

Northern Tier High Adventure

**TROOP 636
July 14 - July 22, 2001**

Crew E071401G

**Crew Advisor: Mr. Joseph Fariello
Crew Chief: Joseph Fariello
Crew Chaplain: James Flannery
Crew Comedian: Jared "Buck" Dunson
Crew Medic: Brian Malinconico
Crew Tree Beater: Mikhail Petersen**

This diary is a synopsis of our canoe trek through the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) and into Quetico Provincial Park in Canada. The names have not been changed to protect the innocent. Some of the events were recorded as they happened and some are from memory, but all are true. Actual times were recorded when possible.

Dear Diary:

Today is Sunday July 15. Yesterday we spent all day traveling from Cooper City to the Boy Scout Charles L. Sommers Canoe Base 23 miles outside of Ely, MN. We had to fly from Fort Lauderdale to Charlotte, NC and change planes. From Charlotte we flew to Minneapolis, MN and then drove five hours to the base. Our flight from Fort Lauderdale departed at 7:00 AM and we arrived at the base at 5:00 PM. (We went back one hour due to the change to Central Standard Time). It was a long day.

Once at the base, we had a meal in the dining hall and then began our orientation. During dinner, Senior Patrol Leader James Flannery appointed Joseph Fariello as Crew Chief. (Way to delegate Jimmy!). The orientation included a "Leave No Trace" presentation. We registered everyone and submitted all the necessary physical forms and other paperwork. Adam, our interpreter, went through our gear during a shakedown and told us what not to pack for our canoe trip. No doubt about it - we definitely brought too much stuff. We then packed all our necessary gear in our bags, the boys played some cards and we went to sleep around 10:00 PM. We stayed in the "Off-road Cabins" which had 10 bunks inside. Not bad.

0500 - The crew awakens. We did not have to get up until 0600, but we were psyched and ready to go. Besides, sunrise was at 0431. All gear for the canoe trip verified and all gear to remain at camp were kept separate.

0700 - The Last Meal. Breakfast in the dining hall - scrambled eggs, potatoes, biscuits and gravy. Joseph appointed James Flannery as the Crew Chaplain (Back at you Jim!). Attended Chaplain meeting. Gathered our camping gear, paddling equipment and food. Secured everything in the appropriate bags. We realized why we had to cut back on our personal gear. Obtained three canoes - two aluminum and one Kevlar. So we now had two personal gear packs, two food packs, one equipment pack and three canoes. Adam had his own pack. A total of nine items to be carried by seven crewmembers. Solution: two crewmembers would be carrying a canoe and a pack. OK lets go.

Initial canoe assignments: Brian/Mikhail(duffer)/Adam
Jimmy/Jared
Mr. Fariello/Joseph

The duffer sits in the middle of the canoe and rests. He also takes it easy and rests. Then he rests and takes it easy.

0915 - Underway from Charles L. Sommers base. Beautiful paddle on Moose Lake>. Still on the U.S. side. Slightly overcast, so it is not too hot. Learned how to make drinkable water. Fill up a one-quart container with lake water and put in

one-half cap of Polar Pure. It is an iodine solution that rids the water of bacteria, in particular *Giardia*. Let the water sit for 20 minutes and it is good to drink. Saw a funny thing. We observed a canoe with a male, female and dog headed towards the Boy Scout Camp. There was a loon next to the canoe that would tease the dog. The loon would honk at the dog and then dive under the water. It would resurface next to the canoe and honk at the dog again. The loon repeated this process over and over. The couple in the canoe was laughing, we were laughing and the dog was wanting to jump out of the canoe and get that loon.

1115 - at Prairie Portage in Canada. Met with Quetico Provincial Park Ranger and obtained permit, paid camping fees and submitted Customs Paperwork, i.e., remote Area Border Crossing Permit and Youth Manifest. My dear friend Mr. Stevens obtained the wrong permit when he checked in at Prairie Portage with his crew earlier in the day. He pulled a permit for Carp Lake for his trip to Basswood River. So, after negotiating with the ranger, we had to pull a Basswood River permit for our trip to Carp Lake. Obtained Canadian Fishing Licenses. Discovered the worst latrine in the history of camping. Breath holding was a must.

1215 - departed Prairie Portage. Nice paddle to Carp Lake. Encountered first portage. Birch Lake to Carp Lake - 40 rods, no problem. One rod = 16.5 feet. 360 rods = one mile. Portaging is definitely a chore. The object was to transit everything from one lake to another in one trip - and we did.

Stopped for lunch. Mikhail and Brian prepared. Meat and cheese sandwiches on white bread. 16 slices of bread were squashed to a one-inch stack. The slices had to be peeled apart. But it saved space. Adam ordered Jared to eat an orange.

