



The Apprentice About

Newsletter for the Australian Army Apprentices Association Inc

Volume 1, Issue 9

August 2013

From the President

Hope this edition of The Apprentice About finds you all as well as can be. So much has happened since the last edition. The Balcombe Commemoration weekend was an unqualified success; we have a new Membership Secretary; we have had a Committee meeting at Bandiana; and Facebook continues to attract new members by the day.

As I said, the Balcombe Commemoration weekend was an unqualified success. To Frank Maloney and Peter Muir, thank you and congratulations on the mountain of work done by you both for what turned out to be a seamless weekend of celebrations including the meet and greet, the unveiling of plaques and storyboards, the Saturday night dinner and the most impressive Sunday march and ceremony at the Memorial in Mornington. To our inaugural President Frank Poole and Treasurer Owen Reynolds thank you for your efforts in the organisation process and to Jeff and Jan Heron, whom everyone met during the registration procedure, thank you for putting your hand up to register and welcome everyone on arrival. To all the other helpers who sacrificed their time at some stage to make the weekend a success, thank you also. I know that many attendees have sent their compliments and gratitude to various Committee Members and I must say these are well received.

In the lead up to the Balcombe weekend, our Membership Secretary Craig Malcolm made the tough decision to step down from his duties due to pressing

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AUSTRALIAN ARMY APPRENTICES ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

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www.austarmyapprentice.org

Patron: Brig David Luhrs, CSC



Membership Matters

The recently held Balcombe Barracks Commemoration has left many of us who attended with vivid memories of the past, as well as positive thoughts of the future.

Without the dedication and drive of the Committee, that event would not have occurred and that, my friends, prompts me to ask the question, "Why have so many Members failed to renew their memberships?" Without the ongoing support of an active membership, we the Committee will be hamstrung in planning and developing the next major event, and future events.

The Committee has commenced seeking approval to have the AAS Banner relocated from the Chapel of Saint Peter at Latchford Barracks to a more accessible location – perhaps the Army Museum at Bandiana, or one of the churches in Albury (where the Army Apprentices School has the Freedom of the City). As access to our Banner is nigh on impossible, relocation would mean access for viewing at times more suitable to you and interested members of the public. It also provides the Committee the access to ensure the banner is maintained as it should be.

So come on, get stuck in and renew now.

Change of Address

Members who change their address in the period between membership renewals are asked to advise the Membership Secretary of their new contact details. This particularly applies to members with 3-year memberships.

Gary Byard (21st VM)

Membership Secretary

membership@austarmyapprentice.org



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work commitments. On behalf of the AAAA Membership, I would like to thank Craig for his unstinting work and commitment to the Apprentice cause and his input to the Committee, which I valued greatly. Fortunately for the Association, Gary Byard has stepped into the breach and has already been active in contacting the Membership regarding renewals and keeping your status financial.

Our Facebook group continues to grow and is now approaching 190 members. I have noticed a Facebook group set up by the Bonegilla intakes which has over 450 members, indicating that the later intakes are not only very active in the social media, but also that the Apprentice bond is alive and well amongst them.

The next major date for the Association is our AGM, to be held at Chatswood RSL in Sydney in October. A number of Committee positions are up for election as per our Constitution and a get together of Sydney-based Appies will be organised to coincide. An official notice will be advertised closer to the AGM as we are required to do and this will include all the business to be discussed and Committee positions up for election.

In closing, I want thank all who were able to attend the weekend of events in early May, knowing that you all had a good time and caught up with old mates and made those stories a little taller than before. I also want to implore you all not to let complacency set in and leave things up to someone else. It would be great to see many of our Members turn up to the AGM and even have some new blood on the Committee, as there will be vacancies. If you are reading this as a result of email circulations, Facebook or by other means and you're not a Member, go to the Website and join now.

Lucas McGann (35th Elec Fitter)

President AAAA Inc

president@austarmyapprentice.org

<http://www.austarmyapprentice.org/membership.htm>

New Editor

Thanks to Craig Malcolm for his sterling job as Newsletter Editor and Membership Secretary for the last three years.

