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Air Crew Survival Pack MK4

Tjin

- Gear reviews and tests - Emergency and survival -



Publication: Friday 19 May 2006

Description :

a review of the standard issue survival kit of the RAF ejection seat.

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The Air Crew Survival Pack MK4

The Air Crew Survival Pack MK4 is a survival kit normally stored in the ejection seat of RAF aircraft. This allows it to be bigger than personal/pocket survival kit, but not by much, since there really isn't much additional space in the ejection seat. This kit is also for sale to civilians. Manufactured by BCB.

Note: Although mine Air Crew Survival Pack MK4 is relative new, this article might not. So the contents might have change when you read this.

The kit is stored in a cloth bag with Velcro closures. There is a main flap closed with Velcro. After opening the flap you see 2 thin flaps from the left and right, they join together in the middle with Velcro. They keep the contents from flying away when you have opened the main flap. You can also use the 2 smaller straps to act as a handle, by closing the main flap first and fix the 2 smaller straps over the main flap with the Velcro. No belt loops or clips to secure the kit on to you.



the cloth bag opened

Inside the bag are 3 separately vacuum packed parts. Two of the vacuum packs are OD coloured tin like foil and one has a clear plastic vacuum package. All vacuum packages have "V" notch made in to them, so you can open them without a knife. Having 3 separate parts, makes it easier to transfer the kit in to the pockets you have. Which is much handier than having a small bag in you hands all the time. Also it prevents you from damaging or loose the contents in other parts of the kit.



The V notches on the packages



Part A



Part A contents

Part "A" contains a tin: with the following contents:

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- ▶ 2x Needles
- ▶ 2x protective Unlubricated
- ▶ 2x tampons
- ▶ 20x water-purification tablets
- ▶ cotton wool
- ▶ Flint and steel
- ▶ Fire making blocks.

The tin is wrapped with electrician tape, with pull tap for easy access. The inside of the lid is reflective, so it can be used as a backup mirror. The needles are taped to the bottom.

It's interesting to see both tampons and cotton-wool in this "A" part of the kit. Tampons are made from compressed cotton-wool, packed inside a waterproof wrapper. So why is there another piece of cotton-wool for? It's probably a decision made because there was a little space left, not enough for a tampon, but enough for the little ball of compressed cotton-wool. Another reason can be the easier handling. When you're really cold, you usually need to be able to make fire with very cold hands. Removing the plastic packaging, removing the outer layer of a tampon, unrolling the compressed cotton-wool and pulling the fibres apart might be a little to hard in such a situation. I would personally prefer tinder that burns longer than just plain cotton-wool.

The flint and steel is the standard BCB ferrosium rod. A thin rod, with a metal support on the back and a hacksaw with a sharpened edge. It does not perform as-well as larger rods and is very hard to use one handed.

The fire making blocks appears to be Esbit, 3 blocks are supplied. It's good material to get a fire going. It can not be lighted by the "flint and steel" (ferrosium rod) directly.

The condoms supplied to be used as watercontainer really isn't mine personal first choice. They are very hard to use and very fragile. But there really isn't much else such small that can carry a litre of water. This kit however is large enough to contain a larger water carrier.



Part B



Part B contents

Part "B" contains:

- ▶ Sleeping bag
- ▶ nylon cord
- ▶ compass
- ▶ candle
- ▶ 4x suspender clips
- ▶ fishing kit
- ▶ snare wire
- ▶ wiresaw
- ▶ razorblade
- ▶ elastic band
- ▶ instruction sheet.

This part is not very space efficiently packed. There is a lot of additional vacuum material left. This takes up a lot of space. They could have done a better job at vacuum the package more smoothly, so the left over materials could be easily folded away.

The main bulk of this kit is the "sleeping" bag, a huge transparent plastic bag, large enough to sleep in. But it is also waterproof, so you will get wet from your own sweat. It can probably be used to act as a condensation bag, to extract water from trees. Although the thin plastic can be a little fragile for that. Other uses for the bag is just waterproofing kit and to act as a tarp.

