

RMC Duntroon & Bastardization

By Julian Knight*



Duntroon: *n.* a suburb of Canberra: seat of the Royal Military College of Australia.¹

Bastardization or **Bastardisation:** *n.* 1. the act of bastardizing. 2. *Austral.* a. an initiation ceremony in a school or military unit, esp. one involving brutality. b. brutality or bullying.²

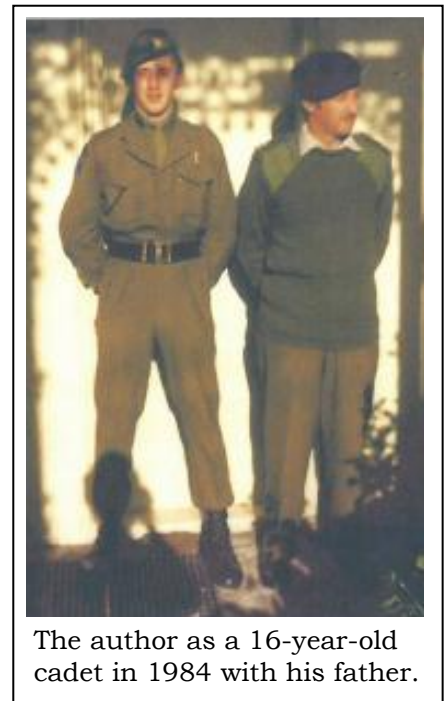
Bastardisation – in the context of training and educational institutions, an umbrella term referring to bullying, harassment, victimisation and illegitimate initiation practices.³

Doctrina Vim Promovet: “knowledge promotes strength” - motto of RMC Duntroon.

Introduction

I wanted to be a soldier for as long as I can remember. By the time I started high school I wanted to emulate my father and be an officer in the Australian Regular Army. I joined the Army Cadets at age 14 and enlisted as a trooper in an Army Reserve armoured unit at age 17 when I was still at school. Throughout high school I dreamed of gaining entry to the 12-month course at the Officer Cadet School (OCS) at Portsea in Victoria. By the time I was old enough to gain entry to Portsea it had been closed as an army officer training establishment, and the course had been transferred to Duntroon in the Australian Capital Territory.

I was a junior staff cadet at the Royal Military College (RMC) Duntroon during the first half of 1987, and I was eventually forced to resign my appointment after stabbing a senior staff cadet in a Canberra nightclub. I recounted my experiences in a 94-page Personal Account I submitted to the Defence Abuse Response Taskforce (DART) in 2013.⁴



The author as a 16-year-old cadet in 1984 with his father.

Instead of graduating as a lieutenant in the Australian Regular Army, I committed the Hoddle Street shootings in Melbourne and I am now serving a life sentence in Port Phillip Prison.⁵



The author as a 17-year-old cadet in 1985 on an Army Reserve exercise.

I never claimed to be an outstanding officer candidate. As I quite freely admitted in my submission to the DART, due to a combination of personal failings and a lack of ambition I would have probably graduated in the bottom third of my class and not have risen above the rank of major.⁶ Before applying to attend Duntroon I had applied for admission to the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA). I did not progress past the initial examination day because I was deemed to be 'too weak academically' for ADFA.⁷ This opinion was also shared by the RMC Selection Board who felt that I might not be able to cope with the academic work at RMC.⁸ My Final Board Grading was Marginal, the lowest grade for acceptance to RMC, and defined as: 'Has definite limitations which make him ... a marginal selection. Could develop into an adequate junior officer.'⁹

My apparent lack of academic ability was actually academic laziness. In high school I simply aimed to obtain my Higher School Certificate because it was the minimum academic requirement for officer training. In 1988, however, I was assessed as having an IQ of 132 (the cut-off score for admission into MENSA is 130), and in 1996, I was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Strategic and Defence Studies from Deakin University.¹⁰

What I was, however, was immature and keen to the point of being gung ho. As a fellow junior cadet in my section has commented, I 'was a keen soldier' but 'Julian was abused from his early training. I believe because his immaturity and them misreading his keenness made him a target of the bullying culture at Duntroon.'¹¹ The same fellow junior cadet added: 'More than most cadets, he was ridiculed, harassed, persecuted, tormented and ostracised by the more senior cadets ... [He] probably copped more abuse than anyone else in that intake.'



The author as an 18-year-old trooper in 1986.

I do not consider my failure to graduate from RMC Duntroon as a case of "should have been" more so a case of what "could have been". What is not in doubt is that if I had not been bastardized at Duntroon, I would not have ended up stabbing my cadet Company Sergeant Major, I would not have then been forced to resign from Duntroon and from the Army, and I would not have then committed the Hoddle Street shootings 16 days after my discharge. At 9.30pm on Sunday 9 August 1987, I would have been in my room in my barracks at Duntroon in Canberra polishing my boots and ironing my uniform, not committing a mass shooting on the streets of Melbourne.

Even with being subjected to constant bastardization I was not the worst performing junior staff cadet at the end of 3rd Class. Of the junior cadets in my company my Peer Group Rating was 23rd out of 26. In relation to the entire junior class, I was graded as 108/118 in academics and 115/118 in leadership. I was, however, the only 3rd Class cadet the Board of Study decided at their 3 June 1987 meeting should ‘Show Cause’ [why my appointment as a staff cadet should not be terminated]. What had cemented their decision was my stabbing of my cadet CSM three days earlier.

