



MAJOR

The Battalion Mascot

THIS IS THE WINNING ENTRY IN THE FIRST OF OUR FORTNIGHTLY CONTESTS FOR ITEMS FOR AN UNOFFICIAL HISTORY OF THE UNIT. TO THE WINNER OF D COMPANY WE OFFER OUR THANKS - AND TWO CARTONS OF CIGARETTES

MAJOR'S origin and how he came into the Battalion have caused much controversy and discussion. First it was said that he was given to the Old Original 29th by an Indian policeman. Then it is stated that he belonged to a nearby farmer when the Old Originals were camped at Namaka.

HOWEVER, HE STAYED WITH THE UNIT WHEN OUR BOYS RELIEVED THE OLD ORIGINALS AT NAMAKA ON MAY 23, 1941. WHERE HE CAME FROM, SOMEBODY MUST KNOW!

He was a wise old dog was "Major", and he had a way of his own of treating coconuts. He used to hold them in his front paws and tear the husk off with his teeth. Then he would take them in his mouth and toss them in the air with a jerk of his head until he broke them.

At Nasese he caused a lot of fun in the wet canteen by rolling empty beer bottles around the floor. When the wet canteen closed he made straight for the recreation hut and caused no end of entertainment with the boys who played quoits. If you took him on at tog-o-war he would nearly wrench your arm off.

IT WAS NOTHING TO FIND HIM MISSING AT TIMES, AS HE OFTEN VISITED ARTILLERY, A.S.C., ENGINEERS AND FIELD AMBULANCE. BUT HE ALWAYS CAME BACK TO THE UNIT. HE SEEMED TO PREFER THE INFANTRY.

"Major" returned to camp from one of his tours to find us packing up for our return for New Zealand. He stayed very close to camp and on Tuesday morning, June 30, he was with us on the wharf at Suva.



If our boys tried once, they must have tried a dozen times to get him on board the "President Coolidge". But each time we got him on the ship's officers chased him off.

FINALLY WE SAILED AT 7.15 A.M. ON FRIDAY, JULY 3, AND "MAJOR" WAS ON THE WHARF WITH THE BAND TO BID US FAREWELL.

When I got back to Papakura after my first leave, however, I received a pleasant surprise. "Major" was in camp! He had been put in a crate placed in one of the trucks, lowered into the hold and brought to New Zealand on the following trip by the 34th Battalion.

the boat the same way as he went on. One of our drivers found him with the 34th at Manurewa and brought him back to the unit.

ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS HE WOULD JUMP ON THE LEAVE TRAIN AND GO TO AUCKLAND WITH THE BOYS. HE HAS ALSO BEEN SEEN ON THE AUCKLAND TRAMS, AND HAS PUT ON A VERY HURT AND DISGUSTED LOOK WHEN THE CONDUCTOR CHASED HIM OFF.

On Monday, September 21, the unit marched to Hunua, and it was "Major" again who led the way. It was always his keenest desire to sleep in front of the large open fire in the Y.M.C.A. But he got short shrift, because our Y.M.C.A. representative slept there himself!



On Friday, October 9, we started on our long trek to Kirapiro P.W.D. Camp, "Major" leading all the way and resting when we did. On arrival he immediately became a favourite with the young school-children of the camp.

WHEN WE WENT INTO THE KILMAIS, "MAJOR" WAS AGAIN ON THE SCENE. HE COULD OFTEN BE SEEN TRAVELLING BACKWARD AND FORWARD ALONG "TOI TRACK", AND WENT FROM COMPANY TO COMPANY DURING THE WEEK WE WERE THERE.

Whenever we went on a Battalion "stunt", to capture 905 or 995, he was always on deck. On Fridays we had a regular Battalion route march and he was always in the lead, but on November 20 he started to drop back after an hour or two and did not finish the march.

This was very unusual for him, and when he appeared at the dance on Saturday night it was thought he was working a "bracket". But on Sunday he was too weak to raise his head. He was gently placed in a truck and taken to a nearby veterinary surgeon who administered a painless death.

"MAJOR" WAS BURIED ON THE HILL OVERLOOKING THE PARADE GROUND, AND WAS ACCORDED A FUNERAL WITH FULL MILITARY HONOURS. THE CHILDREN OFTEN USED TO CARRY FLOWERS AND PUT THEM ON HIS GRAVE, AND I HONESTLY THINK THEY MISSED HIM AS MUCH AS WE DID.

The next period about which we want news is the Namaka era - bright, personal as possible, and as unofficial as you like. To help us in covering every aspect of the history...