rings, velcrow and or with some 550 paracord.

Grab the canteen cover & clips and attach it to the handle of the butt pack which is locate on the flap. Take about 12 inches of 550 paracord, tie a big ol' knot in the middle of it and run these lose ends through the bottom of the canteen cover inside-out.

Then take these two lose ends and attach them to the top rings of the butt pack to prevent the canteen from flipping around & over.

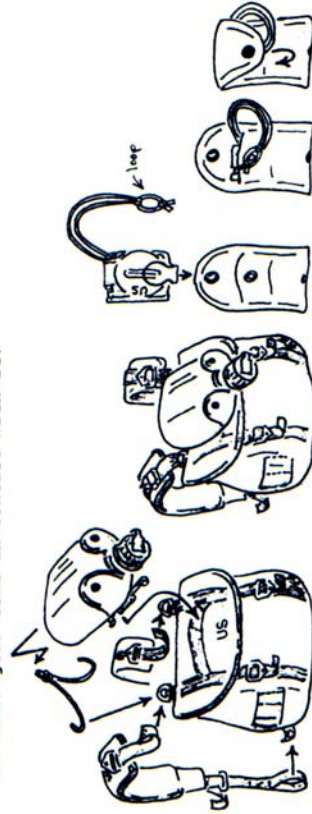
RANGER RICK'S COMMENTS: Another item you can attach to the butt pack handle is your E-tool. But make sure you run some 550 paracord through the bottom of the E-tool case to prevent it (also) from flipping around & over.

If you got two extra canteens, and or one extra canteen and an E-tool, try attaching them along the sides of the butt pack. If you are only going to carry one of these items, then attach it to the handle of the pack handle so it won't be uncomfortably off balance.

A few more ideas that Sgt. Gilliland had....

If you attach a small loop onto the lanyard of the military issued compass, you'll be able to open and close the compass pouch a bit more easily in a cold weather environment while wearing gloves.

A good place to keep some 550 paracord, is around the metal frame of your rucksack. Just wrap it carefully around it and it will always be there whenever you need it. Plus it will also absorb and dampen any clanging sounds should your weapon or other gear come in contact with it.



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MULTI-PURPOSE DOUBLE-HOOK SLING USES

The multi-purpose double hook strap has an assortment of uses. Personally, I like these straps because they're wide, o.d. green in color, and they have two snap-on hooks. I've used my straps for....

as a sling for my weapon...

for carrying my butt pack across my shoulder...

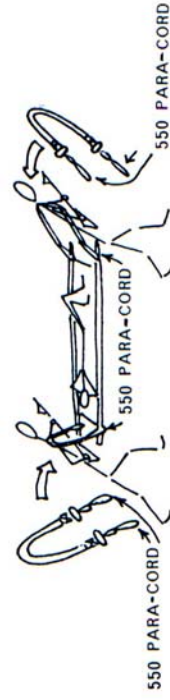
for attaching & carrying ammo cans.....

for attaching & carrying extra equipment to the outside portion of my rucksack.

If you got a couple of these multi-purpose straps handy and some 550 paracord, you can use 'em to rig up a handy-dandy stretcher support system. How?

First, take some 550 paracord and tie it to all four handles of the stretcher. Then, run it through the hooks of the multi-purpose straps. Then, take the straps and either slide it over your shoulders or across your rucksack as shown in the drawing below.

