

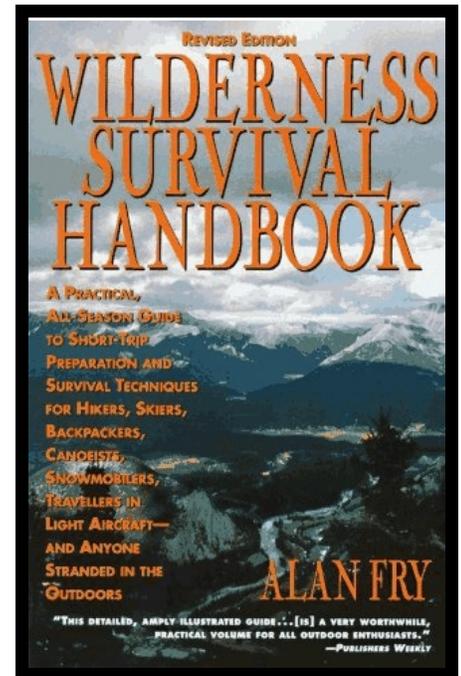
My First Notes - Wilderness Survival Handbook, by Alan Fry ISBN 0312147635

Note that this file did not originally have pictures. When I compiled this document, I had yet to write a web -page or have a means to make a PDF file. Additions were added to these notes in July, 2006, to make this file. Paul.

Recommendation from the web, this day: (I mean, besides my own.)

“Alan Fry is a Canadian woodsman with years of experience in the art of wilderness survival. His book is a concise and readable guide for the preparation and execution of a survival plan, especially in the extreme environment of the boreal north. Although its emphasis is on emergency situations in a particular ecosystem, many of his ideas can be readily adapted to any temperate region or contingency by the intelligent reader. Please note that this is not primarily a book for the recreational back packer. Rather, it's a hard-core guide to survival under extreme circumstances in a particular environment. That having been said, it's still recommended reading for anyone who ventures into the outdoors. Useful, light-weight, and perfect for the field.”

Seems to be some indication the book is no longer in print.



Wilderness Survival Handbook, by Alan Fry ISBN 0312147635
LCCN 96-024863

My First Notes from the Above Book. Rather Long. Can be discarded if not interested, or printed out for later.

Page 53 CORE EMERGENCY KITS

... we must deal with an even more primary concern: the separation of gear between the general pack and the much smaller collection of emergency items.

There is widespread consensus that, since mishap may separate you from the larger volume of general gear, prudence demands that you have somewhere strapped to your person a compact package of core items with which you can manage after the loss of everything else. Travel by canoe perhaps best illustrates the need for this precaution: if you are dumped in fast water, you will have with you on reaching shore only as much gear as is inseparably fixed to your person. The rest will have gone down river with the overturned canoe.

It is harder to argue the necessity of this separation of core items on a day hike. If I carry a tear-drop pack with a waistband and a cross-tie between the shoulder straps at chest level, what likelihood is there that mishap will deprive me of the pack? It is arguably more securely fixed to my body than a kit carried by a single crossed-over shoulder strap.

Perhaps the clinching argument for the need for this separation between the general pack and the core emergency kit for the day hiker is this: when you once have decided on the core items and have assembled them in a separate compact container, you need only pick up the container to know you have with you everything it is intended to have inside it. The day pack is loaded and unloaded frequently, and often something is forgotten. The emergency kit is never opened, except in the emergency for which it is carried; therefore there is no chance of items being forgotten.

If you believe that your day pack is as secure as you require for your core emergency items, you might wish to assemble these items in one package, which then remains permanently in the day pack with no chance of being disturbed by the sort of packing and unpacking of general gear which you will go through on an outing.

When you travel by any conveyance that calls for your general pack to be stowed during transit, the argument for separation of the core emergency items is unassailable, and these core items should be securely fixed to your body.

Now, I do not intend to prescribe what should be in your general pack and what in your compact kit.

.....

Page 58 What Type of Axe?

Even in bush country where there is some restriction on cutting green material, considerable use can be made of dry. In an emergency one uses green wood and brush as much as necessary in any case.

But what sort of axe should you carry? In the milder seasons one hardly needs more than a belt axe, but it should be a good quality belt axe, and quality is usually evident. A well-made head securely fixed to a straight-grained hardwood handle with an overall length of twelve to fourteen inches will serve you well.

