

AMERICAN SURVIVOR

Survival Information For The Prepared Citizen

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Survival and Camping

For the purposes of this article, "camping" refers to tent camping, ranging from the big family tent camp in a campground to backpack camping in the back country. We are not talking about Winnebagos, trailers, cabins or day hikes, although those do have some survival applications. The skills and equipment required for tent (often called "primitive") camping take the family halfway to preparedness physically and mentally. The capacity and experience of 4-season camping goes even further towards full preparedness and self-reliance. Backpacking is the foundation of self-reliance capability. Having one's pack and equipment always ready initiates you into "the brotherhood of the survival pack". During recent disasters in my community I used much of my camping/survival equipment to get through the emergency. Basic camping items such as a coffee pot, camp stove, candle lanterns, water filters, lanterns, and binoculars came in handy. I almost needed my rubber raft as well. Regrettably, camping is on the decline throughout the US. The softening of America and the

obsession with luxury and comfort has replaced the pride in camping skills and the satisfaction of the backwoods experience. Urbanization, commercialization and development have surrounded and corrupted many once wilderness locations.



If one is not physically able to hike far into the back-country you may well find your camp is overcrowded and subject to light and noise pollution. The reduction in vacation time since the 1950s has left many of us with little time for the true "camping trip". Caring for camp equipment, setting up camp and then taking it down is hardly worth the work if you only have a few days off. A motel or cabin leaves more time to enjoy the sights. We can only hope that the current economic conditions bring back "true" camping. Do not be misled, camping skills alone are not the key to true

survival, but they are a good start. If you have all of what you think you need to survive, you should go camping for at least 5 days to test your equipment, skills and attitudes. If you enjoy camping already you need to add some items and skills and reorganize a bit to become survival ready. You should extend your camping/survival capacity into rainy and cold conditions. The day you actually have to camp to survive may not be warm and sunny. Oh, by the way, enjoy the outdoors, get exercise and have fun.

Fleeing into the woods from your home is the last resort. Let's face it, camping is never as safe, comfortable or well equipped as home. Only if the home and community become completely insecure should one resort to the survival camp, but you must have that option. The point is that your "camping" equipment gives you a big advantage even if you never have to evacuate. Let's look at basic camping as a survival preparedness building exercise.

Camping forces you to test your equipment and techniques. All that stuff in your pack or in your basement may not work the way you think it will. Some of these items will fail or at least fail to meet your needs. Your tent may leak or fail to survive a strong wind. Your sleeping bag may not be as warm as the rating indicated. Stoves and lanterns may not hold up. You are sure to find that there are some items you need that you do not have and some items you have that you really do not need. Only camping can fill in the blanks in your survival plans. If you go further and take a backpacking trip you will be able to test most of your evacuation pack items. Most importantly, you will

find out just what you can carry and how far you can carry it. You will also get to try a variety of dehydrated and trail foods. Camping will also force you to learn survival cooking. There are no refrigerators, microwaves or coffee makers out there. All of this will come in handy when the power goes off. In the course of your camping and packing trips, you will also be able to scout out possible evacuation routes and camp locations.



The main differences between camping and survival preparedness are the need for durability and the sustainability. In camping you get to pick the time of year and weather for your trip, but in survival you may be forced out into the worst weather. For this reason, the survival camper must select tents, sleeping bags, clothing and equipment based on the worst case. So, even if you limit your camping to the milder times of the year, you will need winter rated sleeping bags, heaters, raingear and a 3 or 4 season tent. The occasional camper can get away with cheap equipment, but the survival campers who may have to rough it for many months need to buy the best commercial or military grade equipment available. That yellow tent with the flat sides and all the

screening is not going to do for survival. A green, four-season dome tent with a large rainfly and lots of tie-downs is what you need. Buy a tent that is one person larger than the number who will sleep in it. If the tent is too large it will waste heat and be hard to carry. If the tent is too small you will have to leave your gear outside and you may have to sleep against the cold and damp tent walls. Even if you do not camp in winter you want to have good tent heaters, zero-rated sleeping bags and winter clothing. Recreational campers will have a few extra bottles of gas for the stove and heater and a few leftover dehydrated meals, but a survival camper will have dozens of extra fuel cylinders and enough food for months. You will also want to have spare parts, repair kits and backup equipment since you will not be able to buy replacements under emergency conditions. Of course there are a lot of items and skills that go beyond "camping" needs, including first aid, self-defense, navigation, camouflage, water purification and foraging. These must be added to bridge the gap between camping and survival preparedness. A good "camping trip" with the family lasting 4-5 days can go a long way towards preparing for disasters while enjoying the outdoors. Backpacking and cold weather camping can toughen up the family and establish the survival, self-reliant mindset. The family and others may accept the idea of "camping" better than "survival preparedness" and even enjoy the experience. You can add skill-building activities such as fishing, hunting, fire building and tracking. Basic (no frills) camping can be the foundation of a family survival preparedness program while providing healthy recreation.

