

# GLIDER LANDOUT SURVIVAL KITS

By John DeRosa



I needed a landout kit. This realization hit me during early 2011 after an experienced glider pilot was seriously injured when he ran down along the heavily forested ridges in eastern West Virginia. While this area is well populated, it was still forced to spend much of freezing weather. If it could happen in him, it could certainly happen to me. Before this point I thought that only in western U.S. mountains and

deserts was I likely to have a landout that would require me to carry an emergency kit. This accident opened my eyes.

While I suspect (and pray) that I will never need a landout & survival kit, I decided that having something in the glider is simply good insurance. I compiled a list of likely items to include in my kit by asking what others carry (often nothing at all), searching camping stores and by trolling the Internet

(see the list of links below). Soon after the accident mentioned above, Tom Knauft published the contents of his own survival kit, which served as a great starting point.

A common stumbling block is thinking that a survival landout kit has to be large and bulky. Not so. What I created was something compact enough that I wouldn't be tempted to leave it behind while still having all the essentials. So



Figure 1



Figure 2

I started my quest by first finding a pouch that was the right size – not too big or too small – and only then began the search for items to fill it. You have probably already glanced at the pictures and lists below and may have been surprised at the number of items that can be crammed into a fairly small space. The search became an iterative process of finding a particular item, then often replacing it later with a better find.

In the end I came up with three kits, each one expanding on the capabilities of the previous one. The first “kit” (list A below) contains those items which are on my person and which I will have with me even if I am separated from my glider. The second kit (list B, figure 1 and 2) is used when I fly near my home gliderport located in the “wilds” of northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. I carry these first two kits on board always.

The third kit (list C, figure 3 and 4) is the most advanced, supplements the other two kits and is on board when I fly in more inhospitable regions. While there are a few duplicated items between the kits (Three rescue whistles! Three fire starters! Three compasses! Three space blankets!), I believe in a more-is-better approach as long as it doesn't unduly add weight and bulk.

Use these lists as a starting point as I am sure that you will have other ideas as to what you want in your survival kit. I welcome your inputs. Many thanks to the pilots and friends for their suggestions and comments. Be prepared because you just never know. Good luck and fly safe!

#### List A - On my person or in/on parachute;

**Note:** My parachute (a Strong 305 Paracushion) was retrofitted with a small zippered rear pouch by Strong during a repack.

- The Parachute itself - You may not think about the parachute itself being part of your kit and a possible lifesaver such as canopy the risers.
- Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) – This can be thought of as a manually operated ELT with GPS encoding. The SPOT is also a popular option.
- S.M.A.K. Parachute Kit - A great little kit manufactured by Allen Silver (often seen at SSA conventions) snaps onto your parachute harness. The kit contains; a nylon case, hook knife on lanyard, artificial flint and tinder, rescue whistle on lanyard and a signal mirror.
- Flashlight - Single cell AAA size Maglite.
- Compass – Lee Valley Tools sells an incredibly small and indestructible pellet type compass
- Cell phone - Charged and with a spare battery.
- Pocket Knife
- Contact numbers – A printed sheet of information can be invaluable.
- Space blanket – A super-thin silvered mylar “blanket” which can retain 97% of your

body heat and is also wind proof and moisture proof.

#### List B - Local Midwest Flying

- Space blanket
- Small First Aid Kit - There are several good medical and survival kits at Adventure Medical Kits.
- Local road map - It can be a great help to rescuers if you are able to give them directions. GPS coordinates are even better.
- Gloves - I pack the “Jersey” style work gloves available at hardware stores. They are cheap, thin and surprisingly warm.
- Hand warmers - Thin flat chemical type.
- Flashlight - Preferably an LED type as they are more rugged. Use quality batteries and check them at least once a year.
- Poncho - Can be used as a rain coat or a ground cloth.
- Insect Repellent - I use the towelette style which isn't prone to leakage.



