

## **BE-118 Niderhore / BE-149 Meniggrat**

Monday/Tuesday, March 10/11, 2014

*Summary: A double-activation involving a pleasant overnight stay at the Obergestelen Alpine Hut. Hugo HB9AFH completed his Mountain Goat on this trip.*

by Paul, HB9DST/AA1MI

This trip has been on my wish list for some time. However, everybody is very busy, and the hut is not always available. Finding dates that worked for our small group was difficult, but we finally did come up with one. As it turns out, we got some fantastic spring winter-sports weather, quite warm, no appreciable wind -- in other words, great conditions.

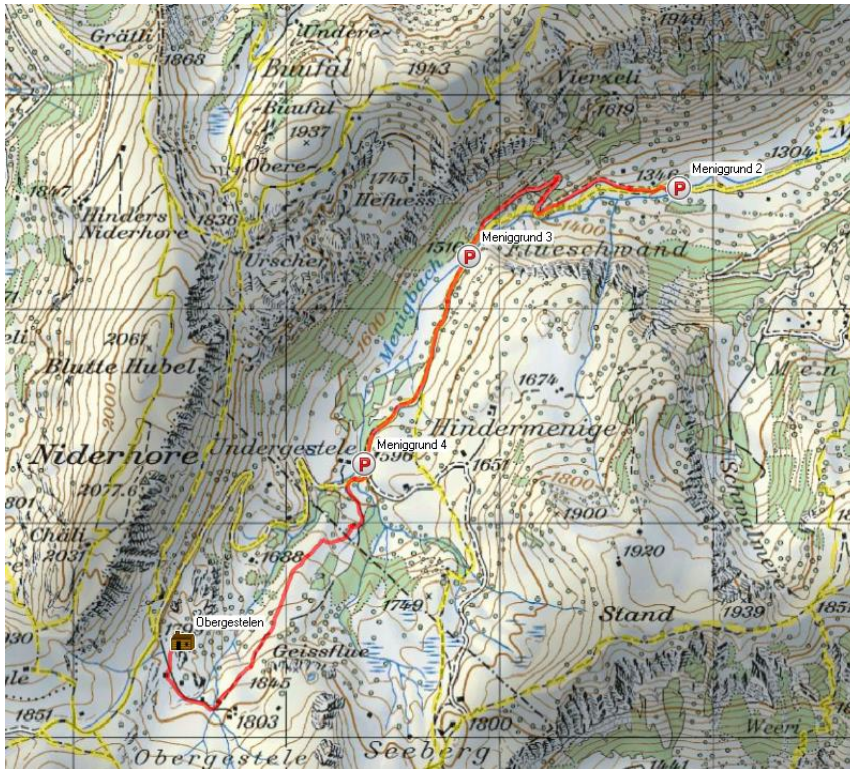
Peter (HB9TVK) and Hugo (HB9AFH) met at my place in Thalwil, and we took my car from there. Our first leg was to downtown Thun, where we had to pick up the key for the hut. Thank goodness Peter had his street GPS; otherwise finding the store where the key is kept would have been quite difficult.

We left my place at about 7:50 a.m., and after picking up the key we got to the parking lot just before 11 a.m. Note that this side road from Zwischenflueh to Meniggrund/Flueschwand requires a fee (CHF 5.00 per day), which you purchase in a machine at the intersection off the main road. We drove up to the spot on the map market Meniggrund 2. The roads were in spots snow-covered but quite passable; I didn't need my chains. The road from this point on was not passable even at this time of year; in the summer you can drive up much closer to the hut.



*Parking lot (Meniggrund 2) and point of departure.*

Now we hiked the 459 meters up to the hut, a distance of almost 5 km, it took just over two hours. It was a steady climb with no terribly difficult spots. There is an area with a number of huts, and our challenge was to find the one we were staying at. We had seen some photos and had some idea what it looks like. We finally did find it -- hint: when going towards Niderhore, this hut is the one furthest to the west, on a slight rise, hidden in trees.



