



MEMBERS UPDATE

October, 2018

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How They Survived: PART II

Wildfire Nation: Surviving the Inferno

Top 10 Glassing Mistakes Hunters Make

Zero Your Rifle Like a Pro

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CONTENT



02

Zero Your Rifle Like a Pro

If the first step you take to sight in a rifle occurs after you get to the range, you could be in for a long day. Don't worry, we'll walk you step-by-step through the process the pros use to get sharpshooter accuracy as painlessly as possible.



08

Caved In! How to Survive Being Trapped: Part II

Last month, we looked at the stories of ordinary people who made it out alive after being trapped underground for days. In this installment, we dive into more incredible "Caved In!" tales.



13

Wildfire Nation: Survival Tips

The numbers are in; wildfires in the Western US are up again in 2018, and it could get worse. The shocking truth is that the damage, measured in acres burned, is still a fraction of what was commonplace prior to 1950. Here's how you can prepare.



16

Top 10 Glassing Mistakes Hunters Make

As you head into the field to plan your 2018-2019 hunting season, chances are you're missing lots of opportunities to spot that trophy buck. Correct just a few of these simple mistakes and you'll learn exactly where the deer, elk, or antelope are moving in your area.



There's nothing like a brand-new toy to get us excited about heading to the shooting range. With visions of penny-sized groups in our heads, we load up our new rifles, new optics, and/or both and head to the range to start printing our sub-MOA groups.

After all, now that we've got this state-of-the-art precision shooting gear with much higher capabilities than the old stuff, it'll be a piece of cake. The latest generation of rifles with their 2-stage triggers and free floated barrels, they virtually guarantee that you can finally put those bullets in the same hole at 100 yards, right?

Then what happens? You get all bagged in at the range, put those crosshairs on the bullseye, squeeze confidently, and then bang... you're not even on the paper. It's so frustrating. The whole point of upgrading your equipment was to get better accuracy. Instead you can't even tell where those wayward bullets are hitting.

It happens to everyone at one time or another; we get a new toy to upgrade our system and end up with a frustrating journey through zeroing hell. Maybe you bought a new precision hunting rifle to get ready for deer season, or perhaps you got a new high-dollar

optic to go on your faithful old rifle. Either way, the road to precision is often paved with frustration.

Let us share a quick anecdote to illustrate. A certain writer/shooting enthusiast here at the NSRA who shall remain nameless, once took a full year to zero in a brand-new Burris optic on his Ruger M77 rifle. It was quite literally one thing after another that kept this rifle out of action for almost two whole deer seasons.

Granted, this wasn't a constant 12-month effort and the shooter had several other worthy rifles in the arsenal. But one issue after another plagued each attempt to get the new "upgrade" implemented successfully. Suffice it to say, the hunter had moments of doubt and regret over the decision to replace a perfectly good and zeroed in optic.

Ammo isn't cheap, your time is very valuable, and your shoulder can only take so much abuse in one sitting. The point we're trying to make here is that any and every step a shooter can take to manage the zeroing in process is well-worth the effort. Not every setback can be prevented, but all that can be should be. You'll thank yourself later.

WHY YOU NEED THIS



Call it a plan or call it a system, what matters is that you've invested some serious forethought into your rifle-optic combo (aka shooting system) before you ever head to the range. Let's put it another way; if your first step toward zeroing your rifle begins at the range, then you may be in for a long day.

That's because the first several steps in your checklist should happen well before you close the bolt on the first live round. Look, this goes beyond simple efficiency or frugality concerns. If you fail to prepare your system for the "sighting-in" process properly, the number of variables that can send your range day off the rails is nothing short of mind blowing.

If you've ever encountered one of the pesky setbacks we're going to identify in this article, you know how time-consuming and confusing some of these things can be, both to diagnose and identify. Believe us, it doesn't help much that these are often very simple fixes that could easily have been prevented.

Our goal for this article is simple; we want you to unlock your hunting rifle's maximum accuracy potential. We want you shooting quarter sized groups as quickly and painlessly as possible, feeling good and triumphant about your newly paired system. We also want to help you avoid a potentially drawn-out process, facing setback after setback at the target range.

This step-by-step process will help you control these real-world variables and get you dialed in quickly. The faster you get comfortable with your "system," the faster you'll build confidence and start having fun.

BEGIN WITH THE RIGHT HARDWARE

Remember how we said the process begins well before you ever head out to the range? Gathering up the right hardware is the first mission critical step toward getting your rifle zeroed.

Now, we're not talking about the brand name on your rifle and/or optic. Instead, we're referring to all of the pieces that mount that optic to your rifle. Do you have the proper scope rings for your tube? The most common scope tube sizes are 1-inch and 30mm, and while you do want your rings to fit snugly, you don't want to damage your optic. Nor do you want it to spin freely during recoil.



Next, what about the bases or rail mount hardware? Visually examine the components with a healthy dose of skepticism. Do they appear to be a good match? Believe it or not, this is necessary even in cases where you purchased a scoped rifle combo. Sometimes quality control slides and/or someone makes a mistake in the assembly line. And that mistake could easily result in tons of wasted time and frustration when it comes to sighting in.

You might chuckle at how basic some of this seems, and you're right. But if these problems aren't identified early in the process, your first group may be nice, followed by an erratic group as things loosen up, and then you'll be off the paper suddenly with no explanation.