Those who carry a belt axe frequently on a day-in-and-day-out basis often spend rather more money to have an axe in which the head and the handle are of one piece of steel and the handgrip is built up with leather. There is a little more weight to this axe, and the balance in the hand is better.

Keep a good edge on your belt axe, then use it with care, and you will find that you can manage wood of a surprising dimension with much success.

All aircraft flying in bush country should have on board a full-sized camp axe as part of the emergency gear in any season.

What about the foot traveler in winter weather? What sort of axe should he carry?

If you have made and tried some snow shelters and have decided that this is your way to go, then the belt axe will still serve your needs.

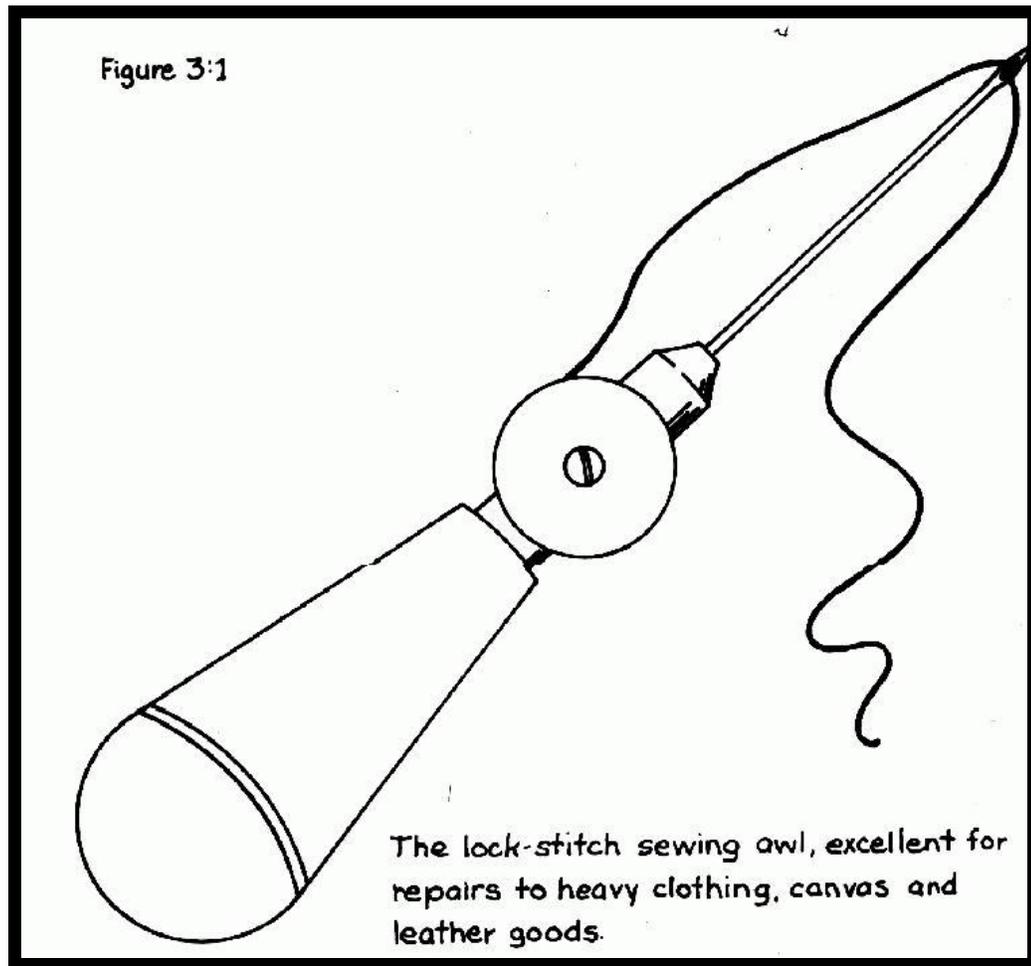
If, on the other hand, you have decided to rely on a lean-to and fire, then there is much to be said for carrying a camp axe of about twenty-four inches overall length. Enclose the head in a leather sheath and you will be able to sling the axe from the day pack with little inconvenience: You will also know that, should circumstance call for it, you will be able to produce a huge pile of firewood in a very few minutes.

