

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.

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. AUSTIN and Senior Constable NOVAK and the officer-in-charge of the Police Watch-house, Sergeant HOBART, returned to the Royal Canberra Hospital at 2005hrs on Sunday 31 May 1987, and came to my bedside. Between 0930-1200hrs that day I had undergone surgery and had my flexor tendons fixed by a micro-surgeon, Dr JAMES. 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.

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 (CSC No 5252). 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. 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.

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 qual poor. Discipline. 10 charges. (Three civ offences pending). A poor cadet setting a bad example to others. Pers and regt 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.'

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).

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 Adrian 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 past wages 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 Cadets at Duntroon and who had been on my Selection Board the year before, 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?

KNIGHT: He went back (to Townsville) yesterday.

EARLE: What course of action do you propose to follow?

KNIGHT: I am undecided at this stage Sir. I have legal counsel and will take their advice.

EARLE: Alright so you know where you stand now?

KNIGHT: Yes Sir.

EARLE: So you go off on convalescent leave until 12 Jun 87. After your hearing, you are to report to the ADJT [RMC Adjutant, Captain R.J. MARTIN], and we will make the necessary arrangements then. OK is all that clear?

KNIGHT: Yes Sir.

I wanted to present my own case to the DMA but I did not believe that there would be any point. It was obvious that I did not have a chance of remaining at Duntroon; my fate had been sealed by the Board of Study. I also did not believe that the Board's decision for me to 'Show Cause' was not related to my 'current difficulty as a result of the incident the other night' (* The official Army records of the BOS's meeting clearly shows that my suspicion was correct, and that the stabbing incident had been a determining influence in the Board's final 'Show Cause' decision). I knew that 'Show Cause' hearings only ever had one outcome: an immediate and dishonourable discharge. It was known by every cadet at the college that 'Show Cause' hearings were only an administrative formality when the college authorities wanted to expel a cadet from the college, and the cadet in question refused to resign voluntarily. At this stage, I was graded as 108/118 in academics and 115/118 in leadership, but I was the only 3rd Class cadet asked to 'Show Cause' by the Board of Study after their 3 June 1987 meeting. My

appointment as a Staff Cadet at Duntroon had been tenuous for some weeks but the stabbing of my CSM effectively left the college authorities with no option but to force me to resign.

For most of the time was on convalescent leave in Canberra I was with relatives or friends. I did not return to the college during this time, nor did I visit the Private Bin.

Court Hearing

On the morning of Friday 12 June 1987, I appeared in the ACT Magistrates' Court in Civic for a bail hearing (Case No CC3792/87). Two of my uncles accompanied me. Major VERCOE also attended the hearing in civilian attire. A solicitor from the Canberra law firm of Crowley and Chamberlain appeared for me and made a brief plea on my behalf before the magistrate bailed me to appear again in the ACT Magistrates' Court on Tuesday 10 November 1987. Bail was set at a \$5,000 self-surety so I simply had to sign the bail register and I was free to go. I was not required to appear in court again until 10 November 1987.

Resignation & Discharge

Following the court hearing, I returned to Duntroon to report to the CSC Adjutant, Captain MARTIN, and to be further interviewed by Colonel EARLE in his office. The WO Cadets at the college, WO2 G.P. MOFFATT, sat in on the interview as the transcriber. The official Record of Interview recorded only part of the interview:

EARLE: I understand your court case hearing has been delayed until 10 Nov 87?

KNIGHT: Yes Sir that's right.

EARLE: Now about your future when do we hear as to what you intend doing?

KNIGHT: Would after mid-term break be okay Sir?

EARLE: No. What about next Friday. In any case why do you need so long to make a decision?

KNIGHT: I'm waiting on legal advice.

EARLE: The other option is to suspend you. Once your hand is healed you could go on leave without pay until November. I want you to report back to me at 1200hrs next Friday. And in the meantime you will be on convalescent leave until then, in the Canberra area. Now are you quite clear?

KNIGHT: Yes Sir.

EARLE: Okay just tell me in your own words what I have just outlined.

