

themselves a group of “untouchables.” To have assaulted MEEHAN, or to have reported the incident, would have undoubtedly resulted in swift and severe retribution from the senior cadets at the college.

TOC Incident

In one incident on a Saturday afternoon in May 1987, I was ordered to prepare tea, coffee and toast for some of the senior cadets in 15 Platoon. This was for afternoon “TOC” (literally “Tea or coffee?” an acronym used to refer to tea breaks at the college) and was conducted in a spare room in the barracks converted into 15 Platoon’s “TOC room”. The room was located directly opposite my room in the Kokoda Company barracks. I was initially instructed to prepare the TOC orders of senior cadets whilst I was on the TOC room floor, crawling from table to table. After about five minutes, I was instructed to prepare the orders without touching the floor, so I had no option but to climb over the tables and chairs. Throughout this exercise the senior cadets present, which included 2nd Class Staff Cadets DUNKLEY and COLMER, yelled at me to hurry up with the orders or they changed their orders when their initial order was partially completed. After about 10 minutes, me and another 3rd Class cadet, Staff Cadet Paul THOMPSON (CSC No 5328), were both given a piece of toast smothered in butter, honey and peanut butter. We were then ordered to force our slices of toast unbroken into our mouths and eat them. The winner of this “race” was the first to get the entire slice into their mouth. Soon after this “race”, Staff Cadet COLMER strode into my room, stood on my chair and stuck a piece of butter-covered toast onto the ceiling. When the slice eventually fell to the floor, COLMER wiped the residue butter off the ceiling and threw the slice of toast into my bin. The entire episode lasted about 15 minutes and was a great source of entertainment to the senior cadets involved. Staff Cadet THOMPSON and I, however, treated the incident warily as “all in good fun”. Even so, I considered it as juvenile “fun” that I did not particularly wish to participate in. It was apparent it was a custom of the “old” Duntroon and I did not wish to perpetuate it.

By mid-May 1987, I was feeling increasingly isolated and persecuted at the college. I felt disappointed in myself when I got myself into trouble, and I was becoming increasingly angry and bitter at the unprovoked treatment I was

receiving from many – but not all – senior cadets. Instead of ignoring or reporting the victimization and harassment, I became defiant and sought to “tough it out”. I was too immature and too strong willed to simply disregard the persecution and wait another month until the 1st Class graduated and I became a 2nd Class cadet. I failed to recognize that by confronting the senior cadets I was simply worsening my own position. I felt that I had been singled out for “special treatment” with the aim of forcing me to resign, and the treatment I did receive only serves to confirm this assumption. I was determined that I would be thrown out before I resigned of my own volition. In the evenings I began to seek solace by driving into Civic (even though it was an AWOL offence for 3rd Class cadets to go on local leave during Monday to Thursday), buying a few cans of beer, then returning to the Kokoda Company rear car park to drink and brood alone in my car. When on local leave I tried to avoid the traditional hang-outs of Duntroon cadets, such as the Private Bin nightclub, and went to socialise in Belconnen or further afield.

My pent-up anger and suppressed frustration at the college coincided with increasing incidences of violence when I was on local leave. Although I was spending most of his local leave with my civilian girlfriend and our friends, and I was trying to avoid encountering senior cadets outside the college, I still frequented pubs and nightclubs which Duntroon and ADFA cadets also frequented. This was practically unavoidable in Canberra. Throughout mid-May 1987, I was involved in a number of fights with civilians at nightclubs in Civic. In the main, however, I did not instigate these confrontations. In one incident at the Civic Club I interceded in a confrontation between Kokoda Company 3rd Class cadets Craig SMITH (CSC No 5318) and Doug BARTLE (CSC No 5225) and a small group of civilians. As I approached the group it appeared that Staff Cadet SMITH, who was very drunk, was about to be assaulted by the civilian he was arguing with so I rushed over and assaulted the civilian. The club’s bouncers broke-up the ensuing fight.