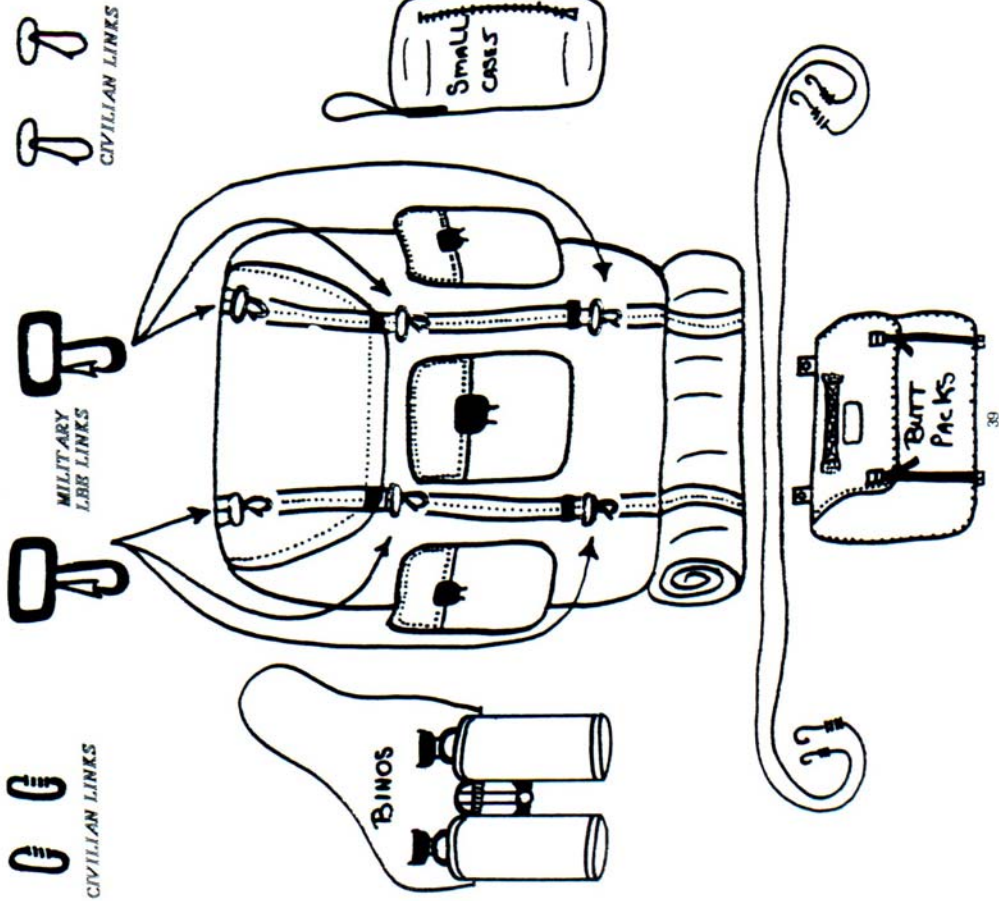
NOTE: The straps should be adjusted to a comfortable length so that the handles of the stretcher are no higher than waist level high or no lower than arms length down. Oh you'll still need to use your hands to steady the stretcher. But at least you'll be able to move faster and travel further without having to switch hands and or personnel so often.



LBE SNAP LINKS

Submitted by: Luis Calcorzi

If you modify your LBE suspenders with the 550 parachute cord, don't throw away those metal snap links. Use them for your rucksack as extra add-on snap links. By taking those LBE snap links and tying or securing them to the top part of your metal frame, you can use them to connect all sorts of items, such as you butt pack, binos, small cases, etc. Easy to snap-on and easy to snap-off, but make sure you tape them silent or the enemy will hear you coming.



MRE CONTAINERS TIPS

Submitted By: Sgt. Mathews S. Cousins

"Hey Ranger Rick, Here's another MRE container idea for ya!"

ITEMS NEEDED: MRE Plastic Container, Velcro and Epoxy Glue.

First, remove the food contents from the MRE plastic container and insure the "opening end" is cut straight and even across the top. Measure and cut a piece of velcro about the same width as the container.

Then, take one part of the velcro strips and glue it just a few inches below the opening end.

