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***REPORT ON THE VISIT OF
THE DEFENCE SUB-COMMITTEE
of the
JOINT COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
DEFENCE AND TRADE
to
EXERCISE KANGAROO 92
19 - 21 March 1992***

MAY 1992



The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

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to
EXERCISE KANGAROO 92
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MEMBERSHIP

36th Parliament Main Committee

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Deputy Chairman: Hon M J R MacKellar, MP

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Senator V W Bourne (from October 91)	Mr E J Fitzgibbon, MP
Senator D G C Brownhill	Mr E L Grace, MP (from November 91)
Senator H G P Chapman	Mr R G Halverson, OBE, MP
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Mr S C Dubois, MP	Dr A C Theophanous, MP
Dr H R Edwards, MP	

* Resigned from the Parliament on 23 August 1991

** Resigned from the Parliament on 31 January 1992

Acting Secretary to the Committee: Ms M J Vincent

Defence Sub-Committee

Chairman: Mr E J Lindsay, RFD, MP
Deputy Chairman: Senator D J MacGibbon

Senator D G C Brownhill	Mr R G Halverson, OBE, MBE
Senator G R Maguire	Mr N J Hicks, MP
Senator P A McLean*	Hon M J R MacKellar, MP (ex officio)
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Mr D M Connolly, MP	Rt Hon I McC Sinclair, MP (from May 91)
Mr E J Fitzgibbon, MP	Mr W L Taylor, MP
Mr E L Grace, MP (from November 91)	

* Resigned from the Parliament on 23 August 1991

Secretary to the Sub-Committee: Gillian Gould

PARTICIPANTS IN THE EXERCISE

Mr E J Lindsay, RFD, MP

Senator D G C Brownhill

Mr D M Connolly, MP

Mr E J Fitzgibbon, MP

Mr R G Halverson, OBE, MP

Hon M J R MacKellar, MP

Rt Hon I McC Sinclair, MP

Mr W L Taylor, MP

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PROGRAM

Thursday 19 March 1992

1515 - 1615 hours

HQEXCON Exercise Concept Briefing

Friday 20 March 1992

0845 - 0900 hours

Move to HQNORCOM

0900 - 1040 hours

HQNORCOM Operations Briefing

1040 - 1045 hours

Move to HQ SAS SQN

1045 - 1105 hours

Current SAS Operations Briefing

1105 - 1145 hours

***Visit 1 Media Support Unit
Briefing and inspections***

1300 - 1315 hours

Move to HQ 1 LSG

1315 - 1500 hours

Visit Logistic Support Units

Saturday 21 March 1992

0800 - 0815 hours

Move to RAAF Baseflight Lines

0815 - 1000 hours

***Fly to 2 Cavalry Regiment Group
Timber Creek***

1000 - 1130 hours

***2 Cavalry Regiment Group
Briefing and inspections***

1130 - 1245 hours

Fly to RAAF Base TINDAL

1245 - 1330 hours

Camp Teal

1330 - 1430 hours

Observe 1 Field Hospital activities

1430 - 1445 hours

***Move to Ground Defence Operations Central
(DCOC)***

1445 - 1545 hours

Visit GDOC/ADG SQN

1545 - 1715 hours

Fly to RAAF Base DARWIN

Thursday 19 March 1992

Exercise Concept Briefing

The Sub-Committee was met by Brigadier Roberts, AM, Chief of Staff, Joint Exercise Planning Staff and briefed on the Exercise Concept at HQEXCON. Wing Commander Moran provided an overview of the Exercise, outlined the objectives of the Exercise and commented on Exercise activities.

The briefing stated that Exercise Kangaroo 92, which commenced on 8 March and was scheduled to finish on 3 April 1992, was proving to be one of the most interesting and demanding in the history of the Kangaroo series. Approximately 12,000 Australian, including 1800 Reservists, and 800 American personnel were participating in the Field Exercise. The US troops were engaged in inter-operability exercises with the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

Features of the area of northern Australia over which Exercise Kangaroo 92 was being staged were indicated to the Sub-Committee on a map and a short video outlined the aim of the Exercise. Members were informed that the main aim was to exercise elements of the Australian Defence Force with respect to three key aspects, namely *Joint Operations*, *the Wet Season* and *Low Level Threat Scenario*.

