

NORTHFIELD MOUNTAIN NORDIC SKI PATROL



Volume 32

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THE KLEPPER TRIP... And the Laws of Physics

by Tom Deam

Yes, another tale of “how it was” during the Northern Norway trip in 1975, but with a different mode of travel. Our counterparts/ hosts were members of the Royal Marine SBS who were called Swimmer/ Canoeists when they finished the training course. I’m sure you all know what Klepper Canoes/ Kayaks are. I say canoes because our UK Hosts that deployment referred to them as canoes. And who were we to argue with that?

Our “Base” was located at a small Norse Torpedo Station, up a fjord in Ramsund Norway, way north in Norway! The building we used at the station was a large two-story wood structure that looked like it had been there a while. Heat was provided by the sun or portable kerosene heaters. That time of year the heaters were on constantly due to the lack of sun. Yes, there was snow, but the north end of the Gulf Stream helped to moderate the weather to some degree. However, weather and temperature wise, a hop over the ridge to the east was a different story.

The first few weeks in Ramsund were spent acclimating, getting acquainted with our UK-issued clothing and equipment, and prepping for some “wet work”. The wet work referred to included Lock Out/Lock In from a UK Sub in the fjord and a few paddles with the Kleppers. Of note, the Sub had a cramped but well stocked bar.

For paddling, Immersion suits were the outer layer of choice: a one piece rubber garment with tight sealing at the neck and wrist. The only body parts not covered were the face, head, and hands. A hefty zipper went diagonally from one shoulder to the opposite hip. *These things did not leak or breathe.*

Fishnet undergarments made up the first layer of clothing, and thin wool garments or a wool long john made up the next. A thin pair of socks was covered by a thick, *really thick*, pair of wool (*continued on page 2*)

DATES TO REMEMBER

Saturday, October 23rd: Northfield Mountain

- **1pm to 4:30pm: CPR/FPR Recertification**
- **5pm (or after recert): Refresher Planning**
Join us as we map out details for our annual refresher. This is your chance to volunteer to coordinate material that highlights your own expertise. Share that wealth of knowledge!

Sunday, November 14th: Northfield Mountain

- **6pm: Patrol Meeting & Candidate Night**
Welcome our new Candidates. Share stories about typical patrol days and patrol history, including the infamous flounder award.

Saturday, December 4th: Northfield Mountain

- **7:30am (registration): OEC Refresher**
Refresher activities will start at 8am sharp. *Bring:* a check for annual dues of \$66 (payable to NMNSP), study guide, patrol pack, lunch, and warm clothes for outdoor activities. Northfield Mountain has a small patrol, so any guest patrollers at our Refresher will significantly change the number of people attending. *If you patrol elsewhere in the Region and would like to join us on December 4th, you must contact our Patrol Rep, Tom Deam, at tdeam@verizon.net by November 8th so we can adjust our plans accordingly.*

Sunday, December 5th: Northfield Mountain

- **8am: Hill (Nordic) Refresher**
Further details will be emailed to Northfield patrollers after our planning meeting.

Sunday, December 12th: Northfield Mountain

- **6pm: Patrol Meeting & Holiday Party**
All Patrollers, Candidates, family members and significant others are welcome to join us for a potluck supper and Yankee present swap (\$10-\$15 gift). Since we follow patrol rules, you never know what gift you’ll end up with! Something practical? Something beautiful? Or something LOL silly? Warning: don’t expect to keep that chocolate or coffee! Laughter and a fun time guaranteed. ✨

CHOCOLATE POT CHAT

by Tom Deam

Hope all's summer went well. It *was* summer! A few things from the Region Meeting:

1. Patrol Competition is a great way to meet, compete, and enjoy with members of other Patrols. Events can be tailored to meet our, Nordic, skills. Let's try and field a team this season, it will be fun.
2. Dues will be the same this year, no change. Breakdown is: \$41 for National, \$17 for Division, and \$8 for Region. The total is \$66.00. Like last year registration will be done electronically so let me know by the end of October if you plan to renew for the upcoming 2010-2011 Ski Season.
3. Elections for a new Region Director will be held at our Refresher. There are three new candidates for the position as the current Region Director is not running for the job. Names of all three and bios of two are on the Region website, www.nspwmr.org. Take a moment to read them so you have the info to make a decision.

