

COMPLETE ARCTIC WARFARE COURSE

Operating in temperatures ranging as low as 38 below zero and in winds gusting up to 62 miles an hour, 35 officers and men of the German, Italian, British and Canadian armies have completed a four-and-one-half week course in arctic warfare at the Churchill, Manitoba, Canadian Joint Services Station.

During their training, candidates on the course spent a total of 15 days living and fighting out on the Barren Grounds.

During their first five days outdoors, troops undergoing training were taught to build the various types of shelter used by the Canadian Army in arctic regions. During this period of their instruction they lived in arctic nylon tents, snow caves, igloos and, when not too far above the treeline, in lean-tos constructed of brush and scrubby fir trees.

Once the basic elements of survival in blizzards and biting cold had been grasped, the 35 candidates and their instructors left their base camp to carry out two five-day tactical exercises on the windswept tundra without shelter of any kind.

The first exercise was conducted on the tundra of the Barren Grounds; the second was held in the deeper, softer snow of the tree-line. Both exercises were highly successful.

Major Delbert (Deb) Kearns, of Calgary, the Canadian Army's chief instructor in arctic warfare at Fort Churchill, said morale of the students remained high at all times. Apart from frost-bite there were no injuries or sickness during the course. By the time they had completed their final arctic trek all could be considered seasoned veterans of living and fighting in the arctic, he added.

Many times during their 15 days on the Barrens, blowing snow reduced visibility to zero, but training continued as scheduled. The "warmest" weather encountered during the outdoor phases of their training was a "mild" 25 degrees below zero. The wind chill factor rose as high as 2,390 - dangerously high for outdoor work or living.

Worked out by a mathematical formula the wind chill factor was designed to measure the degree of discomfort experienced by the human body in extreme cold, and how this discomfort is affected by an increase in wind. When it climbs to 1,750 - far below that in which troops on the course operated - all animal life heads for shelter.

While living and carrying out tactical exercises on the Barrens, candidates on the course were warmly clad in Canadian-designed special arctic clothing. Each man carried an 80-pound rucksack on his back and took his turn hauling toboggans loaded with cooking utensils, camping gear and rations. Throughout their training they carried the new FN rifle and, when the snow was soft or deep, did their marching and "fighting" on snowshoes.

To supply the tremendous amount of energy needed to live, fight and move in the Arctic, each man on the course was provided daily with compact ration packs that provided a whopping 4,500-5,000 calories daily, almost double that required by the average working man.

Although a large number of Canadian Army officers and men have been trained in arctic warfare at Fort Churchill in past years, this is the first year candidates from other countries have been invited to participate in the training.

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STATEMENT ON AIR CO-OPERATION

The following statement was issued last week by Mr. George R. Pearkes, VC, Minister of National Defence:

"I have ascertained from NORAD Headquarters, Colorado Springs, that reports of United States Air Force interceptor fighters overflying Canadian territory carrying nuclear warheads are incorrect.

"Current agreements between the Canadian and United States Governments provide for the integrated operational control of all air defence forces in the two countries. Under normal peacetime conditions, nuclear weapons are not flown on training or active air defence flights for the purpose of identification of unknown aircraft. They are, however, loaded on some USAF "alert" aircraft ready for instant use if need be.

"Only in situations of immediate danger and grave emergency would air defence aircraft armed with nuclear weapons fly over Canadian territory under present Canada-United States agreements.

"Bomber aircraft of the B47 and B52 type of Strategic Air Command have carried out training flights over Canadian territory with nuclear weapons aboard on certain occasions. However, these flights take place only with the prior and express permission of the Canadian Government in each instance."