Page 60, The Sewing AWL

I believe the day-hiker's kit of core items should contain a couple of strong needles and a few yards of polyester-cotton thread, or alternately some waxed linen. Two or three strands of waxed linen thread wound together will make a stout string, and if you have plenty of this thread you have both thread and strong string in the one item

. For any kit that I am going to take for a longer time out, I favor a sewing awl to a needle, though one must accept the greater bulk and weight. I have had in my outfit for years, and constantly use in camp, an awl with which I can repair not only clothing and canvas but leather as well. The handle is hollow and contains a supply of needles, while in front of the handle and just back of the working needle is a reel which holds ten to twelve yards of waxed thread.

Reference Wilderness Survival Handbook, Alan Fry, First Notes 060.jpg



Pages 62 and 63 A Discussion of Line and Rope

.... Polypropylene has largely replaced manila (rope) in most practical applications.

Some synthetic lines are a little difficult to knot securely in some applications. Experience with a variety of knots so that one has alternatives will usually overcome this problem.

For many years I have used braided cotton line in what we call sash cord as a general-purpose line about camp. However, it is not as strong as synthetic line and is nowadays outrageously expensive. I like its handling qualities, but I am using more light synthetic line now in its stead.

In half-inch line I have been using polypropylene for many years. It deteriorates eventually, but not without warning, so it may be replaced in time.

Parachute shroud-line is often recommended for emergency kits. It consists of seven twisted threads, each of which consists of three smaller threads. You can use some of the line whole, some unraveled into the seven threads, and some unraveled still further to the smallest component threads.

Most twisted line consists of three strands, and will unravel successfully to these individual strands. These three strands of the original dimension will sometimes come down successfully to three or more still-smaller strands, and only trial will show what a particular line will offer in this respect.

Although one should expect to extract the lesser strands from any piece of twisted line if necessary, I think it preferable to start out with a variety.

In addition to some fishing line I would consider a hundred feet or more of very small-diameter nylon cord, suitable for lashing pieces of wood into a variety of structures. A hundred feet of this unbelievably strong cord will sit in the palm of your hand with room to spare, yet help you to make everything from shelters to snowshoes.

As an alternative to this thin-yet-strong nylon cord, I like an abundance of heavy waxed-linen thread. It does a fine job as thread, but serves as strong string as well and can be doubled for greater strength.

I would want a generous length -- at least thirty feet -- of soft, braided nylon line of 3/8th diameter in the core items against emergency, but I would have as well some medium-weight cord and perhaps more line of a slightly heavier weight in the general pack. The need will vary according to how you travel and therefore to how long you are out. Also, each person will develop individual techniques which need more or less line than others.

If you have fish net in your larger aircraft pack, have sufficient line with it for both the cork and the lead line that we will discuss later. This will save you having to use all your other line on the net, leaving none for general use in camp.

Pages 156, 157 Limitations of Wild Plants

... For one thing, wild plants are seasonal and very few are usefully available in the winter months. It is true that cattail root and rock tripe, a lichen, can sometimes be secured in the winter, but they are a last resort. Indians of the northern bush, when speaking of the old days, have emphasized that if the dried foods stored in the previous summer and fall ran out in winter and game could not be located, starvation was the certain outlook.

Second, even when available, wild plant foods do not provide the strength of diet needed for the vigor of bush life. The contribution to protein requirements is so slight as to be negligible. As a supplement to meat and fish they are, of course, an excellent means of securing additional vitamins, minerals, and the otherwise-absent carbohydrate, but I caution you not to look on them as sufficient in themselves.

The third caution is that the availability of edible plant material varies from one area to another, although there are some useful plants which occur so widely as to appear in almost all the bushlands of the northern United States, of Alaska, and of Canada. However, the use of wild plants as food must be studied with the region in which you are interested in mind, and with the help of the best texts on the subject that you can secure. Avoid relying on survival manuals which at best are second-hand sources and will not give you the authoritative detail that will enable you to become proficient in locating and preparing wild plants suitable for food. Go to the texts which specialize in this subject and, with the texts in hand, go into the bush to learn by direct experience.

Having said that, I do not propose to deal further with the subject here, although this is not to discount its value. Wild plant foods can be a useful supplement to animal and fish sources, but the latter are the key to survival over any period of time and with these I will deal at length. The specialized texts are the best source for wild-plant-food information.

