

Attacked in the Jungle!

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Attacked in the Jungle!

By Thomas Yoon

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"Tak kenak! Tak kenak!" "Adak Orang sanak!....."

The quiet jungle has suddenly become noisy with intruders. Strange voices and shouting seemed to appear all around us. They were definitely foreign. We were being attacked!

We had been expecting an attack, but we did not expect it so soon. We did everything possible to protect ourselves, but the only cover we had were some bushes, tree trunks, leaves and the natural foliage. If we protect ourselves from the front, we could not cover our backs. Such was the defense we managed to set up.

Our casualty was very high. Nobody could escape the onslaught.

Luckily, this was not real and nobody died.

This was just a Wargame and the weapons were eggs.

The event was an Outdoor Survival-like Jungle Training. Organized by the training department of our Company, a group of staffs went over to the forest reserve at Lata Mengkuang, Sik, Malaysia to take part in Team Building.

The 3-day training started off with the usual briefing, and ice-breaking sessions on the first day. Each person was given a dome tent for spending the night. Various camp crafts were taught. Lectures were given on Motivation, Compass usage, Mission, etc throughout the day and night. In between lectures,

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there were group management activities, which put into practice what was taught. The management activities took the form of games, where the participation of everybody in the team and the clarity of direction from the leader are of utmost importance. In the games, the team and leader had to work together to fully understand their own capabilities and weaknesses in order to overcome obstacles, and to achieve the target in a limited time. The first day session finished at nearly 12 midnight.

Almost all the participants could not sleep very well in the first night. The ground was hard and cold. The portable generator set, which supplied electricity supply for lighting,

was really noisy. Mosquitoes were not a problem, because we had taken the precaution to spray the enclosed tent with insecticide beforehand. There were some expression of fear of creepy-crawlies from some female team members, and also of the tent being washed away if it rains. Other than that the night passed on without any incident.

We started the second day morning with jogging. The distance was very far. Our muscles got more and more tired. After breakfast, the lecture and management activity sessions was conducted like the previous day. The topics and activities were of course different, and were more interesting. We were taught Principles of War, and also briefed on Jungle Mission. We were to enter the jungle at about 5.30 p.m. on the same day.

The Jungle Mission was about camping in the jungle at night, attacking other teams, and protecting your own camp. The whole group of people was divided into 4 teams, each with their own leader, scout, navigator, deputy leader, and members. The team was guided by experienced jungle guides from the organizers whose job was to only take us to our jungle campsites, and offer advice if needed. The challenge for each team is to capture the flags of other teams, which also included a team of Orang Asli's (jungle dwellers). All the teams are free to make their own decision on whether to seek and attack or to stay put for defense. But it is only in attacking that a team can achieve the target of capturing other team's flags. However we could also lose our own flags if we go on an attacking spree without guarding our own camp.

Rain was falling all around in the early evening before we left. My team left the base camp at about 6 p.m. The whole team walked

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in single file towards the jungle camp. The jungle path was steep, muddy, slippery and full of protruding roots and rocks. Sharp thorns on the jungle plants could easily cut anybody. My team reached the jungle campsite at around 7.30 p.m. We quickly pitched camp, set up 3 hammocks, made a small fire for cooking, cleared the area of obstruction, and set up our defense. We ate our dinner very quickly as our cease-fire ends at 8.30 p.m. and we can expect any attack from our enemy from then onwards. Our food was simple camp food – rice, canned sardines, and canned beans. We had plenty of eggs, but these were our ammunition, not our food.

The Wargames was an eye-opener for us. We could experience how a soldier fighting in the jungle and going on a mission feels. It is to kill or be killed. He has to use his wits to survive. His eyes must be sharp. He must be sure where his enemies are and where his comrades are in order not to shoot his own people.

His sentries must be alert all the time. His camp perimeter should have booby trap to prevent enemy's approach from an unexpected direction, maybe from the tree tops.....

A lot happened during the night. Each team has its own tale to tell. To make a long story short – the mission was successful. But it was a long, long night.

On the third day morning, all the teams made their way out of the jungle at about 7.30 a.m. after breaking camp and packing. It was a battle-weary night. All the teams who emerged from the jungle were a sorry sight to behold. Covered with mud, and egg slime from head to toe, unkempt hair, wet clothing, tired bodies we were thankful to be able to reach base camp.

After washing up, we were transported by mini bus to a riverbank where lorry wheel inner tubes and bamboo had already been prepared. We were taught how to fabricate rafts, and when the rafts were ready, we paddled downstream for about 3 miles and presented our prize (the flags) to a "Penghulu" (village headman) who was waiting there. The mission has been accomplished!

These were just brief summaries of what happened during the Experiential Team Building exercise. It has taught in some way or another something of value to all the participants.

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By Andy Hunt

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Andy is owner of the Belize Jungle Dome in Belize, Central America. A former UK soccer player he now offers Adventure Vacations for Families, Groups and Individuals from his Jungle Resort

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