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A different look at BOB's.

Tjin

- Skills and guides - Bushcraft and Survival -



Publication: Wednesday 6 July 2005

Description :

This article is about my personal BOB, it's more suited for people with interests in the outdoors, but less about preparedness. I hope it will inspire others to make one for themselves.

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There has been much written about survival kits, but most of them are really too specialised for most people. And other writings are too basic. This article is somewhere between these. Probably more accessible for outdoor oriented persons, without a huge interest in emergency preparedness.

A different look at BOB's.

I will show you what my BOB (bug out bag) or Grab-bag looks like. It's specialized to the threats I might encounter locally and my personal skills. But first I'm going to tell you something about myself. I'm an intergraded safety student, living in the Netherlands. I'm not preparing for the end of the civilized world or something. My kit is meant to keep me alive and comfortable to a certain level during an emergency. It gives me the stuff I want, if I have to go to a government shelter, but also has some kit so I can sleep out on my own, without assistance. The most likely emergency will be flooding. Living under sea level we have a great risk of floods in this country. We have high-tech defenses to protect ourselves, but that also means a breach in our defense will have bigger consequences. In case it happens near me there are 2 things I can do. Run or stay. I live in an apartment on the 4th floor, that's high enough to keep myself dry. I also have enough supplies to last awhile. Depending on the situation I might choose to stay. But if I have to go, I have to go as fast as possible. So my kit has to be light, small and waterproof. Other possible emergencies are chemical spills or an incident with the small research reactor we have in my town. Both of these possibilities will probably lead to one action: RUN! Again light weight, and small size are vital properties. Earthquakes, tornado's and other building flattening natural disasters are not a real issue here. The only earthquakes we have had in this country are very light ones, caused by the use of gas fields. And the most powerful of them, were only strong enough to damage some chimneys on some houses, they were hardly noticeable. And that's in the north east part of this country, I live the southwest. Other than the previous named emergencies, this kit is useful during house fire's and other "normal" emergencies.

Like I said earlier I'm a student, so my budget is very low. My hobbies are hiking and bushcraft. So virtually all of my kit is also used for plain hiking or bushcraft. That explains the color choice, bright colors are better. It makes you easier to be spotted by SAR (search and rescue) units. This kit is not only my BOB, but also my pre-packed daypack. I sometimes just fancy having a quick hike. And this bag has everything I possibly need on a short trip, saving time and I won't forget to pack certain things. That explains some of the equipment and the color in this kit. The good thing about having a combined BOB and pre-packed daypack is that your kit is regularly checked, used (experience) and rotated.

Note that you should NOT copy my BOB, but you should make your own one, that's suited for your environment and your skills.

This kit is also an addition to my EDC (everyday carry). My EDC consists of the following "survival" things (I carry other things as well):

- Small FAK (First Aid Kit, includes water purification tabs and Ziploc bag)
- SAK (Swiss army knife) Huntsmen
- SAK Swisscard
- SAK Wenger executive
- ACME tornado whistle
- ferrosium rod
- LED keychain light
- P-38
- tissues
- duct tape

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lighter (don't smoke, though)
lipsil

In all my jackets in have the following (and often more):

LED light

at least one form of fire starter

survival bag or space blanket.

cloth bag. (handy for both grocery's and for carrying collected stuff.) Some of them are brightly colored, for signaling.
some (not all) have a whistle and signal mirror

The bob covers the following things:

first aid

shelter

fire

water

signaling

food

tools

The backpack holding everything is a Karrimor Sabre 30. It's a very strong backpack, build like a tank. It has one large pocket and a small pocket in the lid. On the side's there are open pockets to put long thin things in. I choose this one, because it's rugged, simple and doesn't have screaming colors. Screaming colors are actually a good for a BOB, but since this is also my daypack. I went for the OD colour.



the backpack

On the side is a Dutch army field bottle cover, it's attached with ALICE clips. It's placed on in such a way, that I can grab it, without taking my pack off. But far enough so it won't rub on, or against me. Inside the cover is a field bottle, metal cup and a ringstove. The bottle is obviously for storing and carrying water, the cup and ringstove covers the cooking part. I can either burn fuel tabs, small branches in the ringstove or I can put my Trangia stove underneath it. The Trangia stove is very small, simple and reliable. Being a Alcohol stove it is a bit slow and eats more fuel. But since it's meant for short-term use only, it's a compromise I'm glad to take. Sometimes a homemade alcohol stove is carried instead.