TORQUE IT UP AND "LOC" IT DOWN

Before install, it's a good idea to "dry fit" your rig to troubleshoot any potential issues. It's also good idea to oil some of the surfaces where the metal will mate



for both fit and to prevent rust. Be careful not to get oil into your bolt holes as it may interfere with the “Loc” step we’ll cover later in this section.

Pro Tip: Chances are decent that your first combination of bases, rings, optic, and rifle will not come together flawlessly. So, do your best to anticipate some fitment issues, whether your rings aren’t tall enough to accommodate your scope, or the bases are too far apart for your scope tube. It’s very common and there are usually several adaptors, shims, or other work-arounds available.

And now that your hardware is perfectly compatible, copacetic, and ready to mount, you’ll need to take a couple extra steps to ensure it stays that way. Your rifle’s recoil still has the potential to loosen things up over time, of course; often much less time than you’d imagine. Enter blue Loctite 242, designed to lock your threads but not to permanently seize them, in case you need to make changes later.

It’s worth your time to get a torque wrench in order to make sure you’re tightening screws adequately (roughly 30 inch-pounds on bases, 15 on rings), but not going overboard to the point of damaging your equipment.

Use the blue Loctite on the working end of the threads and use your torque wrench to get everything properly snug. Then allow the Loctite to cure for 24hrs before you head to the range.

BORESIGHT YOUR RIFLE

The next step to getting a true, professional grade zero on your rifle is what’s commonly referred to as “boresighting.” The interesting thing with

boresighting is that the actual method is becoming more and more conflated with a product called a “boresighter.” You can imagine why, of course.

These handy little products are designed to sit in either the receiver or the barrel of your rifle and project a laser dot onto a target at the rifle’s exact point of aim, pretty cool. We’re not against using laser boresighters by any means, but you don’t need one of these gizmos to get the job done. Thus, we’re going to explain how to carry out the process the old-fashioned way.

First, remove the bolt from your rifle and set it aside. Next, place your rifle upright on a very stable rest, ideally in a gun vise, pointing at a target 25-yards away downrange. Next, stand behind the rifle and look through the barrel, centering it on the bullseye of your target.

Now, taking care not to move or bump the rifle, look through your scope. Use your windage and elevation turrets to move the crosshairs to match your barrel’s point of aim. If you were using a laser boresighter, obviously you would simply adjust your optic until the crosshairs were dialed in exactly upon the laser dot.

There are several benefits from boresighting, the first being that some ranges won’t allow a rifle that hasn’t at least been boresighted onto the range. The second benefit is the savings element. If you boresighted your rifle properly, you’ll save time, energy, and ammunition.

When you start shooting, it’s important that your shots are “on paper,” for both safety and sanity reasons. If you aren’t on paper, it can be very difficult to determine where the rounds are hitting. Of course, this leads to fatigue a lot earlier in the process and makes the task of getting a top-notch zero much harder to accomplish on a single trip to the range.

TAKE EVERY ADVANTAGE YOU CAN GET

The key, once the bullets are flying, is to make the process as easy as humanly possible for you, the shooter. That means having the best possible rest, ideally a “lead sled” or similar gun vise type product that minimizes any operator error or movement due to gusty wind conditions.

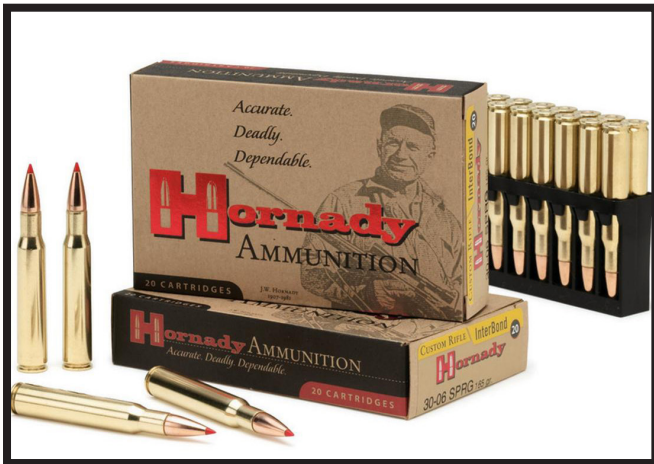
Also, don't underestimate the fatigue factor that comes with shooting a high velocity centerfire cartridge. Each trigger-pull and recoil takes a toll on your mental energy, focus, and of course your shoulder.



It's tempting to get sloppy because it's "just a .223 Rem" or whatever. But you never know how many rounds it's going to take to get zeroed. Nor do you know how much time and mental focus it will take.

SAME AMMUNITION FOR EVERY SHOT

This seems elementary to most experienced shooters, but due to the cost of ammunition or convenience or whatever, it's very tempting for shooters to burn up some of those random "left-overs" rounds rolling around in their range bag. And if ever they plan to shoot them, better to send them at a target instead of a live animal, right? This is the logic anyway.



The problem with this thinking is twofold. First, the variation between different types of ammunition can have staggeringly different results, even at relatively close ranges. Heck, even bullets within the exact

same box have inconsistencies. Minimize these inconsistencies by selecting one specific type of ammo, bullet weight, etc. and stick to it, especially while zeroing.

