

arrangements and if a replacement could not be found, to ring me on the 15 Platoon telephone number. I had still not been contacted by QUIN by mid-day Sunday so I went on local leave with some young women I had recently befriended. A replacement had, in fact, been organized by QUIN but he also failed to attend the match. As it was my name on the match sheet, it was me who was charged by Major VERCOE with being absent from duty. This charge was heard at an OC's hearing on 10 April 1987.

### **"Bishing"**

On the evening of Monday 16 March 1987, a spate of "bishing" broke out at the college. Bishing was a traditional form of unofficial inter-company rivalry which originated in the "old" Duntroon. It originally took the form of practical jokes but it developed into inter-company water and flour/cocoa bomb fights, playful brawling and the taking of "hostages" (e.g. the rival company's cadet CSM). Only cadets, of all three classes, were involved and although unofficial, the authorities were aware of the prevalence of "bishing". It was supposed to be taken all in fun but, at times, it became serious in its nature and got out of control. The "bishes" on 16 March 1987 resulted in a number of 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadets being injured with a couple being hospitalised at 5 Camp Hospital. On the night of 16 March the Gallipoli Company barracks were "bished" and a number of cadets had their rooms hosed out with fire hoses. This resulted in four cadets' stereos suffering water damage. Also during the "bish" on Gallipoli Company a female 3<sup>rd</sup> class cadet, Staff Cadet Kelly SMITH (CSC No 5316), was chased down a flight of stairs which had been covered in water from the fire hoses. She slipped and fell, seriously tearing ligaments in her hip. She was hospitalised at 5 Camp Hospital for a number of weeks and after her discharge from the hospital she was restricted in participating in training for many weeks (\* Staff Cadet SMITH was one of the 31 cadets from Class I/87 that did not graduate). During the same night I witnessed some senior cadets lose their tempers during the playful brawling and became violent, hitting junior cadets in the head or stomach.

On the morning of Tuesday 17 March 1987, the cadets of Kokoda Company formed up in three ranks on the road outside their barracks to move down to the college's sports oval for the inter-company tug-o-war competition. As we were

forming up the Kapyong Company tug-o-war teams ran past in formation. As they did so, two senior cadets from Kokoda Company sprayed them with water from a fire hose on a second storey balcony. The Kapyong teams ran on but then they rushed into the Kokoda Company barracks' middle foyer and began hosing it down with a fire hose. I and a handful of other Kokoda Company cadets ran to the foyer to stop them. Most of the cadets involved in the skirmish were laughing as it was taken in fun by both sides. I ran around the outside of the building and tackled the Kapyong Company senior cadet using the fire hose. I grabbed him in a bear hug from behind and pulled the cadet away from the doorway of the foyer. As I did so someone behind me shouted angrily, "Fucking Fourthie!" and pushed me from behind into the nearby rose bushes. I let go of the Kapyong cadet with the fire hose and fell backwards into the thorny bushes. I disentangled myself from the bushes and stepped back onto the concrete footpath. I was immediately set upon by five senior cadets from Kapyong Company. They repeatedly punched me about the head and body, mostly to the back of the head, and kicked and kneed me as they pushed and dragged me to the ground. Here the punches and kicks continued until a Kokoda Company 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadet, Staff Cadet John "Steve" McQUEEN (CSC No 5281), broke from the ranks of the Kokoda Company junior cadets watching the assault from the foyer doorway, shouted, "Leave him alone!" and started running at them. They immediately stopped their attack and quickly fled before McQUEEN could get to them. As McQUEEN helped me to my feet I noticed that a trickle of blood was running down my left hand. I also noticed the severe swelling and reddening of the back of my left hand and wrist, in addition to the mild paralysis I was feeling in my left hand. I thought I may have broken my wrist. I angrily strode back to the forming-up point at the front of the barracks cradling my left arm in my right hand. When I walked towards CSM REED I bitterly remarked, "How do you press assault charges?" REED simply laughed and asked why. In response, I held my left arm forward and displayed the obvious damage to my left hand and wrist. REED instantly stopped laughing and a look of shock came over his face. He turned around and detailed a 1<sup>st</sup> Class cadet, Staff Cadet Peter EDWARDS (CSC No 5045), to escort me across the road to 5 Camp Hospital for treatment. After x-rays and an examination, I was diagnosed by Army doctor Captain Sue STONES as having severe ligament damage in the dorsum of the left wrist. As a result, I had a back slab cast put on my left forearm, and my left hand and wrist remained in a sling during the period

