

Trip Report

Philmont Scout Ranch

Cimarron, New Mexico



Crew 621-G

6/21/2022 – 7/2/2022

Itinerary 2

Strenuous – 59 Miles

Troop 304

Rockledge Presbyterian Church

Rockledge, Florida

Crew

Scouts

Hayden Bell – Life Scout – Chaplain's Aide

Lexi Bell – Life Scout – Wilderness Pledge Guide

Will Densmore – Life Scout – Crew Leader

Kiera Hoffmaster – First Class Scout

Sammi Taiclet – Tenderfoot Scout

Advisors

Sidney Harris

Dave Reazin – Eagle Scout – Lead Advisor

Ron Reazin

Ken Taiclet – Eagle Scout

Ranger

Jack Holzer

Trip Day 1

Saturday, June 18, 2022

Rockledge, FL – Starkville, MS

Driving Mileage 702 miles
Driving Time 13:00 hours

Program and Activities

- After gathering at 5:30am at Rockledge Presbyterian Church, we started out on our adventure at 6:00am.
- For this trip, we rented a 12-person passenger van. It was a great fit for the Scouts, their backpacks, their gear, and miscellaneous crew gear. But we will say it was not as clean AFTER as BEFORE.
- Today, we drove to the Starkville KOA in Starkville, Mississippi.
- Throughout this day, we called it the Campus Tour – as we drove somewhat near to several major universities:
 - University of Florida – Gainesville, Florida
 - Auburn University – Auburn, Alabama
 - Alabama University – Tuscaloosa, Alabama
 - Mississippi State University – Starkville, Mississippi
- Later on in the trip, we also drove near to other universities, including:
 - Mississippi University – Oxford, Mississippi
 - University of Arkansas – Fayetteville, Arkansas
 - Oklahoma University – Norman, Oklahoma
- Our dinner was at a great burger restaurant – Bulldog Burger
- After dinner, we walked the campus of Mississippi State – both as a tour and as a way to stretch our legs.
- After that sightseeing tour, we drove back to our campground for the first of 16 consecutive nights of sleeping outdoors.

Campsite

- We stayed at the Starkville KOA Holiday campground for the night.

Did You Know?

- Most of the Scouts had NEVER been west of the Mississippi River.
- While this was the first Philmont trek for most in the crew, this is the second trek for Mr. Dave and Mr. Ron, who both went with T402 out of Miamisburg, OH (where Mr. Dave earned Eagle) in 2019.
- This distance, 702 miles, from Rockledge, FL to Starkville, MS is the same EXACT distance as Mr. Dave and Mr. Ron drove on their trip in 2019 from Miamisburg, OH to Topeka, KS.

Thought of the Day

- The trip is off to a great start. The crew members all travel easily, don't get restless in the van, and understand that we have a long drive ahead of us. This is a great group of Scouts!

Trip Day 1

Saturday, June 18, 2022

Rockledge, FL – Starkville, MS

Mr. Dave's Photo of the Day



The scouts of crew 621G pose in front of a flower garden at the Mississippi State University's Drill Field.

Trip Day 2

Sunday, June 19, 2022

Starkville, MS – Oklahoma City, OK

Driving Mileage 623 miles
Driving Time 13:00 hours

Program and Activities

- We broke camp this morning around 6:00am, before stopping at a McDonald's for breakfast.
- BAM! That was the sound that we heard around 8:00am on a quiet highway in the middle of nowhere Mississippi. While we thought (or hoped) that the sound was of a semi-truck tire exploding, we quickly realized that it was a side window in the van. The window behind the driver was broken and shattered across Ms. Sidney and Will, who were both sitting close to the window.
- Over the next hour, we tried several different things to stabilize the situation – including using all of our duct tape, some of our extra plastic tarps, and even our trekking poles.
- While trying to “fix” the window, we contacted the Avis Emergency Roadside service, and they directed us to the Memphis, TN airport where we could get a replacement van. So, we drove an hour to the airport.
- Where, once there, we learned that they do not have any vans and are not sure why we were sent there.
- We spent the next hour or so trying to figure out what to do, when the local manager of the Avis (Kenneth) asked us where we were going and if we were going through Little Rock. When we said “yes”, he called his friend (Joey) and fellow manager at the Little Rock airport who indicated that they had a 12-passenger van. So, we drove 2 hours to that airport.
- At the Avis in the Little Rock airport, we were able to move everything from the original van to our new van. This took us about 30 minutes, but everyone was excited again!
- We then continued on to our destination in Oklahoma City.
- After setting up camp, we went to Frankie's Italian restaurant for a great sit-down dinner.

Campsite

- We stayed at the Oklahoma City East KOA Holiday for the night.

Did You Know?

- Ms. Sidney was looking forward to 3 things on this trip. She wanted to visit the Hot Springs National Park, which was our plan until the incident with the van window. Strike 1 for Sidney 😞. The other two were to go Spar Pole Climbing at Pueblano and to summit Baldy Mountain. Spoiler alert...