Tip: Since you are going to be using this ammo exclusively, consider going with a selection that's both high quality (i.e. match grade) and widely available.

To illustrate the second layer of this "leftover ammo" problem, we'll share this anecdote. Once while zeroing our rifles at the deer lease, an older hunter who had been on the sidelines for many years broke out his old faithful .25-06 Rem rifle. Unbeknownst to the rest of us, he also brought out his old ammunition. This ammo was somewhere between 15 and 20 years old and sitting in an attic most of that time.

The owner sat at the shooting table and shot a group at 100 yards. Lo and behold it was on paper after all those years! It didn't group worth a flip though... Then he shot another group and it was all over the place as well.

Then he tried at 50 yards and again, groups were just as random. Then 30 yards, still nowhere near confidence inducing... Another shooter sat down and shot, same results. Eventually someone noticed the ammo casings looked oxidized and almost rusty.

After a quick trip to the store for a couple of new boxes of ammo, it took only one group at 50 yards and one at 100 to confirm the rifle had been zeroed all along!

TAKE A SHOT AT 25 YARDS

Once your rifle is bore sighted at the 25-yard line, it's a great time to confirm that you're hitting paper. No need to shoot a full group at this point, as we recommend against making adjustments at such a short distance.

If your bullet hits the paper within the target area, almost anywhere on the target, you can move on to the next stage. If, somehow, you're not hitting paper at all, then boresight again at the 25yard line. This is rarely necessary, but it does happen. Consider sitting a few inches further back when looking down the bore and be sure to focus on a very precise spot on the target.

FINDING YOUR ZERO AT 100



Now it's time to move your rig back to 100 yards and really begin the process of dialing in your optic. Unless you're shooting your rifle regularly, it's a good idea to do a little dry fire practice. Before squeezing the trigger on a live round, get your crosshairs on the target, breathe, practice squeezing the trigger, a warmup for your shooting mechanics. Again, this is in the interest of conserving your energy and time; it will also help boost confidence before moving to live fire.

This is also a good time for a quick refresher regarding your scope's adjustability, i.e. what distance each "click" represents. Generally, this is listed on the outside of the turret, or painted onto the windage and elevation adjustment dials.

THE 3 ROUND RULE

When ready, send at least 3 rounds at your target to get a basis for your adjustments. It might seem trivial, but there are several reasons that a 3-round group is a minimum, whereas a 2-shot group is too erratic for our purposes.

That is, when you're sighting in a freshly mounted optic, 3 shots will put it through the ringer. Part of what you're trying to establish with the first few shots is that your optic is well mounted. Keep an eye out for signs that your rings, bases, or any other part of your system is loose or moving.

The second part of the 3 rounds philosophy here is statistical; it's highly unlikely you'll get lucky 3 times in a row. If you flinched or pulled a shot, the point of impact on the target is simply inaccurate, whether

they skewed closer or further from the bullseye. That's the best way to look at it, suspect data. This is where you could argue the merits of 4 or even 5-shot groups. The more shots you print on the target, the more obvious the center becomes. But as long as the shots are "grouping" in some form or fashion, you can determine a rough center point.

FIND YOUR CENTER

You could bring your ruler and a calculator to the target, but generally a rough "triangulation" as to the center of your group is sufficient. You might think of the bullet holes as each being magnets, pulling against each other and drawing your finger to the true center.

You may want to mark the center point with a pen or marker just to keep track. Next, determine how far the center mark is vertically and horizontally from your point of aim (usually the bulls eye). This is why targets often have a 1-inch grid pattern and/or measurements listed out from the bullseye.

Now, return to your rifle and make the corresponding adjustments using the turrets on your rifle scope. For instance, let's say you were hitting 2.5 inches left at 100 yards, and your scope adjustments are 1/4 MOA (roughly a quarter inch at 100yds), then you'd want to adjust your reticle right 10 clicks. If you were 1 inch low, up 4 clicks.

Once you've made your adjustments, it's time to send another group down range. Keep repeating this process until the center point of your groups is exactly aligned with your point of aim. Hopefully, you'll get some nice 1MOA groups as you settle in.

ALWAYS AVOID "FUDGING"

So, here's another thing to consider as you zero in. If for any reason, you begin to feel like all of your shots are hitting to the right, it's very likely that your subconscious mind will tell you to shift your point of aim ever so slightly to the left.

It's a natural human tendency and hard to resist, we know. But you must keep your point of aim consistent while sighting in.

The problem is that your goal isn't actually to hit the bullseye. Sounds crazy, right? Instead, your goal is to measure and adjust your rig's accuracy. You need an accurate representation of your shot placement at a certain distance so you can adjust your optic to reflect that. Compensating works against you.



Thus, fudging even a little bit is counterproductive. Worse still, the problem that you fudged at 100 yards will be progressively larger at 200, 300, etc. So there, we'll get off of our soapbox on this topic, just wanted to stress why this is a bigger deal than it might seem in the moment.

SLIP THE SCALES

This is a really cool feature a lot more manufacturers have started picking up on in recent years: Removable turrets. These allow you to set your zero visibly on your dial, allowing you the capability to adjust your sights for different distances in the field, while easily being able to reset your sights back to zero afterward.



7 In fact, that's really the military concept behind zeroing your rifle in the first place. The zero is a

reference point on which you can make adjustments for distance and even wind conditions on the fly.

