Fieldcraft Skills

Land Navigation

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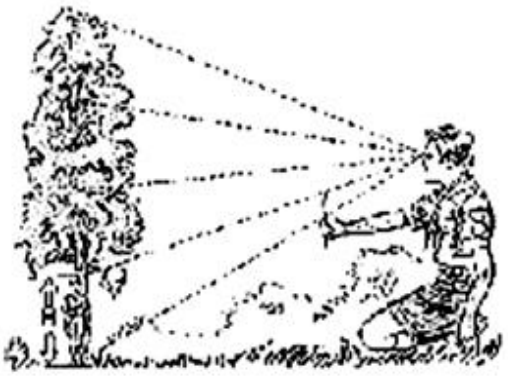
Field Measuring

The following methods of measuring can be used in the field to measure the height of objects and the width of obstacles that you may encounter. With practice, these methods can be used with a high degree of accuracy. It is also essential that you know your pace count in feet as well as meters to use some of these methods effectively.

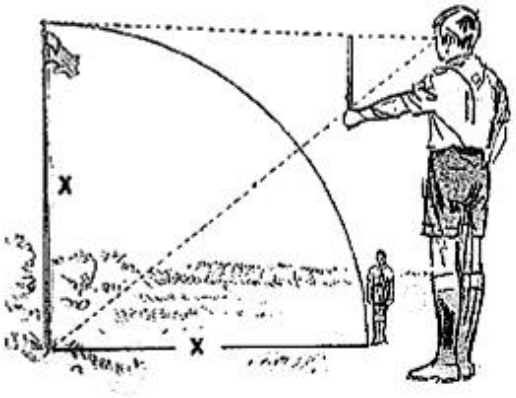
Pencil or Stick Method

Have a buddy whose height you know stand against the tree, or make a mark for your own height (or a known height) on the trunk. Step back. Hold a stick or pencil up before you in your outstretched hand. With one eye closed, measure off on the stick with your thumbnail the height of your buddy or mark. Then move the stick up to see how many times this measurement goes upward on the height of the tree. Multiply the height of your buddy (or your known height) by the number of times up the trunk. This gives you the height of the tree.



Tree Felling Method

Hold a straight stick upright in your outstretched hand. Move backwards away from the flagpole or tree you want to measure. Sight the flagpole so that the top of the stick covers the tip of the pole or tree. Then place where your thumb so that it is at the base of the pole or tree. Now turn the stick 90 degrees to a horizontal position. Pick a point where the tip of the stick hits the ground. Pace the distance from this point to the foot of the flagpole to determine its height.



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"Napoleon" Method

To estimate the width of a creek or river, stand on the shore of the water and bow your head, bringing your chin against chest. Hold our hand to your forehead just above your eyebrows with your palm down. Tilt your hand down until the front edge of it seems to touch the far shore. Now make half right turn, “transferring” the distance to your side of the creek by picking an object that meets the edge of your hand. The distance the point at the edge of your hand seems to touch is the width of the creek or river. Determine the distance to that chosen point using your pace count. That will give you the approximate distance across the creek or river.