The Sub-Committee was told that in meeting its aim, the Exercise sought to address five main issues:

- (1) *the planning and conduct of Joint Operations at the operational level.* This was the first time that Headquarters Northern Command (HQ NORCOM) had been exercised in its operational role in conjunction with the other joint commands in Sydney and Headquarters ADF (HQADF). The focus was on the command, control and coordination of Joint Operations by HQ NORCOM, Maritime Headquarters and Air Headquarters. Land Headquarters was to play a supporting role while HQADF was to role play its normal function as part of the higher control organisation;

The Sub-Committee was told that the Joint Planning process had been initiated in September 1991 when the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) issued a warning order for possible joint operations in Northern Australia to counter expected harassment by the hypothetical 'enemy', the *Kamararian* forces. The plans to meet this threat and the requirement to execute them were confirmed when the CDF issued an operational instruction in January to be ready to commence operations by 8 March 1992.

Each of the three Services was to operate separately but with a focus on the needs of a joint approach;

- (2) *Australia's surveillance capabilities to detect and respond to incursions into the sea-air gap to Australia's north and onto Australian territory.* The briefing stated that this was an essential element of the defence-in-depth concept - by providing early warning of an adversary's possible intentions. This part of the Exercise involved the three Services of the ADF operating together. At sea both Navy and Air Force assets were responsible for patrolling and monitoring the sea-air gap. On land a range of Army surveillance and reconnaissance units was to provide depth to a Joint Service matrix of surveillance. These forces were supported by the Jindalee Over-the-Horizon Radar facility at Alice Springs;
- (3) *the impact of the wet season on ADF operations, mobility and logistic support.* Exercise Kangaroo 92 sought to define the extent to which the ADF would need to change its *modus operandi* to be effective in difficult conditions. The Exercise was also designed to allow evaluation of a number of equipments under torrid conditions in a realistic operational setting.

The Sub-Committee was told that the wet season had this year been disappointingly dry and this precluded real assessments of the impact of the *Wet* to be made. Some electrical equipment had however been found to be adversely affected by the heat and humidity and this was being evaluated by the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO);

- (4) *the augmentation or reinforcement of Northern Command during operations.* The Sub-Committee was told that initially Northern Command had been provided with a limited number of resources to meet a low level of enemy activity. Additional Naval assets, the 3rd Brigade from Townsville and a US Infantry Battalion Task Force were to be allocated to the Joint Operation as the enemy activity increased thereby creating a need to reinforce Northern Command;
- (5) *the exercising of the machinery which is designed to facilitate civil/military cooperation on low level operations.* This aspect of the Exercise involved both military and civil resources - especially the police. The briefing stressed the importance of developing a sound structure for ensuring that civil and military effort was coordinated and implemented effectively.

The major organisation for civil-military interaction was the Civil-Military Operational Planning Committee chaired by COMNORCOM. The example provided to the Sub-Committee was that if the ADF encountered an uncooperative police block, the matter could be referred to this committee for resolution through a coordinated effort.

Conduct of the Exercise

The Sub-Committee was told that the Joint Operations conducted during the Exercise were generated by the activities of the Exercise Enemy Forces (Orange Forces) from the imaginary aggressive nation of *Kamaria*. Orange Force activities were designed to be portrayed as realistically as possible, including the injection of information and intelligence pertaining to Orange Force operations.

Orange Forces were deployed to the Exercise area from their Headquarters at RAAF Base Curtin and from Nhulunbuy. Orange Force air and sea activities represented as realistically as possible the transit of Kamarian units from *Kamarian Lesser Islands*. Some concessions were made, however, to the range limitations of Orange Force Macchi aircraft which consequently operated out of RAAF Base Darwin.

The Sub-Committee was informed that the Orange Forces were operating to a pre-determined plan of conducting a low level campaign of harassment against Australia's civil and military infrastructure within the Exercise area. Exercise Kangaroo 92, more than any previous

Exercise, was a *free play* Exercise. There was no artificial control of the opposing forces to ensure contact occurred between the Orange Forces and the elements of the ADF being exercised. It was up to the ADF elements to detect and counter Orange activities.

The briefing stated that the Exercise was being conducted in three broad phases, each a little over a week in duration.

The *nature* of low level conflict was described. In particular, it was pointed out that low level conflict does not mean that only low numbers of troops are involved.

Friday 20 March 1992

Headquarters Northern Command (HQNORCOM)

The Sub-Committee was briefed at Headquarters Northern Command (HQNORCOM) by Brigadier Frank Hickling, ADC, on operational aspects of Exercise Kangaroo 92, Lieutenant Colonel John Weiland on the role, organisation and command arrangements of NORCOM, Lieutenant Colonel Mike Saunders on intelligence play, Lieutenant Colonel Jack McRoberts on operational deployment and Major Roger Joy on tactical and non-tactical communications within the Area of Operations (AO).