In civilian terms, the whole "zero" part has become synonymous with simply sighting in a rifle. However, if you've "zeroed" most optics, you've probably noticed that there's really no actual zero involved. And once your rifle has been "zeroed in" you certainly don't want to make any adjustments.

Removable turret caps allow you to set your zero like a sniper would in the military. On most models, you simply loosen the screws on the turret and you can adjust the turret freely without making an adjustment to your reticle. This is often referred to as "slipping the scales" as your turret slips without engaging the mechanical splines that adjust the reticle. In other words, you won't feel or hear those clicks.

If you're shopping for optics, particularly for a long-range rifle setup, this is definitely a feature to put on the short list. Making adjustments on the fly is fairly advanced and does require an accurate estimate in terms of range, of course. However, if you zero in at 100 yards and shoot in at 300 yards, you can memorize or mark your 300 yard adjustments in case you need to toggle back and forth on a big game hunt. Pretty cool.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The simple fact is, the reason pros stick to a process when they zero a rifle because they've done it the wrong way first and had to learn from their mistakes. There are lots of dynamic factors that play into sighting in a rifle and the best procedure is the one that controls for them best.

And the biggest favor you can do for yourself is to keep it simple, both in your setup and between your ears. Check and double check your mounting work, bases and rings, to make sure everything is stable and locked into place. Use plenty of sandbags or a shooting vise to ensure a rock steady rest.

Commit to smart work ahead of time and the entire process will be simpler, streamlined, and way more fun. The quicker you're zeroed, the sooner you can start meditating on those penny-sized groups!

HOW TO SURVIVE BEING TRAPPED:

PART 2!

In the last installment of our “Trapped” series, we took a close look at some case studies involving real-life people who got stuck in caves and mines. We also highlighted how you could survive a similar situation. When you think about the possibility of getting trapped somewhere, the odds are high that a mine or cave is high on your list, which is why we chose to start there.

However, the truth is that there are numerous places that can quickly become dangerous during the wrong circumstances. Let's examine a few more of these places (plus some more caves!) and see what we can learn from survivors.

SNOW CAVE SURVIVAL



If you get lost in the wilderness during the winter, you may be able to take shelter by building a snow cave. One such case occurred in the Sugarloaf Mountains in Maine when Nicholas Joy, a 17-year-old skier, became lost after attempting to find a shortcut.

Nicholas made the mistake of having no cellphone, food, or other supplies with him. What he did right, though, saved his life – he took inspiration from a survival reality TV show and constructed a snow cave.

8 The teenager took shelter in the cave for three days. He also attempted to make a fire by rubbing

sticks together but was unsuccessful. Because he built a good enough snow cave, Nicholas came out unscathed.

Unfortunately, many people haven't been as lucky. In fact, there are several recorded instances of individuals dying or losing limbs as a result of staying in a poorly constructed snow cave.

How Can You Survive if a Snow Cave is Your Best Option?

1. CARRY THE RIGHT SUPPLIES – To make a snow cave, you're going to need a shovel and some type of insulating pad (go with a $\frac{3}{4}$ ensolite pad at a minimum).

2. STEER CLEAR OF DEAD TREES AND POSSIBLE AVALANCHE AREAS – If anything can fall on the cave, it can easily bury you alive.

3. CHOOSE THE LEEWARD SIDE OF A HILL – If there's a hill nearby, go to the leeward side (usually the eastern side) to build your snow cave.

4. USE YOUR BASE LAYERS – You don't want to let all of your layers of clothing become soaked with sweat and snow. Strip down to your base layers if possible when you're building the cave.

5. USE CONSOLIDATED SNOW – Light, powdery snow isn't good for a snow cave. If the snow isn't already packed down, you can consolidate it with snowshoes and skis. As you beat it down, be careful not to work up a sweat.

6. DIG OUT YOUR CAVE – There are many ways to make a snow cave, but the best option is to dig in to a 4-foot diameter and then start digging upward. The idea is to have an entrance you can climb through (that can be blocked by your pack) and then be able to sit up into another layer of the snow. From there, you'll need to use a pickaxe to make a couple of air holes in the roof.

To learn more about this process, be sure to review a video on digging a snow cave. There are several examples on YouTube.

7. PROPERLY INSULATE EVERYTHING –

The snow cave can protect you from the wind and other elements. If you build it correctly, you can even keep the temperature around 32 degrees F. This will extend your ability to survive until help arrives or weather conditions improve enough for you to hike to safety.

UNDERWATER SURVIVAL



Harrison Okene's story is almost unbelievable, but it's been so well-documented that we know it's true. The Nigerian man survived for 60 hours while trapped 100 feet under water. He was fortunate enough to be trapped inside a small space (a 4-foot bathroom) when his tugboat capsized. Due to the enclosed space, an air bubble kept him alive.

Now, this isn't something that you could plan or bet on, but if you had no other choice, sealing yourself inside a small space BEFORE water enters the area could possibly save your life in a similar way.

Of course, spending 60 hours in an air bubble can also be dangerous. In the space allotted, toxicity had already begun to set in, and he would have likely become unconscious by the 79-hour mark. Also, Harrison couldn't simply be taken back up to the surface after rescue divers discovered him.

Instead, he had to be taken into a diving bell, slowly transported back to the surface, and then put inside

of a decompression chamber.