Thought of the Day

- While the shattered window was the last thing that we expected or planned for, everyone handled it very well – all things considered. The adults worked well together to address the window and to work through options, and the scouts worked well together comforting each other throughout the day.

Trip Day 2
Sunday, June 19, 2022
Starkville, MS – Oklahoma City, OK

Mr. Dave's Photo of the Day



The crew keeps positive attitudes while working through our unexpected vehicle challenges!

Trip Day 3

Monday, June 20, 2022

Oklahoma City, OK – Philmont Scout Ranch (Cimarron, NM)

Driving Mileage 492 miles
Driving Time 8:30 hours

Program and Activities

- As with most days, we were up early and breaking camp by 6am. When the sun is up by 5am, it isn't too difficult to wake up this early.
- It was a big day today as we finally arrived at Philmont Base Camp!
- We arrived at about 1:30pm, just about as planned... only with a different van than we started with.
- We intentionally arrived a day before our official check-in, and used this opportunity to:
 - Visit the National Scouting Museum
 - Visit Villa Philmonte – the summer home of Waite Phillips
 - Explore the Philmont Scout Ranch base camp
- For dinner, we went into town and enjoyed pizza at the Cimarron House of Pizza

Campsite

- Base Camp is divided into two basic residential areas – Trailbound and Homebound. We stayed on the Trailbound side our first two nights in base camp, in canvas tents with cots

Did You Know?

- When you wear your Scout uniforms into gas stations and restaurants out west, everyone wants to know if you are on your way to Philmont or on your way back. Everywhere we stopped, someone wanted to talk to us about what was ahead and to wish us well!

Thought of the Day

- The New Mexico climate is very, very dry. While everyone in Florida is used to super high humidity, New Mexico is the exact opposite with very low humidity. This is a positive aspect when hiking and when working on drying wet clothing and gear!

Trip Day 3

Monday, June 20, 2022

Oklahoma City, OK – Philmont Scout Ranch (Cimarron, NM)

Mr. Dave's Photo of the Day



The crew takes in the views of the Tooth of Time and the warm sun from the lawn of the Villa Philmonte.

Trip Day 4

Philmont Day 1

Tuesday, June 21, 2022

Base Camp

Hiking Mileage 0.0 miles
Hiking Time 0:00 hours

Program and Activities

- We woke at 5:00am and then enjoyed breakfast in the camp Dining Hall at 6:30am
- A sampling of our day's activities:
 - Check-in and meet our Ranger (who will guide us for the next few days)
 - Jack is a senior at Missouri University studying Civil Engineering
 - Take a group picture in front of "Tooth of Time" – a mountain we did not summit
 - Pick up Troop Gear (cooking utensils, bear bags, bear ropes, etc.) and tents
 - Pick up our food for the first few days
 - Medical Re-check
 - Leader Meetings and Logistics to review plans and responsibilities
 - Gear Check where we took everything out, reviewed it, and packed everything back in
 - Chapel and Opening Campfire
- It rained most of the afternoon and evening. While we weren't thrilled with this, the area has been in a drought and have had massive wildfires this season. Every local that we met said basically the same thing: Sorry that you are getting rained on, but we need this very badly and are very appreciative of the rain.
- We learned that we'll have a "sister" crew doing the same exact itinerary as us. Generally speaking, we expected to see them a lot more than we did in the backcountry. But we rarely saw them on the trail, and we didn't end up seeing them that often. They were from Houston, TX.

Campsite

- Trailbound – A second night in the same spot is a luxury, as you don't have to breakdown camp in the morning.

Did You Know?

- The Opening Campfire was both entertaining (lots of singing) and educational (as we learned about those people and families that settled this area and donated much of the property)

Thought of the Day

- Philmont is highly organized, but everything still happens on "Scout Time". There were about 25 Crews, roughly 250 people, arriving on the same day as us. While it felt busy, it really wasn't too bad.

Trip Day 4
Philmont Day 1
Tuesday, June 21, 2022
Base Camp

Mr. Dave's Photo of the Day



The crew observes while Will receives his Crew Leader charge and his symbolic "tiny" American Flag to remind him of his responsibility to the crew for the duration of the trek.

Trip Day 5

Philmont Day 2 – Backcountry Day 1

Wednesday, June 22, 2022

Base Camp – Six Mile Trailhead – Anasazi

Hiking Mileage 2.1 miles
Hiking Time 1:45 hours

Program and Activities

- After breakfast and a final trip to the Trading Post for any last-minute supplies, we boarded our bus at 8am for a 30-minute drive to the “north” section of Philmont.
 - Goodbye dining hall... goodbye flush toilets... goodbye having to think about whether your water needs treated... goodbye sleeping on cots... goodbye civilization...
- Everyone was eager to get on the trail, so of course our first activity was more training with Jack.
 - We learned to read the Philmont maps, to orient ourselves, to read compasses, etc.
 - We also had other training around the Red Roof Inns and lightening safety.
- Around the time that we arrived at our first camp, it started to rain again.
 - So, we learned to put up Bear Bags in the rain
 - And we learned to setup our Dining Fly in the rain
 - And we learned to setup camp in the rain.
 - We also ate lunch in the rain.
 - And, finally, when we were getting just a little tired of the rain, it stopped. We had a great conversation about “Type 2” fun!
- Once the rain stopped, the attitude and energy of the crew completely changed. We then explored and summited a nearby mountain. We named it “Mount Gator”.