Discussions took place on such issues as:

- . the relationship between COMNORCOM and CDF;
- . the avoidance of civilian assets during the Exercise which were determined through the Civil Liaison Unit;
- . the equipment being tested by the Exercise and the extent of use of Raven, Steyr and Minimi;
- . the acclimatisation of troops from the southern States and the constraints placed on the Exercise as a result. The Sub-Committee was told that about six months was required for Reserves from the south to become completely acclimatised; and
- . the nature of briefings provided to observers from overseas.

The Sub-Committee then inspected the Land Component Operations Room and Communications Centre, the Air Component Operations Room, the Joint Operations Centre and the Maritime Component Operations Room.

Areas of the Exercise Kangaroo 92 AO in which military personnel were either restricted or prohibited were pointed out to the Sub-Committee on a map. These areas included national parks such as Kakadu and Aboriginal sacred sites. No significant Aboriginal lands had granted military access for the purposes of the Exercise. The Sub-Committee was told that there were differences of approach between Land Councils in the Northern Territory and Western Australia. In the Northern Territory specific Aboriginal sites were prohibited whereas the Kimberley Land Council did not provide information on the specific location of Aboriginal sites but placed a blanket prohibition on the area. The ADF had also been denied access to some pastoral regions.

Special Air Service (SAS) Squadron

At Headquarters Special Air Service (SAS) Squadron Members were briefed by the Officer Commanding, Major Dave Rutherford. Members inspected the equipment load typically carried by an SAS soldier, the Perentie 6x6 Long Range Patrol Vehicle, Honda Enduro motor bike and the water operations equipment including the Zodiac inflatable boat.

The Sub-Committee was told that the SAS had encountered problems with the Steyr rifle in the surf zone as it tended to become clogged with wet sand. Problems had also been experienced with the Raven radio. The Sub-Committee was informed that other technology is available which is more suitable for SAS needs.

A fully-equipped Perentie fitted with two guns and motor cycle was inspected by the Sub-Committee. Sufficient fuel could be carried to travel 2,000 kilometres on first-class roads and 1,600 kilometres on second-class roads.

Water operations equipment was displayed. The Sub-Committee was told that the boat system used by the SAS was the best boat system available but that it had an antiquated motor system which was however in the process of being replaced by a twin system. The six-man inflatable boat can operate in a sea-state of 6 - 7 but the boats are not deployed above a sea-state of 4 for training purposes.

1 Media Support Unit

The Sub-Committee was briefed on 1 Media Support Unit by Commander Paddy Hodgman. The Unit is responsible for the administration of the Australian Accredited Correspondents (ACORRS) who are entitled to accompany Australian troops to war. The Sub-Committee was told that 50 correspondents were participating in Exercise Kangaroo 92. ACORRS are obliged to submit copy for security but not censorship purposes.

Members inspected the Joint News Distribution Centre, the Mobile Dark Room and Mobile Editing Suite. Members were also shown a compact unit which was capable of being dropped by parachute and operated in a dark room buried in a 10 feet deep hole in the ground which the camera-person was also required to dig.

1 Logistics Support Group

At Headquarters, 1 Logistics Support Group, the Sub-Committee was briefed by Lieutenant Colonel David Ross. At the time of the visit, the Unit had been stationed in the Area of Operations for six weeks.

The briefing stated the three objectives of 1 Logistics Support Group:

- (1) to provide administrative support;
- (2) to work through *the Wet* and minimise its effect on Logistic Support; and
- (3) to review 1 Logistic Support Group's Order of Battle (ORBAT).

The Sub-Committee was told that for the purposes of the Exercise the Unit was responsible for an AO which extended some 300 kilometres by 500 kilometres and which focused on three major centres at Darwin, Katherine and Kununurra. In addition the unit supplied Jabiru and Melville Island. The strength of the unit was 1512 personnel. Of these 166 were female and 129 were General Reservists.

The role of the unit was to provide third line logistic support and to provide a basis for expansion should additional logistic support be required. For the duration of Exercise Kangaroo 92 the unit was also charged with providing second line support.

The Sub-Committee was informed that some limitations had been placed on the unit over the supply of fresh food. The ADF was bound by State restrictions concerning the transport of fresh food, particularly fruit and vegetables, across State boundaries.

