

Another British Blanket Tent

Greg Renault

We previously looked at an arrangement to replicate a shelter using "2 blankets, two firelocks and 4 bayonets" as described by Sergeant Douglas of the 1st Royal Scots. Curiously, in addition to the corner grommets he mentions "in the centre another [grommet]", which would seem to have no function in the two-blanket shelter arrangement that he describes. However, it occurred to me that an additional grommet in the centre of the long side of the blanket would be required if **one** blanket instead of two were to be used to make a shelter.

So I added grommets to the sides of one blanket to create a single-blanket tent shelter. As the musket would now be too tall to use for a tent pole, I made some collapsible poles in lieu of sticks (deadfall wood is nonexistent at Parks Canada sites), and added rope loops as an additional variation. This arrangement came out looking much like the mid-19th century *tente d'abri*.



To make one:

Add a reinforcement and grommet to the centre of each of the long sides of your blanket.

(A blanket so modified may be used either to make single-blanket shelter, or as part of a two-blanket shelter.)

For poles, cut sticks approximately 40" long.



OR, MAKE YOUR OWN TENT POLES

I copied the collapsible poles designed for the US Army shelter half during the ACW.

You will need:

- two 1" diameter dowels of clear pine, 41" long
- two 6" lengths of 1" diameter copper tubing.

Shave pins at one end. These will go through the centre grommet holes.

Approximately half-way down, cut diagonally through the pole. I made the top part slightly longer, so that it would be the same length as the lower portion when the copper sleeve is attached.

Here is a close-up of the cut. Note that it is about 30 degrees at the sharp end. Be sure to make the cuts at the same place and the same angle on both poles, so that they are interchangeable.

Position the copper sleeve over the diagonal cut on the lower piece (the one without the pin), so that the cut is in the middle of the sleeve. Fasten with a couple of small nails.



You now have each pole in two pieces. The bottom piece has the sleeve, the top piece the grommet pin.

Note how the completed pieces are now approximately the same length.

Here's how they go together to form a pole.

If you like, paint them the same colour as your canteen. I suspect that the Commissariat used the same paint for all of its camp equipage.

NOW FOR THE TENTROPES

Use ¼" rope to make 4 loops as shown by tying an overhand knot at the cut ends. The longer the loop, the more space you will have between the bottom edge of your blanket tent and the ground. The one shown is about 8".

Make two ropes for the tent poles out of approximately 6' lengths. Make a loop at one end with an overhand knot as above; at the other make an adjustable loop by tying a "cow hitch".



You now have the following items:

- 2 tent pole sets
- 4 corner loops
- 2 adjustable pole ropes



SET UP YOUR SHELTER

Pass the looped end through the corner grommets; the knots will stop the loops from pulling through. Peg the loops.



(These loops can also be used with the 2-blanket shelter variation.)

Insert the poles into the centre grommets; slip the loop end of the adjustable ropes over the pin end of the pole, and the adjustable loops over pegs at the front & rear of the tent; tighten the adjustable loops.



PACKING

The ropes and poles will nicely fit above the blanket in an envelope knapsack.



At approximately 22", the poles protrude only slightly.

You and a partner now have portable shelter from the sun.

Those with Baker Rifles will find them just right to serve as poles for the single-blanket shelter. Tent loops and ropes, while handy, are not necessary for either arrangement; the single-blanket shelter can be erected using rifles and bayonets in the same manner as the two-blanket shelter is with muskets.

August 2012