DEFIANCE

The Ultimate Survival Scenario

By Jim Jones

Throughout history, there are examples of a population fleeing to the hills, swamps or forests to escape invaders, plagues and persecutions. This evacuation and survival scenario is generally considered the "worst case" alternative. Up until the early 20th Century there was not much difference between migration and evacuation for survival. Almost everyone lived close to nature and had the skills and mind-set to build a self-reliant support system of water, shelter, food, and defense were ever they moved. Their expectations were very basic and they could use natural materials and a few tools to survive anywhere. Almost everyone hunted, fished, grew a garden, did repairs, had a firearm, preserved food, made clothing and cooked from scratch. Also, up until very recent times there was plenty of unoccupied, unobserved and inaccessible forests and wilderness to flee to. The last example of a large number of people establishing a covert and self-reliant survival camp in a wilderness location is chronicled in the book *Defiance* by Nechama Tec. The book tells the story of how several thousand Jews escaped the Polish ghettos and the exterminations into the Nalibocka Forest west of Minsk in Belarus and survived there from 1940 until 1944. This is one of the few recent examples of mass, wilderness survival on recent history. The survivors fled into the forest with virtually nothing (no survival pack), poorly clothed, and untrained. They were faced with unforgiving weather

conditions while being hunted by the German Army and at times by the Russians as well. It is not my intention to review the book here. I do however want to highlight the lessons and experiences that the book provides.

First of all, guns were the most treasured item to be had. As the Polish army and then the Russian Army retreated through Poland they discarded weapons and ammunition that were quickly scooped up and hidden by the peasants. These were often sold, traded or given to the Jews. Yes in some cases they were also stolen. Anyone coming into the camp that had a firearm and could use it was immediately accepted. Gunsmiths were also highly valued. In one case the gift of a pistol is seen as a gift of survival and freedom. Loss of a gun was a capital offense.

City people did not do as well as country people. They could not see themselves living in the forest, so they often stayed in the ghettos until it was too late to escape. If they did escape, they often could not handle the harsh conditions. City people also tended to have fewer usable skills. Lawyers, managers and academics were the lower class in the forest whereas farmers, mechanics, and hunters were the upper class.

Survival skills were highly valued and assured one of adequate food and shelter. Doctors, mechanics, carpenters, tailors, farmers, gunsmiths, blacksmiths, hunters, fisherman, trappers, cobblers and those with military experience were in high demand. Those who came with no usable survival skills were called "malbush" or useless people. They

got poorer accommodations and less food.

The occupants of the survival camps had made a choice to survive under harsh conditions as free people rather than in the marginally more comfortable cities. Even when masses of people were taken away and it was generally known that they were being exterminated, most refused to take the option of survival in the forest, preferring to believe that they would be spared.

Of course the camps had guards on duty 24/7. They established an inner and outer defensive ring. Individuals and small family groups would be challenged before reaching the camp. German Army units might be delayed or misdirected while the camp was evacuated, but pitched defenses were not possible. Camp guards caught sleeping at their post were subject to being shot.

Foraging teams were sent out to gather food and anything else that was of use from the surrounding communities. Those who collaborated with the Germans might be robbed and even killed, but others were asked for "contributions" or even traded with. Raiding the surrounding population was not done. Doing so would have caused the local populace to depart the region and/or help the Germans. Having a friendly or at least tolerant local population was key to the group's survival. Another tactic was to send the foraging teams far out where supplies were more available and their actions would not give clues to the camp's locations.

The Germans were too busy with the war to concentrate on eliminating the group. They sent in forces for sweeps and then pulled back. These sweeps were costly, but did not wipe them out. When resistance groups started operating from the same forest, it attracted more determined efforts by the Germans.

The shelters were built half above and half below ground. The insides were lined with wood. Each unit had a stove and bunks. Individuals and families were assigned to these shelters.

Hunting parties were sent out to gather food. Shooting, a noticeable loss of game and blood trails could all lead the Germans to the camp location so these expeditions had to operate like military units.

Barter became the primary economy system for four years. This applied to city and country peasants as well as the survival and resistance groups. The Jewish group possessed many skills that they could trade with peasants for the goods that they needed.

The focus of the Jewish group was survival first. Other groups in the forest were focused on resistance. These groups traded and cooperated, but also came close to armed conflict at times.