Duntroon

The Royal Military College, Duntroon, was established in 1911 at the foot of Mt Pleasant in what is now the Australian Capital Territory. Until 1986, when it was replaced by the tri-service Australian Defence Force Academy, it was Australia’s premier army officer training establishment. The cadet body during this period was made up exclusively of young male civilian entrants and the course was of 4 years duration. In 1986, Duntroon replaced OCS Portsea and extended Portsea’s 12-month course to 18-months. In 1987, however, most of the 1st and 2nd Class “senior” cadets at the “new” Duntroon had started their training at the “old” Duntroon.



The RMC Duntroon looking north from the main parade ground towards the Sovereign Company barracks, the flag station & the Cadets’ Mess.

Bastardization

Bastardization (or “hazing”) can take any of three forms. First, it can be of a universal nature designed to “toughen up” a recruit body. Such bastardization has been a feature of military training regimes throughout history, from the Spartans through the Imperial Japanese Army to the French Foreign Legion and the Republic of Korea army. Such training regimes tend to produce soldiers that are not only tough but also brutal. Second, bastardization can take the form of initiation ceremonies applied universally to a junior (freshman) class. Such ceremonies have been a feature of both military and civilian colleges, military units and sports clubs. The defining feature of such ceremonies is that they tend to be of short duration, from one night to a single week (e.g. “Hell Week”), and tend to be good-natured. An extreme form of such bastardization, however, was the year-long “Fourthie Games” played on first year “junior” cadets at the “old”

Duntroon by the second, third and fourth year “senior” cadets. Third, bastardization can simply be harassment, bullying and abuse of a targeted individual for personal reasons. The first and second forms of bastardization tend to result in group solidarity; the third form creates division and the isolation of the targeted individual. The first half of Stanley Kubrick’s 1987 movie “*Full Metal Jacket*” is probably the best Hollywood portrayal of bastardization in both its universal and targeted forms.

The repeated bastardization ‘scandals’ that have plagued Duntroon and ADFA were notably absent from Australia’s other officer training establishments. The Officer Cadet School (OCS) **Portsea** operated for 33 years (1952-85) and produced 3,544 graduates. The Officer Training Unit (OTU) **Scheyville** operated for 8 years (1965-73) and produced 1,803 National Service graduates. The WRAAC Officer Cadet School

(OCS) **Georges Heights** operated for 32 years (1952-84) and produced 462 female officer graduates. All of these institutions produced officers without a hint of bastardization. Similarly, the Royal Australian Naval College (RANC) **Jervis Bay**

has been in operation since 1913, and the RAAF Academy, **Point Cook** has been in operation since 1947, and neither institution has been tainted by bastardization. Of the three army officer training institutions that Duntroon was based on – the US Military Academy at West Point (established in 1802), the UK’s RMA, Sandhurst (established in 1812), and Canada’s RMC Kingston (established 1876) – only West Point has been blighted by “hazing”.

It is apparent that “bastardization” and “hazing” are features of those institutions that have an inherent 3 or 4-tiered class system amongst the cadet body. It also appears to be a feature of those institutions whose cadet body is made up of almost exclusively of young civilian entrants (i.e. 17-22-year-old males with no prior military experience). All of the senior cadets who targeted me for bastardization at Duntroon were either direct entry or ex-ADFA civilian entrants.

I was recently provided with a copy of Bruce Moore’s book, “*A Lexicon of Cadet Language*”.¹² Mr Moore writes that the most common rationalisation for bastardization given by cadet respondents to the slang survey issued in 1983, ‘was that “it was necessary to get all the fuckwits and wimps out of

the Corps”¹³ and it was “necessary to get all fuckwits out of the Corps”.¹⁴ Aside from the obvious faults associated with this attitude – that it is not the



The author’s room (Room 37) in ANZAC Block at Duntroon.



The author as an 18-year-old staff cadet in 1987 at RMC.

responsibility of cadets to make the determination as to who of their classmates deserves to graduate and who does not, and that victimisation based on this determination becomes essentially a self-fulfilling prophecy – I submit that it is also an unreliable prediction as to which cadets will eventually graduate. At the time I stabbed my CSM I had decided to make a concerted effort to turn my performance around. All I had to do was survive another 16 days until my 1st Class tormentors graduated and I became a senior cadet myself. I have recreated below the last Leadership Assessment Report completed on me at Duntroon: six days prior to my stabbing of my CSM.

**Leadership Assessment/Observation Report
RMC Form CG1**

PART 1 - PARTICULARS

Name of Cadet: SCDT KNIGHT J. CAS No. 5266 Date 25 May 87

Event: CSCT – Clear Thinking 17
Simulation Exercise –
‘Disaster on the Derwent’

PART 2 - DESCRIPTION

Description:

SCDT Knight was tasked to play the role of the Captain of the ship, ‘Lake Illawarra’, in a simulation exercise designed to test clear thinking, problem solving, consensus seeking, group decision making and positive debating.