Pages 163, 164, 165, Excerpted, Author's Discussion of Firearms

... Once into .30 calibre you have a great many choices, but one cartridge, the .30-06, gives clearly the best performance, unless you opt for magnums.

... The profusion of choices is now reduced to three: the .270 Winchester, the .30-06, and the .308 Winchester.

In these calibres, I recommend the following bullet weights and styles: a 150-grain pointed soft-point in the .270 cartridge; a 180-grain pointed soft-point in the .30-06 cartridge; and a 165-grain pointed soft-point in the .308 Winchester cartridge. These will serve you until your own assessment and experience lead you to a different choice.

It remains then to select a rifle. There are four basic actions: the bolt, the lever, the slide, and the self-loading, or semi-automatic.

The strongest of these actions is the bolt action, and for accuracy it is widely accepted as the best. With one or two exceptions, only bolt-action rifles are chambered for the .270 Winchester and the .30-06 cartridges.

... Avoid self-loading rifles. (He means semi-automatic.) Some of the pressure which is wanted for driving the bullet must be drawn off to operate the mechanism, and both accuracy and velocity are affected. Once again, some men mistake the rapidity of fire possible with these rifles for

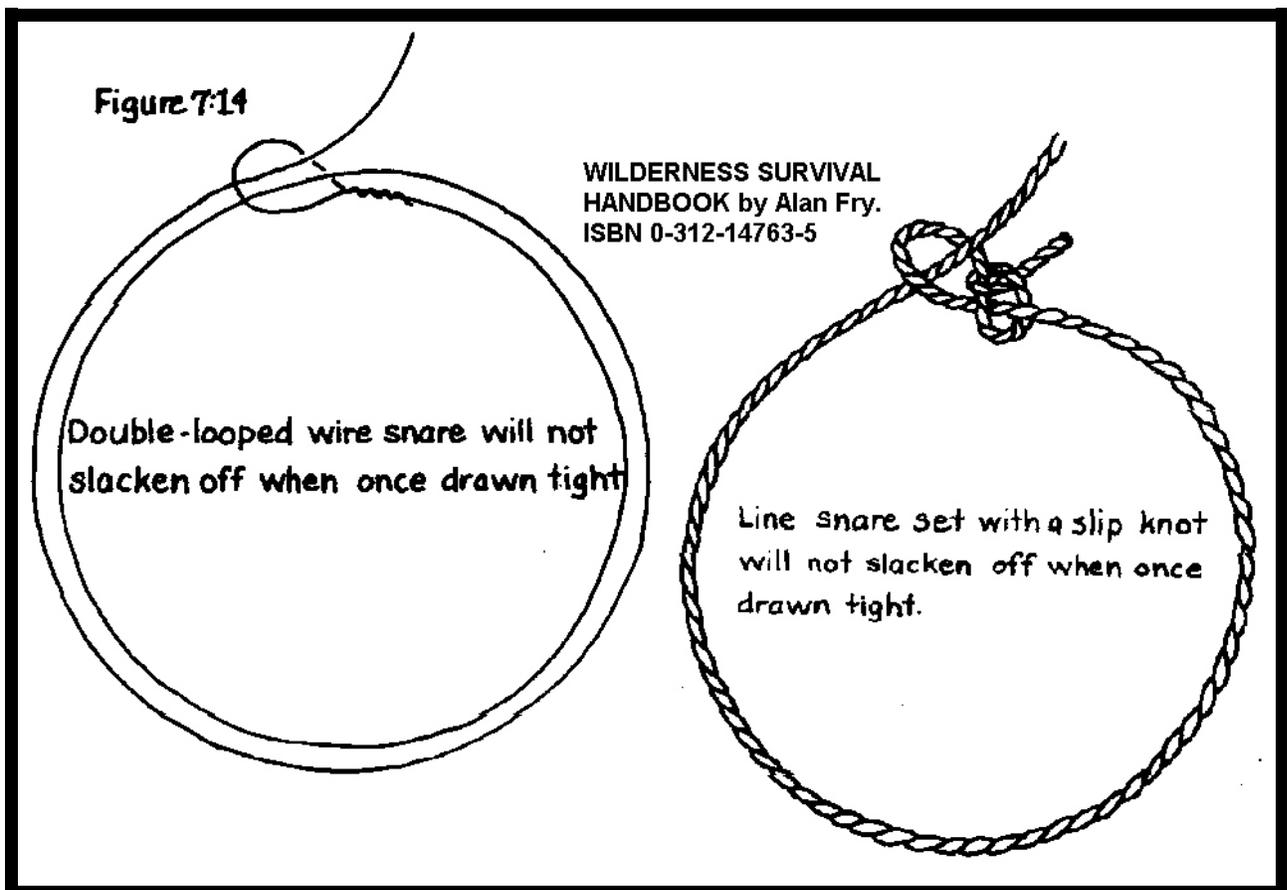
superiority, either in the rifle or in themselves, and they waste both good meat and ammunition in the process.