Campsite

- Anasazi is a Trail Camp, beautifully set in a canyon. A Trail Camp is one where there are no Staff, no activities, and you are free to choose the campsite that you want.

Did You Know?

- Most of our backpacks weighed between 40 and 45 pounds, with a couple carrying over 50 pounds
- We were Crew 621-G – meaning that we started on June 21 and were the 7th crew. While the official code for “G” is “Golf”, our crew chose to go by “Gators” since we were from Florida.

Thought of the Day

- The difference between an Ordeal and Adventure is Attitude!

Trip Day 5
Philmont Day 2 – Backcountry Day 1
Wednesday, June 22, 2022
Base Camp – Six Mile Trailhead – Anasazi

Mr. Dave's Photo of the Day



Troop 304's members present at Philmont gather for a group photo from a vista near the top of "Mount Gator", enjoying the beautiful views and landscape.

Trip Day 6

Philmont Day 3 – Backcountry Day 2

Thursday, June 23, 2022

Anasazi – Metcalf Station

Hiking Mileage 5.0 miles
Hiking Time 5:00 hours

Program and Activities

- After breaking camp around 6:30am and starting our hike, we made it about an hour before we had a few issues to deal with on the trail. Everyone was getting used to their backpacks, the weight, the distribution, etc. And, everyone was feeling aches and pains that they were not used to dealing with.
- We took an extended break to reset ourselves. Mr. Dave and Mr. Ken attended to the emotional needs of the crew, while Ms. Sidney worked her magic (what a Rock Star!) with ropes and knots to adjust the packs to better fit a few of the Scouts. We also redistributed weight across, and within, packs to help everyone.
- We passed through Indian Writings and did the program there to see the ancient writings and hieroglyphs, which were from about 300-1300 AD.
- After program, we took lunch on the trail. At one point, Mr. Ken and Ranger Jack heard a rattlesnake only a few feet away from where we sat. It was an exciting 15 minutes for everyone and got the adrenaline pumping.
- At Metcalf Station, a railroading themed Staff Camp, we learned about maintaining railway, setting and driving spikes, and powering a pushcart. It was way more difficult than it looks, and we even had blisters and pains after this work.
- For the evening program, our crew did the closing flag ceremony. Then, we enjoyed a concert of railroad-themed jokes, stories, and songs.

Campsite

- Metcalf Station is a Staffed Camp. A Staffed Camp is one that has staff, has activities, and they assign you a campsite.

Did You Know?

- When you know that you have a certain number of miles to hike that day, it is only to get from camp to camp. You still have to get to your campsite, to Program, to Water, to the latrine, etc. Nothing is nearby.

Thought of the Day

- Hayden served in the elected role of Chaplain's Aide. In this role, he reminded us of our Duty to God as well as how to help each other. Each evening he led us in a round of "Roses, Thorns, and Buds" – where we discussed our positives for the day, negatives for the day, and hopes for tomorrow.

Trip Day 6

Philmont Day 3 – Backcountry Day 2

Thursday, June 23, 2022

Anasazi – Metcalf Station

Mr. Dave's Photo of the Day



The crew takes in Metcalf Station's world-famous "Company Meeting" evening campfire show.

Trip Day 7

Philmont Day 4 – Backcountry Day 3

Friday, June 24, 2022

Metcalf Station - Sioux

Hiking Mileage 7.4 miles
Hiking Time 4:30 hours

Program and Activities

- This morning, we woke at 5am (which soon became the norm) to start out on the trail 7am.
- Ranger Jack departed our Crew this morning and headed back to Base Camp. We are now on our own.
- Within the first hour, we had our first serious up/down (over a mountain). This was like a smack in the face to everyone and it took us several hike/rest stints to summit. We quickly learned that everyone has different things that motivates them, and today was a day where everyone needed motivation.
- For program, we did Cowboy Action Shooting – using a .38 pistol, a .38 bolt action rifle, and a 2-shot 12-gauge shotgun. It was fun shooting, and everyone hit something... in fact everyone hit many somethings.
- We then headed up, and up and up and up, to our campsite at Sioux.
- We needed to head back to Ponil, about a mile away, to pick up food. Unfortunately, we forgot to take our Crew Leader Copy to the commissary, so it actually took us multiple trips to get our food. A lesson learned the very hard way.
- For dinner, Lexi and Sammi helped the staff cook a chuckwagon dinner. The chili was delicious!
- At evening program, we attended the Cantina show where they presented a “Town Hall” about Root Beer – and whether crunchy or smooth was better. Mr. Ken treated everyone to a round of smooth Root Beer.

Campsite

- Sioux is a Trail Camp set alongside a ridge overlooking the Ponil canyon.

Did You Know?