Knight worked diligently during preparation time, presented the case to the judges of the Marine Court of Inquiry confidently and answered questions showing knowledge of facts. This SCDT proved to be articulate, quick thinking and could argue his case convincingly. His presence was commanding and his ability to think clearly the best in the group.

PART 3 - ASSESSMENT

| LEADERSHIP QUALITIES | KEYWORD | SCORE |
|--------------------------|---------|-------|
| Group Influence | CONV | 4 |
| Power of Expression | EXP | 4 |
| Applied Knowledge | SOUND | 4 |
| Organization | METH | 3 |
| Physical Endurance | - | - |
| Judgement | - | - |
| Reaction Under Stress | COMP | 4 |
| Application | ADEQ | 3 |
| Sense of Responsibility | - | - |
| PERSONAL QUALITIES | KEYWORD | SCORE |
| Co-operation | - | - |
| Energy | - | - |
| Confidence | ASS | 4 |
| Acceptance of Procedures | ACC | 3 |
| Participation | CONT | 3 |
| Maturity | - | - |

Not exactly the assessment of a cadet whose performance was so low as to be beyond redemption.

I also point to the results that I and a fellow junior cadet, Staff Cadet Trevor Darby, obtained on Field Exercise (“FEX”) “Tobruk”. FEX “Tobruk” was what I always dreaded; a combined 2nd and 3rd Class exercise. In my Personal Account I wrote that: ‘I received a bare pass score for the exercise of 5/10, the second worst score in my section. The worst score was attained by Staff Cadet DARBY who received a score of 4/10, due mainly to the fact that he fell asleep in a fire pit during the large-scale mock attack late in the exercise that “woke up half of Canberra.”’¹⁵ Staff Cadet Darby obviously managed to overcome his poor performance in 3rd Class because he graduated with the rest of our class in June 1988 and was commissioned into the Royal Australian Infantry. I consider it reasonable to submit that if I had not been subjected to constant bastardization, it would have been possible for me to make a similar transformation.

My experiences on FEX “Tobruk” were also an illustration of how the position of a junior cadet in the eyes of instructing staff was undermined by the behaviour of senior cadets. FEX “Tobruk” was a defensive exercise that involved the digging of fire pits and connecting trenches in a company-size position at the Majura Field Training Range. Despite being a combined exercise, the 2nd Class cadets considered their position at the college applied in the field. The result was the 3rd Class cadets did most of the work and were tasked with completing all of the daily tasks and duties. In my section, myself and Staff Cadet Darby were detailed with *every* task or duty during the exercise (which might explain why he fell asleep during the live-fire exercise!) While the junior cadets worked the senior cadets generally sat around talking. Whenever they spotted instructing staff approaching they would start furiously digging their trenches, pretend not to notice them approaching, then wait until they were within earshot before yelling out such comments as: “Where’s Knight the cunt? Why isn’t he working” “Get back to work, Knight!” Such comments were then dutifully recorded by instructing staff and included in the cadet’s field assessment report. In addition to my own faults during the exercise, my Field Report for FEX “Tobruk” noted that I ‘did not dig with enough effort ... and was not accepted as an equal by his peers’.

Such behaviour by senior cadets in the field extended to similar behaviour in the barracks back at the college. I once asked a fellow junior cadet in my company what he had done the previous evening after lectures. He replied that he had dinner in the mess and completed his various tasks before retiring at 10pm. My response was that, “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.”¹⁶ When the differences in time management between junior cadets left alone and junior cadets subjected to “special treatment” are compared, it is easy to see why those subjected to “special treatment” stood out from their peers as being ‘below standard’.

Strangely enough, my worst tormentors had never been on exercise with me, had not trained with me and were not even in my platoon. As such, it is hard to imagine what their reasons were for subjecting me to “special treatment”. It could not even be said that their general nature was to bastardize junior cadets because the junior cadets in their platoon said that they were “good as gold” with them. Perversely, even though they were not in a position to evaluate whether or not I was ‘up to standard’, the excuse that I was being bastardized because I was

not 'up to standard' became the justification that was passed onto to other senior cadets who then bastardized me for that reason!

The 'weeding-out' rationale for bastardization becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy; the targeted individual is bastardized because he is deemed to be not up to standard, and then fails to reach the standard expected of him because he is being systematically bastardized. Darren Moore in his book "*Duntroon: The Royal Military College of Australia 1911-2001*"¹⁷ wrote of the individualised bastardization that emerged in the 1970s at the "old" Duntroon:¹⁸

This form of harassment was generally intra-class. A group of cadets would decide that a certain cadet was unlikely to make an effective officer and they would therefore 'encourage' him to resign. This 'encouragement' could take the form of shouting 'resign!' every time they saw him; the vandalism of his personal property, such as his uniforms and room (commonly known as 'zapping'), or interrupting his studying to such an extent that it materially affected his academic progress. Harassment of this nature was often protracted and would generally end with either the cadet resigning or other cadets stepping in to curb the behaviour. ... In a vicious cycle, the staff would note, usually under the formal assessment conditions of a field exercise, that the cadet lacked peer acceptance. Thus, in addition to his civil studies suffering, he was also under pressure from the military staff, since he was assessed as not performing at the required standard in the military component of the course. Once a cadet reached such a position, it was difficult to recover, especially if he did not have the support of his classmates. The cadet usually fell into a downward spiral that generally ended with his discharge (for either academic or military failure) or his resignation.