The DMA and I then went on to discuss my options. The DMA finally gave me three options. First, I could go on leave on full pay until my hand had healed, then on leave without pay until the completion of my court case in November. I would then be asked to 'Show Cause' with its inevitable result. Second, I could front a 'Show Cause' hearing before the Board of Study the following Thursday, 18 June 1987. This would result in me being discharged that day with a week's pay and a dishonourable discharge on my military record. Third, I could resign my appointment as a Staff Cadet immediately and take six weeks convalescent leave on full pay, then be honourably discharged from the Army.

I had no real option but to take the last option. My hand was going to remain in a half-cast until 1 July 1987, so I was unemployable until then and so I needed the pay that accompanied convalescent leave. I also wanted to re-enlist in the Army Reserve so I could not front a 'Show Cause' hearing as the dishonourable discharge that accompanied it might affect my chances of re-enlistment. I knew that I had no real option but to resign but I stalled until the following week before I informed the DMA of my decision.

At this stage I had made the decision to settle in Canberra after my discharge from the Army. I applied to join the ACT Fire Brigade, but I withdrew my application form after I discovered that I was required to list any pending criminal charges. I began looking for a flat to rent in the Canberra area, but I could not find a suitable flat. I was also not financially stable as I had not obtained re-employment and my savings were quickly diminishing.

On Tuesday 16 June 1987, the Graduation Parade for the 1st Class cadets was held at Duntroon. I later received a copy of June 1987 edition of *The Journal of*

the Royal Military College Duntroon. I appear in the rear row of the 15 Platoon, Kokoda Company photo on page 32 (see Attachment 3), and in the fourth row of the Class III A photo on page 47.

On Thursday 18 June 1987, I returned to the college to draft my letter of resignation and to begin my discharge procedure. I had no idea about how to write my letter of resignation so I was given a copy of one by an admin sergeant at the CSC HQ. The resignation I was given was that of another 3rd Class cadet, Staff Cadet S.A. BRADSHAW (CSC No 5228), who had recently resigned. My resignation was dated 18 June 1987, and was addressed to the then Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General Lawrie O'DONNELL. My letter of resignation read:

Sir,

RESIGNATION FROM THE ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE

1. I wish to tender my resignation from the Royal Military College for the following reasons:
 - a. I do not feel that I am mature enough at this stage to accept the responsibility and discipline placed upon me at the College.
 - b. I don't feel confident that my performance in both military and academic studies was at an acceptable level.
2. It is requested that my termination of service be on the 24 July 1987.
3. I wish to have termination of my service in the 2nd Military District [NSW].
4. At this stage I would like to continue my service in the Army Reserve.

[Signed]

On Friday 19 June 1987, I was once again interviewed by Colonel EARLE at CSC HQ. On this occasion Major J.B. SANDS, who was an SO2 Cadets at the College, sat in on the interview as the transcriber. The official Record of Interview recorded the following exchange:

be posted to the Regimental Supernumerary List in the 2nd Military District, to be administered by Local Administration Canberra.

4. Staff Cadet Knight is currently on convalescent leave recovering from a wound received during the course of the incident mentioned above (he cut his hand while allegedly stabbing another cadet with a pocket knife). Therefore recommend that the effective date of his discharge be 24 July 1987. This will allow adequate time for the necessary treatment to be completed.
5. Staff Cadet Knight is not recommended for future officer training.
6. Staff Cadet Knight has indicated that he wishes to re-enlist in the Army Reserve. Should he do so, I recommend that the application not be processed until the civil charges against him are resolved.

[Signed]

R.M. Earle

Colonel

Performing the Duties of Commandant

I was ignorant of the existence of this letter, but even so, I realised at that time that I would never again be considered for officer training. To compensate for this and to ease the stress of this realization, I fell back on the idea that I would re-enlist in the Army Reserve.

I arrived back in Canberra from my leave in Melbourne on Wednesday 1 July 1987. I had the cast on my forearm removed at the Royal Canberra Hospital that morning. I then drove directly to Duntroon to complete my formal discharge from the college. Although I ended up being discharged from RMC on Thursday 2 July 1987, it was not until 10 July 1987 that I obtained my final clearance from the college.

During the period 2-10 July 1987, I spent much of my time completing my clearance procedure.

On Thursday 2 July 1987, I fronted my final Army Medical Assessment Board at 5 Camp Hospital. The medical examination was conducted by Captain Sue