

BATTALION BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

After a spectacular beating of the retreat ceremony to mark the Battalion's eighth birthday in 1981, 1982 dawned as the year in which our anniversary would be marked by the presentation of the new 4 RAR Colours. However, this was not to be. Under the capable leadership of Lieutenant-Colonel Rowe, with his characteristic flair for avoiding things ceremonial and, I am told, assisted by greasing the Quartermaster's palm to ensure the Colours didn't arrive, we managed to avoid such a 'celebration' (?!). Instead, our ninth birthday was marked by a social spectacular, the Battalion Cabaret.

The Ball Committee, led by the Battalion 'rager' the Battalion 2IC, let their imagination run wild and planned our 'night-of-nights'. First of their major achievements was to once again fool the "James Cook University Students Telephone Box Cramming Team" by filling the area theatre with a record crowd. Their second major achievement was to engage the most outrageous band for the evenings entertainment.

On arrival, one entered through a decorated foyer, reminiscent of a Battalion exercise area, complete with camouflage nets, 'thunderbox' and sundry other items. Then into the main hall where the throng were seated, taking refreshment and conversing in muted tones. Then came BESERK! Scantly clad musicians suddenly transformed the scene. Amidst the flashing lights and amplified music the younger and more adventurous gravitated toward the music where they gyrated wildly in primitive dance. Meanwhile at the

rear of the hall, the Battalion 'elders' led by the CO and 2IC (a rager you said), covered in the corner reaching for their 'Vici-foam' ear protection. And so the evening progressed, marked on occasions by bikini clad wenches who led the dancing from the stage.

To celebrate our 'birthday' the chefs had prepared a gigantic birthday cake. The cake was piped in by CPL. Rory MacDonald and was cut by the CO and our youngest serving member at that time Private C.J. Baxter.

During the cake-cutting ceremony Beserk showed themselves to be human as they played a pleasant 'Happy Birthday' and were joined by the fractured notes of the massed Battalion choristers. After the cake-cutting it was time for supper and it is at this time that mention must be made of the support given to us by 1 RAR who provided the bar and catering staff on the night to enable our people to participate in the evenings festivities.

Because this year's birthday fell on the Sabbath, our celebration was held on 14th August, however, most of the revellers stayed on until midnight to see our ninth birthday in. Some, I am told remained to ensure that the sun rose on our birthday; most though drifted off between midnight and dawn wondering if really it might have been less energy-sapping to have had a presentation of colours parade after all.

BESERK you say!!!

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