Although Moore writes of the "old" Duntroon in the 1970s, the above is probably the best encapsulation of bastardization and its effects I have read. In my experiences at the "new" Duntroon in the 1980s this individualised treatment was always inter-class (i.e. senior cadets harassing a junior cadet), and no-one stepped in to protect the cadet being targeted. Indeed, when I was confronted and assaulted by a group of senior cadets in the hallway of my barracks the day before I stabbed my CSM, the other junior cadets in my platoon refused to come out of their rooms. When I asked them later why, they all responded that they "didn't want to get involved." Such experiences were soul-destroying. By way of comparison, at my first parade night as a 17-year-old trooper with my Army Reserve regiment I was involved in a brawl with some local youths in a street beside the barracks. A brother of one of the youths I assaulted later came looking for revenge and when I started fighting him at the barracks gate, everyone in the ORs' mess rushed out to come to my aid (and to put a stop to the fight). As it was my first parade night, no-one in the unit knew me personally; the fact that I was a member of the unit was reason enough to come to my aid.

Moore also wrote that: 'Usually the staff were unaware of the extent of the harassment, knowledge of which was generally restricted to the cadet body, as the victim did not want to show that he could not handle the harassment by officially complaining.'¹⁹ The cadet thus contributed to his own demise. The combination of targeted bastardization and not complaining about it had a snowball effect that resulted in the vicious cycle Moore wrote of. If everyone is bastardized, then everyone tends to, for example, be late to class, to not have

their uniform up to standard, to doze off during lectures, etc. If you are the only one being bastardized, then you are the only one who is late to class, the only one whose uniform is not up to standard, the only one who falls asleep in class. By simply responding to staff questions as to the reason for these faults with, “No excuse, sir” the instructing staff eventually view you as the odd man out which, in turn, tends to become the attitude of your classmates. It is this defining feature of individualised bastardization that distinguishes the bastardization of the “new” Duntroon from the “old” Duntroon. I have read many statements from graduates of the “old” Duntroon who talk of being subjected to bastardization (and subsequently bastardizing others) and still graduating. The reason why they still graduated is the generalized nature of the bastardization they experienced did not make them stand out.

An anonymous contributor to the entry on me on Wikipedia (and a fellow staff cadet in my company at Duntroon) wrote that: ²⁰

Julian Knight was popular with his peers, but displayed few of the qualities required of a military officer, barring his expertise with arms. Allegations of being bastardised by senior classmen are true, but not entirely undeserved as Knight often bucked the system. It was common knowledge that the senior classmen in his company had vowed to have Knight resign from RMC. ... It was well known to Knight’s classmates that he had been targeted by ... senior classmen and was bastardised on a daily basis. This was a turning point in the history of Duntroon where senior cadets had been a part of “Old Duntroon” with its misogynistic and bullying culture which was slowly being changed into a more modern style of Officer Training. To these senior cadets it was normal to threaten Knight every time he was to pass them in a corridor and this contributor personally witnessed him being threatened with a bayonet to the face in the company lines by them some weeks earlier after a dress violation which would normally have been dealt with a minor punishment at most. It was a shame Knight’s classmates were never questioned as to what actually went on in the hallways of Kokoda Company under the Company Sergeant Major in question.

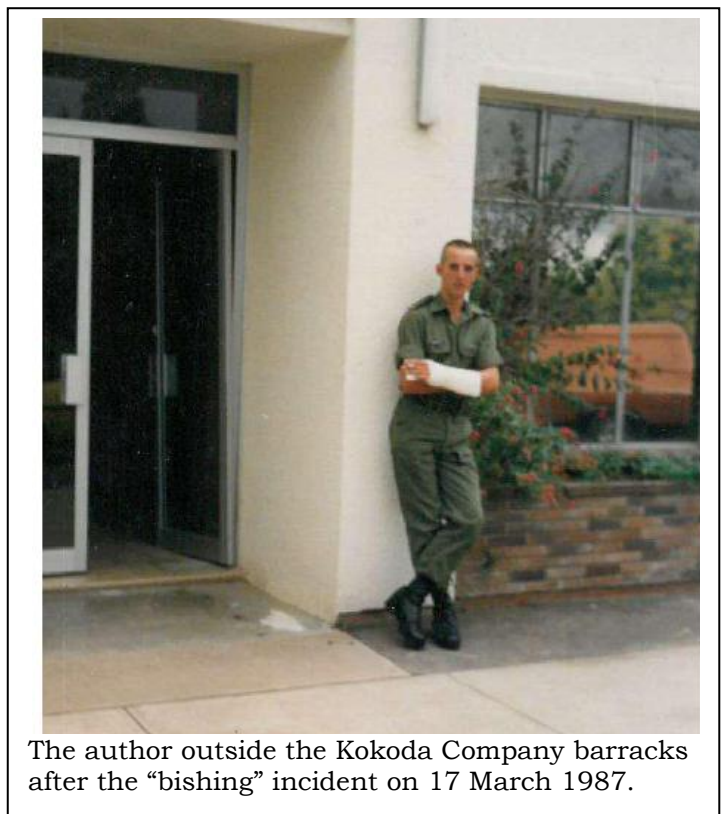
In my Personal Account to the DART I recognized that my immaturity and certain personality traits tolerable in a trooper but not acceptable in an officer (known colloquially as “Other Rank Tendencies”) contributed to this image that arose of me,²¹ but this image took on a life of its own. I developed the reputation as a troublemaking, fighting, uncouth lout. The problem became that I got blamed for misconduct that I did not instigate, for getting involved in fights I did not start, and for traits I did not possess. In one AWOL incident I was blamed for convincing two other junior staff cadets to accompany me to McDonald’s; it was actually their idea and I offered to drive them there after they initially asked to borrow my car. Most of the fights I was involved in off-duty with civilians were either stepping in to protect a fellow cadet or finishing fights a fellow cadet had instigated. As for crude behaviour, one training officer wrote in a report that I stripped to the waist on a field exercise simply to show off my tattoos: I do not and have never had any tattoos!