The local population was caught between the Partisans that came at night for food and supplies and the Germans that came in the day for information. One wrong step and you were dead. Sort of like the gangs and the police in some communities today.

The group quickly developed its own administration system and laws. Organization and task assignments were critical.

In addition to the larger (over 1000) survival group there were many small one or two family camps in the forest. Most of these did not last because they lacked the combined resources and skills of the larger group.

In 1943 the camp included a mill, tannery, food warehouse, stable, school, metal shop, bakery, sausage shop, barber shop, hospital, prison, soap factory, wood shop and dozens of other buildings

The author of Defiance sums up the lessons of the survival camp in the following paragraph:

“At times of upheaval among the ruins of established society, those who are independent and removed from the mainstream of tradition are likely to see hope where there is none. Threatened by overpowering forces of destruction, those with hope will concentrate more vigorously than others on overcoming death. When this struggle yields a semblance of success, self-preservation makes room for concern about the welfare of others. While at first these others are an extension of self, such as close family members, with time and with further success, they come to include friends. Feeding on their own achievement and gaining support, the protectors and the protected soon come to include anyone threatened by destruction and death. Each becomes transformed from prospective victim to a rescuer, blurring the distinction between the

rescuer and the rescued. What began as an unrealistic glimmer of hope turned into a future, those who are independent and free from social constraints can more easily transfer their hopes, their possibilities, and their successes to the less hopeful and less resourceful. This transfer creates its own reality, a reality that opposes the life threatening environment and death.”

Read the above paragraph again! It sums up the whole philosophy, reality and objective of our activities.

What About Now?

All of this was in the period between 1940 and 1944. How would the same scenario work today?

If we assume that the would-be survivors are being hunted and persecuted by a malevolent state, the chances are not good. The Germans did not have satellite surveillance, robot drones, infrared detection systems, and dozens of other detection and surveillance devices that exist today. The smoke, heat, human waste gases, sounds and electrical waves would all give away any moderate size group of people in a wilderness area. Helicopters and precision-guided weapons would negate the effect of guards.

The areas of true, deep wilderness are few today. More roads, helicopters and ATVs penetrate more and more wildernesses. The Western mountains still offer some inaccessible areas, but most people would not be able to get to them from the major population centers.

Small groups moving frequently might do well and avoid detection if they used care not to impact the

communities and the environment through which they passed.

If we assume that the would-be survivors are not being hunted and only need to be concerned about survival needs and perhaps encounters with gangs, the chances improve. The problem is that there are fewer people with basic survival skills and even fewer with the skills to sustain a long-term wilderness community. Any large survival community that did not have a built and stocked survival base in advance would necessarily need to scavenge, forage and hunt the area. These activities might generate the hostility of the surrounding population and even move the group into the category of real or perceived “outlaws”. That takes us back to the “malevolent state” scenario.

Conclusion

Although large groups have succeeded in evacuating to the wilderness and surviving for long periods in hostile natural and political environments, modern technology and social change has greatly reduced the chances for the long term success of the “survival camp” option. Small groups of 10-20 well prepared citizens might be able to survive for some time if they move frequently and maintain a low impact. While the ability to escape, evade and survive must be maintained, the capacity and tactics for the preservation of individual life and freedom must be developed within the society, in spite of the increasing physical dangers and restrictions. While major battles for life and freedom will be fought on the Internet, we cannot eat virtual food, live in virtual shelters or shoot virtual bullets at intruders. A combination of using high technology

to organize and learn while building real self-reliance will be necessary for the 21st Century survivor. Only the total collapse of society or the complete evolution of an oppressive state would justify long-term wilderness camping. However, it must be stated that wilderness camping skills, equipment and experience are the foundation of emergency survival at home and in evacuation situations.

Defiance, By Nechama Tec, Oxford University Press, 366 pages, paperback, \$14.95

Hot Time In Missouri

Many years ago members of Live Free attended a hard-core survival training camp in the hills of Missouri. I do not intend to cover all of the lessons and experiences of that program in this article, but I will share a few learning experiences that may be of interest and value.

The program was conducted in late June. Most of us were coming from northern Illinois and Wisconsin where we had experienced a few 80-degree days. We arrived into temperatures in the high 90s and experiences several 100-degree + days. The camp site was in a valley that was devoid of shade and blocked out most breezes. There would be no A/C, no fans, no cold drinks and no cold water for 7 days. The heat was so intense that about half of the would-be survivors left before the first day was over. Some never even put up their tent. Did they think this would be a picnic? The rest of us adapted and learned to cope with the heat. We drank lots of water. We kept in the shade. We limited activities during

midday. We also learned to keep wet towels or bandanas wrapped around our necks like you often see in Vietnam films. We wore wet bandanas on our heads. Add camouflage paint, a few days of dirt and sweat and we looked just like we had walked off the set of *Apocalypse Now*. The point is that we adapted and got used to the heat. Our ancestors survived without A/C or anything cold, so can you.