1630 - Stopped for dinner and overnight. Decent campsite. It rained as soon as we arrived. Remember - your wet stuff stays wet and your dry stuff stays dry. The Fariello's prepared Voyageur Stew with Fajita's for dinner. Chocolate pudding for dessert. Good day. Everyone tired and in the tents by 10:00 PM, although there was still plenty of light - sundown was at 2030.

The crew chief made meal assignments during the course of the week. Two crewmembers would prepare and cook the meal, two would clean up and two would be in charge of water for the meal. The assignments rotated so the same crewmembers did not always have the same assignment or the same meal. Lunch was always easy, since preparation basically involved opening packages. The dinners always involved cooking as did some of the breakfast's. Those in charge of preparing the meal always ate last.

Crewmember assignments were: Jimmy/Jared
Brian/Mikhail
Fariello/Joseph

At times, the diary includes the meal that was actually prepared.

Each night at camp, the food bags had to be hung from trees to avoid the reach of black bears that frequent the area. This process involved slinging a 50' piece of parachute chord over a high tree limb. Then a longer section of strong bear rope was tied to the parachute chord with a sheet bend and pulled over the limb. The tree limb must be strong and at least 10' off the ground. The chord was then run through the O-rings on the food bags. Another bear rope was tied to the first bear rope with a bowline. Crewmembers then lifted the food bags while other crewmembers pulled on the first bear rope. This enabled the food bags to get high off the ground. The second bear rope was used to pull the food bags away from the tree so the bags were basically suspended between the two trees. Both bear ropes were then tied off to trees.

Dear Diary:

Today is Monday July 16 - Crew awakens - not sure what time. Chef's Jimmy and Jared prepared Hot Oatmeal and Hot Chocolate. Mr. Fariello made coffee.

0930 - Departed camp. 136 rod portage into That Man Lake. Long and rugged portage. Paddled through That Man Lake, No Man Lake and This Man Lake. 49 rod portage into Other Man Lake.

Canoe assignments: Brian/Adam
Jimmy/Jared/Mikhail (Alternate duffers)
Fariello/Joseph

1300 - Lunch on Other Man Lake. Peanut butter and jelly on bagels, trail mix and fruit punch. During lunch, Mikhail was going to tell Joseph that he had a spider on his back, but he forgot (Huh????).

Continued to paddle on Other Man Lake. Saw a Bald Eagle soaring above the lake.

1630 - stopped for the night at a beautiful campsite up high on an island in Other Man Lake. Great spot. We did not see another person the whole day. Went fishing from the canoes. Joe and Joseph caught lake trout - Jimmy tried, Brian watched.

Adam discovers that he does not have the proper map to take us on our intended route. He needed to have map #26. This map would enable us to loop around into Louisa Falls. Too risky to take the route without the map. Disappointing to say the least. Poor Planning - Poor Results. Oh well. If we encounter someone on the way that has map#26, we may be able to borrow the map and continue our original route. If not, we devised an alternate route.

Mikhail and Brian made dinner - Beef Stroganoff (I think). Very good. Fruit punch and pudding for dessert. Invaded by mosquitos and everybody headed for their tents at 2200.

Paddled 11 miles this day.

Dear Diary:

Tuesday July 17 - heavy rains in the morning. Everything wet. The Fariello's made scrambled eggs with bacon bits and hash browns for breakfast. Hot chocolate and of course, coffee. Broke camp late - waited for the rain to subside. Short paddle to first portage of the day - 39 rods, but just about straight up and down. Tough. Adam hurt his knee at the end of the portage. Used emergency radio to call Charles L. Sommers Base and advise them of the injury. Consensus was to keep traveling and monitor the knee. Jared moved into Adam's canoe, to provide strong paddling while Adam "duffed". Jared disagreed with the canoe assignment, but realized it was the best move for the crew. Good job Jared! Adam needed to keep weight off knee. Had to double through a 4-rod portage, which meant some of the crew had to carry items twice. No big deal, short portage. We actually encountered another crew, who was returning to the base, so we were able to borrow map#26.

1330 - Stopped for lunch on Bit Lake. Had pita's with sausage and cheese, trail mix and fruit punch. Adam's knee still hurts, but does not appear to be getting worse.

1400 - Departed lunch site. Crew had to double portage a very difficult 74 rods into Fran Lake. Mr. Fariello had a rather heated "discussion" with Adam about the route chosen and the capabilities of the crew. Set Adam straight - no problems. Had crew meeting and the crew decided that we would alter our route from the Falls Chain in favor of a route that involved more paddling, but less portaging.