The alternative excuse for bastardization, that it is part of the “toughening up” process, is at the start of the line of reasoning that ends with justifying the most brutal systems of military training. If we were to adopt this reasoning as principle, then we would emulate the training methods of the Imperial Japanese

Army in the 1930s. That training and indoctrination regime produced the Japanese soldier, who was pound-for-pound the toughest and bravest soldier of the Second World War. It simultaneously produced, however, the most brutal soldier of the Second World War because it produced a “collective psychopathy”.

Another excuse for bastardization is that it is nothing more than a prolonged initiation ceremony. I underwent an initiation ceremony during my second Army Cadets annual camp at Puckapunyal. Those of us who had been newly promoted to NCO rank were subjected to a night-time fireside ceremony by those cadets who were already CUOs and NCOs. The cadet officers supervised the ceremony from a discreet distance. The ceremony involved drinking disgusting (non-toxic) cocktails and the application of such substances as boot polish and toothpaste. It was uncomfortable but taken in fun, and I would have been disappointed and felt left-out had I not undergone the ceremony. I expect that servicemen and women who have undergone similar silly and light-hearted initiation ceremonies – such as the Navy’s “crossing the equator” ceremonies – would similarly have felt excluded had they not taken part in the ceremony. At Duntroon, however, there were no such light-hearted ceremonies. Even during the one initiation ceremony I experienced at Duntroon - the “leaps and jumps” exercise in the company barracks after the Lanyard Parade in February 1987 – I was assaulted by a 1st Class cadet.

During the five months I underwent training at Duntroon I was medically unfit or on restricted duty for 8 weeks. The bulk of this time was recovering from injuries I received during a “bishing” ²² incident in March 1987. The inter-company fighting known as “bishing” was supposed to – and generally was – taken in fun. During this incident, however, I committed the sin of laying my hands on a senior cadet from another company who was using a fire hose to hose out the foyer of my barracks. I was grabbed from behind by a group of senior cadets and punched, kneed and kicked to the ground. The resulting injuries to my left wrist saw my forearm in a cast or restrictive bandage for the next four weeks and me being restricted in training during the same period. A fellow junior cadet in another company severely injured her hip in a fall following a “bish” on her barracks the day before I was injured. She was hospitalized but was later able to rejoin our Class. Half-way through 1st Class, however, her injuries caught up with her and she was medically discharged from Duntroon and the Army. ²³



The author outside the Kokoda Company barracks after the “bishing” incident on 17 March 1987.



The author as a “Command Post Warrior” on FEX “Buna” in the Mogo State Forest two weeks after the “bishing” incident.

A similarly veined retort to complaints of bastardization is that the person making the complaints should “toughen up”. Such a response is the catchcry of the bully who is used to delivering not receiving the treatment, and who invariably sets his own parameters for what is and what is not acceptable treatment. It is also a rejoinder that makes as much sense as my defending the act of stabbing my cadet CSM by saying that I was just “toughening

him up” (“If he can’t handle being stabbed, how could he possibly handle being bayoneted or shot by the enemy?”), or by saying that my action should have guaranteed me a commission into the Infantry (“After all, if I can stab a fellow cadet without hesitation, I wouldn’t think twice about bayoneting an enemy soldier.”)

In addition, do the apologists for bastardization contend that the rapes and other sexual assaults female officer cadets were subjected to at ADFA were part of the “toughening up” process? ²⁴ Much of what I and others were subjected to was outright criminality, not part of the training, not part of the “rough-and-tumble” of institutional life. Indeed, by 27 October 2014, the DART had referred a total of 80 cases of alleged criminal misconduct to Commonwealth, State and Territory police agencies. ²⁵ Eight of these matters were referrals to the ACT Policing branch of the Australian Federal Police, the police force whose jurisdiction encompasses ADFA and RMC Duntroon.