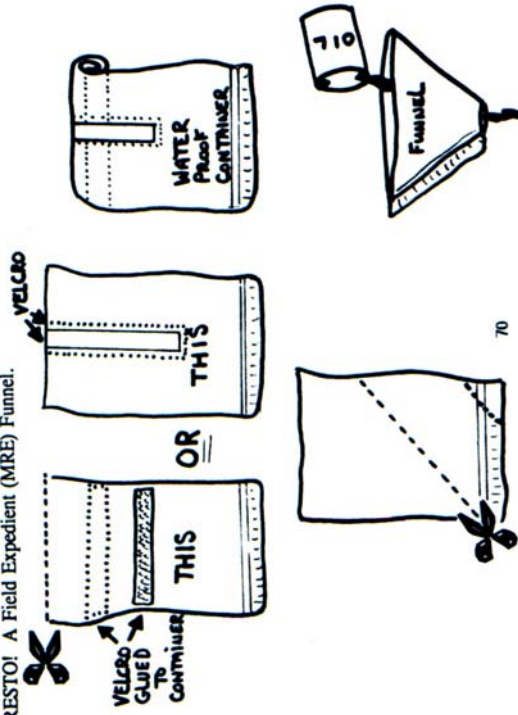
Finally, take the other velcro strip and glue it to the "opposite side" of the MRE container. But it must be placed a little further down from where the other one was glued.

IMPORTANT: The velcro strips **MUST BE GLUED ON STRAIGHT** in order for this to work properly.

When the glue is completely dried, test it out by rolling the MRE container back and forth. If both velcro pieces make contact or "grab" onto each other, then you did it right. If they don't - **YOU BLEW IT!** Start over again with a new MRE container and velcro.

RANGER RICK'S COMMENTS: Not bad! And for those of you who don't want to see the writing on the side of the MRE, turn the container inside out before gluing the velcro to it.

Here's another idea...Need to put water or oil in your vehicle but don't have a funnel? No Problem! Take an empty MRE container, cut one of the corners off at an angle, open it up and **PRESTO!** A Field Expedient (MRE) Funnel.





MRE CONTAINERS



Hey, hey, hey! Move over McGyver, I'm gaining on you, buddy. I have discovered how to get max use out of those Meals Ready to Eat (MRE) plastic containers

One night, not too long ago, I was in Turkey on an exercise called Display Determination 1991 and boy, was I bored. Really! Who in their right mind would sit around dreaming up a way to use expendable MRE plastic wrappers? (Except Ranger Rick.)

I know, you're thinking I'm nuts! Right? Yeah, you are. But wait and see what I dreamed up! I came up with several good ideas anyone can do.

MRE WATER BUCKET: To make, all you have to do is be careful in cutting open your MRE. At one end only, cut out half a circle moon through both sides. Cut it nice and carefully by keeping the half circle round and the lower portion of the circle straight. Then remove the cut out plastic from both sides. You should still be able to slide out the food contents if you did not make the hole too small.

If you have a pair of scissors or a McGyver swiss knife, it would be much easier to do. But if your knife is sharp and you take your time, you can still do it.

After removing the food contents, you now can fill it with water from a creek or lake and there you have it, a collapsible water bucket that weighs nothing and will fit easily into a ruck cargo packet.

MRE FIELD SLIPPERS: To make these field slippers, you need two plastic MRE packets, one for each foot. First, turn the MRE sideways, now as close to the sealed seam without cutting over it or through it. Cut out a circular pattern about the size of your fist.

Again, make it a clean circular cut, except make it through one side or layer. Remove the cut out portion of the plastic circle and remove the food contents. Try putting your foot (without your boot on dummy), through the circle and inside the wrapper.

It may be a tight fit and need stretching, and be advised, boot wearers above size 9, this MRE slipper is not for you. It's only good for size 9 feet and below. Sorry about that!

MRE WATERPROOF CONTAINERS: This is a simple tip on how to use the plastic MRE packets to waterproof your small items that you carry in your rucksack.

Simply make a clean, straight, even cut across one sealed end of the MRE packet. Make sure you have no jagged edges. Now, you can either leave the package writing on the outside or you can turn it inside out so it won't show. Plus you will have the rough ragged bottom edge of the MRE packet in the inside instead of the outside.



