

Individual Combat Load

1. **The optimum individual combat load is 30% of body weight.** The modern combat load has not been improved since 1775. S.L.A. Marshall, in *The Soldier's Load and the Mobility of a Nation*, demonstrated that fear causes weakness, and excessive combat loads get people killed.
2. **The three levels of combat load** for a unit are *Individual*, *Sustainment* and *Contingency*.
 - a. **Individual Combat Load.**
 - Fighting Load. 48lbs–Deuce Gear and weapon. Mission essential gear needed to fight.
 - Approach March Load. 72lbs–Pack: gear needed to survive. Weather gear, sleeping gear. Better to risk temporary inconvenience than exhaust Marines due to overloading.
 - b. **Sustainment Load.** Battalion trains carry:
 - 3 DOS for imminent future operations.
 - NBC equipment
 - NVGs, excess weapons and company armory gear
 - c. **Contingency Load.** Uniforms, personal items and seabags are stored or carried at Division level, or left on ship during amphibious operations.

3. 4-4-4-4 System for Individual Combat Load

- a. **4-Hour Load. Fighting Load.** Marines maintain capability to fight even without packs.
 - Deuce Gear & Weapon
 - Helmet and Flak. *Helmet and flak are not deuce gear, they are mission-specific gear.*
 - Whatever weather gear Marine is wearing
 - NO pack. NO food. NO toilet kit, sleeping gear, weather gear, boot polish, shelter, or spare clothing.

WWII assault echelons carried no packs. Packs were transported by Plat Guides, Co GySgt or reserve company.

- b. **4-Day Load. The Approach March Load.** The gear needed to live and fight for four days.
 - Deuce Gear & Weapon
 - Helmet, Flak
 - 4-Day Pack – food, 4-day toilet kit, sleeping gear, weather gear, and shelter
 - No spare clothing. NO boot polish.

This corresponds to one case (12) MREs, a 4-day toilet kit, and a refit period. *See Refit Period SOP.*

- c. **4-Week Load.** The gear needed to live and fight for a month.
 - Deuce Gear & Weapon
 - Helmet, Flak
 - 4-Week Pack – food, 4-week toilet kit, sleeping gear, weather gear, boot polish, shelter and spare clothing
- d. **4-Month Load.**
 - Deuce Gear & Weapon
 - Helmet, Flak
 - 4-Month Pack
 - 4-Month Seabag

4. **The 4-Day Fighting Load** – Deuce Gear and 4-Day Packs, is ready 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 20 minutes notice.
5. **Commanders establish the combat load**, not the individual. Mission has priority.
A Co CO in 505th PIR stripped his soldiers of 200lbs of excess gear prior to Grenada.
6. **All Gear, individual and unit, is marked as per unit SOP.** *See Equipment Marking SOP.* This allows gear to be transported separately:
 - a. When a unit drops packs, follow-on unit or vehicles can carry them forward. A standard Log Train task is to shuttle packs forward. Marines need freedom to fight without packs, yet have packs available on-call.
 - b. During helicopter or boat assault, packs and flaks can be transported at a later time.
 - c. When casualties are evacuated, equipment can be accounted for.
 - d. During a road march, packs and cold-weather gear can be sent forward to the assembly area or bivouac site.
7. **Principles of a gear SOP.**
 - a. All gear is silenced, subdued and secured.
 - b. Mission essential and survival gear is carried in pockets or on deuce gear.
8. **Gear tips.**
 - a. No gear should be carried below the waist. Cartridge belt should be worn high and tight. Marines should be able to run and execute the obstacle course wearing deuce gear.
 - b. Nothing should be attached to shoulder straps which interferes with weapon.
 - c. Slings should be available for all weapons to allow hands-free activities.
9. **See also:**
 - **Boots**
 - **First Aid Kit**
 - **Toilet Kit**
 - **Canteens**
 - **Bootlaces**
 - **Dog Tags**
 - **Survival Kit**
 - **Flashlight**
 - **Sleeping Gear.**

Boots

Marine Infantrymen need **Good BOOTS, Good SOCKS and DRY Feet.**

Wear Good BOOTS.

- Marine Corps boots are adequate. Marine Corps order allows Marines to purchase commercial boots. The basic rule is: "The lightest boot that does the job."
- Commercially, all-leather boots are making a comeback versus synthetic/cloth boots. Although synthetic/cloth boots are lighter and break-in easily, they are not as durable, not as weather-proof, and do not provide as much support as all-leather boots. All-leather boots last longer and resist abrasions.
- Resole boots when soles are worn. Lug soles are best for field use.
- **Keep your feet dry!** Treat boots with a waterproofing product. Clean leather with saddle soap. Use polish to protect leather from cracks, protect stitches from dry-rot.

