

Whether I would have actually been court-martialled or whether I was being overly dramatic I do not know. In retrospect, I suspect that if I had avoided the senior cadets, I would have been fronted before the CO CSC or the DMA upon my return to the College and inevitably asked to "Show Cause". Either way it would have been the end of my military career.

At approximately 0255hrs, my girlfriend Meg suggested to me that we join the others in going to Liz's sister's house. I agreed with her but I was secretly deciding to launch my planned attack on REED. I gave no indication that I was about to strike. I saw REED talking to a handful of senior cadets on the other side of the main bar. I then covertly adjusted the knife down the front of my jeans. I put my arm around Meg and told her that we would leave with the others but first I had to go to the toilet. I left Meg with Deanne and Liz's sister and her husband then began making my way through the crowd. As I turned the corner of the main bar, I saw REED talking to Staff Cadet Michelle BILSTON (CSC No 5154), an 18-year-old 2nd Class cadet, and about four 1st Class cadets. REED was about 3 metres away and was standing side-on to me, facing BILSTON. I decided that it was time to strike so I quickened my pace as I weaved my way through the crowd in front of the bar.

I stopped a pace away from REED and hesitated for a moment as I fixated a stare on the right side of REED's head. I pulled up the front of my jacket with my left hand, then with my right hand I swiftly pulled the knife from the front of my jeans. I raised the knife instantly above my head then plunged it with force into the right side of REED's head. I heard a squelch as the knife drove into the right side of REED's head, just forward of his right ear near his right temple, and struck bone. BILSTON cried out as REED very quickly began to collapse to the floor. I reacted instantly and lent forward and stabbed REED a second time in the right side of his head. The second blow hit REED just behind his right ear as he fell to the floor in a heap. As the other senior cadets looked down at him in shock, I turned and dashed towards the exit. I crouched over and ran through the crowd. I brushed past the bouncers on the door and jumped down the short flight of stairs leading to the entrance door, which I flung open and burst out onto the sidewalk. Without stopping, I turned left and ran down the sidewalk.

I had got about 50 metres down Northbourne Avenue when I heard someone behind me yell, "Come back here, you cunt!" I turned around and saw one of the 1st Class cadets who had been talking to REED, standing outside the entrance to the Private Bin, with his fists clenched. I kept running down the sidewalk. As I kept running, I noticed blood on my hands and a dull pain in my right hand. I looked down and saw that I was bleeding from a narrow, but deep, cut to the base of my right little finger. When I had stabbed REED, I had unknowingly held the knife with the fully sharpened edge uppermost. As a result, when the knife hit bone and stopped, my hand had slide down onto the blade. While still running and while still holding the knife in my right hand, I pulled out my handkerchief with my left hand and held it over the wound.

As I was running along Northbourne Avenue I decided to look for a police car to hail down so I could hand myself in. I turned left into London Court and then into Petrie Place where I spotted two uniformed AFP officers (Senior Constable John WELDON and Constable TURK) in a marked police sedan driving slowly along the City Walk. I managed to flag them down in the laneway behind the Ainslie Avenue ANZ Canberra City branch bank. Soon afterwards, a senior AFP detective from the City Police Station, Inspector Brian HEPWORTH, arrived at the scene in an unmarked AFP sedan, and at 0315hrs, another unmarked AFP sedan arrived in the laneway containing two detectives, First Constable Shane AUSTIN and Senior Constable Christopher NOVAK from the Belconnen Criminal Investigation Branch (CIB). AUSTIN later stated that, 'I saw that the defendant had a handkerchief wrapped around his little finger of his right hand and that there was a large amount of dried blood on both his hands. I also saw that his nose was swollen and that he had a laceration approximately one centimetre long across the bridge of his nose. I then gave the defendant a seat in the rear of Inspector HEPWORTH's unmarked vehicle'. At 0340hrs, I was transported under police escort in an ambulance to the Accident and Emergency Department of the Royal Canberra Hospital in Acton.