*Trail from the parking lot to the hut.*



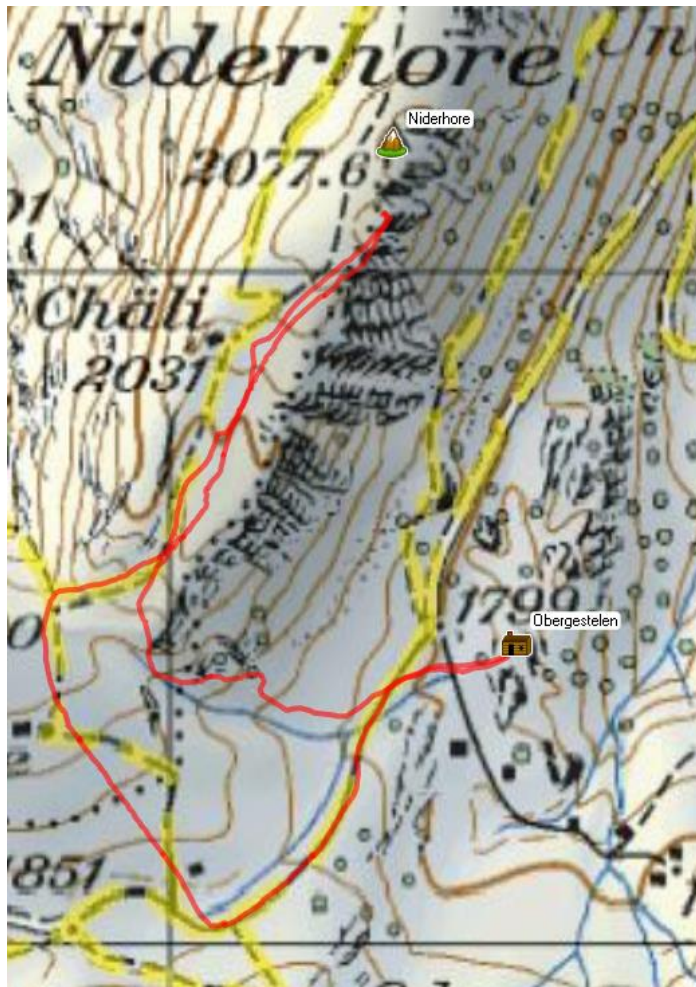
*Our "home away from home" for the night.*

A few words about the hut -- it was surprisingly well equipped. The only thing we had to bring was our food. There was solar-powered lighting, running water, a gas stove to boil water, a nice dining room with a wood stove, and upstairs there are three rooms each with 10 beds. There are plenty of blankets, and I think we all slept comfortably even though the sleeping rooms are not heated. The only thing lacking is an actual toilet; there was only one where everything basically drops into a tank. At this time of year the odor was not bad; I can imagine in the summer it's not quite so pleasant. Flushing is done by bringing a pail of water



from the kitchen. But for a charge of CHF 21.00 per person per night, it was a steal and extremely pleasant. They even had a cellar stocked with beer and wine available at good prices, and we did take advantage of this!

It was still early in the day, so we attacked BE-118 Niderhore. It's another 276 meters, took 1 hour and 20 minutes, round trip 3.7 km. Normally this altitude isn't any problem at all, but we had already had quite a workout getting to the hut, so this required a number of stops to catch our breath.



*Route from the hut to BE-118; on the return trip we took the shorter route, which is a bit steeper; we took the more moderate route up.*



*Our hut is barely visible in the trees just to the left-center of the photo. BE-118 is the summit in the background. Of course, our route took us to the left and then along the ridge to the top.*

After we returned, we took advantage of the last hour of light to sit on the porch and reward ourselves with a cold, well-deserved beer. Then and actually at all times it was unbelievably quiet -- it's rare that you can find a spot with so little noise. And having the hut all to ourselves also meant we didn't have to put up with anyone else and their noise.



*A reward for a strenuous day. (left to right HB9DST, HB9AFH, HB9TVK).*





*Hugo HB9AFH and Peter HB9TVK in the dining room with a cozy fire keeping us warm.*

