

THE PIPES AND DRUMS

By MAJOR J. GUY

Many thought it natural that the only musical support rendered for the Battalion Birthday Parade came from our own resources. A few, however, knew of the lack of precedence for this and the sheer hard work involved in 'getting the act together.'

Last year we had to go on parade with the 1RAR band. Our Pipe Major was on course and what was left in the band hut could barely support a guard mount. The Pipes and Drums were run down and on the verge of total collapse.

This year has seen a big change. Sgt. Jock Gall has made his mark in training a group of musical 'rookies' to a standard where we have all felt considerable pride in their performance and have little trouble in proclaiming them to be 'OUR Pipes and Drums.'

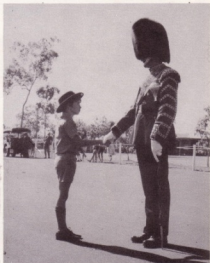
The scene at the band hut was always a little strange. We had a Scottish Pipe Major in an Irish setting with a background in mortars (he was wounded at Coral). We had a German Drum Major in Sgt. Otto Krenke with a totally non musical

background and a collection of South Americans, Italians, Welshmen Englishmen and of course our own tame Irishman in Rory McDonnell. This band of unlikely lads preferred to make an endless cacophony while remaining in PT dress. The PT dress bit would last until any opportunity arose to put on London style heavy winter dress in temperatures which kept the rest of us in PT dress. Standing in tunics and cloaks the pipers would mutter that the bagpipes were thirsty... 'Pipes, I have already given mine a cup of water the reeds are still dry!' Meanwhile the drummers would stand in the sun with their bearskins on, pruning themselves, and conscious only of their images of the effects they would have on the lady spectators, (drums don't get thirsty in the heat!)

The sun set and Cpl. Foxy Grey (we think he is actually Australian but no one likes to mention it) marched out in front of the assembled Battalion and played Retreat (the PR people thought it was Last Post). A picture was taken and it hit the 'Army' front page. All rather splendid but 'What' somebody asked 'What is the man doing in the Guards uniform?' After a good parade with lots of swank and some truth serum from the bar it was not hard to explain that we were the senior Australian Regiment and therefore rightfully wear the uniform of the 'Queens Men.'



*Practise before performance Weipa
Bass Drummer Peter Adamson*



Do you have eyes!

are learning) and a top class Drum Corps. So there is still much to be done and that before we address the on going business of improving our ceremonial attire.



*Tenor Drummer
Elgin Leedie at Weipa North School*

The fact is, of course, that we are affiliated by virtue of our seniority with Guards regiments. The affiliation of the original Fourth Battalion to the Irish Guards is reflected in our Pipes and Drums. The Drummers wear the traditional Guards uniform with RAR embellishments while the pipers, like their off siders in UK, wear the national costume of Ireland which is designed to contrast with the uniformity of English costume and to maintain national identity and pride within the unit. This stress on national identity is felt in our musical expression also.

The Director of Infantry, Colonel Howard MC, watched us on parade and listened expertly to the Pipes and Drums. At the conclusion of the Battalion birthday he proclaimed that the Pipe Major had passed his trade test and that we had the best Drum Corps in the Regiment. The Drum Corps now preen themselves even more and talk to their bearskins before going to bed. The Pipe Major, meanwhile, is showing signs of liking Irish traditions.

Where to from here? Well when you swap your teddy bear for a genuine bearskin somebody's wallet takes a caning. Fund raising is going to be a big thing in 1982. But there are other matters which must be addressed. The Pipes and Drums are two men down on establishment and so recruiting will be on again supplemented by a pipes and drums course in February '82. Eventually it is hoped to produce an organisation that can answer an invitation to go to the Edinburgh Tattoo. For that we need thirteen good pipers (we now have five who can play and two who



Pipes and Drums Weipa State School

The development in uniforms has been the most spectacular aspect this year. We bought new bearskins caubeans and drummers caps. Soon to arrive are buff drummer belts and new kilts. We have borrowed and are in the process of buying the Drum Majors Tunic and Pipe Major's tunic and cloak from the First Battalion Irish Guards. The pipers tunics are 'hand me downs' from the ARES and the scarlet jackets are cast offs from the Barid Corps. Self help is also evident in our home made hackles.

We have conversed by letter and telephone with our opposite numbers in England. Pipe Major Jamie Johnson has been a great help but soon goes on posting. He is to be replaced by Pipe Major Kevin Frazer. We wish Jamie well and look forward to making contact with his replacement.

The Pipes and Drums have also conversed with the heavens. While in Weipa the whole team in full ceremonial flew to 10,000 feet in a CH47 and played over the military radios to the civilians below. All this happened during an open day at the Weipa Rugby field and established an Australian record..

It has been a good year for the Pipes and Drums, but it has taken a lot of effort from the 'boys' to make it so. The 'P & D ladies' have formed an informal auxilliary group and have been a great asset in supporting the team with sewing expertise and in just plain putting up with it all!

I wish the Pipes and Drums and their families every success for the future.



*D/Cpl Alan Gray (Foxy)
Weipa South Mission 'Does he bite!!!'*



Cpl. MacDonnell (Rory) Don't suck blow!!!



*Pipes & Drums after breaking height record 10,00 ft. in
a Chinook*



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