- Going to the bathroom in the backcountry takes planning.
 - If you need to go #1, you need to be at least 100’ from a trail or campsite and you need to be in an area where you can’t be seen. As the trek wore on, adherence to these numbers went down.
 - If you need to go #2, you need to take your own toilet paper to find a “Red Roof Inn” (a glorified latrine, normally a two-seater back-to-back), a “Pilot and Bombardier” (an unglorified latrine, normally a two-seater back-to-back, but with no walls or ceiling), or a place to take your shovel.
 - Fortunately, we never ran out of toilet paper!

Thought of the Day

- The night sky is beautiful! We forget that in Florida. Out here, you can see the Milky Way in all its glory.

Trip Day 7

Philmont Day 4 – Backcountry Day 3

Friday, June 24, 2022

Metcalf Station - Sioux

Mr. Dave's Photo of the Day



The crew enjoys root beer, laughs, and great music at Ponil's "Town Meeting" cantina show.

Trip Day 8

Philmont Day 5 – Backcountry Day 4

Saturday, June 25, 2022

Sioux - Pueblano

Hiking Mileage 6.7 miles
Hiking Time 4:00 hours

Program and Activities

- This morning, we broke camp in record time as everyone was excited to go pick up our Burro.
- We took training for about 90 minutes to learn about our Burro and how to pack him.
- Then, Lexi and Kiera picked out #22... a 20-year-old male burro... with no name. The crew decided that his adopted name would be **Jack “Donkay” Gator**, in honor of our Ranger (and also the other meaning of Jack 😊).
- After the training, the crew tied all of the ropes and knots necessary for him to carry about 50-pounds of load for us. Once inspected, we were on our way!
- We quickly learned that Jack liked to stop and eat various flowers and grasses. Hayden discovered a trick of carrying a handful of flowers in front of him, and then giving them to Jack every once in a while.
- Today was the day that various blisters, sprains, and injuries started. So, we stopped often to attend to the various needs of the crew. Jack loved this, as it was more time to eat and drink. One time he took a giant pee that was way too close to our backpacks - we learned then to keep him away from our gear.
- At Pueblano, the crew did the tie-making program, where we learned the different techniques to making a good railway tie (the same ties that we worked on earlier at Metcalf Station)
- After dinner, it started raining, but we still enjoyed the evening program and concert.

Campsite

- Pueblano is a Staffed Camp, with a theme around the forestry and timber industries.

Did You Know?

- Getting water in the backcountry takes planning. Once you get to camp, you have to find out where it is and how it is available. Then, you have to find out if it is treated or not. Where they had Water Buffalos (giant cisterns of water that have been brought in for Crews) or spigots, you were ecstatic that you didn't have to get it out of the river. Where it was already treated, you were downright giddy. The tough days were when you had to walk a mile to a river, get the dirty water, filter some of it to fill bottles, get more to take back to camp... and then do it all again later in the evening after dinner.

Thought of the Day

- During the bear bag setup today, one of our ropes got hopelessly snagged and we had to cut it loose. We now have 1.5 bear bag ropes for the rest of the trip. Fortunately, that was the last issue with the ropes.

Trip Day 8

Philmont Day 5 – Backcountry Day 4

Saturday, June 25, 2022

Sioux - Pueblano

Mr. Dave's Photo of the Day



Lexi and Kiera meet Jack for the first time and prepare to begin packing his saddlebags and loading him up for the day's hike.

Trip Day 9

Philmont Day 6 – Backcountry Day 5

Sunday, June 26, 2022

Pueblano – Miranda

Hiking Mileage 6.1 miles
Hiking Time 5:00 hours

Program and Activities

- Brutal! Absolutely Brutal! But, let's start back at the beginning of the day.
- We woke to rain this morning and learned that our Spar Pole Climbing program was cancelled. Strike 2 for Ms. Sidney. 😞
- The rain just never stopped. And, it was cold (high 50s). And, it was windy. And, we were in the middle of the clouds and had almost no visibility.
- It was a day of perseverance to go up and over two huge mountains, with our burro, in this weather.
- We later learned that they called the trail "peanut butter" when the dirt gets wet, muddy, and mucky.
- When we finally made it to Miranda mid-afternoon, everyone was wet, cold, and just generally miserable.
- We stopped by the Miranda staff building to have our Scouts go in and get warm. While there were already about 3-dozen people inside, the staff welcomed our scouts and helped them into dry clothes, got them hot water, and got them in front of heat.
- We spent the next 5-6 hours there getting everyone warm and dry.
- Fortunately, the staff let us setup camp in Miranda instead of making it another mile to Ute Meadows.
- Unfortunately, Kiera was still showing signs of hypothermia, so they wanted her to sleep the night in the cabin.
- Mr. Dave and Ms. Sidney set up camp, while Mr. Ken and Mr. Ron were the sherpas moving things around.

Campsite

- Miranda is a Staffed Camp. We weren't supposed to stay here for two more nights, but greatly appreciated the opportunity to keep the crew safe and comfortable.

Did You Know?