To date, no charges have been laid in response to any of the allegations made by complainants to the DART. On 12 December 2014, I received a visit in prison from two AFP detectives from ACT Policing who were acting on a referral from the DART. I provided them with statements in relation to both the “bishing” incident and an assault I was subjected to by senior cadets in Canberra’s Private Bin nightclub on the night I stabbed my CSM. I also provided them with a lengthy and detailed statement regarding my subsequent stabbing of my CSM, in which I freely admitted to his attempted murder. ²⁶

Concurrently with the investigation of these criminal matters, I have lodged a claim for criminal injuries compensation in the ACT Magistrates Court ²⁷ and a damages claim in the ACT Supreme Court ²⁸ over injuries I sustained at Duntroon. My case may not elicit much sympathy but if my claims are dismissed for being “out of time”, what of the female ADFA cadets who were raped at ADFA in the 1990s? Any decision against me will be relied upon by the Australian Government Solicitor and any lawyers representing alleged perpetrators to defeat similar claims lodged by these women.

The reason why my court proceedings are so out-of-date is that as part of my plea bargain with the Victorian Office of Public Prosecutions in 1988, I undertook not to raise the issue of bastardization in court during my plea hearing before being sentenced over the Hoddle Street shootings. In fact, it was the OPP's only precondition. In exchange, they agreed not to oppose the setting of a minimum non-parole term on my life sentence. They abided by this agreement but in April 2014 – five weeks prior to the expiry of my 27-year minimum term - the Victorian State Government nullified my minimum term by introducing section 74AA into the *Corrections Act 1986* (Vic) to ensure that I remained in prison.

The Department of Defence was behind the offer of an unopposed minimum term provided bastardization at Duntroon was not examined in the Supreme Court of Victoria. To make sure that I did not go back on my undertaking the then Commanding Officer of the Corps of Staff Cadets and an Army legal officer attended my plea hearing in plainclothes. The question arises that if bastardisation did not exist at Duntroon, and did not contribute to the state of mind that caused me to commit the Hoddle Street shootings, why be so concerned about such allegations being raised in court? Would the authorities offer a chance of freedom to a mass murderer simply to protect Duntroon's (already tainted) reputation? Duntroon has, after all, had three previous bastardization scandals: in 1934, 1969 and 1983. ²⁹ A corporate file created at the time by the Director of Army Legal Services titled "*Ex Staff Cadet Julian Knight (3204059) – Hoddle Street Killings – DALs Aspects*" was destroyed in 2001, although every other record relating to my service has been retained and is still in existence.

Interviewed for the ABC TV's "Hoddle Street" documentary after my arrest in Melbourne, the then Commandant of Duntroon, Major-General Murray Blake, stated that: ³⁰

I certainly make the point very clearly and firmly and emphatically that there is no way would I tolerate bastardization in the college. I've issued very implicit instructions to that effect and I go to great lengths to make sure that my instructions are carried out.

If there had been no bastardization at the college, why the need to issue "very implicit instructions" prohibiting bastardization and to "go to great lengths" to ensure that those instructions are carried out?

Of the 128 staff cadets in my Class, only 96 graduated (66%): 1 was killed in a car accident in 2nd Class and 31 resigned. Medical discharges aside, I know of no-one apart from myself who resigned who did not want to. The most common motivation behind a cadet's resignation was that they simply decided that a career as an army officer was not what they thought it would be. Strangely, but perhaps not surprisingly, a significant number of the 31 cadets in my Class who resigned were serving Regular Army or Army Reserve soldiers. One former Regular Army sergeant who resigned said before she left Duntroon: "If this is what being an officer is about, you can jam it! I'll go back to my unit."

One can only speculate about how many staff cadets have resigned and continue to resign from Duntroon because of this unnecessary disillusionment. I often heard ex-"old" Duntroon/ADFA senior cadets speak of having "been in the army for four years", when the reality of Duntroon is that it bears little resemblance to the reality of day-to-day service in the Regular Army. I had more exposure to

regular service during the 14 months I spent as a Reservist (which included service at the Regular Army's Armoured Centre at Puckapunyal) than these individuals did as staff cadets.

I do not think it is any coincidence that graduates of Portsea, Scheyville and Georges Heights almost universally speak of their experiences at those institutions with fondness, whereas many of those that passed through Duntroon speak of their experiences there in disparaging tones. Of the 50 defence establishments and units complained about to the DART during 2012-2013, ADFA and RMC received the 11th and 13th most complaints: Portsea, Scheyville, Georges Heights, RANC Jervis Bay and the RAAF Academy Point Cook received none at all. ³¹

Graduates of Duntroon went on to have distinguished careers not because of bastardisation but *in spite* of it. Australia's greatest general, General Sir John Monash, was not a Duntroon graduate; he wasn't even a Regular Army officer, but a "Choco", a part-time Militia officer from Melbourne.

The bastardization apologists will, no doubt, assert that those cadets that resigned were either not suited to military life or were simply below standard. Isn't the point of training, particularly military training, to raise someone up to the required standard? In fact, it was not unusual at Duntroon for staff cadets to be "backsquaded" because of sub-standard performance and forced to repeat a term.