Fight with ADFA cadets

On the night of Friday 22 May 1987, I gave a lift to two 3rd Class cadets from Kokoda Company, John “Steve” McQUEEN (CSC No 5281) and Eric GARDINER (CSC No 5251). Following a minor accident I had on Canberra Avenue, which

incapacitated my car, Staff Cadet McQUEEN was given a lift by a passing civilian to his dinner date, and I caught a taxi into Civic with Staff Cadet GARDINER. We arrived at around 2100hrs and we went directly to the Private Bin nightclub to meet up with other 3rd Class cadets. While at the Private Bin, I drank heavily.

At around 0100hrs on Saturday 23 May 1987, I left the Private Bin with Kokoda Company 3rd Class cadets Craig SMITH (CSC No 5318) and Doug BARTLE (CSC No 5225). As we were leaving we crossed paths with a group of six ADFA cadets who were about to enter the club, two of whom were RAN midshipmen dressed in their White Jacket Mess Dress uniforms. SMITH, who was drunk, made some loud derogatory remarks about the Navy as he passed them, After further derogatory remarks by SMITH, a fight ensued between us and the ADFA cadets in a laneway near the Private Bin nightclub. Although Staff Cadet SMITH had provoked the confrontation, I was the one who initiated the fight by throwing the first punch. During this encounter I suffered a broken nose and two chipped front teeth. When an ADFA cadet and I were the last ones fighting the fight was broken up by the intercession of the others present. My injuries were treated at 5 Camp Hospital at around 0130hrs by the Medical Officer on night duty, Lieutenant K.E. MILLER. I told Lieutenant MILLER that I had been in a fight with civilians in Civic. I was kept in 5 Camp Hospital for observation and I was discharged at 0930hrs by the duty Nursing Officer, Flying Officer D. THOMAS.

7th Charge

After going on local leave on Saturday 23 May 1987, I spent the night with my girlfriend in my room in the Kokoda Company barracks (in contravention of Standing Orders relating to entertaining civilian friends in the lines). Early the following morning we were leaving the barracks hand-in-hand when we passed an instructor, Major P. NEUHAUS, as he was entering the barracks. Although Major NEUHAUS said nothing at the time and simply kept walking, he later charged me with Failure to Comply With a Lawful General Order in breach of s.29 of the DFDA. It was my seventh charge.

On the morning of Monday 25 May 1987, I was examined at 5 Camp Hospital by a Navy doctor, Lieutenant P.J. NEWBERY, who sent me into Civic to have my

head x-rayed at a medical centre. The x-rays indicated that I had an undisplaced nose fracture but no other cranial fractures. As a result, Lieutenant NEWBERY passed me as 'Fit for Restricted Duty' only, and recommended that I be employed as a "Command Post Warrior" (HQ signaller) during the upcoming field exercise FEX "Samichon". Later that afternoon I attended the 21st Dental Unit, located in a wing of the 5 Camp Hospital, to have my damaged front teeth treated. The Army dentist, Captain A.J. LYNHAM, filed down the chipped lower front tooth and filled in the chipped upper tooth.

By the time I reported back on duty that afternoon the Battlecraft testing, which was being held that day in the hills behind the college, was practically over.

On the morning of Tuesday 26 May 1987, I reported to 5 Camp Hospital for an arranged check-up. I told the Army medic who examined me, Sergeant T. GIULIANI, that I felt well enough to patrol so I was passed 'Fit for Restricted Duty' with the only restriction being that I protect my nose which was having a problem setting.

FEX "Samichon"

FEX "Samichon" was held during 26-29 May 1987, and was a 4-day tactical operations exercise held in the Bateman's Bay region of the Mogo State Forest on NSW's south coast. The exercise was essentially training in patrolling, contact drills and counter-ambush drills at the 11-man section level. As only 3rd Class cadets were attending the exercise, every cadet was rotated through the various positions in each section, including the command positions of section leader and section 2IC. The instructor assigned to each section assessed each cadet in the section on two occasions; once after the cadet acted as the section 2IC, and once again after he acted as the section leader. Each assessment was recorded on a Field Report card. During FEX "Samichon" I was energetic and did my best to act as mature and responsible as possible, and to make as few mistakes as possible. I was intent on making a good impression on my section instructor, Sergeant P.J. STILL, and I concentrated on maintaining a good performance throughout the exercise. When there were section de-briefings following tactical manoeuvres I made thoughtful and sensible contributions, and I refrained from being a "smart-

arse” or making stupid comments. I was also overjoyed to be on a field exercise without 2nd Class cadets, and this was quite clearly displayed in my general manner and attitude. My overall performance on FEX “Samichon” was in direct contrast to my performance on the previous field exercise, FEX “Tobruk”, during which I had been constantly angry, unenthusiastic, had made as little effort as possible, and was generally indifferent to practically everything that happened on the exercise.