- Going "off itinerary" is a no-no in Philmont. But, today, they let us know that there were hundreds of calls into Base Camp and the infirmary. The weather today was a major issue across all of Philmont. We were grateful for the flexibility and accommodations of the Miranda staff.

Thought of the Day

- Bonnie, the camp director at Miranda, and her staff were our Trail Angels today.

Trip Day 9
Philmont Day 6 – Backcountry Day 5
Sunday, June 26, 2022
Pueblano – Miranda

Mr. Dave's Photo of the Day



The crew enjoys the Miranda staff's incredible hospitality and uses the opportunity to warm up and dry out after a long day's hike in the rain, wind, and cold.

Trip Day 10

Philmont Day 7 – Backcountry Day 6

Monday, June 27, 2022

Miranda – Ute Meadows

Hiking Mileage 1.1 miles
Hiking Time 1:00 hours

Program and Activities

- This morning, we woke up to more rain. It is nearing 48 straight hours of this miserable rain.
- We learned that Kiera was not yet doing well enough for her to rejoin us, and we were directed to continue on to Ute Meadows and our normal itinerary.
- While everyone was dejected and disappointed, we broke camp and made our way to Ute Meadows.
- Today was supposed to be our day to summit Baldy Mountain, the highlight for most Scouts, but the weather was still miserable and the mountain was closed – no one was permitted to summit today. While we were truly disappointed to not summit Baldy, we knew that it was for the best and the right decision. Strike 3 for Ms. Sidney. 😞
- So, we spent a quiet day in Ute Meadows, and when the sun finally broke through, we all worked to dry out as much gear as we could.
- Later in the day, we hiked to Baldy Town where we picked up our last set of food, toilet paper, fuel, and cleaning supplies. From here on out, we have everything (hopefully!) that we need to finish our trek. We also mailed our post cards and treated ourselves at the Trading Post.

Campsite

- While we visited Baldy Town (a Staffed Camp) for supplies, our actual stay was in Ute Meadows (a Trail Camp). We camped at the edge of the meadow and a river (always nice to have your water supply nearby).

Did You Know?

- Each Trek has one layover day camp, and this was supposed to be ours. It would have felt like a luxury to be in camp 2 nights and not have to break camp in the morning. It's the small things in life...
- Most of the Scouts had NEVER been this high in elevation, whether on the ground or a plane!

Thought of the Day

- Philmont's rules are that you can't leave Baldy Town for Baldy Mountain until 5am (to reduce any likelihood of issues with Mountain Lions) and you must be heading down off of Baldy Mountain by noon (to reduce issues with storms). But they also watch the weather and close mountain when you can't see the peak from Baldy Town, as happened to us today.

Trip Day 10
Philmont Day 7 – Backcountry Day 6
Monday, June 27, 2022
Miranda – Ute Meadows

Mr. Dave's Photo of the Day



Sammi takes a picture of the crew working in our campsite at the Ute Meadows trail camp.

Trip Day 11

Philmont Day 8 – Backcountry Day 7

Tuesday, June 28, 2022

Ute Meadows - Miranda

Hiking Mileage 1.1 miles
Hiking Time 1:00 hours

Program and Activities

- It's time to head back to Miranda and see Kiera!
- Unfortunately, when we reached Miranda, we learned that Kiera had been evacuated to Base Camp and to the Infirmary for continued care. Everyone was very disappointed to know that she would not yet be rejoining us, but we talked at length about how this was best for Kiera and how we would check in on her.
- We setup camp and then headed to program.
- First, we shot muzzle-loaded rifles at the range. You were allowed to shoot at a personal item, and nearly everyone took the opportunity to shoot at their Philmont passport, neckerchief, or some other similar item. There are many holes now in our personal gear!
- Later in the day, we tried our hands at tomahawk throwing. Everyone had at least one "stick", but it was certainly harder than it looks.
- On our way back to camp, Hayden tried his hand at gold panning. At one point, he saw a glint (gold!?!?!), but was not able to find it again.
- Before the evening program, they had a tomahawk throwing competition for all Crew and Advisors that wanted to compete. In the end, one of our own - Hayden - was the winner! He won the competition on his very last throw and was awarded one Twinkie as his prize!
- The staff closed out the evening with a wonderful hour of "Tall Tales" that left everyone laughing and groaning at the stories.
- Tonight, nearly the entire crew woke up at 2:30am to go out into the meadow to look at the night sky. It is amazing what you can see when you do not have light pollution. It was wonderful seeing the night sky – the stars and the Milky Way – in all of its glory.

Campsite

- Our second night in Miranda – one more than we were supposed to have.

Did You Know?

- We were each required to be able to carry 4 liters of water – each liter weighs about 2.5 pounds! Though that was the requirement, most generally carried 2 liters – a liter of water and a liter of a drink mix (like All Sport or Gatorade)

Thought of the Day

- It's not easy to be a leader. It's not easy to lead your peers. It's not easy to lead adults. Will did a fantastic job as our Crew Leader during the trek!

Trip Day 11
Philmont Day 8 – Backcountry Day 7
Tuesday, June 28, 2022
Ute Meadows - Miranda

Mr. Dave's Photo of the Day



The crew celebrates as Hayden is declared the sole winner of Miranda's tomahawk throwing competition.