MOST IMPORTANT TAKEAWAYS

There are a couple of things we can learn from this story: First, staying as calm as possible helped Harrison make the best usage of the air bubble.

Secondly, not trying to force his way out of the bathroom was a very wise decision. If you find yourself in a horrific situation, always try to keep your wits about you and use the environment to your advantage as much as possible.

FLOODING AND MUDSLIDE SURVIVAL

Michelle Grainger and her husband, Steve LeGoff, dealt with a hellacious day in September 2013. First, the couple and their four pets had to escape a flood, then they had to escape a mudslide.

The Colorado residents prepared as much as possible for the strong possibility of flooding in their area. They went so far as to put 2,000 sandbags around their property, and they also strung a string that they could easily see and grab onto while evacuating along their chosen footpath. Aside from these helpful measures, the couple had their backpacks loaded with necessary supplies.

When the call came that it was time to evacuate, they got out of their neighborhood before the water overwhelmed everything. Their next move was to go to a neighbor's house that was built on higher land.



Credit: AF.mil

Once they arrived, the couple and their dogs and cats settled in with high hopes of sleeping through the rest of the weather event. The higher ground they'd reached wasn't high enough, though, and the saturated backyard turned into a mudslide about 30 minutes after everyone went to bed.

Suddenly, they were woken up by a sheet of mud, water, and sediment that came roaring into the house. Michelle was picked up by the mudslide and slammed against an interior wall. One of the couple's dogs was buried in mud, and three huge boulders blocked Michelle's path to safety.

As the water and mud continued to rise, Steve burst into action to save his wife. His attempts at kicking out the nearby window didn't work, so he kicked the door open instead. This allowed water and mud to recede into the rest of the house, lowering the levels enough to keep Michelle's head above the muck.

The next problem was moving the boulders, which Steve has characterized as being about the size and weight of microwaves. Steve was able to rescue his wife with some help from his neighbor. He also found their dog that had become submerged in the mud and saved the animal's life with mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

One of the neighbors was also trapped in the mudslide, and Steve helped rescue him too. After making it through the flood and the mudslide, the family packed up for the second time that night and moved to higher ground yet again. Everyone survived, although one of their cats did suffer from a broken leg.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

This harrowing tale of continual survival has several lessons for us.

1. ALWAYS BE PREPARED AND TAKE WEATHER REPORTS SERIOUSLY

– Michelle and Steven did an admirable job of preparing for flooding. They knew their area was due for a major flood because city officials and meteorologists had been issuing warnings for several days. By listening and taking precautions, they gave themselves the best chance of surviving the flood without extensive property damage.

2. ALWAYS HAVE A BACKUP PLAN

– When their extensive planning failed to keep them safe in their home, they immediately launched into their backup plan by moving to higher ground and staying with neighbors. This had clearly been discussed in advance, which is the perfect way to avoid confusion when disaster strikes.

3. STAY ALERT, EVEN IF YOU THINK YOU'RE SAFE

– We all need to rest, so it's not really surprising that the couple went to sleep after reaching what they believed to be a safe place. When bad weather and flooding is all around you, though, it's always prudent to at the very least have someone keep an eye on things until the situation calms down.

4. ACT QUICKLY

– In every portion of this story, the couple acted quickly when it mattered the most. They left their home right away when it became obvious their preventative measures wouldn't be good enough, and Steven launched immediately into rescue mode by looking for a way to remove water from the room after his wife was trapped.

5. LEARN CPR

– Without mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, one of the couple's dogs would have perished. Learning CPR is always a good move that could save someone's life someday. Be aware that there are special CPR classes for pet owners.



Photo credit: Staff Sgt. Kelly Goonan, AF.mil

ABANDONED MUSHROOM CAVE SURVIVAL



These days, most mushrooms are grown in an indoor, windowless, climate-controlled environment. In fact, approximately half of the mushrooms that are grown and sold in the U.S. come from the same place – Kennett Square, Pennsylvania.

But before modern technology made it cheaper and more effective to grow mushrooms this way, they were often harvested from mushroom caves. A man in France, Jean-Luc Josuat-Vergès, became lost in one of these abandoned mushroom caves back in 2005, and he was extremely fortunate to survive the ensuing 34-day ordeal.

Jean-Luc has since reported that he was depressed when he entered the cave with nothing more than the clothes on his back and a bottle of whisky. His original intention was to explore the cave for a little while in order to have some time alone, but things took a nasty turn when he got lost underground.

For the next 34 days, Jean-Luc sipped whatever water he could find, licked rusted iron, and ate soil and wood. He also wrapped himself in a sheet of plastic he found in the cave, which doctors later credited with keeping hypothermia at bay.

Jean-Luc may never have been rescued if it wasn't for the quick thinking of three schoolboys. After finding the man's abandoned 4x4 vehicle, the boys contacted the local police department. It took 20 police officers

approximately 90 minutes to find Jean-Luc. The man had been stuck for more than a month in a cave system that's three-miles long and described by locals as a labyrinth.

He had lost a lot of weight, but was otherwise okay and was soon released from the hospital.

VALUABLE LESSONS

Jean-Luc certainly learned some valuable lessons during his misadventure. Chief among them is that it's never a good idea to go into a cave alone without a cellphone or supplies. Even more importantly, drinking and exploring are not a good combination; in many cases, this can lead to death or serious injuries.

