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The Practical Rigger

Sewing a Simple Patch

Note: A senior rigger may sew a patch over a damaged area up to 10 inches long if the finished patch comes no closer than 1" from a seam and 5" from a tape or line attachment.

AT THE LAYOUT-CUTTING TABLE

Step 1—Pre-Cut the Patch: Cut a rectangular piece of material at least three inches bigger than the damage in each direction—minimum 7-1/2" in any direction. Always go a little bigger than you think!

Step 2—Create a Fold Line on the Patch: Mark a line around the edge of the patch on all four sides FOUR squares in from the "zero-line." The zero line is the outside edge of the first COMPLETE line of ripstop squares. Fold the patch on the marked line. Burnish the folded edge over a sharp edge of a counter, but don't damage the fabric.

Step 3—Pre-Position the Patch: Fold the patch in half along the long edge and make a tick mark at the center that crosses the fold line. Center the patch over the damaged area INSIDE the canopy both north-south and east-west. Then mark a "plus sign" mark on the canopy intersecting where tick mark and top edge of the patch will lay. Extend that line east and west along the ripstop line a little past the end of the folded patch. Do NOT mark any other edges of the patch yet.

AT THE MACHINE

Check that the machine is sewing correctly and that there is enough thread in the bobbin.

Step 4—Sew Along the Line: Re-fold the first edge of the patch. Lay the patch over the damaged area on the INSIDE of the canopy and match the marks in Step 3. Set the needle at least two inches ahead the center to hold everything in place. Maneuver the rest of the canopy to reduce any tension and so you can sew the first line without catching anything underneath. Sew along the ripstop line you marked east-west on the canopy along the top edge of the patch 1/16" to 3/32" along the edge of the patch, being careful to keep the ripstop line on the edge of the patch exactly on the ripstop line you marked on the canopy. Sew to about 2" from the end of the patch.

Step 5—Fold and Mark the Next Sew Line: Fold the next edge of the patch under and mark the first visible ripstop line along the second edge. Repeat until you come back to where you started. Oversew at least three inches and around the next corner if needed.

BACK AT THE LAYOUT-CUTTING TABLE

Step 6—Mark the Inside of the Patch: On the outside surface of the canopy, determine the zero lines inside the stitched rectangle holding the patch. The zero lines are the first complete ripstop line with no stitching crossing them. Mark a rectangle NINE COMPLETE squares from the zero lines. Mark a diagonal line FOUR squares from each inside corner of the new marked rectangle toward the outside of the patch. Cut all the way to the corner of the fourth square. It's better to cut a teensy bit too far than too short.

Step 7—Cut Out the Damaged Area: Carefully cut all the marked lines of the new rectangle to remove the damaged area. Also cut the diagonal lines as described. Make sure to cut the diagonal lines completely, but DON'T cut the patch or any other part of the canopy.

BACK AT THE MACHINE:

Step 8—Fold, Sew, and Complete: Start sewing on the side of the patch OPPOSITE the overstitch on the patch. Keeping the same $1/16''$ to $3/32''$ distance along the edge, carefully fold the edge under and sew the inside of the patch. Keep the work flat and tension on the material even in all directions. Make sure to sew far enough past each corner to catch the underfolded fabric on the next inside edge after you make the durn. Overstitch at least three inches and around the next corner if needed.

Step 9—Inspect Your Work: Make sure the patch and seams are loading evenly with a one-square positioning tolerance along any line. Stitch row tolerance must be within $1/32''$ and $1/8''$ from the edge. Clip and remove any thread ends inside and outside.