Aside from my assessed intellectual ability and my later academic achievements, I have also maintained a high level of fitness. In August 2012 (age 44), I attained a score of 12.1 on the 20m "Beep Test" (the Preliminary Fitness Test Standard for the Australian Army is 7.5, for RMA Sandhurst 10.2, for the Royal Marines 11.3, and for the British Army's Parachute Regiment 12.0), and I completed a 5km run in 23:15 minutes. The point of stating these facts is not to boast but to point out that I had the potential to reach the required standards and to maintain them into middle age. As far as any character defects are concerned, I think it is fair to say that maturity and training tend to address these faults sooner or later. Who is still the same person they were at 18? Who is still the same person after 18 months of officer training? If not, then what does that say of the lying bullies I encountered at Duntroon and the rapists that graduated from ADFA?

It needs to be stressed that not all the senior cadets I encountered at Duntroon engaged in bastardization for either traditional or personal reasons. The reality was that it was only a minority, but a distinct and active minority, that did so.

As far as my 3rd Class peers are concerned, I was proud to serve with every one of them and I hope that they all went on to have distinguished careers. I also hope that none of them carried on the 'tradition' of bastardization when they became senior cadets. As for those that resigned or were medically discharged, I hope that they came to terms with what happened to them, put Duntroon behind them and went on to have happy, fulfilling lives elsewhere.

So what is the answer to the re-occurring problem of bastardization? I make the following observations and suggestions whilst acknowledging that my military service was brief and many years ago and that I am unaware of current practices or what has been implemented in recent times.

From the published accounts of individuals who attended ADFA and RMC Duntroon, and the work of the Defence Abuse Response Taskforce, it appears that the problem has its roots in a tiered class system where the cadet body is made up largely of young males with no prior military service, and where senior cadets are given the responsibility of disciplining junior cadets unsupervised by instructing staff.

Although the companies at Duntroon are organized along the lines of a normal infantry company, the normal hierarchy is distorted by the division of staff cadets into junior and senior classes. Only those senior cadets with a cadet rank (i.e. CSM, platoon sergeant, section corporal, section 2IC) should have the responsibility for disciplining cadets within the company. In a normal infantry company, after all, there is no such thing as a “*senior private*”. If the companies at Duntroon are intended to resemble normal infantry companies, they should be run like them.

In order to overcome the problem of bastardized cadets “suffering in silence”, instructing staff need to take a more proactive role in supervising the behaviour of cadets. No-one at Duntroon ever asked whether I was being subjected to “special treatment” and the first time I really had the opportunity to raise this topic in confidence – during my the interview with the RMC Student Counsellor as part of my discharge procedure – I said very little as I just wanted to get out of the place! As I recounted in my Personal Account to the DART,³² an earlier attempt by another junior cadet in my company to complain about bastardization resulted in an after-hours haranguing of the junior cadets in the company by a group of senior cadets. No-one complained about bastardization after that.

In order to standardize basic training across all ranks and to give potential officers a better grounding, perhaps the Australian Army should consider adopting an officer training system similar to the, admittedly intricate, *Fahenjunker/Fähnrich* system of the German Army. Before graduating as a *leutnant*, German army officers must first spend up to a year as a recruit, and then spend a year as a *Fahenjunker* (an honorary title not rank) before attending the *Heeresoffizierschule*, then serve in their respective regiment as a *Fähnrich* (Ensign) before sitting their final examination. The German Army is not the only army that makes its officers undergo their basic training as an “other rank”. The British Army also makes its officer cadets first undergo a short period of training in the ranks before attending RMA Sandhurst. It is also a training system that used to operate in the Australian Army Reserve, whereby officer cadets underwent their basic training with the other ranks before attending their Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU). I had experience of this system as one of the recruits in my Army Reserve basic training platoon was an officer cadet. The adoption of such a system could also result in the course at Duntroon being shortened back to 12 months, thus eliminating the 3-tier system that is a main cause of bastardization.

One concept from my time at Duntroon that has remained with me is that of “command responsibility”; the principle that whether the unit you command deserved bouquets or brickbats, you were responsible for it. Such a concept, I think, extends to personal responsibility. I ultimately bear responsibility for what I did in Hoddle Street, but:

“No bastardization at Duntroon. No massacre in Hoddle Street.”

Notes:

