

charges since the last BOS [Board of Studies], and in one of them (AWL) [Absent Without Leave] he subverted two other better cadets who became implicated through his influence.'

The (incorrect) assumption that I had instigated this trip was to be crucial to the decision by the Board of Studies that I be asked to "Show Cause" (*see below*).

Meeting with WO2 Remin

Early on Friday 8 May 1987, I was seen by WO2 Siegfried REMIN regarding my copying of another staff cadet's work on a map marking exercise. A week earlier I realised only minutes before a map-marking lesson that I had forgotten to complete the four practice questions given as homework the previous evening. It was far too late for me to complete the practice exercise, which had to be submitted the following lesson, so I asked Staff Cadet WHITTING for assistance. WHITTING handed his completed exercise to me and told me to trace it, which I proceeded to do. Minutes later we attended the map marking lesson and submitted our practice exercises. The practice exercises were corrected and later returned to us on Friday 8 May 1987. When I was handed my work I was told that the MTW instructor who had set the exercise, WO2 Siegfried REMIN, wanted to see me in the MTW building. Arriving at the MTW building I was ordered by WO2 REMIN to go into his office. I stood to attention in front of his desk as he walked into the office and closed the door behind him. As soon as WO2 REMIN got behind his desk he began abusing me and accusing me of copying from another cadet. He asked me whether it was me or the other cadet. I replied, "It was me, Sir." He told me that I was not worthy of a commission and added that, "As long as my arsehole points to the ground you won't be an officer in this Army." I was then told that if I failed to improve he would take me on one of his, "... little walks where strange things happen. Just the two of us." I was told that on these walks, "The person who's with me falls down and breaks their nose and I graze my fist and knee helping them up." The implication was obvious. In addition to this reprimand I was given a sixty-five question map marking assignment'. I believe WO2 REMIN assumed I had copied off Staff Cadet WHITTING and not he off me because my map marking had been done freehand and Staff Cadet WHITTINGS's had been done with the issued template. I do not know whether it was just an assumption or whether he had questioned Staff Cadet WHITTING and he (WHITTING) had told him. I never questioned either WO2 REMIN or Staff Cadet

WHITTING about it. Later that day WO2 REMIN submitted a damning Leadership Assessment/Observation Report about this incident (*see Attachment 7*). He wrote: 'His decision shows a lack of integrity, an inability to organize or perform even the most simple tasks, a lack of application, no sense of responsibility, and a lack of maturity.'

This incident, and the unauthorized trip to McDonald's (*see above*), was crucial in the decision by the Board of Studies that I be asked to "Show Cause" (*see below*).

3rd Guidance Interview

During the evening of Monday 11 May 1987, I saw Captain GOSS in the MTW building for what would become my last guidance interview. Prior to the meeting I had missed the evening meal but I had quickly had a beer in the cadet wet mess. Captain GOSS's personal evaluation of my situation at RMC was recorded in the official Record of Interview, which stated; 'During this interview I advised SCDT Knight that I was extremely unhappy with his performance since my last interview [27 April 1987] in particular his lack of self-discipline and maturity. He has not learnt from past lessons or accepted advice from myself, his Coy Comd [Major VERCOE], CI [Lieutenant-Colonel WILLIS] or CO CSC [Lieutenant-Colonel KIBBEY]. I believe his trouble stems from his lack of maturity and new found wealth resulting in a preference for social activities rather than applying himself at RMC. An example of his lack of self-discipline was that he reported to me for guidance with alcohol on his breath. The member has been left in no doubt [Captain GOSS's emphasis] as to what will happen if his performance does not improve. I will discuss his performance further with his Coy Comd.' Captain GOSS did not raise with me the smell of alcohol on my breath. If he had, I would have told him that I had drunk one beer very quickly in the wet mess before rushing to the guidance interview.