My girlfriend Meg later told me that, "There was blood everywhere. He [REED] was covered in blood. His mates had to carry him out of the Bin." REED was taken to the Royal Canberra Hospital by his friends and was placed in one of the cubicles in the Accident and Emergency Department about 15 minutes before I arrived. Unbeknownst to REED, I was placed in the cubicle next to him. When First Constable AUSTIN arrived at the hospital he

went to examine REED. He later noted, 'I saw that he had a deep laceration about 2 centimetres long just forward of his right ear and another small laceration about 1 centimetre long just behind his right ear. I saw that there was a large amount of blood around these injuries and also on Mr REED's hands and the front of his clothes. I then had a short conversation with Mr REED. I formed the opinion that Mr REED was well affected by alcohol'.

At about 0355hrs, I was escorted to the main desk of the Accident and Emergency Department, where I rang the Duty Officer at Duntroon, Captain HANSON. I did not identify myself; I simply told HANSON that there had been trouble at the Bin and that, "Under Officer Reed has been stabbed and Staff Cadet Knight has been arrested." Staff Cadet BILSTON was standing next to me as I said this and she cried out, "So it *was* him!" obviously ignorant of the fact that I was the person standing next to her (* *Staff Cadet BILSTON was forced to repeat a class and did not graduate until June 1988*).

I returned to the cubicle where I was being treated. As I sat down, I realized that REED was being treated in the cubicle next to mine. I could not see him through the curtain separating the cubicles, but I could hear him talking to the nurse who was treating him. The on-call Commonwealth Medical Officer, Dr Peter WILKINS, examined REED at about 0400hrs, and then examined me at about 0412hrs. REED had his wounds stitched and was discharged soon afterwards. I saw him walk slowly out of the hospital holding the right side of his head. I overheard him mumble, "I'm going to get that cunt" as he walked out. REED never noticed that I was in the cubicle next to him.

I was later informed by the Resident Casualty Doctor that my knife had cut through both the flexor tendons at the base of my little finger, and that it would require two hours of micro-surgery to repair them over two days in hospital.

After my injuries were examined by Dr WILKINS, I was questioned by First Constable AUSTIN and Senior Constable NOVAK almost continuously from 0420hrs to 0550hrs. At around 0510hrs, AUSTIN told me that, "Due to the fact that you require surgery on your hand and in light of certain admissions you have made to me I am going to place you in

custody and you will later be charged with the Malicious Wounding with a knife of Philip John REED".

At 0550hrs, I was conveyed to Ward 3C of the Royal Canberra Hospital and placed under police guard. At about 0620hrs, First Constable AUSTIN rang Captain HANSON at Duntroon and informed him of the complete situation, before he and NOVAK returned to the City Police Station. Between 0930-1200hrs I underwent surgery and had my flexor tendons fixed by a micro-surgeon, Dr JAMES. At 2005hrs First Constable AUSTIN, Senior Constable NOVAK and the officer-in-charge of the Police Watch-house, Sergeant HOBART, returned to the Royal Canberra Hospital and came to my bedside. I was woken by AUSTIN and I was then formally charged by Sergeant HOBART with: (1) Malicious Wounding, (2) Assault, and (3) Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm. After I was charged Sergeant HOBART returned to the City Police Station, and AUSTIN and NOVAK requested that I consent to a formal record of interview. I requested a solicitor so I was given a phone to call the Duty Officer at RMC, who was by then Captain VOTE. I informed Captain VOTE of my predicament and asked if the Army would provide me with legal representation. Captain VOTE replied that he would find out and call back.

A few minutes later Captain VOTE called back. I left the room and took the call at the nurses' desk in the ward. Captain VOTE told me that the Army would not provide me with legal assistance. I returned to my bed and said to AUSTIN and NOVAK that, "The Army are not providing me with any Legal Aid, I want to provide that record of interview now." The duty registrar, Dr MARCHANT, told AUSTIN and NOVAK that I was fit to be interviewed and the official record of interview commenced at 2101hrs. The interview continued, with frequent interruptions, until 0031hrs on Monday 1 June 1987. During this time, I had no contact with any relatives or friends, and the only contact I had with the Duntroon authorities was with Captain VOTE when he visited the ward, from 2113-2122hrs, to get an up-date on my situation (*see nurse's observations reported at Attachment 12*).

