

Improving Your Impression

Fußlappen sind wärmer als Socken

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The German Soldat in both World Wars was frequently issued a pair of Fußlappen or footwraps, in addition to a pair of socks. Many of you have heard of them but don't know exactly what they are or how they are worn, or even what they can do for you. I hope to impart some information on them to you in this article. Footwraps are simple square or rectangular pieces of soft, flannel-like wool or wool blend cloth that are wrapped around the feet. They may be worn over socks, or less often, by themselves.

Now, I know it sounds absurd to suggest you go wrap a scrap of cloth over your socks, but not only are they easy to make, they're easy to wear, are quite comfortable, and are also quite warm. At one WWI event, I wore only a pair of thick Fußlappen under my boots and my feet felt wonderful. One advantage of Fußlappen is that you can arrange folds of cloth to protect a sore spot on your ankle or heel.

A U.S. Army Quartermaster report from WWII states that among German prisoners, men who wore Fußlappen in leather boots seldom had trench foot, and that men who wore only shoes and Fußlappen seemed to be able to keep their feet warm and dry in any weather. Another mention of Fußlappen can be found in the WWII book Soldat, where the author, Siegfried Knappe, learns how to knit so that he can make socks, something the Russians had never seen, for they wore footwraps like the German troops did.

You can make your Fußlappen out of any sort of fine flannel material; just cut out two squares about 16-18" square. You need not hem the edges, just let them fray out a little.

To wear the Fußlappen, rotate the square into a diamond and place your foot on it so that your instep is along a centerline from top to bottom. Your foot isn't exactly in the middle, but a little off to one side.





Now, fold up the front,

Then one side,

Then the other side,



Now, hold the folded part in place, and stuff your foot into your boot.



Unlike socks, Fußlappen won't bunch up around your toes, and they don't seem to creep around on you at all. In cold weather you can put a sheet or two of newspaper under the Fußlappen, to increase your insulation. Armed with this info, you can now be authentic where no one can see it!

