

The Ballad of 726-J2

by Dennis Wagner, August 2002



We're 726-J2.

We hiked the whole way thru.
Our bodies are beat,
We've blistered our feet;
We're 726-J2

After the shakedown
and a visit to the Doc,
We hoisted our packs
& headed for Cathedral Rock.

The following morning
our Ranger bid adieu,
"You are on your own now
726-J2."

For months we prepared
for the ultimate test,
A 50-mile backpack
at Philmont's best.

We learned the basics
of wilderness survival,
The sump, ring & cable
making up the bear triangle.

Hunter's Lodge was
next on the map,
A place where Waite Phillips
and friends used to nap.

To get in shape
we planned a few hikes,
To Waterdogs Lakes,
Barr Camp and the likes.

When nature called
we did not delay,
but checked in to the Red Roof Inn
for an important stay.

Hidden Valley was our
first test along the way,
As we hiked up and up
to get the best views of the day.

The trek was assigned
Itinerary Three,
And our crew of ten
726-J2 would be

When a Red Roof Inn
was nowhere in sight,
A pilot and bombardier
would solve our plight.

Cimarroncito was
the destination that night,
Setting up camp in the rain
was quite a sight.

Then lightning struck
and burn 'round Ponil.
So a modified trek
would be the new deal.

Clark's Fork was next
along the way.
We branded, rode
and threw rope all day.

The road to Harlan
grew hotter and longer,
But the one wrong turn
made us smarter and stronger.

The first stop was Base Camp
and a night in Tent City,
With Ranger Chris
teachin' us the nitty-gritty.

We slept in the meadow
and watched shooting stars,
And marveled at life
without computers and cars.

That evening at Harlan Downs
our boys became a crew,
As they raced Dirty Larry to
place for 726-J2.

Early the next morning
off to reload we went,
To load with power and pellets
shells that were spent.

We hoisted the shotguns
and let the pellets fly,
At little orange pigeons
that flew across the sky.

Harlan to Vista Grande
was a long, hot trail,
We arrived at camp late
draggin' our tail.

Spring water at Vista Grande
was icy and cold,
Out here in drought land
it's worth its weight in gold.

The hardest day
was yet to be seen,
Down to Cimarron River
and then up to Head of Dean.

We drank so much water
we thought we would cry,
we were told the Water Buffalo
at Santa Claus was dry.

Though the trail was long
to the boys it seemed short,
as words from favorite shows
they would constantly retort.

"I'm feeling great Alex"
was a favorite line,
but I'll go crazy if I hear
"My fingers hurt" one more time.

Role playing games
were also in style,
as they plotted to take over the
world
mile after mile.

Head of Dean held a challenge
to test our crew,
The wall, totem, and web
turned 6 into 726-J2.

Advisor's coffee
each night on the veranda,
was second only to
the vistas from Miranda.

The Mountain Men
did us some learnin',
After shootin' black powder,
Our hats were a burnin'.

Miranda's Dirty Rick
was a great mountain bachelor,
And Bucko and Dunlap taught us
to use our picker, flicker and
scratcher.

Throwin' tomahawks
was loads of fun,
But then so was Mountain Ball,
played 'til the settin' sun.

We headed for Baldy Town
to shower off the dirt,
But it doesn't do much good
unless you wash out your shirt.

The grade to Cooper Park
seemed a thousand feet tall,
And the hike from French Henry
took us straight up The Wall.

The blacksmith tricked us
into kissing Brittany Spears
While the black tunnel mine tour
awoke a few fears.

Sharing thorns and roses,
was a regular event,
this night we talked of boys & men
before we retired to our tent.

Finally the day came
to conquer our final feat,
So we arouse early in the morning
to climb Baldy peak.

We scrambled to the top
in less than two hours,
and from the top of the world
we felt the mountain's powers.

From then on the
quest was all downhill,
looking for Danny's tooth
was the only time we stood still.

One more stop
at Head of Dean,
to give back to Philmont
for all we had seen.

Beauty, life and solitude
as far as one could see,
The logical response was to shout
"Thanks to Yee".

One final highlight
at the Bear Canyon pickup,
a man with pizza and coke
Hope it don't make us throwup.

Skylar, Danny, Lucas
Tim, Josh, and Sean,
Dennis, Priscilla, Steve and Scott
Hiked with all their brawn.

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