17-24 March 1987. On that day, the cast was removed and replaced with a restrictive bandage that remained until 10 April 1987. Needless to say, I was severely restricted in participating in physical or practical training during this period. I effectively could not participate in any training activity that required the use of both arms. I was prevented from participating fully in FEX "Buna" in the Mogo State Forest during 25 March - 1 April 1987. During this field exercise I acted as a platoon and company HQ signaller. When Captain STONES examined me, I told her that he had fallen over in the foyer of the barracks. I lied due to a mixture of loyalty towards fellow cadets and a fear of retribution from senior cadets if the actual cause of my injuries was reported. I was later told by a 2<sup>nd</sup> Class cadet in Kokoda Company, the company's Administration NCO, Lance-Corporal Roger NOBLE (CSC No 4731), that the Kapyong Company cadets involved in the incident had been "spoken to" by the Kapyong Company cadet CSM, Under Officer Michael FULHAM (CSC No 5050). No further action was taken by me or anyone else in response to what happened.

I have attached photocopies of two photographs that were taken of me during the time my arm was in a restrictive bandage (Attachment 4). Both photographs were taken in March 1987. The first photograph was taken outside the northern entrance to the ANZAC Block barracks. The second photograph was taken during FEX "Buna".

### **1<sup>st</sup> Guidance Interview**

On the evening of Tuesday 17 March 1987, I was seen by my RMC Guidance Officer, Captain I.P. GOSS, for the first time. Captain GOSS's official Record of Interview for that meeting read as follows: 'During this interview I discussed in detail how the member was settling in at RMC and how his maturity was developing. He is only 18 years of age and as a result he's had some difficulty in relating to his peers. He was advised to think before he speaks and to listen and learn.'

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Charge

On Friday 20 March 1987, I was charged again with Absence From Duty in breach of s.23(1) of the *DFDA*. On this occasion it was for failing to attend a programmed retraining lesson held by Captain M.G. BROWN for those cadets who had failed the navigation theory exam. I was one of those cadets. I thought that the retraining lesson was voluntary but I did not bother to find out whether it was voluntary or not. The retraining was, in fact, compulsory for those who had failed the exam and Captain BROWN subsequently charged me for being absent. This charge was heard at an OC's hearing held on 7 April 1987.

Beginning in early March 1987, many of the senior cadets began to harass and victimize those 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Cadets that they did not believe were officer material. By late March 1987, this "assimilation" of these junior cadets by senior cadets had continued unabated. The majority of senior cadets seem to have decided that it was their responsibility to determine which 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadets were not suited to being Army officers. They bestowed upon themselves the right to harass these chosen 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadets out of the college if the college authorities, the "Push", failed to do so. If the RMC Board of Studies did not ask the cadet in question to "Show Cause" (why his appointment as a staff cadet should be terminated, a final step before inevitable discharge from the college) or the cadet would not voluntarily resign, then most senior cadets harassed, victimized and persecuted the cadet until he did resign or his performance became so bad that he was asked to "Show Cause" anyway. In nearly all cases it was only the senior cadets, not the college authorities, who made the initial determination that the cadet in question was not officer material and, therefore, in need of "special treatment". The attitude of the majority of senior cadets was best summed up by their regular declaration that, "If the 'Push' doesn't get rid of them, we will!" It was this type of individualized, targeted treatment that distinguished the bastardization of the "new" Duntroon with that of the general bastardization of the "old" Duntroon.