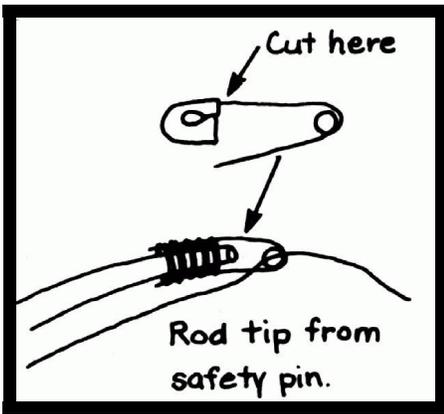
Do not buy an old, worked-over military-surplus rifle. Buy a new rifle by an established sporting-rifle manufacturer or a used rifle of similar origin which has been checked and test-fired by a competent gunsmith. The superior quality of a top-grade sporting rifle over a military dunker is too great an advantage to be done without.

Sighting equipment is also important. Undoubtedly the most accurate available is the telescope with cross-hairs or cross-hairs and post. However, for a survival-equipment rifle I suggest you purchase a rifle which can be equipped with a hunting aperture sighting system. Such a sight system is far more rugged and, in a situation where you can't have repairs or replacements made in the event of damage or malfunction, you will be much more certain of continued service. Excellent accuracy is possible with an aperture, and the risk of damage during transport is negligible. By contrast, the risk of damage during transport to the telescopic sight is considerable.

Finally, with the guidance of an experienced rifleman, learn to handle your rifle with absolute care and safety and to shoot it with knowledgeable competence. In virtually every community in North America, there is a rifle club or fish-and-game association through which you can find someone willing to help you get off to a good Start. **I Have Two Pieces of Advice on Handling Which Your Adviser Might Not Give You. First, in Cold Weather Do Not Bring Your Rifle into the Warmth of the Fire or of the Interior of the Shelter. Leave it out in the Cold. The Change in Temperature Will Cause Condensation Which Leads to Rust. This Can Occur Inside the Barrel near the Muzzle and Destroy Accuracy. Second, in Any Weather Do Not Oil the Mechanism but Keep it Impeccably Clean with Solvent. An Oiled Mechanism Will Frequently Fail to Fire in Cold Weather, Whereas an Impeccably Clean Mechanism Will Function at Temperatures as Severe as Any in Which You Are Likely to Go out to Hunt. (Capitalization Mine.)**

Reference Wilderness Survival Handbook, Alan Fry, First Notes 185.jpg (Good Snare Configuration)