Issues raised for discussion concerned the use of local facilities, given the permanent Defence presence in Darwin, and the value of the Exercise to the district. Questions were also raised on operational readiness and whether the 1512 personnel attached to the unit could be reduced by utilising civilians to perform some of the tasks whilst maintaining operational readiness. The Sub-Committee was told that the total numbers in the logistic support unit were disproportionately high as a percentage of the total force.

The Logistics Support Group is part of the Operational Deployment Force on 28 days notice. Members were told that a logistics group had been put together for deployment to Northern Iraq in about five days. The Reserves however do not meet the short notice.

26 Transport Squadron

The Sub-Committee inspected equipment of 26 Transport Squadron. Members were told that driving the MACK trucks in the Northern Territory heat had resulted in personnel enduring temperatures of up to 58 degrees Celsius in the cabins of the vehicles. Consequently, drivers were limited to 12 hours driving with mandatory 8 hour rests. After Exercise Kangaroo 89 proposals had been put forward for climate control devices to reduce the temperatures in the cabins to 30 degrees Celsius. Cooling systems had not been installed by the time of Exercise Kangaroo 92.

26 Transport Squadron can prepare to move on eight hours notice, with 30 minutes notice for the driver. The operational capability of the Squadron was however reduced by the limitations described above. The Sub-Committee was told that there is a need for reserve drivers as there is no capacity for flexibility.

The Sub-Committee inspected a range of vehicles including a road train, the new Yamaha 600 motor bike and the Perentie rigged for a parachute drop. The Sub-Committee was told that, with two parachutes, the risk of damage to the vehicles and trailers upon landing was slight - that only one in a hundred might sustain damage.

30 Terminal Squadron

30 Terminal Squadron demonstrated the ability of a range of its equipment. This included a rough terrain crane demonstrating its capacity to lift a 2 tonne forklift, and a 45 tonne capacity crane with a 35 metre reach lifting a 5 tonne Forklift.

2 Field Supply Battalion (LSG)

The Sub-Committee was briefed on 2 Field Supply Battalion Logistic Support Group (LSG). The briefing stated that the unit was raised in Townsville in 1981 as a direct command unit of Land Command. It is the only field supply battalion in the Australian Army. On 1 July 1991 the unit came under command Headquarters Logistic Support Force (HQ LSF).

2 Field Supply Battalion (LSG) has deployed on all KANGAROO series exercises as part of the LSG. The unit is responsible for providing base supply support to the north Queensland area from its home location in Townsville and second and third line supply support to the LSG and Force respectively, in the Joint Force AO (JFAO). For Exercise Kangaroo 92, 109 personnel remained in Townsville to provide base supply support to the north Queensland area and 167 personnel deployed to Darwin to support operations in the JFAO.

The briefing stated that the mission of 2 Field Supply Battalion (LSG) for Exercise Kangaroo was to provide third line supply service support to the Force and second line supply service support to the LSG.

The Sub-Committee was provided with an in-depth briefing on the tasks, unit organisation of 2 Field Supply Battalion (LSG), supply support arrangements and a list of initial stockholdings. Members were told that funds totalling \$2.621 million had been allocated for expenditure.

Issues raised for discussion included the ability of the unit to support the Australian UN team in Cambodia and security for supplies in the Area of Operation.

The Sub-Committee inspected the warehouse arrangements and a variety of one-day 10-man, one-day 1-man, individual meals and patrol ration packs. Discussion focused on the comparison of Australian packs with US ration packs. The Sub-Committee was told that the value of

supply support was just under \$1 million. The method of payment for supplies was by Government credit card or cheque.

Members questioned the capability of Darwin to provide supplies and spare parts. 2 Field Supply Battalion personnel considered that Darwin's capability was mixed, with required spare parts not always being readily available. Some problems had been encountered during the Exercise as a result of limited stock held in Darwin.

The Sub-Committee inspected the Local Purchase Office Control Office and the mechanisms for supply accounting and stockholding. The Sub-Committee was told that the computerised system made accessible information on all stocks held in Australia.

Saturday 21 March 1992

2 Cavalry Regiment

The Sub-Committee proceeded to RAAF Base Darwin from where it travelled to Timber Creek by Caribou aircraft.