My determination and concerted effort to excel on FEX “Samichon”, however, turned to bitterness at the end of the exercise when I was shown my end-of-exercise Field Report card. I was disappointed at Sergeant STILL’s comments on the card, which concentrated almost entirely on the mistakes I had made while acting as section leader. Even so, after some reflection, I accepted most of the criticisms. Sergeant STILL had noted that I had run ‘around as if he’s bullet proof, and that I used ‘Rambo tactics.’ Sergeant STILL also noted that, ‘Knight’s navigation is suspect’, due to a considerable error I made in pin-pointing the section’s location on the map after having only moved a short distance. Sergeant STILL did, however, note that I gave clear and concise “fire orders” and that I had controlled the fire of the section’s machinegun group very well when I had acted as the section 2IC. What disappointed me was not the comments on the Field Report card, but the overall mark I received - 5/10 - the same mark I had received at the end of FEX “Tobruk”. I received the lowest mark in the section, along with Staff Cadet C.G. HILL (CSC No 5258), who also received 5/10.

At the end of FEX “Samichon”, as we were driven back to the college, I felt bitter, withdrawn and deeply depressed. I felt defeated in my attempts to make a comeback and I felt a sense of impending doom. I sat next Staff Cadet Kim EXAUDI-LARSEN during the journey back to the college. Kim told me how he felt that succeeding at RMC would be his last chance to make his parents proud of him, and that if he resigned and went home his parents, his parents would be ashamed of him. He said, therefore, that he would never resign of his own choice because he felt that if he did, he would have nothing to return home to. Kim was adamant that if he did resign and return home, it would be in disgrace as far as his family would be concerned. I confessed to him that I felt that I was in a similar situation and that I too had been resolute in my decision not to resign. I

told him that I had concluded, however, that at that stage it looked like I would eventually be run out of the college or be thrown out.

We arrived back at the college in the late afternoon of Friday 29 May 1987, and we assembled at the MTW building near the Kokoda Company barracks. As was the usual practice, we had to clean and return issued weapons and equipment before we would be dismissed. After a couple of hours I was still cleaning some equipment at the MTW armoury when I was informed by another 3rd Class cadet from Kokoda Company, Staff Cadet John "Steve" McQUEEN (CSC No 5281), that I was the Kokoda Company "Coy-Ord" (Company Orderly) for the day and that a 2nd Class cadet had been covering for me until then (* Each company had a Company Orderly rostered on every day of the week with both 2nd and 3rd Class cadets being rotated through the duty via a roster system. It was a 24-hour duty commencing each day at 0600hrs). I asked McQUEEN if he was joking as we had just returned from a field exercise (* It was standard practice that a cadet was not rostered on as Company Orderly upon returning from a field exercise). McQUEEN replied that he was only telling him what a 2nd Class cadet, Staff Cadet Charles SHAW (CSC No 5201), had told him to tell him.

An hour later I finished cleaning the exercise equipment and returned to the Kokoda Company barracks. I immediately went to the company's main noticeboard to read through the Kokoda Company Coy-Ord roster. The Company Orderly rostered for that day was, in fact, Staff Cadet SHAW and I was not due to relieve him until 0600hrs the following day. My anger began to rise as I made my way to the company's recreation room where a group of cadets were watching a video. Staff Cadet SHAW was amongst them and when he saw me in the doorway he told me that I was the company's Coy-Ord for the day. I retorted angrily, "Bullshit! I've seen the roster. I'm not doing your Coy-Ord duty for you." SHAW spun around in his lounge chair to face me and yelled, "You'll do what I fuckin' tell you to do!" I responded by telling him he could "forget it!" as I walked off into the foyer.