There is a medium sized FAK (first aid kit) in the lid. First aid is one of the higher priorities. So it has to be accessible.

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The lid pocket is idea for that. Since it's one of the few items in there, you don't have to dig for it. And possibly leave a bloody mess on your other kit. This kit also has a space blanket in it. The contents are put in to waterproof Ziploc bags.

A hygiene kit is very important during a emergency. During emergency's your exposed to more natural diseases. To prevent infections, cleaning your hands with soap is important. Also proper tooth cleaning is important to prevent toothache during these hard times. That's why I got soap, toothbrush with toothpaste, wet cleaning tissues and brush-aways in my kit. Also a pertex towel is carried. They are also useful to clean your hands, when your getting a bite after a day trip.

Insect repellent (depends on season)

On the bottom of the kit is the spare clothing. The clothing carried depends on the season. They are packed in waterproof and vacuum bags. The clothing in it is mostly synthetic. They give the best space and weight/protection ratio. They also dry quickly.

A Stowaway shirt is carried either as EDC or in this kit.

A Dutch army poncho is carried, with Para cord and stakes. For rain protection and shelter.

A Dutch army tri-laminate PTFE rain trousers. Waterproof and breathable. (well known commercial PTFE laminates are Gore-tex and Triple laminate)

A reinforced Mylar blanket/tarp is carried to act like a groundsheet, "Rambo style" jacket, signal sheath or blanket. It's red on one side.

Two survival bags are carried for improvisation of a sleeping bag. But also as redundancy for the poncho and Mylar tarp.

A 1 liter Platypus bottle with a Gate Keeper water filter is carried with Aquaclear tablets to purify water. The tablets kills the bacteria and the filter gets out the bigger stuff like Giardia and reduces the chemicals in the water. Not perfect, but very light and compact.

Whistle and Starflash signal mirror in the lid.

The kind of food carried varies. In the winter more chocolate is carried. But mostly it's foil packed food, that only requires some boiling water and time to cook. Sometimes cans or a combination of foil and canned food is carried. Depending on what I have left around.

There are lots of tools carried, because I like to practice primitive skills. They are carried in shoulder bag, inside the backpack. The shoulder bag is from a Russian GP-5 gasmask. But can be transferred to be carried with the backpack on for instant access to the tools. None of them are very expensive. I don't use an expensive knife to its full potential, because they are to expensive and pretty. I can't see myself batoning on my custom or high end production knives, and have actually sold most of them.

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the backpack with the shoulderbag next to it.

The tools in the kit are:

a small hatchet, Hults Bruk Acdor (carried in the backpack to prevent problems with the law)
knife, Frost Mora (inexpensive and good quality)
folding knife Opinel #7 (also inexpensive and good quality, but doesn't work very well when it's wet.)
crooked knife
locking folding saw
small manual chainsaw.

magnesium fire starter.

BIC lighter

storm lighter

matches

tinder

2 sticks of fatwood

bow drill set (I like to practice this skill, but I still can't do it successfully (at the moment I wrote this). But practice makes perfect. The bow part is rarely mounted on the pack.)

string

A pair of working gloves. They protect your hands from abrasion, cuts, heat, etc. But also keeps them clean. Cleaning you hand is actually quite hard to do properly in the field. Wet tissues or cleaning gels don't take off the dirt off your hand very well. Make sure the leather is supple, there is a lot of difference in the same batch of gloves. Take the time to choice the right one. Also having a elastic opening makes it harder for dirt to enter the glove.

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some of the itmes in the shoulderbag.

a sitting mat, keeps my bottom clean and insulated from the cold. (this is luxury, meant primarily for daytrip use)

a waterproof bag is carried to collect dry tinder or store other kit in.

toilet paper, if anything is low in supply in a public shelter, it's got to be toilet paper! A roll (with the cardboard middle section removed, to save space) is carried in a waterproof Ziploc bag. Also handy to light fires. Use from the inside out. This way you don't have to remove the toilet paper from the bag first.

Trowel. Digging is sometimes handy, but a full sized E-tool is a bit to much.

There is space left in the backpack, for addition equipment. That I might need, during a emergency or day hike.

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