Wear Good INSOLES.

- Molded rubber insoles cushion feet, absorb thousands of pounds of concussion.
- **Keep your feet dry!** Rubber insoles absorb almost no water. Wring out damp insoles, air dry.
- Buy a set of Sorbothane™ Ultra Soles (\$9.95).

Wear Good SOCKS.

- **No cotton! No cotton! No cotton!** Cotton absorbs water, provides little cushion and no insulation. Wet cotton socks keep skin damp. Feet become cold, wet, soft, and blister-prone.
- Wool *used* to be the only answer. Wool ventilates well, wicks sweat from skin, provides good cushioning, and insulates even when wet. But...
- **New manmade fabrics ventilate and wick as well or better than wool.** Feet stay dryer and less blister-prone. No 'liner' socks are needed for wicking. Synthetic socks are stronger, more durable and longer wearing than wool. In moderate climates wool insulation is not needed.
- Buy a pair of Thorlo™ Combat Boot socks: 84% acrylic, 14% nylon, 2% spandex (\$7.50). This sock has dense padding at ball and heel to cushion against concussion, friction and blisters. Synthetic blend wicks moisture away from feet, ventilating panels keep feet cool and dry.
- **Keep your feet dry!** Keep a second pair of socks in a zip-loc bag in your pack. Change socks when wet.
- Wash your socks inside-out. Socks do not work when dirty. In the field, wash socks even if no soap is available. In garrison, wash with fabric softener. Do not use bleach.
- Dry your socks. Hang on pack, wear to bed, or wear next to body. In garrison, do not use high dryer heat on wool or synthetic socks.
- If getting wet is unavoidable, in rain, stream, or surf, wear your boots without socks. Replace socks after immersion. Walk until socks are soggy, then switch to a dry pair. Dry the wet socks on your pack or body.

Keep your feet DRY.

- **SWEAT:** Average foot produces 12 gallons of sweat per year. Good socks wick sweat away from feet.
- **RAIN, STREAMS, SEA WATER:** Good waterproofed boots keep feet dry.
- **Treat feet before hike:** Trim nails. In field or garrison, wash and dry feet daily. Air dry as long as possible.
- **Treat feet during hike:** Change into dry socks. Use Band-Aid or duct tape on blisters, Vaseline on hot spots.
- **Treat feet after hike:** Wash, elevate and air dry. Use safety pin on blisters then antibiotic ointment (Mycitracin™). Aspirin or Motrin™ reduces swelling.

BLOUSE Your Trousers. Blousing trousers below the top of the boot:

- Keeps *scree* (small rocks) and twigs out of boots.
- Keeps light rain off socks and out of boots. **Keep your feet dry!**
- Use two sets of boot bands for a tight blouse. Extra set can be loaned out or used for field expedients.

Canteens

Carry two 1-Quart Canteens on your Deuce Gear.

- Carry water purification tablets in one Canteen cover pocket.
- Carry a speed loader in the other Canteen cover pocket.
- Refill Canteens at every opportunity. Keep as full as possible at all times. Full Canteens make less noise.
- A full one-quart Canteen with nylon cover weighs 2.70 pounds.

Carry additional Canteens with your Pack.

- Collapsible 2-Quart Canteen is versatile. It can be carried alone on strap, attached to pack or deuce gear, or carried inside pack. 2-quart can also be used as a pillow. Extra 1-Quart Canteens can be attached to pack or carried in pack.
- Drink these additional Canteens **first**. When packs are dropped, Canteens on deuce gear are still full.

Carry a Canteen Cup. Always in cold, wet climates. Never in hot, dry climates.

- Cooking food over an open fire
- Heating and drinking hot liquids – coffee, tea, soup
- Washing and shaving

Bootlaces

Carry 2 Extra Bootlaces or 6 feet of Parachute Cord on your Deuce Gear.

- Replace Bootlaces
- Repair Equipment
- Build Poncho Shelter
- Bind Prisoners
- Garrote Enemy Sentries
- Tie Tourniquets
- Carry Multiple Canteens during Water Resupply
- Dummy Cord Equipment
- Carry Rifle or Equipment with Expedient Sling
- Signal with Pull Line
- Maintain Contact during Night Movement using “Elephant Tails” Technique

Dog Tags

Wear 2 Dog Tags around your neck at all times.