5 rod portage into Slate Lake over a beaver dam - we even saw the beaver. It's cool when they dive and slap their tail on the surface of the water. 8 rod portage into Saganagons Lake. Saw another beaver. Camped on Saganagons Lake. First two campsites surveyed were too rocky, but we did find a very nice site on the east side of the lake.

Jimmy and Jared made dinner - spaghetti, sausage and peas. Peas??????? Yes, we had to eat everything. Vanilla pudding, or as it lemon pudding - hard to tell, for dessert. Muy bueno.

Paddled 8 miles this day.

Dear Diary:

Today is Wednesday July 17 - layover day on Saganagons Lake. Crew slept late - no hurry, no schedule. The Fariello's made Buttermilk Pancakes for breakfast.

1130 - short paddle to Silver Falls, three miles roundtrip. Beautiful 30' falls - great photo opportunity. Had lunch by the falls - Jimmy and Jared prepared. Hudson Bay bread with peanut butter and jelly, trail mix and water. Jimmy was able to open the jelly with absolutely no problem. He pulled off the aluminum tab in one piece. Stayed at the falls for a nice relaxing time and to enjoy the great view.

On the way back to the campsite, saw an Eagle and its nest. At camp, went swimming and fishing. Swimming - boots and PFD's on per BSA regulations. Cool and refreshing. Crew went fishing and napping - no luck fishing, but excellent luck on napping. Returned to camp and the boys played Uno. Repaired Mikhail's boot - the sole had separated from the boot. Duct tape, line and bungy chord - all you need to fix anything.

Chef's Mikhail and Brian prepared dinner - North Woods Spaghetti with meat sauce and diced carrots. Yummy!!!! Excellent blueberry cheesecake made with fresh blueberries, for dessert. Heard Mikhail talk about Turtle Heads. Turtle Heads?

After dinner, the boys played Uno and another card game called "Kent". Mr. Fariello caught a small mouth bass, fishing from the campsite. Mosquito's arrived like clockwork as the sun went down. Looked like it would rain during the night. Everyone in tents by 9:30 PM. Secured all loose items under the dining fly.

Big storm hit at midnight. Plenty of lightning and thunder. Some of the lightning was rather close. Saw a great light show, just by looking out of the tent. Light but steady rain until 0300.

Dear Diary:

Today is Thursday July 19 - Jared's Birthday. The Buck Man made sure we all knew it was his birthday. All week long he made us aware that Thursday was his birthday.

0700 - Everyone up at 0700, breakfast at 0730. Long day ahead. Cold granola and hot chocolate. Tents wet from overnight rain. Oh well - the wet things stay wet and the dry things stay dry.

0815 - Departed campsite. Beautiful clear and sunny morning. Adam's knee is much better. He is able to carry weight. 24 and 26 rods portage from Saganagons Lake to Lilypad Lake. Went through serious "Moose Muck" - thick

black mud. Jared, with canoe on shoulders, sunk past his knees. 40 rod portage into Jasper Lake then a 100 rod portage into Ottertrack Lake.

The crew definitely has the portage drill down to a science. Everyone knows their assignment once they reach the portage. Packs are removed from the canoes and placed on the backs; canoes are pulled from the water and placed on the shoulders. Crewmembers are able to get the canoes on their shoulders, by themselves. Crewmembers with packs carry the miscellaneous gear, i.e., paddles and fishing poles.

Paddled along the U.S. Canadian border. Saw a plaque dedicated to Ben Ambrose secured to a cliff face. Ben Ambrose???

1300 - Stopped for lunch near Little Knife Portage on the U.S. side. Crackers, sausage, cheese, trail mix and fruit punch. Ate with a family of otters. Or were they minks. We referred to the critter identification book and decided they were minks. They just ran around the area - everyone know and then, one would snarl at us, just to let us know that it was their home. Outstanding!

1330 - Departed lunch area. Saw an Eagle soaring above the lake. 5 rod portage into Knife Lake. We mock a 5 rod portage. Beautiful afternoon. Jimmy, Mikhail and Jared in their canoe - Jared has been duffing all day. Is this a good idea?

1530 - Looked at potential campsite. Decided to keep paddling - too early to stop. We had to locate a campsite on the Canadian side - we did not have a permit to camp overnight on the U.S. side in the BWCAW.

1645 - Found very nice campsite on Back Bay. The Fariello's made dinner - macaroni and cheese with peas. There are those peas again. Had dessert too. Adam made Jared a birthday cake. Or was it a pie. Whatever, it had fruit, raisins and some crust. Sang Happy Birthday to Jared. Used the fruit and raisins for bait. Beautiful evening - clear and cool. Sun setting behind us. The crew sat by the water, talking and fishing. The Fariello's each caught a Northern Pike. They give a bit of a fight. Brian, the Crew Medic, had to save the life of Mr. Fariello's fish. Hook was buried deep. Nice job Brian! Diary, did I mention that Jared duffed all day?

