



Equipment Reviews

Our Specialist Support Team Operatives/Consultants name their Top Three Essentials

We managed to track down three of our Specialist Team members and asked them the same simple question. Name your top three essential favourite pieces of kit for deployment to a Hostile Environment, other than the obvious escape/grab bag? With significant hostile environment experience in all parts of the world and all with diverse backgrounds, this could be an eye opener.

Steve is a senior team member, ex British Army, and very particular about his kit

'This is easy; it's a no brainer for me. Number one has to be my boots, my feet hate the cold and wet and upset feet means upset morale so I have always ensured my boots are top priority. I could be stuck in a jungle or desert for weeks or just stood around all day with a journalist, either way boots and some good insoles are crucial. I love Bates boots for their comfort, durability and reliability; I have tried all sorts, but now stick to a couple of differing pairs of Bates. They are military tough, but look like any civi boot, so ideal for all projects and operations.' Second would be my sleeping bag, you have to get good sleep to stay sharp and with space, weight, warmth and durability always key issues I stick with snuggpak every time. I have differing bags for differing climates, all are superb.' Number 3 would have to be my water filter, all too often I see people sick from the water, aid agency staff when a supply has been contaminated, others drinking bottled water from shops, often filled from the tap over and over again in many regions. My Katadyn filter goes with me everywhere.

Judy is also ex military, a specialist medic, interpreter, and very kit orientated.

"I love my bum bag, no idea now how long I have had it or where it came from, but it has my escape pouch inside full of emergency essentials, a few medical items, a small powerful torch, and normally sweets. It's always on me it's just part of me when I'm away.' Next would be my head scarves, I take several so I don't stand out the same each day. They are critically cultural in some parts, but useful in all places for many reasons.' Finally, and probably not that useful for readers is good sports bras. The lads have no idea how uncomfortable long days and nights on operations can be. The basics are as critical as all the fancy gear".

PK also served with the military, but retrained as a specialist psychologist.

"Hmmm.... You want me to say my expensive jacket, seal skin gloves, escape bag and all that stuff, but I get the practical essentials packed away first like toilet roll. In many places its simply inadequate and in others not used at all and I'm sorry, but I like to feel clean and tidy if you know what I mean. I fold it into every spare pouch and pocket I can find." Then my Jet Boil cooker, lots of the teams use other cookers and many still like those small solid fuel army things that pack down small, but I'm always the fist to have a brew and I like my coffee wherever I am. Finally it's my little escape pouch which is like the Dr Who Tardis, its only like a small camera pouch, but it has all the essentials I need to survive the most challenging situations and has done just that several times. The list of its contents appears endless, but each has a special role and I have continually evolved it over many years. If you wanted me to name specialist stuff or brands, Lowa, Karrimore, Snuggpak, and Leatherman would almost always be on my person somewhere?

We will hunt down some other staff for their insight and would love to hear yours too!

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