At around 1100hrs on Monday 1 June 1987, I was discharged from the Royal Canberra Hospital and transferred in an Army ambulance to 5 Camp Hospital at Duntroon, where I was admitted at mid-day. I was interned in the hospital because the college authorities would not allow me to return to the Kokoda Company barracks. They feared that if I did, I

would be the victim of reprisals from the senior cadets who were outraged over my stabbing of REED. Later that afternoon I was given local leave in order to report to the Belconnen police station at 1630hrs.

I arrived back at 5 Camp Hospital at around 1900hrs. After I reported back in to the hospital I went to call my mother from the public pay phone in the corridor at the front of the hospital. When I arrived at the pay phone I found that it was occupied by a 3rd Class cadet from Kokoda Company, Staff Cadet Steve GRACE. Steve hurriedly finished his call to talk to me. He asked me how I was. After I replied that I was "fighting fit", Steve offered himself as a character witness for me when I went to trial over the stabbing. When I warned him that by doing so he might be subject to repercussions from the authorities or the senior cadets, he just shrugged his shoulders. I was heartened that at least one of my classmates was prepared to back me up. Steve also informed me that during the night of the stabbing a civilian visitor had stolen Staff Cadet Simon MACKS's SLR rifle from MACKS's room in the barracks. I found this comical, even though the negligent loss of a rifle would normally be a court-martial offence (The theft of Staff Cadet MACKS' rifle was also another example of the inability of the majority of junior staff cadets in Kokoda Company to lock their bedroom doors). As Steve left the hospital to return to the barracks he said to me, "If you need me as a character witness, or you need anything else, just let me know."

After calling my mother, I returned to my room in the hospital where I was visited by my father at around 2000hrs. My father was then a major and the OC of the Education Unit at Lavarack Barracks, Townsville. He had taken emergency compassionate leave and had flown down from Townsville that night. I was pleased to see my father but I felt that I had shamed him and that he was disappointed in me.

At 0800hrs on Tuesday 2 June 1987, I was again granted local leave so I could return to the Royal Canberra Hospital for a 2030hrs appointment with Dr JAMES. At the hospital, Dr JAMES applied a dynamic splint to my right hand and forearm, which included a half-cast to the back of my forearm, and informed me that it would have to remain on for a month.

Following the appointment with Dr JAMES, my father and I returned to the college and examined my Torana in the Kokoda Company car park. We discovered that the driver's side

front tire had been let down and that the engine had been disabled by the removal of some essential engine parts. We later learnt that this had been done by some senior cadets. We then went to my room in the barracks and discovered that the senior cadets had gained access to my car by using my spare set of car keys, which they had found by searching my room after the stabbing.

Later that morning my father and I met with Major VERCOE and Sergeant JORGENSON in VERCOE's office in the barracks. When we informed Major VERCOE of what had been done to my car, Major VERCOE reacted with surprise. He said that he knew nothing about the senior cadets tampering with my car or even that they had searched my room. Major VERCOE said that he would investigate the matter and ensure that the car was restored to its original condition.

What I did not know was that Major VERCOE had been directed by Lieutenant-Colonel KIBBEY on the morning of 31 May 1987 to compile a report on the incidents at the Private Bin the previous night (*see Attachment 13*). A number of the senior cadets involved in the incident were questioned by Major VERCOE but I was not asked for my version of events. The subsequent report, without my input, contains a number of falsehoods. Some are the result of confusion but others are deliberate.

On the morning of Wednesday 3 June 1987, my mother flew up from Melbourne, and together with my father, she visited me in the grounds of the 5 Camp Hospital. She was forced, due to work commitments, to return to Melbourne late that afternoon. During the rest of the afternoon, my father and I collected my (by then restored) Torana and drove it to a garage in Fyshwick to have it serviced. They then spent the evening together around Canberra before I returned to 5 Camp Hospital at around 2100hrs.