The harassment I write of is not to suggest that all of my failings at Duntroon were attributable solely to bastardization. I accept that many of my failings were my own personal failings. One of my personal failings was that when I felt I was being singled-out by instructors I tended to "buck the system" (as evidenced by

my ejection from my A Vehicle Drivers Course), whereas when I liked my instructors I tended to strive for perfection (as evidenced by being the Student of Merit on my Radio Operators Course).

I was not, however, the only 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadet who was harassed, victimized and persecuted. Nor was I the 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadet who received the worst treatment at the hands of senior cadets. There were a number of other 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadets who were subjected to constant abuse and victimization. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadets who were subjected to "special treatment" similar to the treatment I received were: Steve RIDD, Kim EXAUDI-LARSEN, S.S. MOODY (CSC No 5286), and B.B. TAYLOR (CSC No 5324). On many occasions these cadets, like me, brought down punishment upon themselves, but in the main it was self-righteous and vindictive persecution from senior cadets. RIDD and I, however, also gained reputations as "troublemakers" because we would not back down when confronted by senior cadets. By the end of July 1987, RIDD, EXAUDI-LARSEN, MOODY and TAYLOR, along with numerous other 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadets, had resigned their appointments as staff cadets at RMC.

On one occasion I asked a 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadet in Kokoda Company's 13 Platoon, Staff Cadet Steve GRACE (CSC No 5252), who was both an ex-sailor and a former soldier in an Aviation unit, what he had done the previous evening. He replied that following afternoon lectures, he got changed and went to the mess for dinner, then did some laundry, prepared for the next day's training and went to bed around 2200hrs. He then asked me what I had done. I told him, "I didn't have time for dinner and I got stuffed around and ran errands till 2 in the morning, then got up at 5.30 to get ready for the first Defaulters Parade." This exchange highlights the obvious difference in time management between a junior cadet that was left alone by senior cadets, and a junior cadet subjected to "special treatment" (compounded by deserved or undeserved disciplinary measures).

The harassment, victimization and general persecution that drove 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadets to desert or resign varied in frequency, degree and nature. In addition to constant pressure to resign, selected 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadets were also subjected to many forms of persecution including: theft of personal civilian and Army-issue property, verbal abuse and ridicule, derogatory references to civilian companions

and friends, the assigning of more duties than other junior cadets, automatic charges instead of reprimands or Extra Drills awarded to other junior cadets, unauthorized and covert “borrowing” of their equipment which was then returned dirty or not at all, excessive Show Parades, the assigning of meaningless errands often involving the search for something or someone that did not exist, the forced subjugation to “regulations” that had been invented by senior cadets, threatened violence, physical attacks during “bishes” and at other times, the fire hosing or cocoa/flour/shaving cream bombing of their rooms, the forced subjugation to “orders” whilst on local leave, and derogatory remarks in relation to the cadet’s background.

### **Theft & “Borrowing”**

A major problem at the college whilst I was there was theft. The theft of Army issue equipment, uniforms and training manuals as well as personal civilian clothing at Kokoda Company barracks can only be described as epidemic. The extent to which items were stolen made it impossible to attribute it to one or even a couple of offenders. Theft from the laundries, platoon storerooms and even cadets’ rooms was common. What is interesting to note is that ex-serving soldiers were especially disgusted with the amount of stolen items as it far surpassed the extent of thievery they had experienced as private soldiers or junior NCOs. Theft of items occurred within a time span as little as 20 minutes from the time the items were last observed. This applied especially to thefts from the laundry. The amount of theft I experienced at Duntroon far exceeded that I experienced at the various schools I attended, in the Army Cadets, in the Army Reserve, or even in the four Maximum Security prisons I have served time in over the past 26 years.

On one occasion, a 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadet in Kokoda Company, Staff Cadet Craig SMITH (CSC No 5318), a former rifleman with 1 RAR, had his personal copy of a training manual stolen from his room. It was the same day that the 1<sup>st</sup> Class cadets were required to return their issued copies of that manual. The manual was one of the texts issued to 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadets half-way through 3<sup>rd</sup> Class and was not returned until half-way through 1<sup>st</sup> Class. The next day all of the cadets in 3<sup>rd</sup> Class were issued copies of this manual. By chance, Staff Cadet SMITH was issued his personal copy of the manual that had been stolen the day before.