Jeff Heron (21st Radio Mech)

Editor and Website Forum Moderator

moderator@austarmyapprentice.org

AAAA Memorial Report

A new batch of inscribed pavers has been added to the Memorial pavement, which is now more than 70% covered. Greg Mulcahy is about to start on the task of drawing up an inventory and "site plan" of the pavers so that individual inscribed pavers can be identified and located. Thanks to Jim Hislop, for again carrying out the placement of these pavers.

Greg Mulcahy has also received orders from intakes and trades for bronze plaques, which should be manufactured and in place within the next month.

A brochure has been prepared, for placement on the Website, with copies to be held at the Army Museum and in a brochure/donation box at the Memorial.

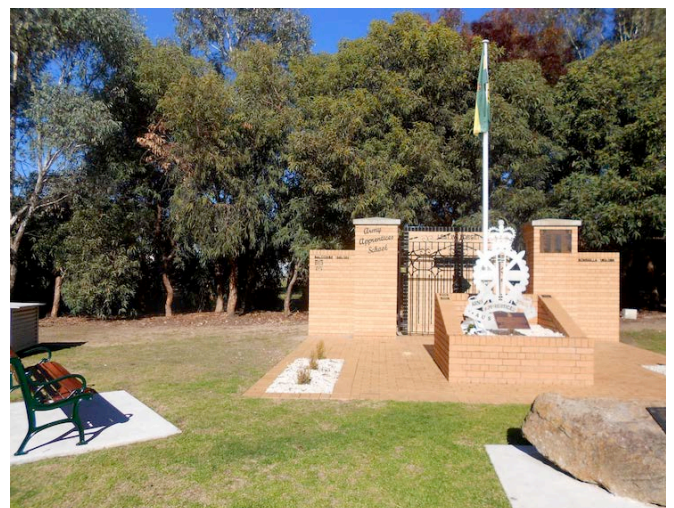
I would also like to acknowledge all those who include a donation for the Memorial in their membership applications/renewals and those who send in special donations. They are much appreciated and they allow the Memorial to remain a "living" memorial with continual upgrading, not just a static edifice.

And a reminder, if you wish to be remembered by a Remembrance Plaque on the respective school wall that you should complete an Order Form, advise your NOK and lodge it with your will.

Frank Poole (10th Architectural Draughtsman)

Chairman, Memorial Sub-Committee

memorial@austarmyapprentice.org



Newsletter Contributions

If you have any items of news or other suitable material for inclusion in The Apprentice About, please contact a member of the Committee.



ASSOCIATION MERCHANDISE

The Association will have the following items for sale, commencing 15 Sep 2013:

- Ties \$25.00 (+\$5.00 P&H)
- Lapel Badges \$10.00 (+\$1.00 P&H)
- Car Stickers \$5.00 (+\$1.00 P&H)
- 60th Anniversary (2008) DVD \$15.00 (+\$7.50 P&H)
- Balcombe Commemoration (2013) DVD \$30.00 (+\$7.50 P&H)
- AAS Flags \$175.00 (+\$9.50 P&H)

Order form and contact details will be on the Association Website: <http://www.austarmyapprentice.org>

BALCOMBE BARRACKS COMMEMORATION REPORT

It was always going to be an ambitious project that the Australian Army Apprentices Association (AAAA) first embarked upon in 2010 when it turned its attention on the original home of the Army Apprentices School at Balcombe in Victoria. From those who had visited in recent times, there was a feeling that more could be done so that the military significance of the area could be improved and preserved for future generations.

Much has been written about the history of the military area that lies just south of the town of Mornington on the Mornington Peninsula, a premier district of Victoria. Though in most instances it had been done very well but it didn't have a sharp focus on the camp and its military tenants, was easily available to the curious. Thus the project known as Balcombe Gates was born.

The AAAA established a sub-committee comprising Barry Teal (10th Clerk), Geoff Martin (2nd VM) and Jack Westernhagen (3rd VM) and they made contact with the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (MPSC) and other Associations of the Balcombe units to determine if they were interested in being a part of a heritage project. Enthusiastic replies were received from all. They also approached the 1st Div USMC Association and their prompt response was to despatch their Association Secretary to come to Australia and check it out.

The result was the establishment of a working committee in mid-2010, chaired by Barry with MPSC, Schools of Signals, Survey and Music, and AAAA reps. Good planning work was done until personal circumstances beset the AAAA reps around mid-2011 and they were unable to continue. As the AAAA was the driving force, the project stalled due to the focus on the Apprentices Together reunion to occur in Canberra in October 2011.