Always let someone know where you're at when you go into a cave, and be sure to consult with any known maps so that you have a better idea of how to find your way out at the end of the day.

UNDERWATER CAVE SURVIVAL

Imagine getting stuck in an underwater cave within a vast network that contains many caves that have never been explored. That's exactly what happened to Xisco Garcia last year in Majorca.

The experienced diver was 54 years old at the time, and he was smart enough to be diving with a friend. That decision saved his life when a fault in Xisco's oxygen tank prevented him from being able to return to the surface. Instead, he was forced to take shelter in a small, water-filled cave located approximately 120 feet below ground.

Xisco told his diving buddy how to describe his location and sent him off to get help. Xisco had no food, no water, and no other useful supplies to help him survive. The only thing that helped keep him going was a small amount of fresh water that he happened to find in the cave.

A team of 60 rescuers tried to drill a hole to give Xisco food and water, but their efforts failed. They

had to travel almost 2 miles from the entrance of the cave system to find Xisco, but he was successfully rescued after 48 hours. Once the man was brought to the surface, an EMS crew observed him while he became reoriented to sunlight. They transported him to a local hospital afterwards, where he made a full recovery.

IMPORTANT LESSONS FOR DIVERS

Diving isn't very conducive to carrying a lot of supplies, so it's not practical for us to tell you to always have a lot of food and water with you when you dive, just in case. But any supplies you can carry could be helpful. Also, as illustrated by this story, diving with a friend is a must. If Xisco had been alone, he would have died.

Finally, although a fault could develop at any time, make sure to always safety test your equipment and give it a full examination before you head into the water. This is especially important if you plan to go diving inside a cave system because this will make it much harder for rescuers to reach you if you end up needing help.

LEARNING FROM THE MISTAKES OF OTHERS

We all want to believe that we know what we're doing or that we'd handle a situation better than someone else, but the reality is that everyone makes mistakes. We also all run the risk of freaking out during a bad situation.

That's a major part of the reason why we've decided to share these stories of survival with you; there's comfort in knowing that others have been in similar situations, and we also hope that these tales will encourage and help you if you're ever stuck somewhere.

Be sure to take note of the things that each of the people in these stories did right and wrong. As always, we'd like to remind you that it's imperative to tell people where you're going to be, bring a cellphone, travel with a friend whenever possible, dress appropriately, and bring extra food, water, and other survival items.

You might be intending to be gone for only a few hours, but you never know what could happen. By being prepared, you'll give yourself a much better chance of surviving the unknown.





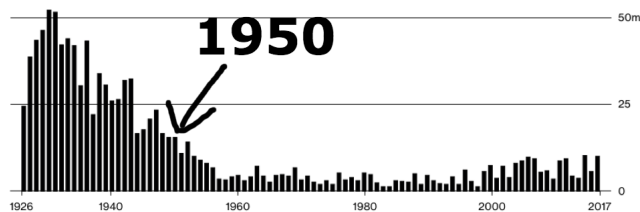
WILDFIRE NATION: WILDFIRE SURVIVAL TIPS

In last month's issue, we shared some incredible real-life stories that featured everyday Americans caught up in a rapidly escalating fight for their lives. There's much to learn from these inspirational tales, but perhaps the key takeaway is the hard to fathom speed and unpredictability of a raging wildfire.

What's more, the past few wildfire seasons have sparked a fresh debate about what's causing these fires and what we can expect in the future. Will they continue to get worse? Are changing climates fueling worsening fire seasons year over year? Could these fires be controlled with better forest management?

As politicized as the topic has become, a recent analysis has turned up something that's perhaps more troubling than the climate change doomsday argument. Consider this, as apocalyptic as 2018's wildfire season has been, it pales in comparison to every single year from 1926-1950.

A History of American Flames
Acres burned in U.S. wildland fires*



Data: National Interagency Fire Center
*Reporting process standardized in 1983

From 1951 and onward, a mixture of better fire control methods and favorable weather conditions created a period of what a recent study identified as a 3,000 year low in the incidence of wildfires in the

Western US. Thus, whether you believe that a drier climate in the Western US is making wildfire seasons worse, or you think lax management is to blame, the answer is both.

As you can see, the 10 million acres that burned thus far in 2018 is dwarfed by years in 20s and 30s where wildfires routinely consumed four times as many acres. Our point isn't to argue that these are the best of times or the worst, only to say that it can get dramatically worse. And wildfires have been much worse in the past.



That's why anyone living in a wildfire prone forest should implement a very concrete emergency plan immediately. For the rest of us, suffice it to say that

wildfires can happen almost anywhere, even in urban landscapes if conditions are right. Let's examine some of the best time-tested tips for staying safe during a wildfire.

1. DON'T HESITATE TO EVACUATE

If you're given the signal to evacuate, then do it! Hesitating for even a few minutes can be deadly. It's best to leave as soon as a voluntary evacuation order is issued. Not only will this give you a better chance of getting out with some of your belongings but it will also help you beat the traffic crunch that accompanies a mandatory evacuation.

2. REMAIN AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS

When there are active wildfires, you need to be on full alert at all times. Even when there's not an active wildfire, though, you should remain aware of your surroundings. This will help you pick up on early clues if a wildfire – or any other catastrophe – starts nearby.

