

# BUGIS STREET SINGAPORE 1973

Dedicated to MCBonny Wasiu



**Memories:** This article and others like it *are based on true events. Readers are warned that some of the material may be inappropriate. Material is somewhat unchanged to reflect the behaviour, expectations attitudes prevalent at the time.*

Jock and Pete had finished their tasks for the day and decided to go drinking Tiger ale at Bugis Street. Bugis in those days was made up of two streets that resembled a Tee junction. In the middle of the T-junction was a toilet block. If you didn't have a disease before you went in, then you were guaranteed to have had a disease on the way out. The place stank to high heaven. When you urinated it went onto the floor. You had no choice but to walk in the urine. The stench of ammonia was unbelievable and worse than a pigsty.

If you wanted a crap, well that was even worse. You would have to put up one hand against the door to stop any "ladies" (Kai Tais) (men in drag) from coming in while the other hand was over your nose to stop the smell of crap lying at the bottom of the bowl. If you were smart you had your own paper. When you wanted to wipe your arse, you would take a deep breath and use the hand holding your nose. Personally I preferred to shit in my pants than go through that ordeal.

Bugis street attracted visitors from all over the world; there were sailors from every port on the globe. Some were straight while many were not. The Aussies and Kiwis would get up on top of the Urinal block and do the "Dance of the Flaming Arseholes". What this entailed was that a group would stuff toilet paper up their arse, sing the song Zulu warrior or some other likewise tune while someone would light the toilet paper and then they would dance to the flames.

This was all done in the nude. We, who were the spectators would laugh, anyway we were too far pissed ourselves to worry about their nakedness. There were no prudes there. Apart from the sailors, the soldiers from the three battalions, Scottish, Australian

and Kiwis, stationed on the island, also frequented Bugis. Apart from fighting each other, we could always count on the kiwis and the Jocks to help in a punch-up against the Brits; we all hated them. The Military Police at Sembawang were hated not only because they were coppers, but also because they were Brits.



The Kai Tais were amusing as they were mostly paid by the shopkeepers to help us buy them drinks and increase the trade for them. Tourists would get photos of the Kai Tais and the Kai Tais would ask for a tip. Many of them were on drugs, we could tell by the drawl in their voices and the lethargic way they walked. Some were very beautiful and you could hardly tell the difference. Bonny, Pete's mate was well known in Bugis Street, he was a legend and the shop keepers nearly killed him one night when they all got together and threw bottles at him.

Bonnie was no shirker from trouble. He looked after his mate Pete. He was on good terms with the Kai Tais, for they feared his strength and angry moods. Bonnie allocated a Kai Tai to look after Pete whenever he visited Bugis Street. Pete was straight, but always wondered why "Lisa Lust" kept near him. Pete didn't find out until years later the true reason. Bonnie ended up being Godfather to Pete's eldest son.

This night when Jock and Pete had gone out together looked like any night and nothing out of the ordinary. Next to us were some loud mouth Brit Merchant seamen already half whacked drinking the chemicals of Tiger ale. One of them looked over to our direction and called us Fuck'n Aussie cunts. Jock looked at Pete and said "Oh fuck" He knew that Pete didn't take shit from any bastards. He also knew that Pete was proud of his Battalion and the RAR in general.

Jock knew Pete when they were roommates in 1 RAR together. He liked Pete even though he was wild with and somewhat crazy at times. But he still stuck by his mate, as he knew his heart was in the right place. Well, what happened next didn't surprise Jock, but it scared the shit out of Pete. One of the Brit seamen looked over towards Jock and Pete and called all Aussies weak as shit again and only good for wiping his arse with.

Pete stood up and rammed his fist down this blokes face and stood waiting for him to retaliate. The Brit seamen stood up, and that is when Pete shit himself. This bloke was about 6 foot 8 inches tall. Just when he was going to cave in Pete's face, the Brits other mates grabbed him and told Pete to fuck off.

Well Pete didn't need a second time to be told. He wheeled around gave the Brit being held a boot to his face, you could hear bone breaking, Pete stood back and said. Just remember cunt, that it was an Aussie that belted the shit out of you. Pete ran down an alley and hailed a taxi that was in the vicinity. Pete took twenty dollars hidden in shoe and paid the driver and went home.

***Postscript.** Bonnie remained in the army until approximately 1977 whereupon his skills were no longer required. Upon discharge, he returned to Bamaga (Thursday Island - Far North Queensland) where he kept house with his partner raising their children. sadly Bonnie passed away with kidney and liver problems. I personally believed he died of depression and great sadness as the Australian Army was his family and life. (But that's another story)*



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