

OR TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY...

After long and protracted battles in 1995 with the Evil Empire and their defacto commander, 'Darth Molan', the Officers of the 4th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, RDF, Commando, Special recovery, finally achieved their own Mess on 7 December 1995. Much joy and alcohol celebrated the achievement of this fine goal. It was a place to relax after the rigours of another day doing point as well as a haven in which to continue to refine our plotting and scheming. Several of our comrades had fallen in previous battles. 'Beer' was no more taking Barbara with him, even if his memory remained financially; 'Ashurst' had succumbed to drink, cancer and lowly serving wenches and 'Bung' had perished on Molan's dreaded riposte.

Even so, the Mess managed to conserve its energies and set about the serious business of 1996. 'Inspector Gadget' and his trusted aide de camp, 'Brains', installed themselves in the Spartan environment and set about to transform the place into a place to call home. 'R2D2' rubbed his hands with glee and with the assistance of Cinderella's two sister Griselda and Esmerilda, began the process of applying the spit, polish and panache. An intensive training social program was designed by 'The Abrasive One' and functions allocated to deserving minions. Wilko became a law unto himself, carrying on the fine traditions established during his first night in the unit and partied long, hard and often. Hill Top became a fading memory and Mess bar profits soared. 'Uncle Buck' and 'Moonbeam' kicked off the first official function with a Germanic theme that spoke of past Prussian glories and Julie's ability to handle her jugs. The Luddites wet T-shirt competition for men was greeted with somewhat less enthusiasm, however the day was saved by Moonbeam's destruction of the Hunza beer and Polly's flat head beer balancing. Inspector Gadget decided to test the moral and physical integrity of his men at a Regimental dinner and after forcing them to drink to excess, deployed them on a search of the training area and Canberra. The stormtroopers were reinforced for the weekend with the Brownshirts under command of the 'Phantom' and his assistants, 'Swampy' and 'Hooters'. 'He Who Gives advice to regular Commanders' couldn't make the trip but partied hard with us, both before and after. We don't know what they achieved, but navigation was not one of the terminals. Patrick contributed to the planning process by sleeping during all the orders groups, 'Magic Man' immersed himself in detail and 'The Puppet Master' practised pulling strings.

Uncle Buck and his men departed shortly after, to scourge the northern regions of the Asiatic Ones. The stories we have heard all have no basis to them, particularly those concerning 'Fabio' and 'Ivana Trump'. Rumours were heard that they continued the fine social traditions of Pik Botha and Ian Smith. Meanwhile, further reinforcements were received to take their place and they soon commenced making a name for themselves. 'Chuck' spent his days either sick or on duty whilst 'Paul Keating' dreamt of economic matters and his place in the food chain. 'The North Shore Love Magnet' developed a lust for Egyptian things and became the pimp for the Nursing Bulk Store, providing manpower to satisfy their every desire. The Mess hosted several happy hours, both planned and impromptu. Between Devo, Quinnie, 1 Field Hospital and transits, sufficient tests were available to keep us on our toes. The Teapot travelled the world, spreading the reputation of the unit. Brains had to make many telephone calls to the Irish Guards to recover the situation. The Puppet Master pulled sufficient strings to kick off the inaugural Mess Red Alert. An interesting night was had by all doing it the way it is done in the Sergeants' Mess.

The Captains' Night was a successful night, despite Brain's efforts at planning. From a closed door session in the Mess Annex, emerged the idea of a mystery culinary flight around the world.

The setting up was organised by The Doll, The Puppet Master, The Swallow and Brains. It was the best mess devised to avoid those last minute details regarding Swift Eagle. Highlights of the night included Barfield's food aid mime and begging, the inflight video and Litepro presentation and the raid on Entebbe (Where Balaclava got all his ideas??).

The Mess also gained the services of the enigmatic and atypical 'A.L.' this year. He travelled on all exercises and made many friends - Nicki, Virginia, Karen, Moira, Precious and even General Keating. Good one A.L., get a gerbil up ya!! Our Mess characters have continued to develop. 'The CareTaker' solved all crises, either legally or illegally with total agreement from the Unqualified One. Yes is so easy easy!! Virgil no longer slumps on his strings, Pimms has taken to hiding his face in wool and giving one wall and sundry, and Scoff can add. Honest!! Angus found a social life and then lost it to leather and Larry. Gerry and Keenan have already christened the Billiards table - (only the two of them involved), The 'Swinherd' has developed a work ethic, 'The Phantom' a personality, 'The Commando' a set of standards and 'Brains' a South Queensland intellect. What more can we want?

We again celebrated Melbourne Cup at the Sergeants' Mess, although it wasn't as successful as last year. The second and third in the Calcutta saw the princely return of minus fifty cents. That's what happens when Majors run the betting. Events still to occur include the Regimental Dining In Night and the Christmas party. No doubt they will be successful. In conclusion, the members of the committee deserve thanks for their sterling efforts throughout the year, particularly 'Scoff Gough' for his imaginative and creative accounting that kept the mess afloat, Angus and his ever changing Menu, the Grim Sisters for making it all happen, the cooks in the back for their delectable delights and Max for all his hard work and organisation. All the best to everybody in 1997 and keep drinking.

Things we would like to see in 1997

More Nurses like Neffertitti.

To be defrosted.

The Mess with money.

The Sergeants' Mess win on Melbourne Cup Day.

Bar Snacks on Thursdays.

Pete Haley in the Mess and playing hard.

Wilko the Northern Warrior back home. We miss the money.