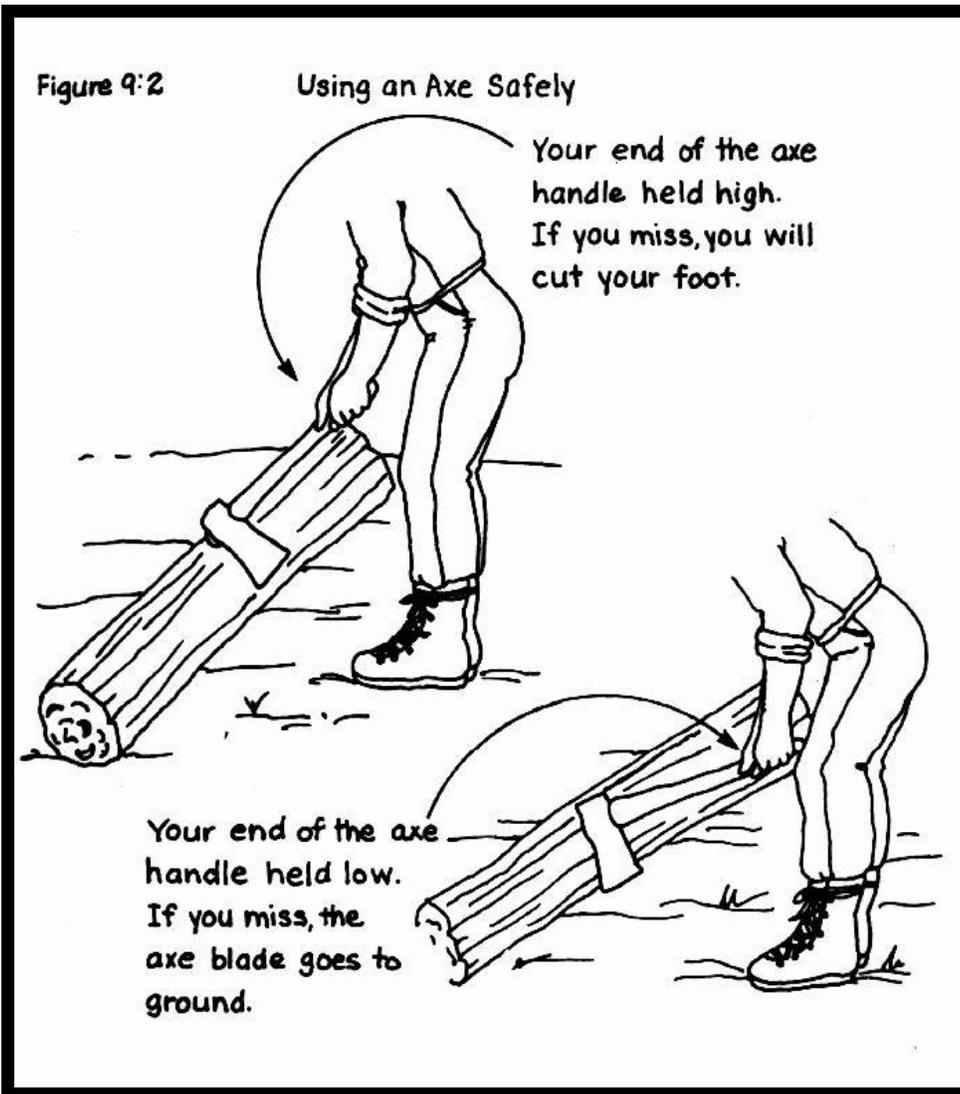




Page 205 Fishing

... You can make a serviceable fishing rod tip from the round loop of a safety pin.

Reference Wilderness Survival Handbook, Alan Fry, First Notes 205.jpg



Page 239 Using an Axe Safely, Keep Your Axe Handle Held Low!

... If you keep your end of an axe handle held high and miss, you will cut your foot. On the other hand, if you keep your end of the axe handle held low, and miss, the blade goes harmlessly into the ground. ...

Reference Wilderness Survival Handbook, Alan Fry, First Notes 239.jpg

Pages 279, 280, 281 Conclusion (Contains Excellent Points)

Now I have said little of a direct nature throughout these pages about maintaining a sound and confident state of mind when confronted with an unexpected time out in the bush, yet this is undoubtedly as vital to safety as is proper clothing and the wise use of the contents of one's emergency kit. It is by intent that I have left the question to these last paragraphs, and even now I propose to say little on it. I realize that if you make good use of everything said earlier you will need little advice about frame of mind; if you do not, such advice will be of little use.

Fear and consequent panic grow out of an overwhelming sense of weakness and vulnerability in the face of real or imagined danger. Fear can be prevented by developing, over time, a sense of one's own strength and competence in potentially dangerous situations. Also, when fear does occur, self-discipline can prevent panic behavior.

Practice and training in realistic surroundings have been the methods, for centuries, of preparing people to respond usefully in the face of danger and while experiencing intense fear.

The person who has had such training and whose confidence is reinforced by the knowledge that he or she has good gear for the task at hand will not panic and will have the best chance of success however bad the odds.

