

For Sarah  
From Charles Preston  
September 1, 2024

A couple items you may not be aware of.

#### Summary

The U.S. military has done considerable research and development over the years in keeping field personnel able to perform at a high level of physical activity with as low as possible rate of incapacitation from hypothermia or heat related illness, including with the help of Patagonia to design and produce specialized clothing.

<https://tacticalgear.com/experts/extended-cold-weather-clothing-system>

The Generation III Extended Cold Weather Clothing System (GEN III ECWCS) is a system of mix and match for conditions. I wanted to call your attention to the base layers. While I don't like the Layer 1 bottoms due to a stiff and scratchy waistband, and I wear Patagonia bottoms instead, Layer 2 is warmer than anything I'm aware that Patagonia or other companies have, and it is Polartec Power Dry grid fleece. Imitation military clothing dealers offer something that looks similar but is not MILSPEC Polartec Power Dry.

[https://www.fortbraggsurplus.us/GEN-III-Cold-Weather-Mid-Weight-Drawers--ECWCS-Level-2\\_p\\_3168.html](https://www.fortbraggsurplus.us/GEN-III-Cold-Weather-Mid-Weight-Drawers--ECWCS-Level-2_p_3168.html)

These are often available new and unissued for about \$29, vs about \$90 for Patagonia base layers.

I have worn the GEN III Layer 2 riding a bike at 38 degrees F in the rain, and really wet, at 15 mph under poly/cotton trousers and been warm and mostly dry.

#### Improved Military Sleep System (U.S. Army)

I'm mentioning this only because the IMSS warm weather sleeping bag has more chest and knee room than the Big Agnes bags, other mummy bags, or other high quality european military sleeping bags. It has more rugged material and construction than typical outdoor sports bags. One feature I use is a zipper arrangement that is almost non-snag. It is a non-locking zipper that you can open in a couple seconds. While I'm not anticipating being attacked by enemy forces or bears, I have other needs for speed when exiting a sleeping bag late at night after too much tea before bedtime. I also like the muted military colors better than many of the major brands color choices.

For really cold weather, excess space equals more space for your body to heat, and the restrictions of a true mummy bag may be a good compromise.

This bag is often available from certain trustworthy surplus dealers for \$80 or less, in prior issued but very good condition. I use only certain dealers to be sure of getting actual MILSPEC gear instead of some of the imitations that are on the market.

Using Nikwax Tech Wash and a front loading washer, and then a 45 lb commercial dryer on the lowest setting, I have had good results washing synthetic sleeping bags without apparent damage.

This bag's lowest sleeping temperature can be extended about 10 degrees by using ECWCS Layer 1 and 2 base layers (see above) and a Polartec beanie and maybe neck protection. I haven't found that one or two layers of a Patagonia Nano Puff adds much useful warmth. ECWCS Layer 7 will, and a zippered military poncho liner over the sleeping bag also works OK for about 10 degrees colder.

I have a used IMSS set, but I decided I wanted a new summer bag as my primary bag, which I was able to buy directly from the military supplier, Tennier Industries.

[https://www.fortbraggsurplus.us/Sleep-System--Patrol-Bag-Only\\_p\\_3086.html](https://www.fortbraggsurplus.us/Sleep-System--Patrol-Bag-Only_p_3086.html)

<https://www.tennierindustries.com/product/tii-mss-inner-bag/>