- One Tag is worn on the main chain, second Tag should be on the smaller loop chain.
- Silence Dog Tags. Use gutted parachute cord on chain. Tape tags or buy commercial silencers.
- Wear an extra Tag in the laces of your left boot.

First Aid Kit

1. Carry the First Aid Kit on your deuce gear in the SOP location.

- First Aid Kit is always accessible even when packs are dropped.
- Every Marine in the unit wears the First Aid Kit in the same SOP location.
- Treat each casualty with his own First Aid Kit.
- Silence the First Aid Kit. Waterproof unsealed items inside a zip-loc bag.

2. Inventory your First Aid Kit. Know what you are carrying.

- Always carry a minimum of (1) Battle Dressing.
- Standard inventory includes: Band-Aids, Iodine Antiseptic, Gauze Bandage, Muslim Bandage, Eye Dressing, and Lip Balm.

Carry water purification tablets in the canteen cover pocket.

3. Augment the issue First Aid Kit.

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| • Ibuprofen. Motrin™ | See note below |
| • Antibiotic Ointment. Mycitracin™ | See note below |
| • Hydrocortisone Creme. Cortaid™ | See note below |
| • Insect Repellent | DEET – Minimize DEET contact with skin |
| • Lip balm | Medicated, with emollients and sunscreen SPF 12+ |
| • Sunscreen | Total Block, UVA & UVB type, SPF 25+, non-water soluble |
| • Malaria pills or issue medication. | |
| • Styptic pencil | For minor cuts, scratches and leech bites |
| • Molefoam | For blisters |
| • Band-Aids, gauze and tape | For wounds of all sizes |
| • Scissors and tweezers | If not carried elsewhere with gear |

Carry additional items with First Aid Kit or in waterproof case such as plastic peanut-butter jar.

- Ibuprofen. Motrin™
 - a. For pain and inflammation: muscle soreness and inflammation from physical activity, overuse or strain of a muscle group or joint; injury, headache, and wounds.
 - b. For fever or malaise.
 - c. To interrupt a worsening condition: sunburn, blistering, rash, or abrasion.
 - d. To prevent an oncoming condition: anticipated muscle soreness.

Always accompany with large amounts of water. Take with food. Delay taking Motrin if you have indigestion, heartburn, or upset stomach. Do NOT take Motrin if you have kidney problems, ulcers, stomach or rectal bleeding, or are allergic to aspirin.

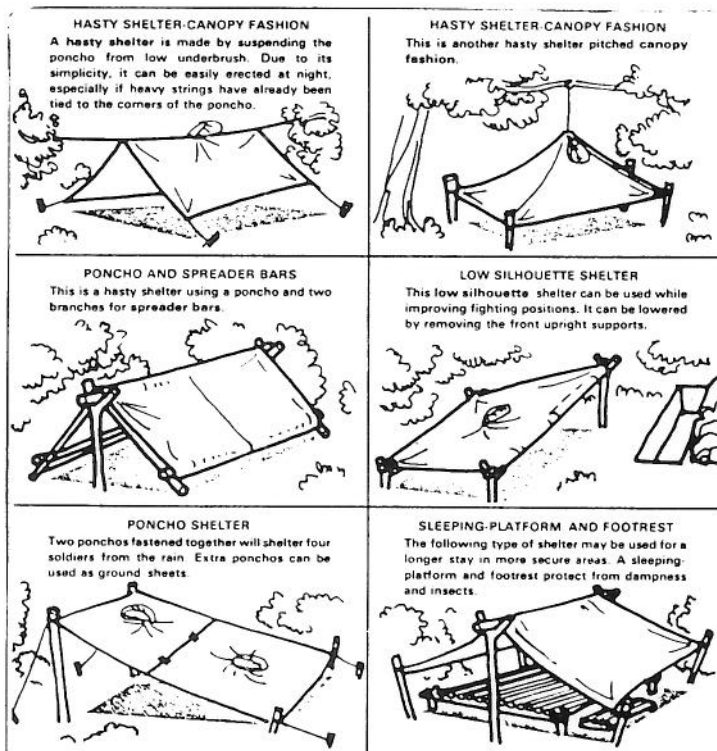
- Antibiotic Ointment. Mycitracin™

For open skin wounds: abrasions, blisters, cuts and punctures. Ointment moistens skin, promotes healing, and augments the body's fight against infection. Use immediately to help prevent the spread of infection, further inflammation, or swelling.
- Hydrocortisone Creme. Cortaid™.

External application for skin irritations and inflammation where the skin is not broken: itch, rash, redness, insect bites, poison ivy, oak, sumac, heat rash, jock itch and diaper rash (as from diarrhea).