The nylon cord is not the standard little amount of white coloured cord you get with most BCB kits, but it is thicker (i guess 3mm) and in an OD colour. It appears to have one white coloured inner strand. The ends of this cord are not melted and will raffle. I use similar cord for mine guide lines on mine tarp.

The compass is also not the BCB standard, but it's a small silva button compass. It's smaller than the one from BCB. It's nothing really special, it point north and has a little lanyard hole. No glow in the dark or other nice features.

The candle is a standard tea candle. Very bulky in the kit and also a risk of it melting in you kit in hot environment. Mine shows signs of being melted once in its life.

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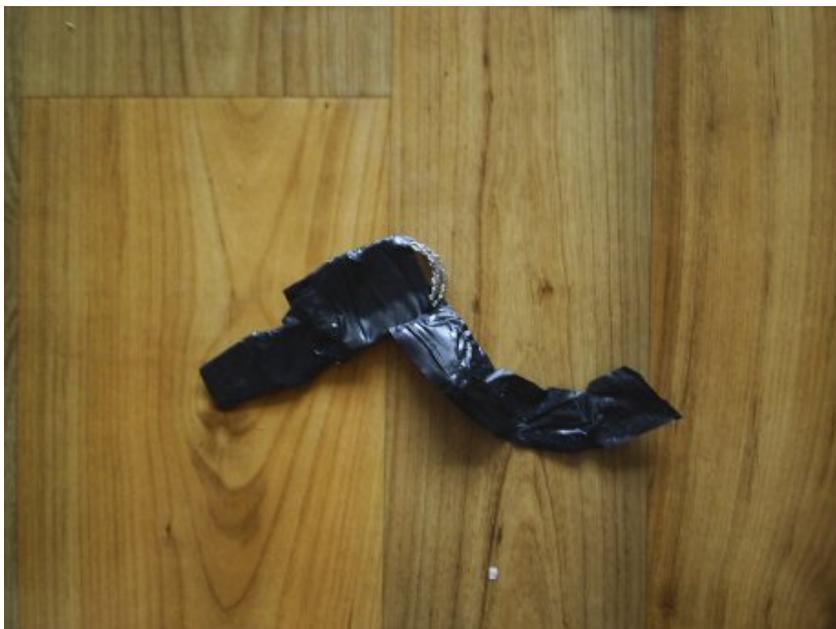
The suspender clips are meant to be used with the survival bag or blanket. It will stretch the plastic when used. I personally would rather use the trick with a little round rock in the corners to tie it to something.

The fishing kit is not standard BCB. It actually has 2 flies in them, but the rest isn't really much. Just a few tiny hooks with nylon trace, 5 split shots and 2 swivels. The fishing line must be improvised from the inner-cord from the supplied cord or from inner strands from parachute-cord.

The snare wire is the standard little roll of brass wire.

The wiresaw is well taped in with electrician tape, this prevents it from damaging the rest of the kit. But also makes it very hard to access.

The instructions were not very long, just some explanations about the kit and the uses for the parts. It actually says it can be burned, after you have read and remembered what's on it.



The wiresaw wrapped in tape. slightly unwrapped in this photo



Part C

Part "c" contains

- ▶ Foil Blanket.

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I did not open this part, since it's just a space blanket, with a OD coloured side. Keeping it for sealed for a homemade kit.

First thing you notice is the lack of signalling equipment. (Most) pilots have them in there flight suits, but if your not a pilot with this kit, this becomes a problem. Also no medical stuff in this kit either. There isn't really a knife in the kit, just a razor blade. That's probably because a knife is carried on the pilot.

Conclusion: This kit is not mend as a stand alone type of kit, so it does not and will not provide you with everything you want in a survival kit. Remember that when you carry this kit. I would highly advice you to add a knife, signal equipment, carry a First Aid Kit (FAK) and other things if you do not have a knife, FAK and signalling equipment on you.

The kit it self is not as "cheap" as other BCB kits, but not the highest quality either. Some parts are found in normal BCB kits, but some are also a upgrade. This kit is a good base for a better kit and actually not bad for it's intended use.

Manufacture website [here](#)

Other great reviews of pouch sized kits can be found [here](#)

Any additions or corrections will be posted on the comment section below.