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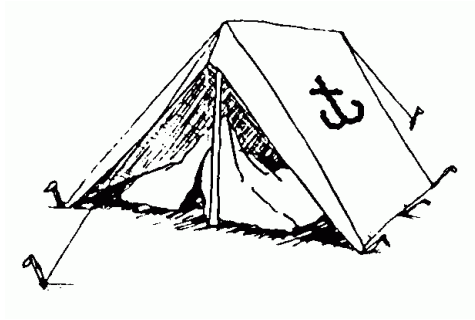
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Keine Stimmen

Building a Bivouac



In this article, we'd like to share some tips and tricks, as well as essential information, on how to set up a bivouac.

What Is a Bivouac?

A bivouac is a shelter that protects people and equipment from the elements. The word "bivouac" comes from the French "*bivouac*," which means "night camp" or "field camp."

The term "bivouac" is most commonly used to describe a structure made of **military tarps**. However, it generally refers to any camp, whether outdoors, in huts, or in tents.

Requirements for a Bivouac Site

In order to live and rest in a bivouac, it must meet four conditions:

- Protection from the elements. The bivouac must have a roof and walls. Tents, rocks, snow, and the forest are all suitable for this purpose.
- Protection against cold and damp ground. Primarily using hay, straw, shrubs, branches, or skis.
- Interior warmth: Candles, kerosene or gasoline lamps, improvised stoves, and hot stones provide the necessary warmth. Be careful when heating bivouacs!
- Good, flat sleeping areas.

To build a bivouac, you need to know

- Dry, *still* air is a poor conductor of heat.
- Cold air is heavy and sinks, while warm air is lighter and rises.
- Moisture promotes heat loss. Therefore, take off any wet or damp clothes before getting into your sleeping bag.
- Snow at least 30 cm deep is a good insulator. Where light shines through the snow, the cold also penetrates.

Environmental Factors Affecting a Bivouac

- In a bivouac, cold air forms a “cold pool” on the ground. By elevating your sleeping area (straw, mats, blankets), your body is positioned above this cold pool.
- Wind and storms accelerate heat loss. Natural protection from the wind is provided by: forests, boulders, rock crevices, rock barriers, scree fields, and slopes sheltered from the wind. The following should be avoided as much as possible: mountain passes, gaps, ridges, and slopes exposed to the wind. Choosing the right location also protects you from the cold when setting up a bivouac.
- Cold air flows into the valley floors, drawing warm air masses in its wake. This creates cold pools in the valley floors. The slopes are less exposed to frost and hoarfrost. The warmest zone is usually located above the middle of the slope. This zone is also less exposed to ridge winds.
- The ground loses its stored heat through radiation. The more unobstructed the radiation is, the greater the cooling of the ground.
- The bivouac must be protected from avalanches and rockfall. Overhanging rocks and caves offer good protection against these, as does the lower edge of a dense slope forest.
- Forests, trees, and cloud cover reduce heat loss. Uncovered terrain therefore cools down more quickly than covered terrain.
- Scrubland and meadows with tall grass retain moisture.
- On impermeable ground, rainwater and meltwater run off and collect in hollows, depressions, and holes. Therefore, it's best not to set up camp there.

Types of Bivouacs

Different Types and Styles of Bivouacs

- Ridge Tent
- Coffin
- Berlin-style
- Gotthard
- Sloped-wall
- Combat tent
- Igloo
- Tarpaulin sleeping bag

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