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By Chris Collard

My first experience with Zarges aluminum cases was during the Expeditions 7 crossing of Antarctica. We used them to store everything from tents and clothes to spare parts and oil. They were tossed in and out of the vehicles, used as step ladders, chairs, and tables, and stuffed with volumes of gear that would have created a hemorrhage in anything I had used before. When I considered my options for upgrading my long-term Tacoma storage, the choice was clear. They are not cheap, but dang they are tough.

General construction is 1- to 1.5-mm formed aluminum with beaded walls and corners for increased dimensional strength. All joints are riveted and sealed, the stainless steel piano hinge is robust, and spring-loaded handles on each end make for an easy carry. The lid opens to about 110 degrees and is held in place by two webbed straps. When the lockable, stainless steel latches are cinched down, a polyurethane gasket on the lid seals the cases airtight. All are IP54 rated for water intrusion (IP65 is available), ATA (Air Transportation Association) 300 Category I approved, and meet MIL-STD-810 and 461 standards for structural integrity.

The K470 series is available in 25 standard sizes, but custom units can be built for specific needs. My cases are 23.6 x 15.7 x 13.4 inches, weigh in at 11 pounds each, and fit perfectly with my other gear (the cost for this size is \$305). I'm using one for my mess kit, the other for food storage. Another nice feature is the formed cast-aluminum corners, which allow me to stack one case atop another without fear of having it shift or slip off. I suggest they thread the corners and offer adjustable, screw-in legs to allow the case to be used as a table.

Although the cases come from Zarges unlined, Bauer Cases now offers CNC-cut, .25-inch, 6-pound Stratocell (closed-cell) foam liner kits. I found two distinct advantages to the liner: protection of content and sound insulation. Overall I've been really happy with this storage upgrade. The K470s are lightweight, rugged, and weather resistant. If I need to pack them for a flight, I know they are certified for most consumer products. Bravo! zargescases.com, 888-357-6285, bauercases.com, 800-301-2212

Top, clockwise from upper left: Cast-aluminum corners "nest" into the base of a same-size case for stacking and provide extra protection. Spring-loaded stainless steel handles are sturdy and ergonomically comfortable. Bauer Cases offers custom CNC-cut, closed-cell foam liners that deliver a measure of protection for content as well as noise damping. Dual, lockable stainless steel latches and a polyurethane lid seal provide excellent weatherproofing.



Zarges K470 Cases \$206-\$1,194

Quality storage solutions for the long haul.