A couple of hours later I got in my car and went on local leave. I drove straight to the Belconnen Mall and purchased a black-handled, stainless steel, imitation switchblade knife with a 4" blade from the mall's army disposal store. I chose that

particular knife because it was easy to handle, was easy to conceal and had a double-edged blade with the leading edge fully sharpened, and the other edge partially sharpened near the tip of the blade. I considered the fights I had recently been in with civilians and the increasing confrontations I was having with senior cadets, and I decided that it was wise to start carrying a knife for my own protection.

Jeans Incident at Private Bin

After purchasing the knife I left the Belconnen Mall and drove straight to my girlfriend's house in the nearby Canberra suburb of Page. My girlfriend, Meg RUMMERY, and I then left her house and arrived at the Private Bin nightclub at around 2130hrs. We entered the ground floor bar and went to get a table by the door. On the way, we passed Lance-Corporal THORP and Staff Cadet EVERINGHAM, who were on local leave and who were drinking by the bar. EVERINGHAM sternly called me over and told me that he did not like the faded jeans I was wearing and, anyway, RMC Dress Regulations forbade the wearing of denim by cadets when they were on local leave (* This was a regulation that was almost universally disobeyed by cadets of all classes). He told me that I should not be wearing them and I would be in trouble if any instructors caught me. He then ordered me to return to the college and change. I told Everingham that I would take the risk of being caught and then I walked back to Meg at a nearby table.

Bayonet Incident

At around 0730hrs on Saturday 30 May 1987, all the cadets at RMC attended a parade rehearsal for the upcoming Queen's Birthday Parade. The rehearsal involved drill with rifle and bayonet. The rehearsal finished at around 0930hrs and the cadets were marched off the college's main parade ground. As they were forming up into their respective companies to march back to their barracks, Lance-Corporal THORP angrily called me over to where he was standing on the road leading to the parade ground. The moment I arrived THORP began abusing me over the jeans incident the previous night. As THORP ranted at me he had his unsheathed bayonet levelled a couple of inches from my chest. He furiously told

me that I “must be a fucking idiot” for wearing jeans on local leave, and for not returning to the barracks when instructed to by Staff Cadet EVERINGHAM. When THORP had finished abusing me he quickly jabbed me in the chest with his bayonet. I reacted instantly by angrily pushing THORP’s arm away and striding off to form up with the rest of Kokoda Company. I ignored THORP’s furious commands to return to where he was standing.

Kokoda Company marched off in formation and just before we halted at the Kokoda Company barracks THORP, who was behind me, told me to remain behind after we were dismissed. Moments later the company halted and was dismissed on the road in front of the barracks. THORP immediately told me that he was going to charge me with insubordination for walking off on him. I queried this but THORP interjected by shouting “Stand to attention when you talk to me!” I responded, “You can get fucked. I’m sick of this shit.” Exasperated, I turned around and strode off. THORP yelled at my back, “Get back here, Knight!” He then added, “I’m going to charge you!” I shouted back over my shoulder, “Good! We’ll settle it at the charge hearing!” I then mounted the steps into the barracks and walked to my room.

I had only just entered my room and thrown my cap and rifle on my bed when I heard someone yell from the hallway, “Get out here, Knight!” I ventured out into the hallway and saw Staff Cadet Robert HAMBURGER (CSC No 4548), a 2nd Class cadet, striding down the hallway towards me and we met halfway down the hallway. As we came face-to-face, HAMBURGER started abusing me for walking off on Lance-Corporal THORP and told me, “You’re not going to push me around like you did little Thorp! I oughta’ punch you in the head!” He then told me that I was going to be charged with insubordination. Whenever I attempted to speak HAMBURGER lent forward and shouted, “Shut your mouth!” On my third attempt to speak, HAMBURGER furiously shouted, “Shut your fuckin’ mouth!” I then calmly replied, “If you’re not going to listen to me, I’m not going to talk to you.” As I turned to walk back to my room HAMBURGER grabbed me by the front of my shirt with both hands, then quickly pushed me backwards up against the wall and held me there.

