

Commanders Confident As Canadian-American Army Maneuvers Approach End

Northway, Alaska, Feb. 23—(U.P.)—Battalion commanders appeared confident today as Canadian-American maneuvers neared an end that well equipped and trained combat units could stand sub-Arctic weather conditions indefinitely during a war.

Cold weather clothing, new types of rations and tent shelters have stood the test well. Naturally, army specialists have found points for improvement and already have considerably advanced equipment in experimental phases.

Few Casualties

One of the surest measures is casualties and there have been surprisingly few. Of 5,265 Canadian and American troops involved in operation Sweetbriar, umpires have official reports of only 20 casualties.

Some casualties undoubtedly have been missed but still the rate is low. In a maneuver of this type, two per cent casualties might well have been expected.

The main troubles have been frostbite and common cold.

Frostbite cases suggested the need for both better footgear and better training. Some have had to learn the hard way that wet feet can be disastrous in these latitudes unless socks and felt boots were dried immediately.

Colonel Interviewed

Lt. Col. R. C. Works, commanding United States ground forces in the maneuver, was interviewed on the survival question while his battalion combat team was making camp in deep snow off the Alcan highway this side of the Canadian border.

He said his men could stay in the field all winter. "They could sustain combat for 12-hour stretches if need," he added.

Despite sub-zero temperatures, men cheerfully dug away snow, set up tents, hid vehicles among trees and prepared meals in the open yesterday.

They will break camp today and move on for the final assault here at this desolate air strip where the enemy is headquartered. Later today, a full-scale attack scheduled by Canadian and American ground and airborne troops.

While these war games are showing that ground war can be fought, at least on a small scale, in the coldest weather in the world, many soldiers say they would prefer spots like the South Pacific islands.

Survival Problem

They deeply appreciate the unique characteristics of the Arctic, namely that if you are wounded in combat and not evacuated to shelter almost immediately you can freeze to death. Plain survival thus becomes as

important a problem as combat—probably more important.

A soldier here is heavily burdened with personal equipment. His uniform alone weighs 25 pounds.

The uniform consists of heavy woolen underwear, wool shirt, two pairs of wool trousers, sweater, pile field jacket, muffler, heavy pile parka with fur-lined hood fitting over a pile cap, wool inner mittens and leather outer mittens.

Footgear depends on the weather. Down to minus 30 degrees, a soldier wears two pairs of ski socks and felt boots. Below that, he changes to heavy felt socks and mukluks. Overall goes a white suit to make him blend with snow.

Each man assigned to the maneuvers must carry about 60 items of equipment on his person or in a rucksack and duffel bag. Besides that, each group of five men have a sled, tent, Yukon stove and camp axe.

GAME GOES ON

Columbus, O. (U.P.)—John Weber, 18, star forward of Linden-McKinley's high school basketball team, was allowed to finish a game before being told that his father had died of a heart attack. The father collapsed after watching his son score the field goal that put his team ahead in the closing moments as Linden won, 48-45.

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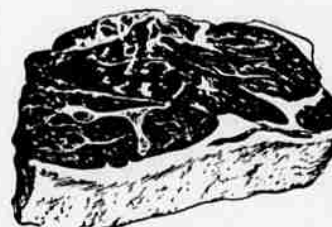
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