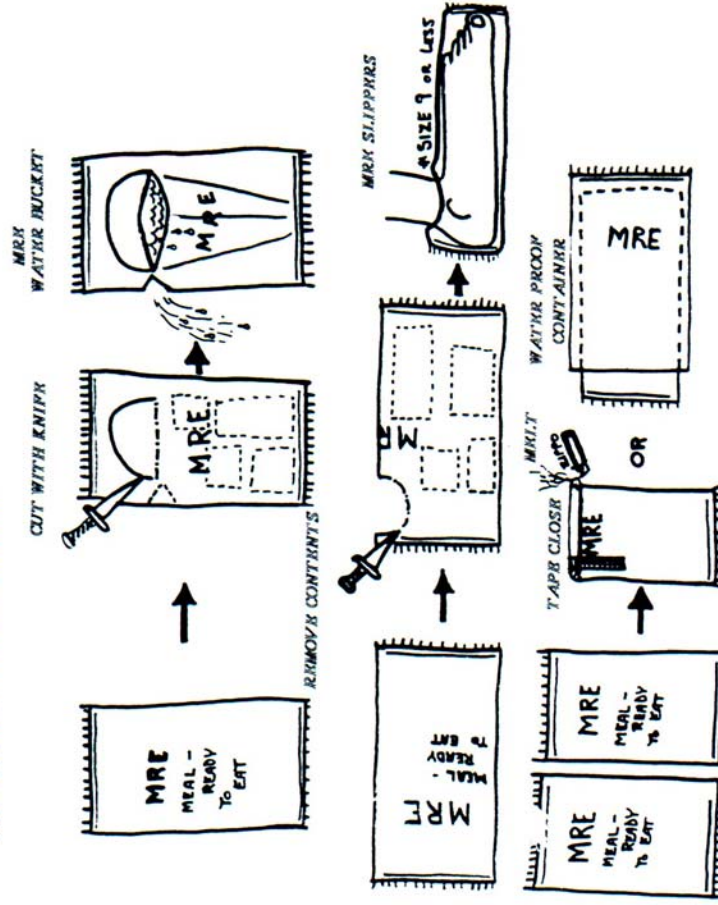
Now, you can either put the articles you want to keep dry inside the plastic packet and fold in the top, or you can go as far as sealing and melting the open end with a lighter.

What I prefer to do is either seal it with military 100 MPH tape or take two empty MRE packets and put one inside the other. The open end of the outer MRE plastic packet facing down inside the ruck cargo packet so that if it rains, the water will not run inside the open ends.

O.K. readers! Come on, let's hear it. Were these good ideas or what! Are you now convinced that I'm not nuts? I hope so. But remember this, the first time you try to use this tip, you will no doubt have problems with it. It takes a little patience and practice to master this technique. If only the officers in the tent next to me knew what I did with their stolen MREs...

WANTED: YOUR PLASTIC PACKET/WRAPPER TIPS.

They're needed for the next Ranger Digest book (IV). If you have a good tip or idea on other uses - SOUND OFF AND LET'S HEAR IT!





MRE HEAT PACKET TIPS & TRICKS

When I was back on active duty in the Army, from 1972-1993. We went from heating our C-Rations by burning the box that it came in, to heating the MREs in a canteen cup of boiling hot water with a heat tab.

Well times have changed, now you guys & gals got a fireless & smokeless bag of heat for warming up your MRE meals. You just add a little bite of water inside this plastic bag, slide it beside your meal, wait about 10 minutes and PRESTO - an instant hot meal. Cool! Or I should say HOT!

Well, even though this was after my time, I was able to acquire some of these MRE heat packets and do a little bit of experimenting. And here's what I came up with that I think you'll find useful and or at least interesting.

COLD WEATHER HAND & FEET WARMER: Yep, you should have thought of this way before me, as it was obvious that it could be used for this. But, instead of following the instructions on the packet in how to use it, try this instead...

(A) Remove the o.d. green and gray heat packet from the plastic bag/pouch and cut it up into 3-5 narrow strips.

(B) Place the strips in the bag one-at-a-time, add a little bit of water and squeeze it so the water spreads around and gets absorbed, then close up the bag. In a few minutes you'll have instant heat.