Figure 3



Figure 4

- Wire - Handy for lots of uses. Aviation stainless steel wire is inexpensive and strong.
- Nylon rope (braided) - Handy for lots of uses such as tying down your glider. You need at least 30 feet. Note that your parachute has 100's of feet of canopy risers which can be used in a pinch.
- Multi-knife - My favorite knife in this category is the SOG "PowerPlier" line. Other popular common brands are Leatherman and Swiss Army.
- Garbage Bags (kitchen sized) - Can be used as a poncho, ground cloth or tie down anchor (when filled with rocks or dirt).
- Pencil
- "Sardine Can" Survival Kit -

Includes one each of: Acetaminophen, adhesive bandage, alcohol prep, antibiotic ointment, book matches, tea bag, chewing gum, sugar, salt packet, energy nugget, duct tape, fire starter cube, wire clip, first aid instructions, fish hook and line, note paper, pencil, razor blade, safety pin, whistle, compass, reflective signal surface and waterproof bag.

#### Glider Survival Kit #2 - Rugged Location Flying

- Space Blanket - Sleeping bag type
- Rescue whistle survival "kit" - This model is also a waterproof match box with rubber gasket, very small signal mirror, compass, signal whistle, fire starter, nylon lanyard.
- Waterproof matches
- Hand warmers - Thin flat chemical type
- Spare flashlight batteries
- Signal mirror - A CD is a cheap alternative
- Snake bite kit
- Artificial flint and tinder - my favorite artificial flint is the BlastMatch.
- Cable Saw - Very compact and does a great job of cutting firewood.

- Water purification tablets
- Survival Books - "Pocket Guide to Outdoor Survival" is considered the best fully waterproof survival manual in print...". Only 4-1/2" x 3-1/2" (11.5cm x 9.5cm). There is also a companion book "Pocket Guide to Emergency First Aid." See figure 5.

#### Supplies, Sources and Information Web Sites

Here are some key web sites for information and sources for your supplies.

- <http://www.equipped.com>
- <http://www.whistdecreek.com>
- <http://www.campingsurvival.com>
- <http://www.ultimatesurvival.com>
- <http://scoutstuff.org/basupply>
- [http://www.silverparachutes.com/smak\\_pak.html](http://www.silverparachutes.com/smak_pak.html)
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Survival\\_kit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Survival_kit)
- <http://www.eglider.org/newsarticles/survivalkit.htm>
- <http://www.darryl-ramm.com/glider-survival-equipment/>
- <http://www.adventuremedicalkits.com/>
- <http://www.leevalley.com>

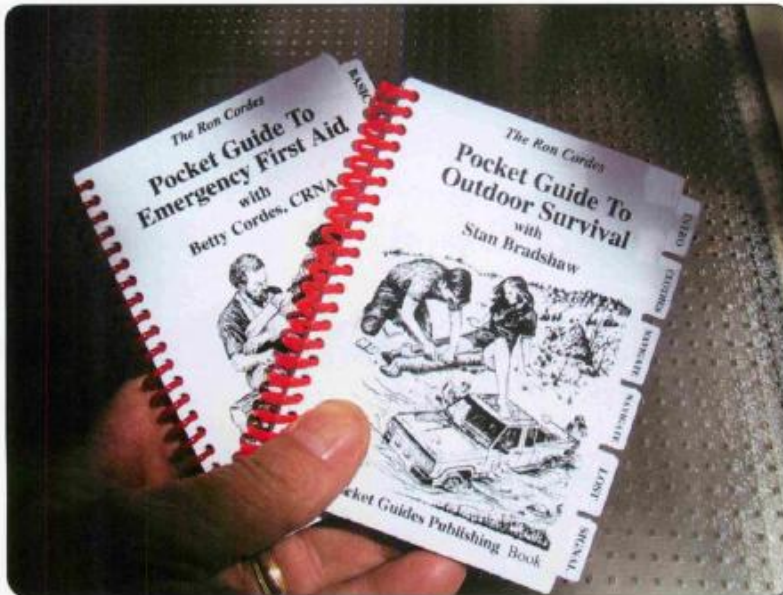


Figure 5



*About the author:* John DeRosa is a past president and current secretary/seminar-chairman of the ChicagoLand Glider Council (<http://chicagolandglidercouncil.com>). He is the current vice-president of Sky Soaring Glider Club (<http://skysoaring.com>) in Hampshire, IL. John hosts a web site of various glider related subjects at <http://aviation.derosasweb.net>. John can be reached at [john@derosasweb.com](mailto:john@derosasweb.com).