By this stage, there were about ten 1st and 2nd Class cadets standing around me, including 15 Platoon's platoon sergeant, Sergeant Gary STONE and my section leader, Corporal Peter CRANE. The 3rd Class cadets in the area (Staff Cadets Craig SMITH, Stuart CROME and Adrian MANNERING) all remained in their rooms. HAMBURGER continued holding me up against the wall and kept repeating "I oughta' punch you in the head. I oughta' punch you in the fuckin' head." I believed that I was going to be attacked at any moment so I asked HAMBURGER to let go of me while gently trying to push his arms away. I noticed that the only 3rd Class cadet in the hallway, Staff Cadet Stuart "Sid" CROME (CSC No 5240), was standing a few metres away in the doorway of Staff Cadet Adrian MANNERING's room and was watching what was happening. I looked at him, raised my arms above my head and loudly asked CROME, "Are you watching this?" CROME stared back at me but remained silent as he walked into MANNERING's room out of sight. I was willing and able to fight the senior cadets in the hallway should I be attacked, but the fact that my classmates were not even prepared to bear witness to me being bashed, let alone come to my aid, was one of the most disheartening experiences I had at Duntroon.

As only senior cadets were huddled around me in the hallway, I feared that I was about to be bashed by them so I decided to strike first. I knocked HAMBURGER's arms away and angrily pushed him backwards. As I stepped forward to press home my attack a 2nd Class cadet, Staff Cadet Michael DUNKLEY, quickly stepped in between us and held us apart. At this point, Corporal Matthew THOMSON barged through the crowd on my right side and shouted at me, "I saw that! You're gone! You're getting charged with insubordination and assaulting a superior!" THOMSON concluded by confining me to my room and telling me to go there immediately. I glared back at THOMSON for a moment then turned and angrily strode back to my room. When I got there I turned and started talking to Sergeant STONE and Corporal CRANE in the doorway. STONE asked me what had caused the confrontation with HAMBURGER, and I was just starting to explain when Staff Cadet Nicholas EVERINGHAM ran up on my right side shouting abuse at me. EVERINGHAM was so enraged and he was yelling so hard that he was unintelligible. Sergeant STONE stepped forward and told EVERINGHAM to calm down, then he told me to step back into my room. When I walked back into my room, Corporal THOMSON walked in behind me. When I

turned around at the foot of my bed, THOMSON told me to take off my bayonet, which was still attached to my parade belt in a scabbard. I asked aggressively, "Why?" THOMSON, who was standing near the door, replied, "Just do it." I glared back at him for a few moments then, maintaining my stare at him, I unclipped my belt and tossed it onto the end of my bed. THOMSON watched the belt land on the bed then informed me, "You're going to be charged with insubordination and assaulting a superior." I snapped back, "Good! We'll settle it at the charge hearing." THOMSON stared back at me wide-eyed and then said, "You're a fool, Knight", as he backed out of the room. I flicked up my right hand as I angrily retorted, "Just get out! We'll settle it at the charge hearing."

After THOMSON walked out Sergeant STONE walked into the room and calmly asked me what had caused the earlier incident. After I recounted the whole story, STONE told me to stay in my room and "cool off." I asked him if I was confined to my room. STONE told me he I was not, but to stay there and relax. STONE then left.

A few minutes later Staff Cadet Kim EXAUDI-LARSEN walked into my room and asked me what had happened earlier. I was flustered and quite angry by this stage. I lit up a cigarette and angrily paced up and down my room as I told Kim what had happened. Kim listened sympathetically and expressed his concern, but soon afterwards he had to leave as all the 3rd Class cadets in Kokoda Company had been ordered to clean-up the outside of the barracks.

I finished my cigarette alone in my room then noticed my fellow 3rd Class cadets were outside working dressed in shorts, sneakers and tee-shirts. Not wanting to sit in my room while my classmates were working, I got changed and joined them outside. As I moved around the outside of the northern end of the barracks I asked the various 3rd Class cadets who had been in the vicinity when the incident with HAMBURGER had occurred earlier - CROME, MANNERING and SMITH - why they hadn't come out of their rooms when they heard the commotion in the hallway. They all avoided looking at me and all of them said the same thing; they had stayed in their rooms because they did not want to get involved. This response depressed me even further.