Don't forget, our CPR/FPR recert is Saturday, October 23rd, from 1:00 to 4:30. An OEC Refresher planning meeting will follow at 5pm, or after the recert is done. Help is needed to make the Refresher a meaningful event for all of us.

Our OEC Refresher is December 4th, and the On-the-Hill (Nordic) is December 5th. Ideas for the Nordic portion are needed. What do you want to see covered or refreshed? If you're not there, we won't know.

Plan to attend our Patrol Meeting on November 14th at 6:00pm and welcome new candidates.

Finally, I'm looking forward to seeing all, and to the season to begin. Enough of this warm weather! Let's see if we can use more SWIX wax than Klister this year! ❄

THE KLEPPER TRIP... *(continued from page 1)*

socks. Finally, one could choose to wear or carry a pair of trousers and wind proof for wear onshore. One thing became painfully clear. Make sure your bladder is empty and hold off on coffee for a couple hours prior to donning this suit!

One paddle we took involved a 3 to 4 mile voyage to a firing range. The range was used by the Norse Navy's Fast Patrol Boats for practice and test firing their boats' weapons. This day, two of the Kleppers would have a GPMG fixed to their bow to be fired by the bow paddler. The GPMG is a fairly sturdy light to medium use, belt-fed, 7.62mm, *(continued next column)*

(continued from column 1) machine gun used by many NATO Forces. It's normally fired using either its integral bipod or fixed to a swiveling tripod. Light does not describe its weight.

Two of the Kleppers had slight modifications to securely mount the weapons at the bow. A 100-round box was attached to the gun for an initial supply of ammo and 200 extra rounds would be stowed in a modified bag in the bow, easily reached by the bow man. Packs, Bergans, would also be carried in the canoes, for us anyhow.

Two of us five SEALs weighed about 140, two were around 170 and one rang in at 160 pounds. Funny, the Swimmer/Canoeists mirrored our weights. Common sense would say the light guys would be in the bow with the added weight of the GPMG and ammo and the heavier ones in the rear. But our hosts had a sense of humor and streak of, "Let's see what they're made of!"

The other 170-pounder and I were each assigned to the bow of a Klepper that held a GPMG. Wails and threats from us? Hey, we would have done the same thing. The canoes loaded, waited on the shore. The safety craft that would accompany us were set and afloat with engines started. Now with our bladders empty, the suits were zipped and off we went.

The fjord had a bit of a chop and the Kleppers, loaded with gear and paddlers, were down at the bow. Ya think! Other than the cold water and chop slopping over, the paddle to the range went well. We stopped, linked up with the safety craft, reviewed the range limits, got permission, and were cleared to fire. The guns were loaded, safed, and we cast off from the "mother craft". The two canoes with the GPMGs separated twenty yards, positioned bows to the range and on signal, fired.

A quick physics lesson ensued. The recoil of the weapon pushed the canoes straight back, suddenly and unexpected. *Well, I did not expect it.* No, the Klepper did not roll or capsize, but the muzzle dipped a bit and of the 50 rounds fired the last 20 could be seen leaving a trail in the water 30 yards in front of each boat.

Various methods of stabilizing the canoes were tried and the best, but by no means optimal, was two Kleppers side by side with one weapon firing. The paddle home went quicker as our thermoses of tea had been emptied and nature was taking over. ❄

WWW.NMNSP.ORG

Don't forget to check our website for the latest patrol news and dates of upcoming courses and events.

If you don't remember the user name and password for entering the 'patrol room', contact Bill Schweikert at: webmaster@nmnsp.org

The next issue of the Rattlebone will be published midseason.

Please get all articles, information, dates, etc.

to Joannie Duris by January 15th.

(978) 928-5587 or jvduris@charter.net.