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Nazi accusations against members of 3RAR

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The World Today Archive - Tuesday, 19 December , 2000 00:00:00

Reporter: John Stewart

COMPERE: You would be forgiven for thinking that the Army's worst nightmare might be having insufficient resources to deal with several regional disasters and a potential invasion at the same time. But today a different kind of horrible reality is unfolding for our Defence Forces. Once again soldiers from the Third Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, 3RAR, are back in the headlines. This time it's not bastardisation, death threats or sexist behaviour.

The latest outrage that the hero of East Timor, General Peter Cosgrove, does not seem to be able to get a discipline handle on is naked racism.

A website photograph for the world to see of the Neo-Nazi hate rock band 'Blood Oath' giving a Nazi salute. Three of the band being former soldiers in 3RAR.

As John Stewart reports, the photograph is

the latest in a series of embarrassing revelations showing a darker side to life in the Australian Defence Forces.

JOHN STEWART: On a website called 'Blood and Honour' the independent voice of rock against communism, there's a review of neo-Nazi bands, including one group called 'Blood Oath'. The website contains photos of the band performing on stage, surrounded by swastikas and neo-Nazi flags. Music from the website can even be downloaded.

JOHN STEWART: 'Blood Oath' might never have made the front page of today's newspapers and just remained an obscure right-wing band, but for three of its musicians being former soldiers.

The Australian Army today confirmed that three former members of the Third Battalion Regiment had been members of the band. However, an investigation into the soldiers musical taste found no evidence that the three soldiers were involved in actively recruiting other members of the regiment to the Neo-Nazi cause.

JOHN STEWART: The soldiers are no longer with 3RAR. The Army today confirmed that they'd been relocated for reasons not related to their involvement with 'Blood Oath'. However, it's unconfirmed whether the soldiers were linked to reports of bashings, bastardisation and illegal punishment dished out to 30 soldiers between 1997 and 98. A matter currently under investigation.

Despite the controversy surrounding the Regiment, 3RAR served in East Timor and basked in the glory of the welcome home parade in Sydney earlier this year.

JOHN STEWART: 3RAR has a long proud history. The paratrooping regiment is, by necessity, made up of young men trained to

parachute into enemy territory. The band, 'Blood Oath', is also aware of the history of 3RAR. The website pays tribute to Adolf Hitler, the SS and veterans of the Kapyong Valley, a specific reference to the Third Battalion's Regiment's involvement in the Korean War.

The Army today emphasised that 3RAR has 600 in a constantly changing regiment. And that the unit has been cleaned up. But despite the inquiries and the reforms, the injuring image of 3RAR will not be paratroopers storming into East Timor to beat off the militias, but a group of soldiers giving a Nazi salute.

COMPERE: John Stewart.

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