

# Extra Magazine Pouches

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Light infantrymen presently carry two magazine pouches on their load carrying equipment (LCE). I believe they should carry two extra magazine pouches, one as a first aid pouch and the other as a smoke grenade pouch.

Even when wearing kevlar helmets and vests, light infantrymen are particularly vulnerable to artillery, rocket, and grenade fragments, as well as to small arms fire. In battle, many soldiers would receive multiple wounds, some of which might require more than one field dressing. Small arms fire, for example, often causes separate entrance and exit wounds. Also, when a field dressing becomes saturated with blood, another dressing is required to reinforce it. When a field dressing becomes rain-soaked, another dressing must be used to replace it.

Having treated a variety of wounds, I consider four field dressings per soldier a realistic number, but we currently distribute only one dressing per soldier and expect our medics to carry all the additional dressings needed. There are some problems with this. Because the mortality rate for combat medics is worse than for infantrymen, there might often be only one medic for two platoons. Because of everything else medics must carry, they usually carry no more than 20 field dressings. Besides, it is especially hard to locate casualties during night operations; wounded soldiers may be on their own and have to provide their own dressings.

With the nylon straps removed from the inside, a 30-round magazine pouch makes a good first aid pouch. It can hold four field dressings standing upright, with a triangular cravat bandage stuffed up under the top flap. The pouch,

together with the M9 bayonet, take up about the same width on the pistol belt as the Number 8 medical instrument and supply set. The 30-round magazine pouch can carry additional medical items as well, such as two extra bottles of water purification tablets, two half-ounce bottles of povidone-iodine 10% solution, two packages of bandaids, and a tin of foot powder.



The second magazine pouch would keep smoke grenades more readily accessible for use in marking a unit's location for close air support and for marking helicopter landing zones. It is awkward to carry smoke grenades exposed, and they are not readily accessible in the bottom of the rucksack.

Again, with the nylon straps removed from the inside, the 30-round magazine pouch makes a good smoke grenade

pouch. The tall cardboard canister that smoke grenades are shipped in makes a good liner to prevent a smoke grenade from rattling around inside the magazine pouch. There is also room in the pouch for another triangular cravat bandage stuffed up under the top flap, and room in the inside corners for two 30-minute high intensity chemlights (NSN 6260-01-074-4230) for marking night helicopter landing zones.

For special operations, ABC-M7A3 CS grenades (DODAC G963) could be carried in the pouch instead of smoke grenades for breaking contact and discouraging pursuit. Infrared chemlights (NSN 6260-01-195-9752) could be carried instead of high intensity chemlights for marking night helicopter landing zones.

The pouches that contain magazines should be carried in front so that the heaviest items—loaded magazines and fragmentation grenades—hang directly under the field suspenders; this also makes them easy to get to.

The first aid and smoke grenade pouches should be carried to the left and right of the magazine pouches. Unit SOPs should identify which sides they should be worn on and how they should be marked.

I believe these two extra pouches would be an efficient way for a light infantry soldier to carry additional, and often vital, items.

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