Trip Day 12

Philmont Day 9 – Backcountry Day 8

Wednesday, June 29, 2022

Miranda – Head of Dean

Hiking Mileage 5.3 miles
Hiking Time 2:30 hours

Program and Activities

- We woke at 5:30am, which was very difficult after our night sky observations a few hours ago.
- It was an uneventful hike to Head of Dean, which was a welcome situation after the last few days.
- For our program, we did the C.O.P.E. (Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience) challenge with the entire crew. This was a series of challenging exercises that forced the team to work together, develop communication, and demonstrate teamwork. The favorite activity for the crew was to get everyone on to a platform that they had to balance (with the story being that they were on a ship at sea). Not an easy challenge, but they laughed and worked together throughout the event.
- In the afternoon, Will pulled the crew together to play some volleyball – one of his passions at home.
- Late in the afternoon, the crew got the news that they've been waiting for... Kiera rejoined us!
- The crew spent at least an hour sharing news of what we did in the backcountry and what Kiera did in camp. In short, Kiera's summary of the infirmary process can be simplified down to one word: Prison. Her routines were tightly controlled by staff, and she had little to do but rest and recover. Which, of course, is the point of the infirmary. Kiera definitely wanted to rejoin the crew on the trail!
- For our evening program, we took a 30-minute walk about 2-miles (without backpacks, everything is easier) to a mesa outside of camp where we watched and enjoyed the sunset. Many in the crew noted that this might have been their favorite activity of the trip, and many (many) photos were taken.
- Tonight, we had another night of stargazing at about 11:00pm. What a beautiful sight!

Campsite

- Head of Dean is a Staff Camp that was pleasantly laid out near a beautiful meadow.

Did You Know?

- While we learned about various families of Philmont (Phillips, Chase, Maxwell, Carson), Dean was not a name that we learned much about. The best guess is that he was a rancher and Head of Dean might have been the headquarters for his backcountry operations.

Thought of the Day

- Having the entire crew finally back together re-energized the crew in a way that is hard to describe in words.

Trip Day 12
Philmont Day 9 – Backcountry Day 8
Wednesday, June 29, 2022
Miranda – Head of Dean

Mr. Dave's Photo of the Day



The crew rejoices the opportunity to reunite with Kiera after she is returned to the trail from the Philmont Infirmary.

Trip Day 13

Philmont Day 10 – Backcountry Day 9

Thursday, June 30, 2022

Head of Dean – Santa Claus

Hiking Mileage 3.9 miles
Hiking Time 2:30 hours

Program and Activities

- Today was a short hike to Santa Claus. Yes, the Staff building is decorated for Christmas, complete with a Christmas tree decorated in red and green shotgun shells and clay pigeon ornaments, as well as red and green shotgun shells as strunged “lights”.
- After setting up camp, Mr. Dave spotted a bear! About 30-40 yards from our camp, a bear was patiently pawing and clawing everything in search of food. Soon though, the Staff walked through to chase off “Reginald” for both his safety and our safety. Number of days since a bear spotting: 0!
- Today’s program was shooting 12-gauge shotguns. First, we learned how to make shells. It is about a 6-step process that has to be done in precisely the right order, or bad things will happen. We each made 3 shells, then headed down to the Shooting Range when it was our turn. There, we went through the training and range rules before heading out to give it a try. About half of the crew managed to hit at least one clay pigeon target.
- After shooting, the Scouts had the rest of the day to themselves. Mr. Dave and Ms. Sidney taught Hayden and Sammi to play Euchre, and this soon became their favorite game. So, if nothing else, they have new games to teach their peers on Troop camping trips.

Campsite

- Santa Claus is a Staffed Camp that they started using again after the fires of a few years ago.

Did You Know?

- The Ute Park Fire of 2018 had a significant impact on Philmont. The entire central area is closed, so all treks are purely northern or purely southern routes right now.

Thought of the Day

- At some point, you just get used to having to walk a half-mile to use the latrine, a half-mile to get water, a mile to go to Program. Around that same time, you find that constantly walking on rocks and boulders is the new “norm”. We can adapt to anything, and achieve anything, with the right frame of mind and focus.
- Lexi served in the elected role of Wilderness Pledge Guia (Guide). In this role she taught us the Philmont Wilderness Pledge and helped us adhere to both it and Leave No Trace. Throughout the trek, she would remind of us our duty to Philmont and its preservation.

Trip Day 13
Philmont Day 10 – Backcountry Day 9
Thursday, June 30, 2022
Head of Dean – Santa Claus

Mr. Dave's Photo of the Day



Hayden and Mr. Dave challenge Sammi and Ms. Sidney in a round of Euchre while relaxing in camp over the course of the evening.