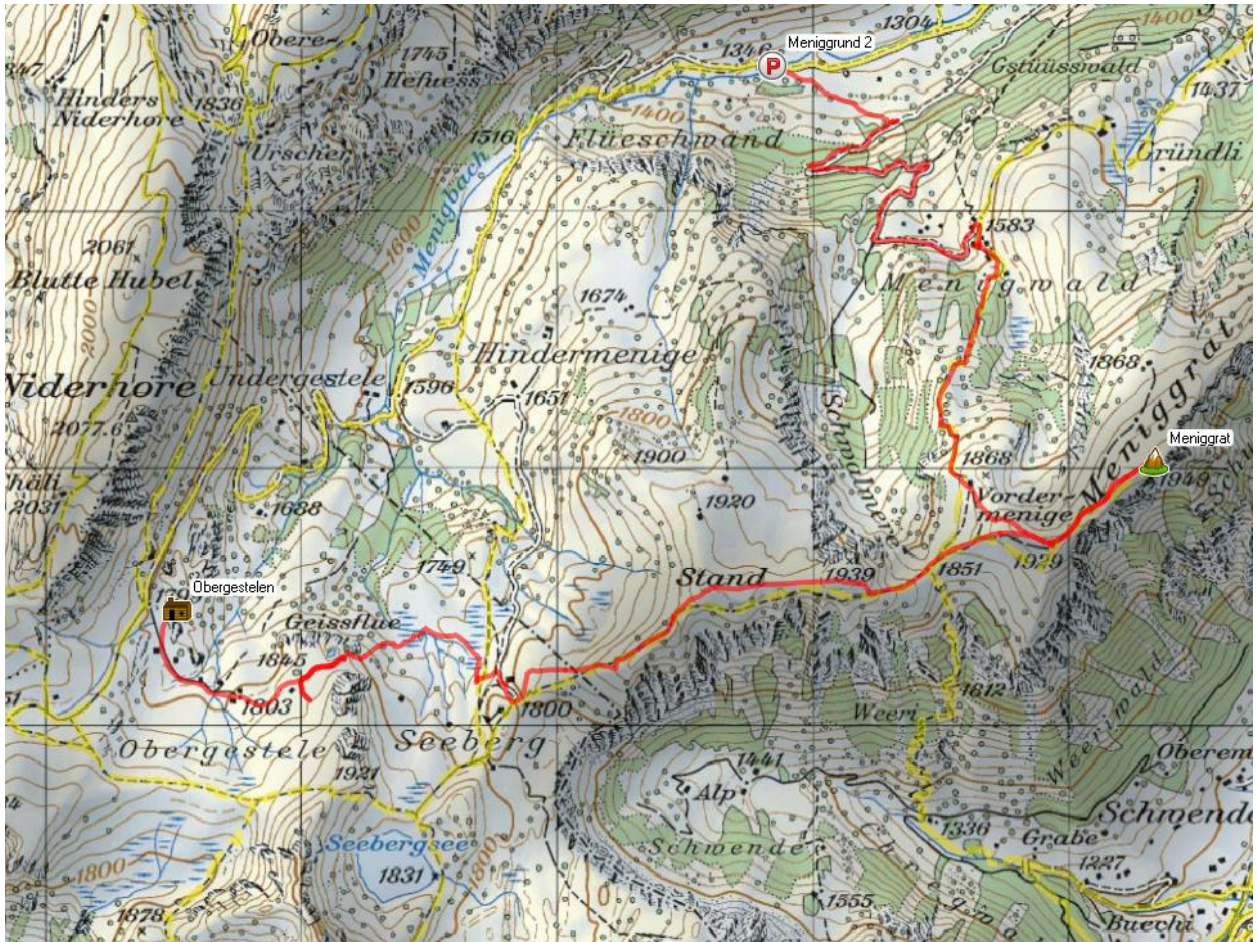


*The bunk room where the three of us spent the night.*

We slept quite well and long; we were in bed just after 9 p.m. but didn't really get moving until about 8 a.m. We had a leisurely breakfast and then cleaned up the hut. It's amazing how much there is to do even after just a short overnight stay!

Our next goal was BE-149 Meniggrat. On paper it looks easy -- just 151 meters in elevation - - but instead there is lots of up and down. That, and our choice of routes, meant it took us almost three hours to get to the summit. Peter and Hugo chose the route shown on the map below going across Geissfluh. We were fortunate with snow conditions, but under most conditions I would strongly advise not taking this route. The hiking book I have recommends going around the Seebergsee just to the south. It's much more picturesque and much safer under most conditions. I strongly advise taking that route rather than the one we did use. All things considered, it's probably also faster, as well.





*The route we chose over Geissflue is recommended only if conditions are very good. The default route mentioned in the hiking books is around the Seebergsee to the south. The path back to the parking lot (Meniggrund 2) is very well marked and not difficult.*



*The final approach to the summit of BE-149. Not technically difficult but there is a lot of up and down on the way.*

We did finally make it up to the summit, where we let Hugo HB9AFH go on the rig first -- with his four QSOs and the activation, he is officially a Mountain Goat!



*Welcome to the Mountain Goat club, Hugo!*

The descent into the valley and to the parking lot could be tricky if you don't follow the main trail. We did just that, and everything went fine -- just some sore muscles and feet. The entire trip on Tuesday from the hut to the summit and then the parking lot was about 10.7 km. We needed our snowshoes every bit of the way.

All in all, it was a very pleasant experience, especially with the overnight stay at the hut.