

Reproducing WWII Matchbooks

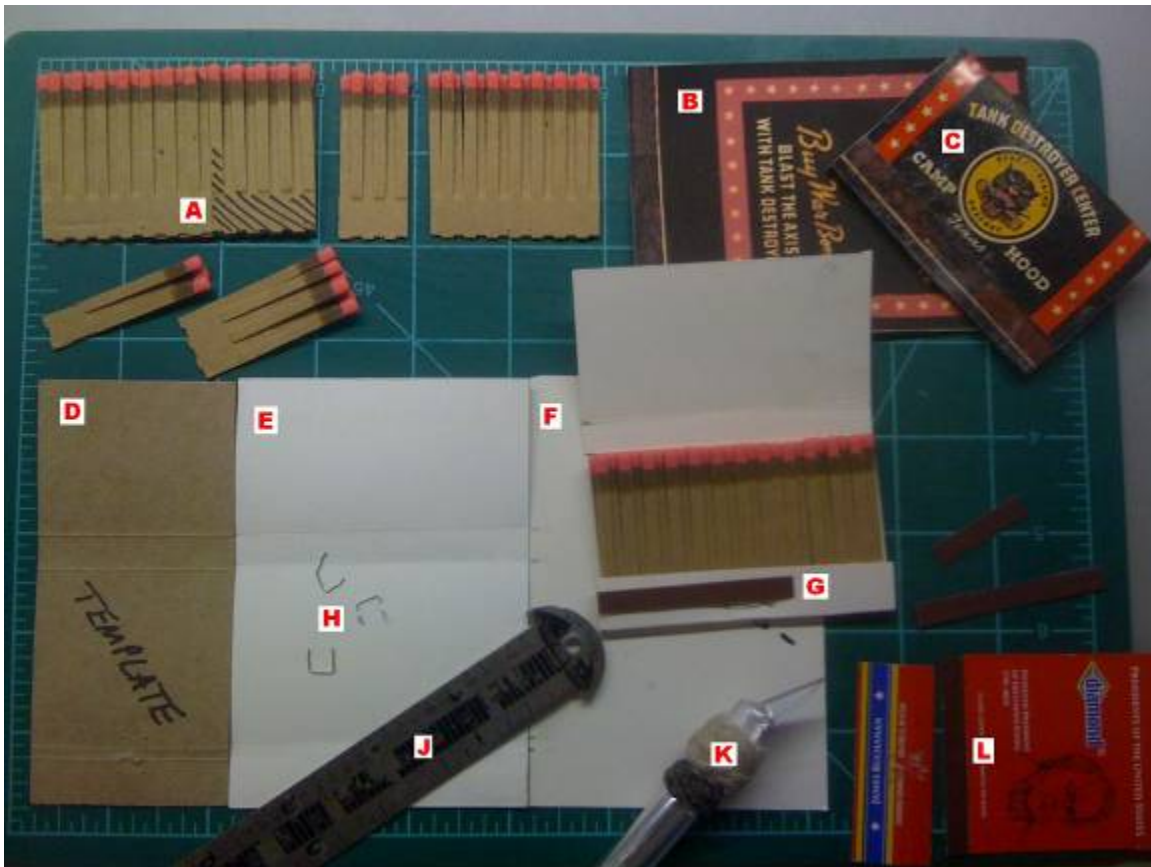
Overview

Since a part of history is matchbooks, this is an extension of a Reenactment. Similarly food storage, cigarette packages, gum and candy wrappers, etc. are reproduced. Use original examples or pictures from the Internet and new matchbooks as a starting point. The example used here came from *TD single.PDF* at

[groups.yahoo DOT com/group/wwiifreepaperwork/files/Smoke%20%27em%20if%20ya%20got%20%27em](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wwiifreepaperwork/files/Smoke%20%27em%20if%20ya%20got%20%27em)

New Matchbooks

Be careful not to damage the striker strip. Using a sharp point (don't stab yourself ...) pry the staple points up and using pliers, straighten the points and push the staple through the match book. Using the pliers, pull the stable from the book.