2130 - Here come the bugs. Everyone in the tents.

Paddled 15 miles this day.

Dear Diary:

Today is Friday July 20.

0630 - The crew awakens. Sun is up - Mr. Fariello with a cup of coffee, fishing from the campsite. Perfect. Brian and Mikhail made breakfast - oatmeal. Joseph caught smallmouth bass.

1100 - Mr. Fariello, trying to help the breakfast clean-up team, picked up a hot stove. He didn't pick it up for long, as he burned four fingers of his left hand. FSGD!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Ran for the lake to cool the hand. Did some yelling - everyone thought he was mad at someone. Crew Medic Brian came to assist with first aid items. Thank you Brian, at least you came to help. Adam helped bandage four fingers - no problem.

1115 - Departed campsite. Underway on Knife Lake headed for Big Knife Portage. The Fariello's took Mikhail, so Mr. Fariello could do some duffing and fishing. Indeed, Mr. Fariello caught two lake trout while duffing/trolling.

Fun portages - short and sweet. Pulled canoes through one 15 rod portage that contained some small rapids. Some portages were actually in the BWCAW. These portages were much easier than the portages in Quetico.

Stopped for lunch on Carp Lake - bay bread with peanut butter, jelly, trail mix and fruit punch.

Jim Flannery took the day off. Well he was steering in the back of the canoe he shared with Jared, but at a nice leisurely pace. Was this payoff to Jared?

Found campsite about one mile from Prairie Portage. While securing canoes. Jimmy and Jared had a heated discussion about Jared taking yesterday off for his birthday. Jimmy in a heated discussion? Maybe next time, Jared won't take the day off from paddling - even though it was his birthday.

Mr. Fariello and Adam went fishing in the canoes - no luck.

Jimmy and Jared made dinner - Kahshahpiwi Rice - not bad.

Jared made Banana Nut Bread.

Adam and Jimmy went fishing in a canoe. Jimmy caught a smallmouth bass.

Jared was on a mission to bake the Banana Nut Bread. He watched the stove and was very careful not to make the fire too hot. At one point, the stove ran out of fuel, so he and Joseph put some more Coleman Fuel in the stove. Well, they also put fuel on the outside of the stove and on the ground around the stove.

Jared: "Mr. Fariello, could you come here please?" Mr. Fariello strolls over to the refueling area to see the stove, the ground, a PFD, the bottom of Jared's pants (almost) on fire. Poured water on flames and stamped out the rest, before it traveled to a tent. Everyone had a good laugh - no visible damage to any equipment.

Jared continued on the Banana Nut Bread mission, but it could not get completed before the mosquito's arrived.

Paddled 8 miles this day.

Dear Diary:

Today is Saturday July 21.

Leisurely wake up. Not sure what time. Granola cereal for breakfast - The Fariello's prepared.

0930 - Departed campsite. Mixed the crews - The Fariello's with Brian, so they could alternate duffing; Jared with Adam; Mikhail and Jimmy. Looked at the back of one of the yellow PFD's - minor fire damage.

Short paddle to Prairie Portage.

1030 - Stopped at Prairie Portage. Rested and bought some Quetico souvenirs.

Crew discussed conversion of Canadian currency to U.S. currency.

Saw a family of loons and a baby loon doing the "loon dance". Funny

1130 - Departed Prairie Portage en route to base camp.

1300 - Stopped for lunch on island near Scout Island (Moose Lake). Tuna fish, crackers, trail mix and fruit punch. Adam entertained himself by repeatedly canoeing around a nearby small island by himself. Just to waste time. Tired to convince the crew to do the same, but the last thing we wanted to do was paddle when we did not have to - so we didn't.

1430 - Arrived at Charles L. Sommers Base. Cleaned canoes, boxes and all gear. Cleaned selves in showers. We made it. Great crew, great trip.

Remember - Report Smug Drugging to the U.S. Customs Service.

Went to Ely Steakhouse for dinner. While en route, stopped at the U.S. Customs trailer outside of Ely and cleared. Peter completed a Customs Declaration for all.

Did some souvenir shopping in Trading Post. Stayed in Off Water cabins for the night.

Dear Diary:

Today is Sunday July 22.

0930 - Departed camp and drove five hours to Minneapolis/St Paul Airport.

1600 - Departed Minneapolis/St. Paul en route Charlotte, NC. Added one hour due to change from Central Standard Time to Eastern Standard Time. Had three-hour lay over in Charlotte.

2200 - Departed Charlotte and arrived Fort Lauderdale at 0030 on Monday July 23.