DMA's Board of Study

On Wednesday 3 June 1987, the Duntroon DMA's Board of Study sat in review of '5266, Staff Cadet Third Class J. Knight'. The Brief of the DMA BOS recorded the summary of the CSC CO, Lieutenant-Colonel KIBBEY, as; 'Unsatisfactory CSC performance. Offr [officer] qual poor. Discipline. 10 charges. (Three civ offences pending). A poor cadet setting a bad

example to others. Pers [personal] and regt [regimental] standards below average. PT and sport satisfactory. (Aust Rules 2nds). PGR [Peer Group Rating] 23/26.' Lieutenant-Colonel KIBBEY's recommendation was listed simply as 'Show Cause' (*see Attachment 15*).

The reference to being, 'A poor cadet setting a bad example to others', was taken from Sergeant JORGENSON's Leadership Assessment/Observation Report (*see Attachment 8*) and Major VERCOE's reports on me (*see Attachments 9 & 14*) and was based on their incorrect assumption regarding who instigated the unauthorized trip to McDonald's by myself and Staff Cadets SMITH and BARTLE (*see above*).

The MTW CI, Lieutenant-Colonel WILLIS, had his summary recorded as; 'Field Training. Assessed as marginal for FEX 3 [Exercise "Tobruk"] and 4 [Exercise "Samichon"]. His fieldcraft was poor and he was impulsive. He seems to have low peer acceptance. His nav is suspect. He was not tested in Battlecraft due to his being at the RAP for treatment of a broken nose he sustained in a fight on 23 May. He was spoken to by CI MTW at the last BOS for low personal standards and indiscipline. General Studies. Satisfactory.' Lieutenant-Colonel WILLIS's recommendation was listed as 'Discuss.' The reference to 'a fight on 23 May' was a reference to the fight I had with the Midshipmen from ADFA (* *discussed above*). The 'low peer acceptance' referred to in Lieutenant-Colonel WILLIS's summary was a reference to the comments in my Field Report card for Exercise "Tobruk" (* *discussed above*).

The comments of my Guidance Officer, Captain GOSS, were summarized as, 'SCDT Knight's performance has been unsatisfactory during this Reporting Period. He has shown a distinct lack of motivation and self discipline. He has been charged on an almost continual basis - a direct result of his poor judgement and a lack of a sense of responsibility. His integrity is also in question due to the member resubmitting another cadet's work during a retest. His trouble stems from a lack of maturity and his new found wealth resulting in a preference for social activities rather than applying himself at RMC. Though he has accepted advice and criticism and is aware of his faults, he is yet to take action to remedy them.' Captain GOSS's last interview with me had been on 11 May 1987. The 'retest' he referred to was the map marking homework (* *discussed above*).

The Board of Study also recorded a summary of the other factors they discussed; 'In hospital, three charges by civil police (Crimes Act), hearing next week. Trial probably in three months, probable not guilty plea. Unsatisfactory discipline record. (Seven charges, three civil). Not accepted by peers. Med unfit for 6-8 weeks.'

The final decision of the DMA's Board of Study sealed my fate at the Royal Military College. In the BOS Brief the Board's decision was officially recorded as; 'Decision: Prepare Show Cause, seven charges. Below standard on all leadership qualities. Issue following legal advice re civil charges. Convalescent leave from RMC/5 Camp Hospital. Seek legal advice on whether he can be suspended pending court case.'

I was not present at the Board of Study's review; I did not even know it was being held. Nor was I immediately informed of its decision.

During the early morning of Thursday 4 June 1987, my father flew back to Townsville, while I was finally discharged from 5 Camp Hospital on extended convalescent leave at 1030hrs. That afternoon I collected my pay from the CSC HQ, along with the rest of the 3rd Class cadets from Kokoda Company. I was understandably the centre of attention as most of the 3rd Class cadets gathered around me to question and probe me about my stabbing of CSM REED and my arrest. They also told me that I had been given the nickname "Staff Cadet Knife", and that there was a joke going around that I was going to be issued a machete the next time we went out on a field exercise. It was also humorously rumoured that an annual "Be Kind to CSM Day" was going to be inaugurated. This was later referred to in the June 1987 issue of *The Journal of the Royal Military College Duntroon* in the chapter on Kokoda Company: 'an annual 'Be kind to CSM Day' was inaugurated following a particularly unusual [15] days-to-go present. As all this was going on, 45 Section went from being the Corps Rearguard to the official College Backdoor with 'Hooks' Crane continuing to lose his hair and Gary Stone having to bulk order consortments of PD105s [Army charge sheets]' (*The Journal of the Royal Military College Duntroon*, June 1987, page 30).