Trip Day 14

Philmont Day 11 – Backcountry Day 10

Friday, July 1, 2022

Santa Claus – Flume Canyon

Hiking Mileage 5.0 miles
Hiking Time 3:15 hours

Program and Activities

- Today was our last full day of hiking, and it was going to be far more difficult than we originally expected. On our original itinerary we were to hike a few miles downhill to New Dean. However, they changed our conservation project and now we have a long hike, with two major up/downs, to Flume Canyon.
- While we'd generally been hiking downhill since Baldy Mountain, today had two final 1000' climbs in the middle, just to remind us that this was Philmont!
- While preparing for our Conservation project, Mr. Dave and Mr. Ron were pleasantly surprised to meet up with a crew from their Ohio Troop (T402 in Miamisburg, OH). We knew from comparing itineraries that they were not supposed to meet on the trail, but with our change from New Dean to Flume Canyon, they just happened to cross paths today. They spent about 15 minutes visiting with the other crew. What a small world!
- Just as we were hiking to our Conservation project (trail building), more storms moved in. Eventually, the "work" part of the project was cancelled and replaced with "lecture". No one was too disappointed to sit on chairs, under a dining fly, for an interesting discussion about trails, forests, and ecology at Philmont.

Campsite

- Flume Canyon is a Trail Camp. It was a great camp to end our backcountry adventure.

Did You Know?

- Philmont meals are pre-packaged meals, separated into plastic pouches by day and meal, and each bag is designed for two people. They have a 10-day rotation. So, for example, today we ate Day 1 Breakfast, Day 1 Lunch, and Day 1 Dinner. Breakfast and Lunch could usually be eaten without any preparation, and usually contained a mix for an energy drink, hot chocolate, or hot apple cider. Dinner usually needed to have water boiled to hydrate or add to a meal. It was common to see scouts trading around what they didn't want. At Staffed Camps, they have Swap Boxes where you can deposit what you don't want and dig through to see if there is something that you want to take.

Thought of the Day

- This is our last night in the backcountry, and we're all somewhere between sad and thankful – melancholy was the word of the day.

Trip Day 14
Philmont Day 11 – Backcountry Day 10
Friday, July 1, 2022
Santa Claus – Flume Canyon

Mr. Dave's Photo of the Day



The crew treks up a steep hill on a beautifully sunny morning while in route to Flume Canyon.

Trip Day 15

Philmont Day 12

Saturday, July 2, 2022

Flume Canyon – Ponil Trailhead – Base Camp

Hiking Mileage 4.5 miles
Hiking Time 2:00 hours

Program and Activities

- Today is our last day in the backcountry and our last day of hiking, and it was not a short one. We were concerned about being to the pickup area by 8:30am, so we woke up early and started hiking by 5:00am.
- However, the crew was highly motivated and going downhill today, so it did not take more than a few hours to reach the pickup point. It was better to wait there than to be late for the bus!
- Once we were on the bus, everyone cheered! WE ALL MADE IT!
- Back at Base Camp, our work wasn't done... there were numerous things that we had to take care... turning in our gear, cleaning out tents and getting them checked by the staff, and several pieces of paperwork that our Crew Leader had to take care of.
- We had time for that most important of activities... a shower! And, it was hot water!
- After lunch, everyone enjoyed the cantina for snacks, visited the trading post for souvenirs, and visited the branding area to have an item or two branded with Philmont-themed markings.
- We had our final dinner at Base Camp, and it was a great hot meal... one that we didn't have to prepare.
- We ended the day by attending the closing campfire. It was a great way to end our trip!

Campsite

- For the first time in over a week, we weren't sleeping on the ground. True a cot isn't your bed, but it is a great way to sleep after two weeks in the backcountry. And, this time we were on the "Homebound" side of camp!

Did You Know?

- Waite Phillips donated his first tract of land in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of the Rocky Mountains in 1938 and another larger section in 1941. The camp was originally named "Philturn" (for Phillips and "Do a Good Turn Daily"), but was later renamed "Philmont Scout Ranch" to respect the original name of the ranch.

Thought of the Day

- While it is good to think about going back to "normal", we know that we'll miss many things... like seeing the Sunrise every day, the Sunset every evening, the mountains, the streams, the canyons, the star-filled sky, and the Milky Way. We'll also miss hearing the birds, the wind, the quiet, and "nothing" - did you know that you can hear a jet flying overhead at 35000' out in the backcountry?

Trip Day 15
Philmont Day 12
Saturday, July 2, 2022
Flume Canyon – Ponil Trailhead – Base Camp

Mr. Dave's Photo of the Day



The scouts celebrate their return to base camp and opportunity to momentarily reunite with Ranger Jack after the successful completion of their trek!

Trip Day 16

Sunday, July 3, 2022

Philmont Scout Ranch (Cimarron, NM) – Shreveport, LA

Hiking Mileage 856 miles
Hiking Time 13:00 hours

Program and Activities

- Due to the long drive ahead of us, we decided to wake up at 5am and leave Philmont at 6am.
- While stopping for gas and food in Texas, we were approached by a gentleman who noted that we were Boy Scouts. Through conversation, we learned that his daughter is Bonnie – the same Bonnie who helped us so much at Miranda during the rains! What a pleasant surprise and a great opportunity to let him know how wonderful his daughter is.
- After arriving at the KOA in Shreveport, we went out to dinner at Applebee's. The girls (finally!) learned that Ms. Sidney had a boyfriend and spent dinner peppering her with questions.
- During the meal, we heard the song "Country Roads" by John Denver. This was the first song sung at every "after show" concert at the staffed camps. It was a wonderful coincidence and helped wrap a bow around our trip.
- Other favorite songs from Philmont shows included:
 - Philmont Hymn
 - Wagon Wheel
 - Rivers and Roads
 - All Star

Campsite

- Shreveport / Bossier City KOA Journey, Shreveport, LA

Did You Know?