On Wednesday 13 May 1987, SMITH, BARTLE and I each separately fronted Major VERCOE in his office to have our AWOL charge heard. Due to the seriousness of the charge, Major VERCOE referred the charge against all three of us to the CO CSC for hearing. I was the last to front Major VERCOE who, before he referred the charge, reprimanded me harshly. He accused me of being the one who suggested the excursion to McDonald's, and then he reprimanded me for dragging SMITH and BARTLE down with me, for getting them

into trouble when it was all my fault. I felt that if I attempted to tell Major VERCOE what actually happened, I would be betraying two fellow cadets and I would only be accused of lying in order to protect myself. As a result, I remained silent, looked straight ahead and accepted Major VERCOE's angry reprimand without protest. It was only after my arrest and that I discovered that Major VERCOE's (incorrect) assumption that the trip to McDonald's was my idea and I had persuaded SMITH and BARTLE to come with me. This was officially recorded by Major VERCOE and was a key justification in the eventual decision by the DMA's Board of Study to recommend that I be asked to "Show Cause" (*see below & note 'A poor cadet setting a bad example to others'*). I do not know why Major VERCOE accused me of being the one who persuaded the other two to go to McDonald's. I did not ask Major VERCOE or staff cadets SMITH or BARTLE. It is relevant to note with respect to our respective judgment, that SMITH was involved in a car accident in Canberra while driving to report to Duntroon (I do not know who was ultimately found to be at fault), and BARTLE killed himself and injured two other staff cadets - one seriously (Staff Cadet McQUEEN) - in a car accident in Canberra on 16 August 1987. I understand that BARTLE was driving at excessive speed, lost control and crashed into a tree in Fairfax Street, O'Connor, just after midnight. Bartle was killed instantly and the two injured staff cadets were trapped in the car for three hours (*I wrote to the ACT Coroner on 10 January 2022 in relation to the finding into Doug BARTLE's death but did not receive a reply).

Around this time, I finally realised that if I did not begin to make a concerted effort to improve my performance, I ran the risk of being asked to "Show Cause" (why my appointment as a staff cadet should not be terminated), and being thrown out of the college. I was now determined not just to pass my tests and examinations, but to pass them as well as I could. I was inspired by a renewed sense of motivation and I became dedicated to making a great comeback. I was pleased with the feeling that my performance was steadily improving. When the 3rd Class cadets did the PTT again I put in a determined effort and tried as hard as I could. During the 5km run I finished 5th in my half-class and took two minutes off my previous time. I tried to remain alert during classroom lectures instead of falling asleep as I had frequently done beforehand, and I tried to appear enthusiastic during practical lessons without being boisterous or gung ho. I also took a sensible approach to training exercises held at the Majura Field Firing Range. One test conducted at the Majura range was the 5km cross-country run which I found difficult but which I passed easily with

a reasonable time. I also tried to maintain a quiet, low profile in order to keep out of trouble, although I did occasionally seek responsibility and volunteer for extra duties. Outside training hours I visited any of my cadet friends who were in 5 Camp Hospital, and whenever I was going on local leave or to a sporting event I went around the Kokoda Company barracks, asking my fellow 3rd Class cadets if any of them needed a lift. I believed strongly in helping my mates whenever I could. In a letter to me after my arrest for the Hoddle Street shootings, a fellow 3rd Class cadet in Kokoda Company wrote; 'I may have only known you for six months but during that time you were always a great mate, and would do anything for anyone.'

A confidential peer group rating, however, conducted within Kokoda Company on 15 May 1987, rated me as 23/26 of the 3rd Class cadets (one 3rd Class cadet - Steven RIDD - having already resigned by this stage after having initially gone AWOL). Interviews conducted with several members of Kokoda Company produced the following comments: (a) He is a "character" who was "quite liked". (b) He is "too young" and has "no common sense". (c) He was a "skinhead" in Melbourne, made it common knowledge and enjoyed the image. (d) He had had "blues" in town with civilians. (e) He "dug his own grave" and made it worse for himself by talking back. (f) He didn't attempt to "fit-in" and the comments directed towards him in terms of his dress and speech were "water off a duck's back" (see *Attachment 11*). This last comment suggests to me that the "peer group" interviewed consisted of senior cadets in the Company. During my time at Duntroon I was never asked to participate in a peer group rating. None of my classmates ever told me that they had been asked about me or had participated in a peer group rating. I note that in spite of the negative comments, I was still not ranked at the bottom of the company. I do not know who the three staff cadets were who were rated as being lower than me or if they eventually graduated.