Sleep deprivation was also part of the program. We had survival classes such as foraging, trapping, shelter building and fire craft during the day and combat defense training at night. Did I mention that the camp was run by former Special Forces members? Our night hikes would last until midnight and then we had to take turns at camp guard duty until dawn because raids were common. Since it was still in the upper 80s at night and we slept on the ground, what sleep we did get was of poor quality. Again, we adapted and learned.

Food consisted of MREs or weeds and rabbits. This created some digestive discomforts and weight loss. Butchering the rabbits and cooking them was good experience for the city kids in the group. The area that was used for food preparation was not cleaned up and attracted swarms of flies and mosquitoes. Another lesson learned.

Showers involved hoisting buckets of water to the top of a plywood shower stall and then taking a 5-gallon lukewarm, no pressure shower. You had to take someone with you to the outhouse or shower stall because our hosts were not above taking you prisoner while you were indisposed. Did I mention that the camp was run by former Special Forces members? They actually had a Vietcong style

camp you would spend the night at if you got sloppy and were captured. We didn't.

We learned to move through the woods day and night. I often wound up being the "point man" for a patrol. This was an exhausting task requiring constant alertness and attention to your surroundings. You walk slowly, lifting your feet high and putting them down slowly, because trip wire and pressure plate booby traps were placed on every trail. Did I mention that the camp was run by former Special Forces members? So you had to look down for trip wires, out and around for ambushes and up and around for snipers. If you missed anything your group would get nailed and if you spotted anything you might get nailed anyway.

While those weeks (went twice) were a long time ago, the lessons learned stayed. We educate and train all that come as best we can. Not everyone has the time, money or opportunity to take this kind of course, but the harder the training the more you learn. I hope you got a few tips from this story.

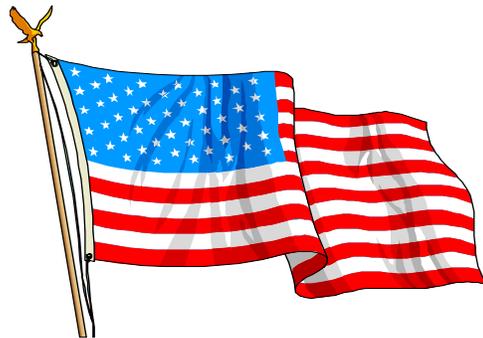
What Became of America?

I was born in 1941. That year the Japanese decided to bomb Pearl Harbor and start a war with the United States of America. Big mistake! They killed 3,478 military personnel and 68 civilians. They destroyed 159 aircraft and damaged or sunk 19 ships. Four years later the United States of

America produced 159 aircraft and 19 ships in about two days. The entire Japanese Navy had been sunk, Japan was in ruins and the United States of America had produced millions of tanks, guns, planes, trucks and ships for the entire allied forces.

Now let's look at 2001. A small group of fanatics hijack four passenger planes and crash them into two New York skyscrapers and the Pentagon, laying waste to the center of America's largest city and killing thousands of civilians. Eight years later there is still a big hole in New York and no realistic prospect of rebuilding anything. The leader of our enemy is still alive and free while we take our shoes off at the airport. We have spent billions on security and billions more on two wars and the enemy still exists. Our economy is in ruins and most of our products, including much of our military equipment are made in other countries.

That is the reality of what has become of the United States of America. This is the reality we and our children have to survive and hopefully turn around.





CAMP INDEPENDENCE

Saturday, May 1st 2010

(Save This Weekend)

**Tippecanoe River State Park, Winamac Indiana
(in the Potawatomi, Group Camp)**

Training Activities Start at 9:00 AM and Run Through 6:00 PM

**Advanced Registration Before April 15th
Individual \$20.00, Family \$30.00, Add \$10.00 for a cabin**

**Registration After April 15th or At The Site
Individual \$25.00, Family \$35.00, Add \$15.00 for a cabin
Group Rates Available**

**Bring the whole family, Stay overnight, Enjoy the park in spring, Become
more self-reliant, Group rates available,
guest speakers may apply.**

Programs To Be Presented Include:

- **Survival Food Selection
Preservation & Preparation**
- **Survival Medical Skills**
- **Solar Cooking**
- **Survival Evacuation Packs
and Survival Camping**
- **Camouflage Contests**
- **Emergency
Communications**
- **Nuclear, Chemical &
Biological Defense**
- **Home Emergency
Survival**
- **Much More**

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- I want to make an additional contribution of \$_____ to help Live Free.

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