- At many Staff Camps, the staff would ask if anyone had any questions, poems, haikus, plays, readings, etc. Since we were getting asked so often, we made up a few haikus during the trek. Here is one example of our work:

We will check all gear
To organize our backpacks
And we'll be happy

Thought of the Day

- We tend to take a lot of things for granted in our daily lives. This trip was a great eye-opener for everyone – to appreciate all of the comforts and conveniences that we have that we sometimes forget to think about.

Trip Day 16

Sunday, July 3, 2022

Philmont Scout Ranch (Cimarron, NM) – Shreveport, LA

Mr. Dave's Photo of the Day



Mr. Ron and Mr. Dave pose in the golden light of sunrise in front of the Philmont Scout Ranch Camping Headquarters sign prior to leaving base camp for the trip home.

Trip Day 17

Monday, July 4

Shreveport, LA – Rockledge, FL

Driving Mileage 898 miles
Driving Time 15:00 hours

Program and Activities

- Today, we just did a whole lot of driving.
- We woke up at 4am, not entirely refreshed. It is hard to sleep when the temperatures don't drop below 80 degrees and the humidity feels like it is also in the 80s. Can you say "sweating"?

Campsite

- Home and our own beds!

Did You Know?

- We drove home on Independence Day. And, in the early evening, we saw a lot of official and unofficial fireworks displays. It was almost like we were being welcomed home!
- The final riddle for the crew, and one appropriate for today, was to name the states that have all of the letters: U. S. A.
 - Lexi was the winner!
 - Louisiana, Massachusetts, South Carolina, and South Dakota
- The crew already had solved the riddle to name the states that don't have any of the letters: U. S. A.
 - New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Vermont, and Wyoming

Thought of the Day

- What a journey! Whether any of us ever make it back again, we can all say that WE ALL DID PHILMONT! That's a story to share in Scouting that not everyone has. But, more importantly than having simply experienced this for ourselves, we owe it to others in Scouting to encourage them and to help them on their own journey to Philmont Scout Ranch. And, maybe someday, we'll be lucky enough to have another chance to go "HOMe" – "Heaven On Earth". Pass it on!

Trip Day 17

Monday, July 4

Shreveport, LA – Rockledge, FL

Mr. Dave's Photo of the Day



Hayden and Lexi reunite with their family after countless challenges, experiences, and more than two weeks away from home.

Trip Summary

By the Numbers

3571	Total Miles driven
210	Total gallons of gas (we averaged about 17mpg)
0	Number of speeding tickets during the trip
10	States visited – Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and Louisiana (we found that the average American has visited 12.5 states)
47	Total Miles officially hiked with Backpacks (we did not have our Baldy Mountain Summit)
20	Number of additional miles hiked around campsites and Base Camp
345,765	Number of steps taken during the trek (per person)
182	Number of liters of water filtered in the backcountry
8	Number of falls while wearing backpacks
486	Number of photos taken by Sammi during the trek
1	Number of times the doody shovel was used (not actually used in dealing with real doody)
37	Number of times we replied “Florida” in response to “Where are you from?” on the trails
9	Number of rolls of TP used in the backcountry (many carried by Sammi, the most important job!)
5375	Pictures taken by Mr. Dave (edited down to 1513 after returning home)
273	Number of times someone asked Will to see the map
3	Number of times we were lost on the trails
7	Number of days it rained on us
8	Number of nights Mr. Ron went to the “bathroom” in the backcountry (out of 10) – no snakes!
55	Number of pounds of Will’s backpack – easily the heaviest amongst the Scouts
0’	Lowest altitude visited - Florida
6800’	Lowest altitude that we camped at – Anasazi
9200’	Highest altitude that we camped – Ute Meadows
10000’	Highest altitude visited – Baldy Town
5000’	Total altitude gained (and lost) hiking during the trip – nearly 1 mile!
1	Number of Bears that we saw (WAHOO!)
0	Number of Mountain Lions that we saw (PHEW!)
4	Number of Snakes that we saw or heard (fortunately it wasn’t more given the fears in the Crew)
6	Number of Deer and Antelope that we saw (and, yes, they were playing!)
45	Lowest temperature that we had (most mornings were in the high-40s or low-50s)
85	Highest temperature that we had (Most days were in the low-80s)
16	Straight nights spent sleeping outside (3 KOA, 3 Base Camp, 10 Backcountry)
1	Fantastic, unforgettable, memorable, trip of a lifetime... had by all!



Crew 621-G

6/21/2022 – 7/2/2022