My renewed enthusiasm and determination to make a vast improvement was not recognized by most of the senior cadets in Kokoda Company. As far as they were concerned, I was not worthy of being an Army officer and they were determined to ensure that I resigned my appointment. On 13 May 1987, my section leader, Corporal CRANE, noted that, 'SCDT Knight continued to display a lower level of personal organisation than most members of Third Class.' He also commented on 'SCDT Knight's lack of reliability'. Instead of my situation in the barracks improving it significantly worsened. By mid-May 1987, many

senior cadets were subjecting me to regular abuse and harassment, sometimes for something I had neglected to do, but usually just for the sake of it or for light entertainment. Three 1st Class cadets in Kokoda Company's 14 Platoon in particular. Corporal Matthew THOMSON (CSC No 5132), Lance-Corporal Craig THORP (CSC No 5133), and Staff Cadet Nicholas EVERINGHAM (CSC No 4823) singled me out for "special treatment" and abused and victimized me at almost every opportunity. Even though they were in 14 Platoon and their rooms were upstairs at the other end of the barracks to my room, they harassed me whenever they saw me. I was warned by two 3rd Class cadets in 14 Platoon, Simon MACKS (CSC No 5276) and EXAUDI-LARSEN, that THOMSON, THORP and EVERINGHAM had it in for me. During one conversation I had with Staff Cadet MACKS, he said, "They [THOMSON, THORP and EVERINGHAM] really hate you." I replied that I did not why. I said that he "must hate being in their [THOMSON, THORP and EVERINGHAM's] section." He laughed and said, "No, they're as good as gold with us." MACKS and EXAUDI-LARSEN also told me that they did not know why THOMSON, THORP and EVERINGHAM gave me such a hard time as they were "good mates" with all the other 3rd Class cadets in the Company. I was just as bewildered. I had not trained with, socialized with or had any personal clashes or "run-ins" with these three senior cadets prior to their victimization of me starting, so I am at a loss, even today, to explain why they took such a dislike to me.

On one occasion Corporal THOMSON gave me a nonsensical message and told me to relay it to a certain 1st Class cadet in Gallipoli Company. I went to the Gallipoli Company barracks and went room-by-room in a vain search for the named cadet. When I reported back to Corporal THOMSON that I could not find the named cadet I was roundly abused by him in front of Lance-Corporal THORP and Staff Cadet EVERINGHAM, who both laughed. I was told that I was a "fucken' idiot" and to go back and have another look. This process was repeated two more times before Corporal THOMSON tired of the exercise and told me not to worry about it. During the second time I searched the Gallipoli Company barracks it dawned on me that the named cadet did not exist. The whole incident lasted around two hours.

Hallway Incident

By mid-May 1987, I was having regular clashes with senior cadets in Kokoda Company. One incident happened during the evening of Friday 15 May 1987. I was walking along the hallway on the second storey of the south wing of the barracks, heading towards the south wing ablutions to have a shower. I would have used the ablutions in the north wing of the barracks except the north wing's hot water and heating system had completely broken down in early April 1987. When I came across a group of about ten 1st Class cadets sitting on the floor on both sides of the corridor, I halted, stood to attention and requested permission to pass from the most senior cadet present (By this stage, I was the only 3rd Class cadet still being held to this initial assimilation requirement). The most senior cadet present was Sergeant Stephen ALEXANDER (CSC No 5008), a 23-year-old ex-Wormald security officer who was the Platoon Sergeant of 14 Platoon. Before Sergeant ALEXANDER could reply, Lance-Corporal THORP asked me, "How many times have you been charged, Knight?" I answered, "A few times, corporal." Corporal THOMSON then interjected, "Have you been charged with being a fuck-bucket yet?" At this point the senior cadets present burst out laughing. I told THOMSON I had not so THOMSON and THORP continued to ridicule me. I quickly tired of the ridicule so I again requested permission from Sergeant ALEXANDER to pass. ALEXANDER granted me permission over the ridicule of THOMSON and THORP so I walked on to the showers despite efforts by senior cadets to trip me up as I passed.

It should be noted that this incident is an example - one of many - where I conducted myself appropriately but was spoken to by senior cadets in the manner described. Any later criticism of me that I supposedly resented discipline, talked back or would confront senior cadets needs to be considered with this in mind.