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1. "Collins English Dictionary" (Australian Edition), Third Edition, HarperCollins Publishers, Sydney, 1991, page 483. See also www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Military_College,_Duntroon.
2. *op.cit.*, page 130. See also "The Macquarie Concise Dictionary" (Third Edition), 1997; **Duntroon Military College** *n.* a military training college at Duntroon, ACT, established in 1911. Also, **Royal Military College**. (page 345), **Bastardise** = **bastardize** *v.t.*, 2. *Australian* to seek to humiliate, as part of initiation into a regiment, college, etc. – **bastardisation**, *n.* (page 84).
3. Defence Abuse Response Taskforce, "Report on abuse in Defence", 26 November 2014, page xi. Copies of all reports released by the Taskforce are available on the DART website www.defenceabusetaskforce.gov.au/reports.
4. *Personal Account of Staff Cadet Julian Knight (3204059) CSC No 5266*, 26 November 2013 ("Personal Account") accessible at www.julianknight-hoddlestreet.ca.
5. See www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_Knight & www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hoddle_Street_massacre. See also *R v Knight* [1989] VR 705 reproduced at www.lexis.com/research (Ref: 1988 VIC LEXIS 530).
6. *Personal Account*, page 92.
7. *Personal Account*, page 3.
8. *Personal Account*, pages 7-8.
9. *Personal Account*, page 8.
10. *Personal Account*, page 93.
11. Tigerquoll, "RMC Duntroon officer training perpetuates a dangerous bullying culture", (2012-03-07), www.candobetter.net/Blogs/Tigerquoll/sblog, accessed 24 October 2014.
12. Bruce Moore, "A Lexicon of Cadet Language: Royal Military College, Duntroon, in the Period 1983 to 1985", Australian National Dictionary Centre, ANU, Canberra, 1993.
Note: **bastardisation** (page 26): the public's term for the unofficial initiation rites which Fourth Class cadets underwent during their induction to the College. Given the most recent bastardisation 'scandal' (1983), cadets responding to the slang survey [taken during 1983-85] either were wary of the term **bastardisation** ("it doesn't really happen", "shhh!") and somewhat defensive ("it doesn't occur unless you're a real fuckwit", "necessary to get all fuckwits out of the Corps") or they referred to such activities as taking place in the past – "once upon a time".
13. *ibid*, page xiii.
14. *ibid*, page 26.
15. *Personal Account*, page 42.
16. *Personal Account*, page 25.
17. Darren C. Moore, "Duntroon: The Royal Military College of Australia: 1911-2001", Royal Military College of Australia, 2001.
18. *ibid*, pages 385-386.
19. *ibid*, page 386.
20. Contributor's entry on www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_Knight since removed from entry but available in site's history.
21. *Personal Account*, page 10.
22. Bruce Moore, *op.cit.*, pages 41-44: **bish** [noun] (pages 41-43) [verb] (pages 43-44): 1. To wreck a cadet's room, to direct unofficial 'punishment' at an individual cadet. 2. (more generally) to create havoc and disarray in another company's rooms, or to engage in inter-company 'fights'.
23. See *Smith v Department of Defence*, unreported, Supreme Court of NSW, Sperling J, 6 April 1998: Butterworths Unreported Judgment BC9801079.
24. See Dr Gary Rumble & Melanie McKean, "Report of the Review of Allegations of Sexual and Other Abuse in Defence: Volume 1: General findings & recommendations", 11 October 2011, available at www.defence.gov.au/culturereviews/docs/dlapiper/volume1.pdf. See also: ABC TV, Four Corners, "Culture of Silence" (broadcast 13 June 2011) & ABC TV, Four Corners, "Chamber of Horrors" (broadcast 9 June 2014) available at www.abc.net.au/4corners/stories.
25. DART, "Report on abuse in Defence", *op.cit.*, page 39.
26. See "ACT Police interview Hoddle Street killer over historic stabbing", Michael Inman, *The Canberra Times*, 14 December 2014 (www.canberratimes.com.au/ACTNews) & "Knight charge bid", Michael Inman, *The Age*, 15 December 2014, page 10.

27. ACT Magistrates Court, *In the Matter of an application by Julian Knight*, Case No CIC 44 of 2014. See also: *In the matter of an application by Julian Knight under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Act 1983 (ACT)* [2014] ACTSC 337.
28. ACT Supreme Court, *Knight v Commonwealth & Ors*, Case No SC 176 of 2014. See also: “Exclusive: Hoddle Street killer to sue Duntroon over military abuse”, Michael Inman, *The Canberra Times*, 13 June 2014; “Mass killer Julian Knight seeks transfer to Canberra jail”, Michael Inman, *The Canberra Times*, 16 June 2014; “Hoddle Street killer takes criminal injury claim to ACT Supreme Court”, Michael Inman, *The Canberra Times*, 17 June 2014; “Hoddle Street killer says he doesn’t hold grudge against alleged Duntroon abusers”, Christopher Knaus, *The Canberra Times*, 24 November 2014; “Hoddle Street killer given addresses of alleged Duntroon attackers”, Christopher Knaus, *The Canberra Times*, 26 November 2014 (Ref: www.canberratimes.com.au>ACTNews).
29. See Dr Christopher D. Coulthard-Clark, *Duntroon: The Royal Military College of Australia: 1911-1986*, Sydney, 1986 (* NB: Dr Coulthard-Clark graduated from Duntroon in 1972); Darren C. Moore, *Duntroon: The Royal Military College of Australia: 1911-2001*, Royal Military College of Australia, 2001; especially Chapter 21 – Hazing, pages 347-396 (* NB: Mr Moore graduated from Duntroon in 1991) The author is discussed in Mr Moore’s book at pages 153-6 and is listed in Appendix 10 at page 489; Bruce Moore, *A Lexicon of Cadet Language: Royal Military College, Duntroon, in the Period 1983 to 1985*, Australian National Dictionary Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1993; pages ‘bastardization’ ix-x, xiii & 26-34, ‘bish’ 41-44, ‘leaps’ 208-9.
30. ABC TV, “Hoddle Street”, broadcast nationally on 14 December 1988. The quoted statement appears 23:21 minutes into the documentary.
31. DART, *Report on abuse in Defence*, *op.cit.*, Appendix D, pages 368-369.
32. Personal Account, pages 29-30.

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