- A Resembling the matches
 - B Printed Cover, cut out
 - C Finished Matchbook
 - D New Cover “template”
 - E Printed Cover, Scored for Folding
 - F Cutting Template
 - G Sample Matchbook, glueing striker strip.
 - H Old Staples
 - I Metal Ruler for cutting guide
 - J Metal Ruler for cutting guide
 - K Metal Ruler for cutting guide
 - L Cutting the striker strip from new books
- Background – Self Healing Cutting Board

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Separate the matches and the cover

Using slim sharp knife (Exacto etc.) and a ruler cut the stricker strip from the cover being careful to not cut away too much stricker and not to leave any color from the cover.

Reassemble the Matches

It will probably turn out that your new matches are too narrow for your reproduction cover. Lay as many match sections as needed to make up the new width. Count the number of matches to remove to make the new width and cut enough match sections for the number of books that you are making. I was able to use the short pieces also ... more cutting a making things fit.

One section plus 6 matches less from a second section. Glue a short section to a full section and then do the reverse to make an offset. Glueing the match sections seems to make great sense to me. They could have been stapled, just not through the cover. Waterproof glue might help ... but if this packet gets wet ... it will probably be gone anyway.

Print a Cover



Starting with a scan or good square photo of an original cover (left), clean up the image so the writing is clear and neat when printed. Make cutting guide marks all the corners (right), paying attention to placing the marks so they will not show in the final product. Make the border wider than the cut marks so you can cut into color and not paper color will show at the edges. (I use Paint to edit the image ... easy and free).



I use Word, and in the example of a large WWII matchbook, the cover is 3" wide. Two columns that are more than 3 inches will put four on an 8 1/2" x 11" page. Paste four cover images in the columns and size each 0.1" large than the last. Print a sample which gives four widths/heights and compare that to the correct width ... 3". If needed adjust the sizes, print another sample etc. When you arrive at the correct width, change the four samples to match.

All cutting is done on a self healing cutting mat. The one I use is from a popular office

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supply chain and is made by TechTools. It is green and has lay out line in a one inch grid with some angle marked. Sometimes the marks are handy.

Use a new cover and the image to create a template of the reproduction cover and mark the location of the folds. Start with blank stock and fold and make sure the template works for you matches. Use a rounded point to score the cover along the fold lines. A jumbo paper clip is a good scoring tool or at least the profile to look for. DO NOT use a knife. All the scoring is on the inside of the cover ... it will not show when the new book is folded.

Striking Strip

Make a choice to put the striker on the front or back. Placing it on the front like it was in 1940 something might be preferred. Use the strips removed from the new covers. Align the strips about 1/16" from the edge of the cover. Using a slight amount of white glue press and hold the strip in place until the glue will hold. If the new strips are short, use a second strip and apply it touching the first strip and let the excess hang over. When the glue dries, trim the excess using a sharp knife. With any luck this piece can be used in a future book.

Assembly

Place the matches in the cover, fold up the cover and place a standard staple near the edge at the center of the cover making sure that it is not too high to keep the cover from closing far enough. Use the new covers as an example. Press the staples points down on the back to make them smooth.

Final Notes

It is not my intention to make money on this and for you to sell them either. I am considering using a couple for my display and the rest will be special gifts for folks that help me in a special way at events. A way to give someone something that is probably not in their kit and that they can use without destroying an ancient artifact. A note and signature on the inside adds an extra personal touch. Perhaps a comment directly related to the event and special deed in a war context.

Special recognition and thanks to hardscrabble.com for the ideas and free files. This was my inspiration and spring board.

About the Author: Tom Essary and his wife live in Arlington, TX. They restored a WWII jeep (1943 Ford GPW) to Army service in 2008. Since they have driven "Toby" over 7000 miles. Tom is a reenactor with Baker Co. 1st Bn. 141st Inf. Rgt., 36th Division in North Texas (36thdivision.org). "Toby" and these matches are in many parades, battles and shows. See more at ad5zo.com.