I also noted that the background of those that subjected me to the worst bastardization was usually one of private schooling and "old" Duntroon/ADFA. I do not recall a single example of a senior cadet who was a former serving soldier engaging in acts of bastardization. These ex-Duntroon/ADFA cadets would often say "I've been in the Army four years" (meaning three years at a military academy and a year at RMC). It could also be said that of the instructors that those who tended to believe that surliness was a mark of toughness were those that had not seen active service. I also recall a comment by Staff Cadet

GRACE that the sailors he had served with in the RAN were “a lot tougher” than the soldiers he had served with.

In a sworn statement to the AGS on 10 April 2015, Sergeant ALEXANDER stated the following (*see Attachment 11*):

I recall attending a meeting with Major Todd Vercoe, [CSM] Phil Reed and [13 Platoon Sergeant] Michael Thomson during which Knight was discussed. I remember that the tone of discussion was positive in the sense that we discussed what could be done to help Knight. We discussed options including moving him to another platoon to give him a fresh start, as he appeared to ostracize most of his fellow class mates. I recall that we decided that moving him would not be productive at this late stage.

The fact that my situation was raised with the Company OC at a company meeting is proof that senior members of the company (including the Officer Commanding the company) were aware that I was experiencing difficulties with senior cadets in the company.

Parade Rehearsal

On another occasion in mid-May 1987, during a parade rehearsal the 2nd Class cadet behind me in the formation, Staff Cadet Robert HAMBURGER (CSC No 4548), a 22-year-old ADFA graduate, constantly abused me throughout the rehearsal for not being able to march. HAMBURGER complemented the abuse by kicking my heels throughout the rehearsal. I was more than competent in the skill of marching and had been marching since I joined the Army Cadets five years previously. HAMBURGER simply did not like me and after the rehearsal he told a 1st Class cadet, Sergeant Michael THOMSON (CSC No 5131), a 25-year-old former RAEME electrical technician, that I could not march and that I should be given Extra Drill parades. Such punitive parades could only be awarded by 1st Class cadets and were conducted during the Defaulters Parades. Sergeant THOMSON accepted HAMBURGER's accusations without question and immediately ordered me to attend two EDs.

It should be noted that Staff Cadet HAMBURGER entered the "old" Duntroon in 1983 but did not graduate until June 1988. He had to repeat his second academic year at ADFA and was later forced to repeat 1st Class at Duntroon due to an instance of dishonesty (he failed to attend a parade rehearsal and tried to cover it up).

Other Rank Tendencies

In addition to being constantly told to resign my appointment, I was also constantly abused by senior cadets for supposedly having "Other Rank Tendencies" (ORTs). Senior cadets claimed that ORTs were traits usually associated with private soldiers and which senior cadets considered to be un-officer like and unacceptable traits for officers. ORTs were not, however, outlined in any manual or Standing Orders, and were not referred to by the authorities. Nearly all of the traits that the senior cadets considered ORTs and which they complained about, were simply petty examples of their own personal prejudices. I was, for instance, was constantly abused because of my crew cut hair. Even though it was cut within regulation length, it was considered an ORT by senior cadets. At one stage, I was ordered to grow my hair and Staff Cadet COLMER ordered me to "Show Parade a haircut" in a week's time. On another occasion, Staff Cadet BURNSIDE told me that, "Your men won't respect you with hair like that!" (BURNSIDE's only military experience was as a cadet at the "old" Duntroon and at ADFA).

My sideburns were also considered an ORT by senior cadets, even though they were within regulation length. They frequently harassed me over them and repeatedly ordered me to shave them off. The fact that I constantly refused to shave them off angered them further. During one evening in the barracks in mid-May 1987, I was warned by Staff Cadet BURNSIDE that, "If you don't shave them off, someone might run in on you and shave them off themselves." Two evenings later, I was studying at my desk in my room when I noticed a group of about six 3rd Class cadets standing around my doorway. They were staring at me and quietly laughing. When I asked them what was going on they rushed into my room, pulled me struggling off my chair, and pinned me to the floor. I was held down as one of them plugged in an electric razor into a nearby wall socket and, despite my protests and my attempts to escape, completely shaved off my right sideburn. They then quickly let go of me and hurriedly left the room laughing. I was not impressed with having my sideburn shaved

off but I took what happened in good cheer because it was fellow 3rd Class cadets who did it and who did it without malice. I later learnt, however, that they had done it at the instigation of senior cadets in the company.

