



PRESIDENT'S UPDATE
November 2007

Firstly, let me apologise for this very delayed Update, I do try to communicate with members (and others who care to read these ramblings) at least every couple of months. In my case, I have had my wife Val to care for following a couple of rather traumatic operations on her leg which has meant for the last 6 months she has been wheelchair bound and completely dependant upon me. Unfortunately, the situations does not show any sign of improvement in the near future. On top of that, I have had a hectic workload I have been trying to keep up with. Anyway, enough of my problems, I know that there are many of you out there in a worse situation.

The AGM was held in August and although understandable numbers were not high, we still had a reasonable turnout. Unfortunately, half an hour before the start I had a call from my daughter that she had just called the ambulance to take Val, who was at home recovering from an operation, into emergency for what turned out to be a broken femur. President of Vice, Jack Westernhagen ably took the reins and the meeting proceeded smoothly. General Ken Gillespie, our Patron opened the meeting with an update of trade training in the Army today, followed by a presentation by Jack to the Association of a President's gavel. The proceedings, reports and motions that followed can be found in the Association web page (www.austarmyapprentice.org).

At the last Committee Meeting, a number of issues were discussed:

1. Sponsorship and funding for the SPAASSM project (the digitising and cataloguing of apprentice images, film and print previously stored at the Army Museum but deteriorating from lack of resources. Now been passed to the Association under Peter Thorton and his Working Group and has been moved to the AWM where we have been given a work room);
 - a. Submissions have been made to the National Library of Australia grant program. **(Missed out)**.
 - b. Peter is looking for a couple of additional workers to help out on the sorting and digitising. **This will only entail a half day a week or less. Anyone who can help Peter should contact him on peterthornton@grapevine.net.au**
 - c. We are waiting for the results of a submission to Chief of Army by our Patron for financial assistance to assist in commercially digitising the collection.
 - d. Ian will investigate the possibility of a loan of a suitable scanner from Cannon. **(Cannon have now loaned a scanner for use in digitising the collection if funding does not eventuate)**
 - e. **If any apprentice can assist Peter in sponsorship please contact him with details so that a package can be negotiated.**
 - f. Funding has been made available to our Welfare Officer Russell Evans to have printed special sympathy cards from the Association and to cover his mailing costs. It is an unfortunate fact that we are seeing an increase in deaths from our ranks. **Please let Russell know if you are aware of any seriously sick member, a death or if a member or spouse requires assistance in finding their way through the welfare web. If you find that the Vale Page of our web site is out of date please let Russell know.**



- g. Membership procedure has been streamlined with the Treasurer Ray Wilson receiving applications, and issuing receipts and membership packages, then forwarding applications to Secretary Stephen Hladio for entry into the membership program.
- h. In the next 12 months the Constitution will again be visited in line with motions from the AGM to separate routine issues such as duty statements and membership procedures and include them into by-laws.
- i. Memorial. I reported on the initial approach to the Trustees of the Memorial Park at Bandianna as directed at the previous Committee Meeting. It would appear that there are no difficulties and I will be visiting the Park in early December with other Apprentices to select a site and to then prepare a submission to reserve the site. Our next steps will then be the design, costing, approval, fund raising, building and dedication. This site was selected as it provides a secure, maintained and permanent location appropriate for a memorial as it has other corps memorials in the park. It is also located across the road from the Army Museum that holds the Army Apprentice collection/display and has picnic and BBQ areas as part of the park.
- j. The reprinting of brochures and car stickers was approved as was a new run of membership badges. It was decided not to continue with the numbering of the badges and to investigate a slightly larger badge.
- k. Jack Westerhagen reported that the on-line memorabilia shop was open on the web page.

Chris Moon, our Heritage Officer has identified that the Balcombe back gates, that were built by apprentice blacksmiths and are now located at the entrance to Bonagilla, and that Bonagilla now has no connection with Army Apprentices and indeed may be sold off. He has suggested that we look at their relocation to a more suitable site.

Coincidentally, our Promotions and PR Officer Frank Maloney has identified that 2008 marks 60 years of graduating Apprentices and has noted that this will probably be the last meaningful anniversary event that will be able to be attended by our early intakes. (Age takes it's toll) Consequently, he has suggested that we should hold a 60th Anniversary celebration.

A straw poll indicated that this would be favourably received and initial planning has started with a working committee of Frank Maloney (Chair), Chris Moon, Bill Merton (Social Officer) and Ian Morris. Initially, it is envisaged that the major event will be held in October/November 2008 with the dedication of the Apprentice Memorial site at the Memorial Park, perhaps incorporating the gates, plaques and the trees/cuttings/plaques from the Latchford memorial drive (Time will determine what can be achieved). Much to be done and not much time but we will keep you updated by these Updates and the Web site. Funding is another factor and a separate sub-account has been opened specifically for memorial donations –HINT, HINT!!

I have suffered a major melt down on my computer and have lost, among other problems, my complete contact list of the apprentices that I send these updates out to, some 400 names. Consequently, in future I will only have our membership list to email out to and the posting to the Web site, so non-members will have to rely on the forwarding through the intake contact lists and on reading the web page. (Or of course they could actually join the Association!!)



THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY APPRENTICES ASSOCIATION INC.

ACT Incorporation No: A04404

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The 10th intake are celebrating 50 years in December with a big reunion at Lake Hume, with visits the Army Museum and local Apprentice landmarks, plus BBQs and dinner. Barry Teal has worked hard to organise the function and it looks like about 70 will attend. Congratulations and good luck to the 10th.

Well that about it for me for now. Again my apologies and I hope to have the next Update out in January with planning information on the 60th celebrations.

Merry Christmas to you all and to your families and a happy and healthy 2008.

Frank Poole
President
Australian Army Apprentices Association Inc.