

Would You Accept Less Than 100 Percent?

By Sean Smith

Recently I received my *Family Heirloom Weavers (FHW)* blanket, and it is wonderful, and after the *Woolrich (WR)* blanket I had, this one will be a savior during those rainy events. For those of you who don't know, *Woolrich* makes a lot of the blankets you see in the field today. But little known is that they contain 15% synthetic fibers. *Family Heirloom Weavers* blanket on the other hand is 100% wool, spun on a loom. I found some major differences being the weight, dry warmth, wet warmth, and overall look and feel.

The *FHW* blanket is about 4.5 pounds dry, which is fairly close to what a good Civil War era blanket would be. The *FHW* blanket is basically two blankets in one. The blanket is two panels of woven blanket hand-sewn. This makes for it being extra warm, good for colder weather in the winter, spring, and fall. The blanket is also big in size; about six feet by six feet. The *WR* blanket is about 2.5 pounds dry, under what most blankets were of the time. It is also smaller in width, it will not completely fold over me on two sides, which is a great disadvantage- especially in the summer with mosquitoes, and I am by no means a "wide" person (6'1" and 145 lbs.).

I found that *FHW's* blanket is superior in warmth when dry compared to the *WR* blanket. Part of the reason has to do with the weave. The *FHW* blanket is a fairly tight weave, but does let air pass. As for the *WR* blanket, I cannot tell the weave, and I don't believe there is a definite weave to it that I can see. In a temperature of about 25 degrees at night the *FHW* blanket had an inside blanket temperature of about 50 degrees. When I tried the *WR* blanket in the 25 degree air temperature, the inside blanket temperature was about 38 degrees. Need I say more?

The blanket being wet is another thing for campaigners to take into account, I've been to many events where I've been poured on and braved it out under a tree and my blanket has been wet and I froze! Well not with my *FHW* blanket I won't! I tested the two blankets in rain. They were both soaking wet and I slept in them. The temperature difference in the *FHW* blanket was about an 18-degree difference from the air temperature inside the blanket to the air temperature outside the blanket. The *WR* blanket had a 12-degree difference, not huge but noticeable when you're cold.

Some people say they can't tell the difference between the 100% wool blanket and the blanket with 15% synthetic fiber. I can tell the difference just from the look. And I can defiantly tell by the touch, there is just a difference feeling between the two. The *FHW* blanket is defiantly itchy to the touch, I wouldn't dare sleep under that thing without being in long sleeve shirt and pants. Whereas the *WR* blanket is much gentler to the touch, which also makes it less authentic. To the eye the *FHW* blanket looks rougher and more natural, the *WR* blanket has more of a kind of glossy shine to it, because of the synthetic fibers. And finally the stitching is different. The *FHW* blanket is hand sewn all around, the two panels come together with hand sewing and the edges are hand sewn. The *WR* blanket is machine sewn around the edges with a more modern blanket stitch.

I would highly suggest the *Family Heirloom Weavers* Double Woven blanket to anyone (Confederate or civilian) in the market for a new blanket or for anyone who wants to upgrade his kit. The blanket cost \$95.00 complete and \$85.00 for a kit. And get rid of that *Woolrich* 1861 Emergency Issue, US Issue, or their “civilian” blanket. Would you accept 85 percent from you car or from the chair your sitting on? Why should you accept anything less than 100 percent from your blanket?