Sleeping Gear

1. Sleeping Pad.
 - The insulating layer beneath you is more important than the layer above you.
 - According to Colonel P.G. Collins, "A pad is a necessity if your out for more than 3 days."
2. Ranger Roll.
 - Very light, very effective bedroll.
 - Protects your from dew, not from rain.
 - Best when used with sleeping pad on clear nights, poncho hooch on rainy nights.
3. Sleeping Bag.
 - Comfort and weight tradeoffs versus Ranger Roll.
 - Double secure with plastic trash bag. Sleeping Bag should always be dry.
 - Unit leader may decide to carry one bag per two Marines.
4. Hammocks.
 - Wherever trees are available, in the jungle or woods, a hammock is worth carrying.
 - In the constant wetness of the jungle, a hammock also serves to dry your skin. Sleep in a night shirt. Put wet clothes back on in the morning.
5. Tents.
 - Weight-wise, the shelter half is almost not worth carrying versus a poncho hooch.
 - New tents are almost state-of-the-art. Weight is still a concern.
 - GP tents are carried by battalion for general bivouac.
6. Poncho hooch.
 - Build a poncho hooch in the dark in 10 minutes.
 - Use mini-bungee cords, boot laces, boot bands, or 550 cord.
 - Two ponchos are needed. One for hooch, one for ranger roll.



Survival Kit

- a. Any survival kit has five (5) components:
 - Fire (Matches, lighter, candle stub)
 - Signal (Signal mirror, flare)
 - Food (Fish hooks, wire)
 - Water (Purification tablets, plastic bag, non-lubricated condoms)
 - Shelter (Emergency blanket)
- b. A survival kit is mission-specific, tailored to the environment, type and length of mission.
- c. Some survival kit items, like compass, matches, knife, purification tablets, and signal mirror, should be carried at all times, and are therefore not needed in a survival kit.
- d. No food items are needed in most survival kits. The weight is not worth carrying. As a general rule, humans can last two minutes without air, two days without water, and two weeks without food.

Flashlight

All Unit Leaders should carry a Flashlight on their Deuce Gear.

- Flashlight should be small and lightweight, preferably 'AA' size to match batteries of NVGs.
- Flashlight should be rugged and waterproof: Maglite™ (\$10.95) is an excellent flashlight for infantrymen.
- Corpsmen, drivers and others can carry larger Flashlights on commander's approval.
- When packs are dropped, Flashlight is still on person or deuce gear.

There are Only 4 Reasons to use a Flashlight:

- Reading: Map Reading or Note taking
- Signalling
- Evaluating Casualties or Equipment
- Searching Prisoners and Kill Zones

All Flashlights are filtered with colored lens to preserve night vision.

- Unfiltered White Light is used only at commander's discretion. Evaluating casualties and searching kill zones may require white light.
- SOP should dictate specific colors for units.
- Red lens Flashlights will not be used in LZ operations. Current helicopter NVGs are blinded by red light.

Toilet Kit

1. **Carry the Toilet Kit in your pack.** Toilet kit will not be missed when packs are dropped.
2. **Carry the fewest items you need.** Carry the smallest types. Do NOT carry anything that smells.

- 1-ounce Toothpaste
- 4-inch Toothbrush
- Soap in plastic case. *A chewing tobacco case works well.*
- Razors for 4 days.

A good toilet Kit container is an empty plastic peanut-butter jar.

- Carry a dark-colored hand towel. Wrap towel around Toilet Kit and secure with 550 cord.
- Carry Toilet Paper separately in a zip-loc bag in your pocket. When packs are dropped, you still have it.

3. **Plan for 4 hours, 4 days or 4 weeks.**

- Plan for 4 hours. Carry no toilet kit at all. Carry toilet paper in zip-loc bag in pocket.
- Plan for 4 days. Carry items listed above. NO shampoo, NO shaving creme, NO 'extras.'
- Plan for 4 weeks. Add replacement items: razors, toilet paper, toothpaste and soap. Add items for field head or shower: shaving cream, bath towel, shampoo, fingernail clippers, other items.

4. **Carry a complete Toilet Kit in you Seabag.** Plan for 4 months of deployment before resupply.

- Shaving Cream and Razors or Electric Razor.
- Bath Towel and Flip-Flops
- Soap and Shampoo
- Fingernail Clippers, Scissors
- Toothpaste, Toothbrush, Mouthwash and Dental Floss
- Anti-perspirant
- Replacement Items: Razors, Soap, Toothpaste, Anti-perspirant, Shampoo
- Additional Hygiene Items