The Sub-Committee was briefed by Lieutenant Colonel Brimelow on the role of 2 Cavalry Regiment during Exercise Kangaroo 92. Approximately 400 soldiers were located at Timber Creek. The Sub-Committee was told that 2 Cavalry Regiment had been issued with a one month's warning order from the Land Component Commander Northern Command. For the purposes of the Exercise, the Regiment included two reconnaissance squadrons and a tank squadron from Puckapunyal. The Regiment was also equipped with Ground Surveillance and Radar troops.

The Sub-Committee was told that 2 Cavalry Regiment operated closely with NORFORCE. The Regiment was equipped with six Raven communication units. The Regiment was unable to communicate easily with the Special Air Service Squadron, however, as the SAS tended to operate independently. The Regiment's preference to work more closely with the SAS had been conveyed to the Land Component Commander Northern Command.

Members were provided with a brief on intelligence relating to the operations of 2 Cavalry Regiment, analysis and appreciation of 'enemy' movements and consequent deployment of the Regiment.

The Sub-Committee inspected surveillance equipment, tanks and light armoured vehicles (LAV) stationed at Timber Creek and was told that the Regiment had encountered problems as a result of the extremely high temperatures experienced within the vehicles. A request had been put forward for a cooling system to be installed in the LAVs.

Camp Teal, RAAF Base Tindal

The Sub-Committee transferred to RAAF Base Tindal where it was met by Administrative Staff Officer Headquarters Tindal, Wing Commander Tony Behm. Informal discussions took place over luncheon at Camp Teal.

1 Field Hospital Unit

The Sub-Committee then inspected the facilities including the theatre facilities, sterilising and laundry equipment, the X-ray and pathology units of 1 Field Hospital Unit where Members were briefed by Lieutenant Colonel John Teh, Commanding Officer, Royal Australian Army Medical Corps. At the time of the Sub-Committee's visit, 1 Field Hospital was in the process of withdrawal from the Exercise Kangaroo 92 Area of Operations. This provided the Sub-Committee with an opportunity to observe the mechanisms involved in preparing the hospital for deployment.

Personnel of the Unit conveyed to the Sub-Committee their willingness to be deployed to Cambodia as part of the UN peace-keeping force.

3 Royal Australian Regiment Parachute Battalion Group

The Sub-Committee was briefed by Lieutenant Colonel Gary Bornholt on 3 Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR) Parachute Battalion Group which, Members were told, had been operational for only 18 months. The Group contained three rifle companies. As a Ready Reaction group the tasks of the Group included opening up an area for the Operational Deployment Force and evacuation.

The Parachute Battalion Group consisted of 680 personnel who were all volunteers. Four jumps a year are required to qualify for the Group. The Sub-Committee was told that the parachute jumpers' allowance is inadequate for the tasks they are required to perform. There are some risks. For example, last November some 50 parachutists were blown off-course by a freak atmospheric condition. Most sustained injuries.

The Sub-Committee was told that the Group has no intrinsic means of troop mobility. The Group operated with 36 Squadron in the north and 38 Squadron in Canberra. A typical training exercise was described, particularly in terms of the equipment loads carried by the parachutists, the time involved in dropping up to 100 parachutists and the discomforts of low flying during the exercise. The Members of the Sub-Committee were invited to participate as observers on a training exercise.

The Sub-Committee inspected a display of equipment held by 3 RAR Parachute Battalion Group. Members were then briefed on the Parachute Surgical Team and inspected the Parachute Group's Resuscitation Centre and Operating Theatre.

No 75 Squadron, RAAF

The Sub-Committee proceeded to Ground Defence Operations Central in the Flight Line Office at RAAF Base Tindal where Members were briefed by Commanding Officer No 75 Squadron, Wing Commander Paul Devine.

The Sub-Committee was told that Exercise Kangaroo 92 had not incorporated an extensive role for air defence. Discussion revolved around more general requirements for air defence. The view presented to the Sub-Committee was that RAAF Base Tindal was vulnerable and man-power intensive. Furthermore, it was located too far away from Darwin to provide adequate air defence for Darwin. It was considered that both RAAF Base Tindal and RAAF Base Darwin would be more cost effective if both bases were equipped with facilities to sleep aircrew and technicians on a temporary basis.

Some concerns were expressed that low flying intruding aircraft cannot be detected. The employment of Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) aircraft was considered to provide a solution to this problem.

The Sub-Committee was also told that an essential requirement for air defence was an upgraded in-flight refuelling capacity.

Senator Chris Schacht
Chairman

E.J. Lindsay, RFD, MP
Chairman, Defence Sub-Committee.