I was also constantly abused by senior cadets for owning a Torana SLR 5000 because it was considered by senior cadets as “not a suitable vehicle for an officer.” This was regardless of the fact that the RMC authorities permitted staff cadets to own any type of vehicle except motorcycles. During the final stage of the ICT at Majura, I had even queried Major VERCOE about owning a Torana SLR 5000 and was told that it was quite alright to own such a car. On a weekend in May 1987, I was washing my car in the car park outside the front of the Kokoda Company barracks when Corporal THOMSON, Lance-Corporal THORP and Staff Cadet EVERINGHAM walked out of the barracks’ middle foyer. They were dressed in civilian attire as it was the weekend and they were all off-duty. EVERINGHAM strode angrily over to my car and yelled at me, “What’s this fucking shit box doing here?!” I stated the obvious: “I’m washing it.” EVERINGHAM screamed back “What?!” I calmly replied, “I’m washing it... Staff Cadet Everingham.” EVERINGHAM mumbled something then curtly ordered, “Move that fucking heap of shit out of here as soon as you’re finished.” I simply nodded in reply as EVERINGHAM, THOMSON and THORP got into a nearby car and drove off. This is another example of the manner in which I was spoken to by senior cadets.

I was even harassed by senior cadets over such things as my choice of music - “hard rock” groups such as AC/DC, The Angels and Rose Tattoo - and my choice of civilian clothes.

Many senior cadets also abused and ridiculed me for supposedly having “lout” friends, even though they did not know any of my civilian friends. This was in addition to the abusive references they made to my girlfriends and other female civilian friends. On occasions whilst on local leave senior cadets even went as far as sexually harassing my girlfriends or other female friends (*see below*).

The Australian Army is not as “rough and tough” as many believe it to be (see comment of Staff Cadet GRACE above comparing sailors with soldiers). The social background of most of its members is actually quite conservative. I found that the violence, regular interaction

with police and widespread drug usage that I was exposed to living in inner-city Melbourne (I told fellow cadets I came from the Collingwood area because no-one had heard of Clifton Hill) was foreign to the experiences of my classmates.

Sexual Harassment of Female Friends

In early April 1987, I began regularly seeing Meg RUMMERY, a 17-year-old Commonwealth public servant who worked in the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations. Meg later stated that: 'I was sexually harassed on at least two occasions by first class cadets at Duntroon in order to stir up Julian' (Statement by Alice Meghan Rummery to Private Investigator Peter Tierney on the 17 November 1987, page 1).

On another occasion in late May 1987, Lance-Corporal THORP groped another female civilian friend of mine (Elizabeth "Liz" GLOVER) in front of me at the Private Bin nightclub. I had gone to the Private Bin with Liz and Meg RUMMERY and a mutual friend, Deanne METCALFE. We found a corner to drink in on the ground floor. As Liz walked to the toilet THORP, who was sitting at a nearby table with a group of other senior cadets, lent out and grabbed Liz's backside as she walked past. When she turned around and objected, THORP and his mates laughed at her.

On one Saturday night in mid-May 1987, Meg and I had gone with other friends to the Private Bin nightclub at around 2000hrs. At around 2130hrs, Meg and I decided to leave and go and visit friends in Belconnen. At this stage of the night we were at the rear of the ground floor so we started to move towards the front door. Another 3rd Class cadet, Staff Cadet J.C. TUNSTALL (CSC No 5329), was walking in front of me while Meg was walking behind me whilst holding my hand. As we made our way through the crowd gathered in front of the main bar we passed a group of senior cadets who were also on local leave. One 2nd Class cadet in the group, Staff Cadet Stephen MEEHAN (CSC No 5190), a 26-year-old former rifleman from 2/4 RAR, lent out and grabbed hold of each of Meg's breasts in turn as she walked past. I had stopped and turned around just as MEEHAN began to lean out. After witnessing MEEHAN's actions, I stepped towards him and told him sternly to "Lay off." MEEHAN simply lent back on his seat, folded his arms, smirked and laughed. I began to move towards MEEHAN but Meg quickly stepped in front of me and quietly told me to