3. PLAN AN ESCAPE ROUTE

You need to know how to get out if a wildfire enters the area. Plan an escape route that takes you downhill, if possible. This is the best way to avoid the spread of fire. Going uphill will put you in much more danger. Of course, your preferred route may become inaccessible, so make sure you familiarize yourself with a few other options as well.

4. STAY AWAY FROM CANYONS

This may seem contradictory since we just told you to choose a route that goes downhill, but canyons, draws, and chutes are very bad news during a wildfire. These areas will actually funnel deadly smoke directly toward you like a chimney. To reiterate, downhill is good, but not if it involves canyons.

5. LEARN ABOUT SHELTERS AND SAFE SPOTS

Do you know where the closest emergency shelters are? And do you know what areas of your property and town are least likely to stoke the

flames? If not, find out today and learn how to get to them too. Figuring this stuff out in advance is critical; you may not have time to do any research after the fire begins.

6. YOU COME FIRST

Yes, we know; you have a lot of important items in your home, including some gear that could help you survive a fire. But what good is it going to do you to get to those items if the time you lose makes it impossible to escape? Never prioritize items over yourself. If you're worried about not being able to bring your wallet/purse or keys with you, start keeping them on your bedside table at night.

7. LOW-LYING GROUND IS YOUR FRIEND

Can't get out? The safest spot on your property is the lowest-lying spot (as long as you don't somehow have a canyon on your property, that is). A ditch will help improve your odds of survival.

8. USE YOUR SHIRT AS A RESPIRATOR

Smoke inhalation is extremely dangerous. It can cause you to pass out, and it can also lead to lifelong health complications. Avoid as much of the smoke



as possible by putting your mouth and nose inside your shirt. Tuck your head in so that you're breathing close to your chest. If this isn't an option, try to grab a spare t-shirt, towel, or rag and cover your mouth and nose with it.

9. EXTINGUISHED, BURNED GROUND MAY HELP

It's always best to completely evacuate the area. But if you can't get out, you might be able to take shelter on a property that's already been burned. As long as the flames are out, there's less of a chance that the fire will happen again, especially if any buildings and grasses are burned down. Be careful, though; embers can still float through the air, the ground is likely to be very hot, and any standing trees will be very brittle and could fall with no notice.

10. INVEST IN A FIRE SHELTER

As previously mentioned, fire shelters can save lives when there's no other options. They're not cheap (the average price is around \$400), and you'll need to make sure you know how to use the shelter. But this is a safety measure that may be your best option if you can't get out in time.

Just be aware that you need to use your arms, legs, and knees to prevent high winds from ripping the shelter away. Firefighters also say that the fear of the shelter failing is one of the deadliest things about this safety tip. In many cases, at least one firefighter will let panic take over. By trying to flee instead of staying under the protective barrier, these individuals usually forfeit their lives.

FINAL THOUGHTS

A wildfire can break out quickly, and they're often unpredictable due to wind shifts and other weather-related changes. Therefore, even if the fire is 20+ miles away, you need to be ready to leave with a moment's notice. Don't let the heartbreak of thousands of previous wildfires be in vain; make a plan, share it with your entire family, and be prepared to execute it at any time of the day or night.





TOP GLASSING MISTAKES HUNTERS MAKE

binoculars with you at all times. The best binoculars can put up with most weather conditions and give you HD like vision from over 1000 feet away.

Not only will you have an enhanced field of vision, your chances of seeing a buck or turkey hiding in the brush will also increase tremendously.

Not Having A Game Plan



Glassing, or spotting game at a distance from a vantage position, is a great way to calculate how many animals are using a specific area, the size of the animals, and trails showing where they are entering and exiting.

But many hunters make common mistakes that prevent them from having a successful trip. From not planning a strategy to using binoculars incorrectly, these mistakes can increase your odds of missing out on your prized game.

Not Using Binoculars

Using your eyesight is a great way to get an idea of the area, but once you spot movement, you'll need something more powerful than your natural sight to have an effective glassing expedition...especially if weather isn't perfect.

You can use a scope for glassing but your depth of view will be compromised by only using one eye and your field of vision will decrease, leaving you with less ground to cover.

A good glassing voyage starts with planning a strategy. You may know of prime glassing positions, but what you need to focus on is the schedule of the game you are hunting.

Before you head out, you need to decide if you want to catch your prey at feeding time or when they are heading back to their shelter.

If you choose feeding time, this means setting up your spot in the dark before the sun rises so you can see what direction they are entering.

If you're looking to catch them before they head back to their shelter, you need to be in position before the sun goes down.

The more detailed your plan is, the more information you will learn about the game you are scouting.

Not Using The Weather



Finding a herd can be difficult, so take advantage of what's in front of you. Animals are like humans. If you think sitting in windy or hot conditions is miserable, animals most likely feel the same and will try to find covered areas.

The wind direction can tell you where game might be. Say the wind is blowing west, you'll want to head to west facing slopes and focus your glassing on the protected side of the slope.

The sun can also help you in a few different ways. During winter season, find areas where sun hits first. Deer try to find warm areas for breakfast. While in the summer, spend more time glassing shaded areas.

Not Using The Whole Terrain



Follow the beat of your own drum. Using the same glassing spots as other hunters works, but you might be missing other key locations.

