

KANGAROO THREE

by CAPT. NJWAISTELL

By the time this article is read either KANGAROO THREE will be completely forgotten by all us minions or we would have heard or talked so much about it that it is the last thing anyone wants to read in a battalion magazine. A day by day account of how a digger spent those remarkable three or four weeks (depending on how fortunate you were) is not appropriate. So in order to keep you on this page I shall refrain from writing these notes out of my diary but will limit myself to recording a few of my thoughts and observations.

No doubt the logistics side of the exercise learnt a lot of lessons and one can only congratulate all those people who managed to keep the exercise supplied with all our needs and also to get us all down there. I was told that the trip down to Shoalwater Bay would take 12 hours by bus. Somebody obviously didn't tell my driver that. If they did, then he was either a retired Grand Prix driver or just ignorant of the laws of the road. Anyway at least he got us down to the charming place of residence — Camp Growl — with no mishaps but I was very happy to fly back.

Camp Growl brings me on to my next point. I told my wife that I would be roughing it for four weeks but those first four days were a great pleasure. Well, with showers, continuous hot water, booze and all meals cooked for you — what more could you ask for. The organization was very good and we can only offer our thanks to the Camp Commandant — the ever cheerful QM — and his well disciplined groups of camp followers.

All exercises have their grueling part, and I suppose that digging all those trenches was one of those occasions, especially when some of them were never used. At least we had the satisfaction of knowing that the task was behind us and never again should we have the question "what size do you think a trench should be?". Many variations were seen around the place but now we even mastered the latrine size. Hopefully there will be no more groping for the side of the latrine having missed ones footing!! No names to be mentioned of course.

We all came into contact during some part of the exercise with our friends from other parts of the world but it would be amiss not to mention the US marines. Not only did they give us a demonstration of a new range of battle tactics, but they also gave some of us a field concert — ratings nearly as high as 'It Ain't Half Hot Mum'. We were also able to introduce them to the Australian 24 Hr Pack and questions like 'Well that's great but where are the other two meals' were quickly dealt with.

They were a very welcome experience and it was good to see that C Coy were able to foster relationships with a communal barbecue/potted sports day before the exercise started. It was

remarkable how quickly the marines picked up cricket — who said the Aussies were beaten again.

One of the tasks of the exercise at the lower level was to practise different ways of carrying the equipment of a mortar section which every company had to form. Companies like Charlie who have all the brawn reverted to the conventional methods of man handling. But the prize for the most sophisticated method must go the Alpha Company who decided to go back a few years (they even had the pamphlets) and used horses. Somehow it was a shame that A Coy were deployed on an unused enemy route and so were never able to use them to the full effect.

Anyway, at least members of that company had some interesting experiences. Some diggers must now nearly be qualified vets and the last time 21C of A was seen, he was off hunting one of his four legged friends who had decided that the call of romance was more important than her battle position. Well done 'A' for trying something different!

In all these exercises we have to do a fair proportion of walking and anyone who wants to know what its like withdrawing in the rain with an additional load of a sandbag containing 10 77 batteries should ask 'Redbeard' or OC C Coy.

The prisoner of war/casualty system proved a very popular source of entertainment and it was remarkable how the same people always seemed to get themselves noticed by the umpires. I always wondered why they came back looking so happy? It would be appropriate here to mention our gallant umpires who had a very difficult task of controlling the battle. I was glad to hear that the umpire who was injured in the first American stampede is now out of hospital but, he is asking to join the Orange forces next time. The umpires had a very difficult job of controlling the forces, so next time you see one give him a pat on the back.

The end of exercises are always joyous occasions and the end of KANGAROO THREE was no exception. The end this time was heralded by a concert show at SH (Samuel Hill for those who were never lucky enough to be captured) and I hear that the troops showed their appreciation in an appropriate manner — included the Kiwis.

Well that's KANGAROO THREE. KANGAROO FOUR? Who knows. Maybe they'll start asking for donations after the next pay rise. As an afterthought, please will all those personnel who have not yet handed in their Orange force cap badges please do so or pay \$1. See you all on KANGAROO FOUR.