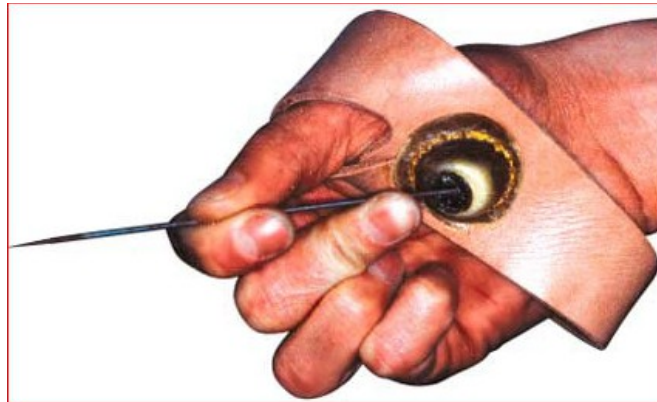


HOLSTERS

By Oliver Cameron
with Ole Wik

How did you use babiche?^{1,2}

For holsters for axes, knives, and rifles. I have a sewing palm for pushing a big needle through leather or sack material or ugruk skin.



Sewing palm.

Image source: http://www.thetreasuredepot.com/cgi-bin/bbs62x/relicarchive_config.pl?md=read;id=380101

I like a fairly heavy piece of leather for a holster. Sometimes if I'm in a hurry, I have the fur on the outside, but ordinarily the hair is worn off or has been scraped off.

You can tie the front end of the holster down to some part of your sled, usually with a string about a foot long, so that you can flop the whole thing up on top of your load and have one strand of rope across it. At any rate, you want to have that fixed so that when you want the gun, you can just pull it out of there and get it in use quickly.

I usually make it with a flap of lighter skin over the opening where the rifle goes in, so that there's no danger of getting snow in it if I tip the sled over or whatever. I don't fasten it with a buckle, which is a damned nuisance when you're in a hurry. Instead I usually make a quick-release, using a staple and a little wooden wedge.

I set the staple on top of the holster where I want it to hold the flap shut. Then I make a hole in the leather where each of the two points of the staple extend down, and push the staple through. I bend one leg of that staple forward, and bend the tip part up into the leather. Then I bend the other side back and bend the tip up into the leather. That way the staple will stay upright.

I attach a little wooden wedge up the holster a ways, fastened by a little strap of leather. I make a little slot in the cover flap that fits down over the staple. To secure the flap, I stick that little wedge into the staple.

The leather strap keeps the wedge from getting lost. There is enough slack in the strap that I can just hook my finger under it and give it a little jerk, and the holster comes open easily. It's very quick, and it's not noisy.

What is the length of staple?

It depends on what you're using it on—usually 5/8". I use fairly heavy wire, similar to coat hanger wire. The idea behind bending opposite legs of the staple one forward and one back is to keep the staple from tipping.

I don't always use a wire staple. Sometimes I've sewn a piece of stiff leather on there instead of the staple. I've even just cut a couple of slots, maybe half an inch apart, perpendicular to the wedge. That makes a little kind of bridge that you just put the wedge under. It takes the place of the top part of the metal staple.

1) This essay stems from a series of telephone conversations that Ole Wik had with Oliver between December 2007 and February 2008. Highlighted text indicates remarks made by Ole.

2) Babiche: "Thong(s) of rawhide or sinew used as cord, lacing, or webbing, in the manufacture of snowshoes, braided straps and tumplines, fishing and harpoon lines, knit bags, etc." Source: <http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/babiche>