

What Camp Pathfinder Means to Me

Ted Hubbard, 2007

Camp Pathfinder is many things to many different people. To some it is just a summer camp for boys, and others a wilderness experience of difficulty but also of lasting friendship. To me, it is where I grew up. When I look back on my life as I developed into who I am today, Pathfinder stands out as the defining experience that helped me grow the most. In my ten summers as a camper and staff on the lakes and rivers of Algonquin Park I learned more about camaraderie, courage, and dedication to goals than I could have anywhere else. I knew what it meant to push that little extra to make it over the last portage to your destination lake, and then have the energy to set up camp and take care of those around you. I also knew what it meant to pull over and wait because one in your group was too cold, hungry, or weak to go on without a rest. Most of all, Pathfinder instilled a desire for things in life that are not easily or readily attainable. Life is and should be hard, but Pathfinder made it so that instead of walking down the easier path, I run up the more difficult one.

Today I am a U.S. Marine Corps Officer. The path to get here was the most difficult I have ever taken, but I owe much of my success on that path to my time at Pathfinder. Pathfinder taught me how to be a leader, which is essential to being a good Marine Officer. It taught me how to make mistakes, but more importantly how to recover from those mistakes. My experiences on the waterways of Ontario gave me the confidence in myself to accomplish almost any task given to me. Improvisation and adaptation to unexpected situations on Pathfinder trips is huge. A headman has to be able to fix broken gear, feed his trip even when food gets spoiled, and maintain the morale of

his campers. A Marine officer has to do all of those things and more, and Pathfinder inadvertently prepared me to meet those challenges head on.

As Marines we all have something called *Esprit de Corps*. It is the intangible belief that our Corps and our fellow Marines are the best in the world, and that we have a moral obligation to live up to the legacy left to us by Marines of the past. I first found that kind of *esprit* at Camp Pathfinder. As Pathfinder trippers we know that we are the best in Algonquin hands down. We can out paddle and portage anyone in the park, and everyone knows it. Pathfinder taught me how to take pride in my work and my organization. Today I am a Marine, but I couldn't have gotten to where I am today without my summers on Camp Pathfinder Island.

Noonway and Semper Fidelis,
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