Now place it either in your pocket, in your hands and or near your feet. If you want two of these for the price of one, just cut the bag in half and place an o.d. green and gray heating strip inside each bag half.

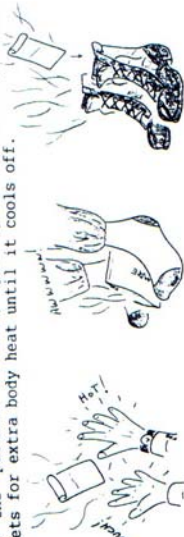
Now, the only draw back to this, is that these heating strips don't last very long. So as the heat dies down, you'll need to replace it with another narrow gray strip of heat & water.

It's better to replace the strips of heat one-at-a-time than to use the whole damn thing at once. Why? Well not only will you get longer use out of it (heat wise), but it won't get so hot that you won't be able to hold onto it. Thus wasting valuable heat, ya know what I mean? You see my point?

To use it as a foot warmer, you'll have to remove your boots and place your feet on or near the heat packet itself. But watch out, if you're not careful you'll burn your little toes.



If you're like me and hate putting on cold boots in the winter time. Instead of trying to warm'em up with a cigarette lighter, match, or a candle, try using one or two MRE heat packets. When your boots are defrosted, don't throw away the packets of heat, just place it inside your BDUs pockets for extra body heat until it cools off.



HOT CHOCOLATE/COFFEE HEATER: Now I know you wouldn't have thought of this, and before you criticize it, don't knock it until you've tried it. Or at least until you're desperate for some coffee and you can't make a fire....

If you're in a tactical situation and you can't make any fires, such as in a bunker, LP/OP position, etc, and you want to have a cup of coffee or cocoa. Well, here's one way you can warm some up without a fire. BUT, the hotness or warmth of the coffee and or cocoa will depend on how many MRE heat packets you use or have available.

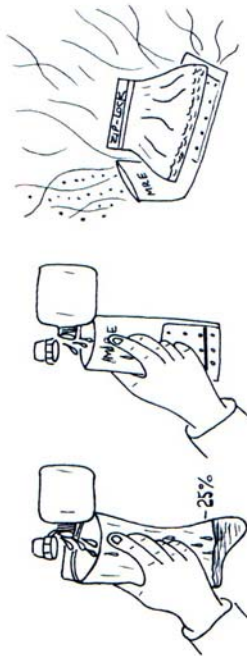
ITEMS NEEDED: Several MRE heat packets and 1 X Zip-Lock Bag.

A) Take the zip-lock sandwich bag and fill it about 25% full of water (and no more) and then zip-lock it closed/shut.

B) Take an MRE heat packet and follow the instructions on it.

C) After following the instructions, place it underneath the zip-lock bag of water and wait for it to heat up.

IMPORTANT - Depending on how much water was placed inside the bag and how cold it is outside, it may take 2-3 MRE heat packets to warm it up. Though it won't become real hot, a nice warm cup of coffee or cocoa is better than a cold one. Try it!





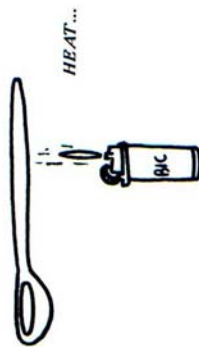
THE MRE SPOON

Submitted By Matt Ianer

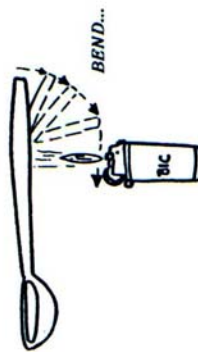


Here's a neat little trick you canall do with your MRE spoon to prevent it from falling into your canteen cup while your eating or drinking from it.

Heat the spoon handle approximately one inch from the end.



When it becomes very hot (Not Burnt), bend it down and hold in place until it cools.



Then try it out by hooking it to the side of the canteen cup. Now it won't fall in accidentally.



TRY IT OUT.