The most serious incident of theft at Duntroon while I was there was the theft of three pay packets. Three 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadets in the Gallipoli Company barracks had their pay packets, each containing three weeks cash wages, stolen from their rooms. On this occasion the 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadets had been required to attend training immediately after attending a Pay Parade. As a result, they did not have the time required to bank their wages, so they left their pay packets in their rooms. Whilst they were undergoing training, the three pay packets were stolen. During this time, the only personnel in the Gallipoli Company barracks were senior cadets. The Special Investigation Branch of the Military Police investigated the thefts but no suspects were charged. Not one of the Gallipoli Company senior cadets made a statement on the basis that they all “heard nothing, saw nothing, knew nothing” about the thefts.

Borrowing of equipment was also prevalent at the college even though it was an offence according to RMC Standing Orders (Standing Order No 1413). Cadets of all classes regularly borrowed equipment of each other but it was the senior cadets who constantly borrowed items from 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadets with and without (most often without) their knowledge. It frequently occurred that a 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadet would return to his or her room to obtain equipment needed for their next lesson, only to discover that it had already been “borrowed” by a senior cadet. Although rarely given, the most common excuse proffered by senior cadets for taking equipment or articles of clothing was that theirs was dirty or they did not have the time to find their own. In nearly all cases, it was left up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadet concerned to locate and retrieve, and then clean, the “borrowed” item. Senior cadets usually gave no explanation or apology for borrowing items without asking and they never left a message regarding the item’s whereabouts. On a number of occasions such unauthorized borrowing resulted in myself, and other junior cadets, being late for lessons or spending hours searching for, locating and then cleaning missing items.

On one occasion, I was changing into my evening dress uniform when I discovered that my cummerbund – an essential item of the mess uniform – was missing from my room. I frantically searched for it and asked everyone in the platoon area if they had taken it. As I was late for mess, I was finally forced to borrow a cummerbund off another 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadet, Staff Cadet Adrian

MANNERING (CSC No 5339), who was not attending mess that evening. Over the next week I thoroughly searched my own room and the 15 Platoon storerooms, and questioned almost everyone in the platoon, but I failed to locate my cummerbund. A week had passed since the cummerbund had gone missing when I asked 1<sup>st</sup> Class cadet, Staff Cadet James MUNTZ (CSC No 4876), the only member of 15 Platoon I had not asked, if he knew the whereabouts of the cummerbund. MUNTZ casually replied that he had needed a cummerbund one evening the week before so he had borrowed mine. He then turned around and produced the cummerbund from one of his drawers, then tossed it to me. MUNTZ's own cummerbund was at that time draped over the back of his chair.

On another occasion, I returned to the barracks during a two-minute break between classroom lectures. I took off my peaked cap and left it on my bed while I went to the communal toilets. Upon returning a minute later, I discovered my cap had disappeared. I frantically searched for it and asked everyone in the vicinity if they had borrowed it but I failed to locate it. Five minutes later a 2<sup>nd</sup> Class cadet, Staff Cadet M. Harry WALDEN (CSC No 4629), walked into the hallway wearing my cap. WALDEN casually remarked that he had needed a cap to go on an errand and he did not have time to find his own, so he had gone into my room and grabbed my cap. I was, of course, late for the next lesson and after giving "No excuse" for being late, I was given two EDs by Sergeant P.R. HERNIMAN, the instructor conducting the lecture.

Incidents such as the above two examples were frustratingly common for me and other junior cadets. Although by themselves they were relatively trivial, they occurred with sufficient frequency to damage the cadet's reputation for punctuality and personal organization in the eyes of the instructors. The offer of "No excuse" for any unclean piece of "borrowed" equipment or clothing, or for being late to a lesson, was a standard response by junior cadets.

During my time at RMC, I also had senior cadets in my platoon ask for and demand a regular supply of cigarettes from me. They never repaid the favour and on one occasion, Staff Cadet WALDEN cheerfully said to me, "Don't worry. In a couple of months you'll have your own 'Fourthies' to scab off."