(* REED would go on to serve only 12 years as an infantry officer before he left the Army in 1999. STONE would be awarded the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Trophy but he, too, would leave the Army as a Major. He actually served under then Lieutenant-Colonel Roger NOBLE, who was in the

class below him, in Iraq in 2005 as part of the Al Muthanaa Task Group. Most of the senior cadets and most of my classmates would not progress further than Major. CRANE would be the only 1st Class cadet to graduate from 45 Section in June 1987. Of those in 45 Section during January-June 1987, only half the section eventually graduated. CRANE was the only 1st Class cadet to graduate from the section. COLMER and DUNKLEY were the only 2nd Class cadets. WHITTING was the only 3rd Class cadet.)

My classmates also told me about how the senior cadets had reacted with intense rage when they learnt of my stabbing of REED. I was informed how the senior cadets had found out that I was admitted to the Royal Canberra Hospital after the stabbing, through a nurse who worked there and who was a friend of Sergeant Stephen ALEXANDER, and how they had planned to sneak into the hospital and bash me in my hospital bed. They had abandoned the idea only after finding out that I was under police guard. Instead, the senior cadets had searched my room in the barracks, disabled my car after finding my spare set of car keys, and had planned to wait until I returned to my room then firebomb the room with a Molotov cocktail. The senior cadets had even contemplated firebombing my room even if I did not return.

After I collected my pay at CSC HQ, I was given a lift by Staff Cadet MANNERING to collect my car from the garage in Fyshwick. The Torana's servicing fee accounted for most of my pay but luckily I had saved over \$1,000 of my salary in my Defence Force Credit Union account (* *Contrary to Captain GOSS's assumption, I had, in fact, been reasonably thrifty as far as my 'new found wealth' was concerned*). As soon as I had collected my car, I went to stay with my paternal uncle and aunt at their house in the Canberra suburb of Griffith.

1st DMA Interview

On Friday 5 June 1987, I was interviewed by the Director of Military Art at RMC, Colonel Rodney EARLE, in the DMA's office at the college. Major P.J. NEUHAUS, who was an SO2 (Staff Officer Grade 2) Cadets at Duntroon, sat silently in the rear of the office and transcribed part of the interview. His official Record of Interview recorded the following exchanges between Colonel EARLE and me:

EARLE: I have called you here to advise you of your current situation as a result of my recent Board of Study. You were raised for special mention and the decision of the Board was that you be asked to 'Show Cause.' The 'Show Cause' is in relation to your poor performance here at RMC, and does not include your current difficulty as a result of the incident the other night (pause). You are below the RMC standard in every leadership and personal quality. Do you understand?

KNIGHT: Yes Sir.

EARLE: During your time at RMC, you have shown the following weaknesses:

- a. Poor fieldcraft,
- b. impulsiveness,
- c. low personal standards,
- d. poor self discipline, and
- e. poor acceptance of responsibility.

I don't think you would disagree with these, would you?

KNIGHT: No Sir.

EARLE: So it would seem that you are not suited to being an Army Officer, and I have grounds to ask you to 'Show Cause'?

KNIGHT: Yes Sir.

EARLE: What happens now is that you remain on convalescent leave until after your [court] hearing. Then when we know what is to follow, I will either ask you to 'Show Cause' at that point or you will be suspended from RMC. It is quite clear that you cannot return to RMC until this is resolved. Is that clear?

KNIGHT: Yes Sir, except in regards to suspension.

EARLE: The suspension will be until after the court case is concluded, should that be the way the hearing goes. I believe you would be paid while on suspension, but you will not live in the lines [barracks] again.

KNIGHT: Yes Sir.

EARLE: At the moment you are on convalescent leave?

KNIGHT: Yes Sir.

EARLE: Staying with your uncle?

KNIGHT: Yes Sir.

EARLE: Your father?