If you can, climb higher up so you can get a better vantage point of your terrain and see areas you might

On flat land? Try exploring the areas away from the beaten path and find an undisturbed place.

Animals are smart and will start to recognize where danger is coming from if it happens often enough.

Not Using The Right Binocular Stance



It's extremely difficult to get a still image when you are using optics without the assistance of a tripod. Shaky hands tend to be the culprit.

But this can be managed by using the right techniques when holding your binoculars.

If you're sitting down, bring your elbows to your knees. Use your knees as makeshift tripod.

If you're standing, put a cap on. Bring the binoculars up to your eyes and grab onto the brim of the hat to keep your hands steady.

If you're hunting with a bow, you can use the limb much like a tripod and rest the binoculars on top.

Not Using Optics Correctly



No matter what you are using, binoculars or scope, the techniques you use to scan an area will play a huge part in how successful you are at spotting game.

First, concentrate your glassing on areas within your rifle's range. There's no point in finding game a mile out. You won't be able to hit it.

Second, a lot of people will move their optics to find their target and unknowingly miss a lot of details and small movements. One way to fix this mistake is to pick a spot and move your eyes to scan the area instead of the optics. By moving your eyes within the field of vision of your optics, you will be able to cover more ground.

Also, it's a good idea to stay away from sweeping motions. Instead, carefully observe your target area then move to a nearby spot and observe. Keep doing this until you feel comfortable with your terrain.

Being Impatient



Sometimes hunters will believe everything they see on the first pass. You will miss out if you do this.

Animals tend to blend in with their surroundings so scan the area out more than once. It's a waiting game, so take your time and scout as many spots as you can.

If you still don't see anything, stay put. Some hunters will get frustrated and start roaming from ridge top to ridge top or field to field, but this will only make matters worse. Stick to the plan!

You never know what you might have missed or what is just around the corner.

Being Too Visible



Visibility comes in all different shapes and sizes. But one thing is for sure, once your target sees or hears you, it's over.

Talking is the biggest offense when glassing. Avoid glassing in large groups so you're not tempted to talk. The littlest whisper can catch the attention of your prey.

Try your best to hide your presence by staying off the skyline using brush, rocks, or shade. The latter is a particularly good choice because shade will help conceal your outline and movements.

And finally, always wear clothing that doesn't make noise when going through bush or when making any type of movement.

Not Being Aware Of Your Surroundings



You've found your target. You're fixated on every movement it makes. But be careful, you might be missing the bigger picture.

By focusing solely on your target, you might miss the rest of the herd. Why is this a problem? If you don't see a non-target animal, and it sees you, say goodbye to your prized mark. Once one spots you, the herd will disperse and ruin your trip.

Always keep an eye on what the rest of the herd is doing because they might be keeping an eye on you.

Not Using A Mixture Of Range



While some hunters rely on long range glassing, others swear by close range glassing. The truth is each approach comes with its pros and cons.

Close range scoping is great for antler identification and finding hidden prey, but your chances of being spotted increase dramatically.

Long range scoping is great for collecting data and planning a strategy of attack, but you can miss game that is concealed by trees or rocks.

The best way to get the most of your trip is to find a happy medium between the two so you can learn as much as possible.

Introducing the "MCG Recon Military Binoculars"

No matter what range you prefer when you're glassing for game, the operative word here is: Glass. You need a high-quality optic with just the right balance of clarity, magnification, and dependability with you every step of the way.

19 The truth of the matter is that a great reconnaissance optic isn't just critical for glassing and scouting, it's

key in virtually all aspects of the hunt. From spotting big game, to identifying, to confirming, and even blood trailing after the shot, a set of binoculars with great light gathering ability and instant, easy-on-the-eyes clarity can make all the difference.



Optimized for Distance

There's a reason why the vast majority of professional hunting guides carry a set of 10X42mm binoculars around their necks at all times. While there are new configurations hitting the market every season, the Recon's 10X42mm configuration offers the best balance and versatility.

With powerful BaK7 prisms and 42mm objective lenses, MCG Recon's capture light with stunning clarity in both bright and low-light conditions, allowing you to virtually see in the dark. This is especially true with early morning hunts, when you need to get a detailed look at a deer grazing nearby well before sunrise. And if you hunt varmints at dusk, the Recon's are ideal for spotting coyotes approaching from great distances.

Ruggedized for Heavy Field Use



The Recon's multicoated lenses aren't only dialed in for long distance clarity, but are designed to stand up to the toughest hunting conditions you can throw at them. Piggybacking off of military-spec designs, the Recons are shockproof, weatherproof, and feature scratch resistant lenses. All of this has been thoughtfully loaded into a nearly indestructible ABS body with a rubberized outer coating.

The twist-up eyecups provide a full 10mm of eye relief for comfortable view that minimizes fatigue. If you wear corrective lenses, your eyes will thank you for this. In addition, the variable magnification allows HD clarity at a wide variety of distances, allowing users to scout continuously all through your hunt.

What about ease of use and protection in the field? The MCG Recons come standard with rubber lens caps for both the objective lenses and eyepieces. Also standard with these binoculars are a convenient lightweight carrying case and comfortable carrying strap.



For NSRA Subscribers ONLY...

For a very limited time, we're offering our MCG Recon Military Binoculars to NSRA members like you for a massively discounted introductory price, 50% Off MSRP.

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