Such minor irritating treatment also extended to petty, but nasty, abuse. I was constantly abused by many senior cadets for wearing Australian Rules football shorts because they did not "like the look of them." I was ordered by numerous senior cadets to get rid of them because they were too tight for their own Rugby tastes. At times senior cadets also referred to my girlfriends and other civilian friends as sluts, dogs, bush pigs and "Boons".

Such bitter treatment also extended, on occasion, to other 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadets. During one evening in early March 1987, Staff Cadet MUNTZ was holding Show Parades with me and the two other 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadets in 45 Section, Staff Cadets Steve RIDD (CSC No 5303) and Chris WHITTING (CSC No 5336) During this inspection he threatened to stop Staff Cadet WHITTING from seeing his wife and children the following weekend. WHITTING had not seen his family for nearly three months and he had been granted special leave to see them. MUNTZ angrily stated that he did not care and that if WHITTING didn't get his uniform up to MUNTZ's standard, then MUNTZ would make sure that WHITTING did not go on leave. After MUNTZ had dismissed us, WHITTING was so upset by MUNTZ's threat that he was almost in tears and was shaking with rage.

### **Complaint of Bastardization**

Around this time a junior cadet in Kokoda Company complained to instructing staff that there was ongoing "bastardization" of select junior cadets in Kokoda Company. The identity of the cadet was not revealed but I believe it may have been Staff Cadet Steve RIDD (CSC No 5303) or Staff Cadet Kim EXAUDI-LARSEN (CSC No 5245). This report became known to senior cadets in the company and a meeting with the company's junior cadets was held in the ANZAC Block common room one evening after instructing staff had left for the day. Around 1930hrs all the 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadets in Kokoda Company were ordered to assemble in the company's recreation room. As soon as we were all present, we were then harangued for around half-an-hour by a group of around 4-6 senior cadets and told not to go to "the Push" (the authorities) with complaints about mistreatment. A very irate 2<sup>nd</sup> Class cadet (and Kokoda Company Administration NCO) Lance-Corporal NOBLE (CSC No 4731) informed us that a 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadet in Kokoda Company had gone to Major VERCOE and had complained about bastardization

in the company. NOBLE then warned us not to go to the OC with such complaints, but to instead use the cadet chain of command; section leader, platoon sergeant, CSM (positions which were all occupied by senior cadets). NOBLE also told us that bastardization no longer existed at Duntroon and that if it did re-appear, then the senior cadets would "deal with it." Although NOBLE did not name the junior cadet who had complained to the OC, he accused him of overreacting and he warned everyone else not to do the same otherwise they would "get in the shit." During this assembly, NOBLE also berated the 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadets for not going to my aid when I was attacked during the "bish" on 17 March 1987. Any thought of reporting incidents of bastardization or victimization to the college authorities were swiftly dispelled by this lecture.

I should state that during my time in Kokoda Company I cannot recall a single instance of being "bastardized" by Lance-Corporal NOBLE.

Soon after the Show Parade incident with MUNTZ, WHITTING moved out of the barracks to live with his family in the Canberra suburb of Hughes. In the meantime, Staff Cadet RIDD deserted and later returned to the college to resign. With RIDD's desertion and WHITTING's move out of the barracks, I was left as the only 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadet in 45 Section outside of training hours. This usually meant from 1700hrs until 0700hrs the following morning. During these times, I had to complete any of 45 Section's duties, work details or errands by himself.

### **Desertions**

During my time at RMC Duntroon, two 3<sup>rd</sup> Class cadets deserted (as opposed to simply going AWOL for a brief period).

After weeks of constant abuse, Staff Cadet Steve RIDD (CSC No 5303) deserted early one morning in March 1987 (he "deserted" as opposed to simply going AWOL for a day or two – he had not intention of returning). After evading the Military Police in Melbourne and Sydney, he returned to Canberra a couple of weeks later of his own volition. He rang the Commandant of RMC, Major-General Murray BLAKE, and offered to return to the college if he was not court-martialled and was instead allowed to resign and be discharged from the Army. Major-