

Swedish Air Force Survival Training

With the focus on Peacetime Survival Instructor Course and Parasail Training

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Abstract

The Survival Training for air crew in Swedish Air Force (SwAF) is regulated in a regulations called “Utbildningsreglemente MIFS:Ö”. The acronym stands for: the Man In the Flight System:Survival (the Swedish name for Survival is “Överlevnad”). The regulations also include topics as: Physic Training, Aerospace Medicine (physiology, psychology and odontology), Parasail, CSAR, Centrifuge Training and Hypobaric Chamber Training.

The Training Section of Aeromedical Centre (AMC) in Swedish Armed Forces has the responsibility for the MIFS:Ö Regulations and the carrying out of the training. Two Physiology Training Officers (PTO), also pilots, at the Training Section conducts the training. The philosophy in SwAF is that pilots instruct pilots. This holds for all topics in the MIFS:Ö Regulations (e.g. pilots who are Flight Surgeons, PTO, Survival Instructors, etc.).

Survival Training

The Survival Training in SwAF is divided up into: *Peacetime Survival Training* and *Combat Survival Training*. The reason of the split up is that until 1993 the Survival Training had a very peacetime touch, with concentration on: the ejection seat, parachute, life jacket, life raft etc., and how

to “camp” in the woods. Therefore there was a natural split when SwAF, the summer of 1993, started up Survival Training with concentration on SERE.

The Peacetime Survival Training is carried out as: *Basic Training* at the Flying Training School and *Rehearsal Training* at the Wings. Pilots at the squadrons, who also are instructors, carry out the training. The Combat Survival Training is centralized and is carried out by the PTO at the AMC Training Section and instructors from Swedish Armed Forces Survival School.

Peacetime Survival Instructor Course

To provide for the Peacetime Survival Training, Aeromedical Centre carries out a Peacetime Survival Instructor Course. The course, which last for six weeks, contains:

- Academics - 2 weeks
- Survival Exercise in the Swedish Mountains - 1 week
- Parachute Training - 2 weeks
- Water Survival/Parasail - 1 week

Experience is one of the most important things you need to become a good instructor. If you haven't been in the situation yourself, you can't instruct. It's during the Survival Exercise the becoming instructors really get the opportunity of working with the Survival Kit and get experience of living in the nature under the toughest winter conditions, with temperatures down to 20 degrees centigrade below zero.

For 4 days and 3 nights they stay in the mountains with exactly the same equipment that they would have had if they just had left the aircraft. If you are a Fighter Pilot in SwAF you don't even have a sleeping bag; the only way to get water is

to melt snow and you don't have a spade to dig a snow cave.

The pilots go by snowmobiles out to the exercise area. There they will be left one by one and will live totally alone for three days and nights (the instructors visit them two times per day). Now they have to rely on their skills and meager Survival Kit.

The first day and night they stay above the tree line; digging a snow cave with their snowshoes; using their life raft as a bed; and parachute as a sleeping bed. It's a tough job to dig the snow cave and the quality of the snow is conclusive for how long it takes to get it ready (it can take from 1½ up to 4 hours). It's not unusually that it's dark before they can crawl into their "residence" for the night. Irrespective of the outdoor temperature, they will be roughly at the freezing-point in the snow cave and pretty comfortable. During the first day and night they only get water by melting snow with their Mini Alco Gel Stove

Day 2 starts with a 4 kilometers long walk to an area just below the tree line (small mountain birches). They have to bring all the equipment that they want to use during the rest of the exercise. Depending on how well they have looked after their water intake during their first day and night the walk can be pretty tough and last for hours. In the new area they have to build a new shelter. After the first days digging and the walk earlier the same day, they now starts to get a little bit tired and the need of water is huge. At this time the Mini Alco Gel Stove used to be used up, so they have to find some firewood and make a fire to get some water. This night too, it will get dark before they get their shelters ready.

Day 3 is a day of boredom. Now the participants start to get real tired - it's hard for them to get out their beds; it's hard to find firewood; and it's hard to do what it needs to improve their shelter. Everything

they do, they do in slow motion. Not least due to the fact that the Survival Kit only contains 400 kcal. This day require self-discipline to be able to do everything that they need to do. Instead of thinking, "I will do", they every now and then think, "I should do", and then not much happens.

The last day they have to do a walk again; this time back to the civilization 5 kilometers away. But the exercise doesn't end before they are back at the Base Camp so they once again have to drag their stuff with them.

After the exercise the becoming instructors have a lot more experiences. Now they know how it feels to get exhausted; how it is to handle the equipment in darkness with frozen fingers; and they know how it is to do all this totally alone.

Parasail Training

During 4 weeks in August every year SwAF carry out Parasail Training in the archipelago in the southeastern part of Sweden. Every pilot has to do this training each fifth year. The training conducts by AMC Training Section and each Wing support with their Peacetime Survival Instructors. Blekinge Wing provides all logistics at the Camp.

The Parasail Training carries out during two half days, and during that time the participants will do:

- 2 parasail jumps
- Parachute landing training on land
- Dragging in a parachute harness in the water
- Hoisting in a helicopter

During the two last years the Parasail Training has improved a lot, especially as regards the equipments. Thanks to at very good co-operation between the Defence Material Agency, Aerotech Telub AB and

AMC Training Section, the equipments today are very good and you can hardly see any differences between the exercise equipments and the real one.

The Parasail Jump itself carries out from a free-floating stage in the sea. That means that we are not depending on wind direction, and we don't have to be afraid of the ground. Our Parasail Parachutes allow us to jump in wind speeds up to 19.4 knots and we don't experience that as limitation.

The pilot is connected to the boat with a 200 meters long rope. In good conditions the pilot can reach a level of 100 meters before he release the rope to the boat. Then he has fully 20 seconds to do his measures before he lands in the water. After the landing he will release himself from the parachute harness and enter his life raft. After a couple of minutes the safety boat will pick him up and take him back to the free-floating stage for another jump.

Exercise Equipment

Most survival training demands a lot of equipment. To secure that AMC Training Section and the Wings always have the best possible exercise equipment, the stock keeping and supervision of it have been centralized. Each Wing has only a small amount of exercise equipment for training. When they need more equipment they order it from Aerotech Telub AB. This solution has many advantages:

- You decrease the total need of exercise equipment.
- Each wing doesn't need to have a large stock of exercise equipment.
- With a smaller amount of exercise equipment you afford to invest more money in it.