If you lose your way in the bush in winter, wearing poor clothing, and you have never practiced any method of sheltering, it is all but a certainty that fear will grip you and panic responses might easily follow. You may lunge about blindly in the dark and may easily die when exhaustion brings you down in the snow.

It is as hazardous, in its insidious way, to do nothing when fear takes hold, to go into a sluggish inertia from which nothing results. When careful assessment followed by resolute action is needed, a numbness of mind rejects reality. No shelter is made nor fuel gathered. Disaster comes more slowly, but may arrive just as surely.

Yet, if you go well clothed, with a little of the right sort of gear in an emergency kit, and with skills acquired long since in practice camps, the prospect of an unexpected night out will be at worst an inconvenience and more likely a welcome adventure.

You can be helped much by reading, and it is for that purpose that I have written this book. You cannot, however, incorporate essential skills and constructive responses into your behavior without training and practice in the field situation. So hie to the bush, my friend, to test the adequacy of your clothing and to practice the skills of the camp.

Now, however much at home you feel in the bush and however confident you are about your gear and your skills, you still may experience fear, unexpectedly, when an accident happens or when the awesome power of nature strikes you in some sudden fashion.

High on a ridge top in a developing storm, with the wind whipping your jacket and screaming in your ears, you may suddenly be overcome with a sense of your puniness in the vast universe which surrounds you. Once, as a young man, I was returning to my cabin across a wide and open swampland. The day was late and a storm grew swiftly out of nowhere, filling the sky with black and threatening clouds. The wind picked up to lash the aspen trees at the meadow's edge, tearing some to the ground in its growing fury. A killdeer, flying across my path to cover, shrieked in high, shrill protest against the chaos.

I was in the bush land of my boyhood and not a mile from my cabin. No one could have been more surely in his own home ground, yet my scalp crawled and a scream rose up in my throat. Only by a deliberate imposition of my will on my rising fear did I keep both the fear and some irrational response at bay. Afterward I puzzled how, in such a harmless situation, I could have had such a sense of danger. How much more discipline would have been needed had I been miles from the security of my cabin, with night falling and with little means of making shelter.

So we need good clothing and gear, we need to have developed skills which will afford us confidence in ourselves, and we need discipline. Given these, we can face an emergency with rapid, yet sound, assessment, followed by prompt, yet thorough, action, and without the complications brought on by fear and undisciplined behavior. Our venturing into the bush will be certainly safe and probably comfortable, even in the event of the unexpected. We want to go well. With preparation we will go well. That is what this book has been about. Preparation.

Page 284 Flight Emergency Kits, Detailed by Canadian Law

SCHEDULE II (ss. 3 and 8)

EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT FOR FLIGHTS IN SPARSELY SETTLED AREAS

1. Food having a calorific value of at least 10,000 calories per person carried, not subject to deterioration by heat or cold and stored in a sealed waterproof container bearing a tag or label on which the operator of the aircraft or his representative has certified the amount and satisfactory condition of the food in the container following an inspection made not more than six months prior to the flight.
2. Cooking utensils.
3. Matches in a waterproof container.
4. A stove and a supply of fuel or a self-contained means of providing heat for cooking when operating north of the tree line.
5. A portable compass.
6. An axe of at least 2 1/2 pounds or 1 kilogram weight with a handle of not less than 28 inches or 70 centimetres in length.
7. A flexible saw blade or equivalent cutting tool.
8. Snare wire of at least 30 feet or 9 metres and instructions for its use.
9. Fishing equipment including still fishing bait and a gill net of not more than a 2 inch or 5 centimetre mesh.
10. Mosquito nets or netting and insect repellent sufficient to meet the needs of all persons carried when operating in an area where insects are likely to be hazardous.
11. Tents or engine and wing covers of suitable design, coloured or having panels coloured in international orange or other high visibility colour, sufficient to accommodate all persons carried when operating north of the tree line.
12. Winter sleeping bags sufficient in quantity to accommodate all persons carried when operating in an area where the mean daily temperature is likely to be seven degrees Centigrade or less.
13. Two pairs of snow shoes when operating in areas where the ground snow cover is likely to be 12 inches or 30 centimetres or more.
14. A signalling mirror.
15. At least three pyrotechnical distress signals.
16. A sharp jack-knife or hunting knife of good quality.
17. A suitable survival instruction manual.
18. Conspicuity panel.

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