With that successful event out of the way, the President initiated reactivation of the Balcombe Gates job. A new sub-committee was formed comprising Lucas McGann (35th Elec Fitter), Peter Muir (25th VM) and myself.

What followed was months of planning interspersed with meetings with MPSC and other interested parties. In essence, Peter Muir took on the engineering works component whilst I saw the opportunity for a reunion of Balcombe soldiers, male and female together with the civilian staff. The Balcombe Barracks Commemoration 2013 event was created and rescheduled for 3 to 5 May 2013.

The date selected was significant: the Battle of the Coral Sea commenced on 4 May 1942, the US Marines arrived at Balcombe 70 years earlier in 1943 and AAS, the last of the four post-WW2 training units, departed Balcombe 30 years earlier in 1983.

The question asked in the early stages by MPSC was how many would attend. Wanting to secure their maximum involvement, I optimistically advised that we should cater for numbers in the range of 500-700. This raised a few eyebrows around the table but, as it turned out, was almost right on the money.

Peter Muir had very busy days in the final months or so with coordinating the works program. This involved almost constant liaison with MPSC engineers and their contractors. He gave of his own time and worked tirelessly



at all hours to ensure the desired result was achieved. All this was achieved whilst attending to his own daily professional chores. He also played a big role in the preparation, wording and layout of the storyboards and plaques.

Mention here is appropriate of Norm Wells (14th VM) for his wording of the Army Apprentices School storyboard, and collating of the School of Survey board. Peter and Norm prepared the general Balcombe units board, and this was no small task either. Bob Ludlow (13th Elec Mech), in keeping with his keen interest in the Pacific War, prepared the USMC board assisted by Peter and Norm. So it was a case of many hands making light work.

The weekend was built around a Meet and Greet on 3 May at the Mornington Racing Club (MRC), which was our principal reunion venue. It kicked off about 3 pm with an 8 pm conclusion. By that time, all of the administration matters were attended to, refreshments were enjoyed, and blotting paper in the form of tasty and plentiful snacks was eagerly consumed.

Saturday morning saw the return of the administration element of Jeff (21st Radio Mech) and Jan Heron for the late registrations, which were many. At the same time, the Dinner tables were set up with an almost continual change of seating plan and catering numbers as the late registrations came in.

Saturday afternoon had us all assembled out at Balcombe Grammar School (BGS) with many locals from the Mornington Peninsula. The Principal kindly offered the School facilities for the Commemoration ceremony considering many aspects of the gathering but mainly the unpredictable weather at that time of the year. We conducted a symbolic unveiling of the plaques and storyboards indoors in the School gymnasium.

The final address was given by the Principal and, on completion of the ceremony he invited the gathering to afternoon tea prepared by the domestic science students in the assembly hall. We were hosted by the senior students throughout the day. It was most impressive the way the Principal, Matthew Dodd, and the students created such a welcoming atmosphere for we older graduates of the Balcombe precinct.

The former AAS parade ground now boasts high quality storyboards and plaques for the four major Australian training units, the 1st Div USMC and the lesser-known minor units of which over the years there were many.

On the evening of Saturday 4 May, we were back at the MRC for the Reunion Dinner. From the start of the evening to the finish it was judged a roaring success. The highlight of the evening revolved around our Marine Corps veteran. Bob Ludlow recited a poem that he had written for the occasion entitled "The Old Breed" which is how the 1st USMC Division members describe themselves. Bob signed all 100 copies that he prepared and which were snapped up by the audience.

He then went on to introduce LtCol John Stevens, 1st Div USMC (retired), together with his wife Jody who honoured us with their presence. When the elderly gentleman got to his feet the Marines Hymn was played. Now Marines wherever they are always stand to attention whilst the hymn is played but, within just a few seconds, he was joined by everyone in the room, on their feet, singing and clapping time – it was an awesome response. The old veteran told me later that he was overwhelmed and had never experienced such a powerful reception.

Our prime speaker was Colonel David Lawrence, Royal Australian Armoured Corps and a former Commanding Officer of AAS at the time it was relocated from Balcombe to Bonegilla. His well-chosen words resonated with all at the Dinner and particularly with those who were Apprentices at the time of his command. He was warmly received and his presence added to the vigour and spontaneity of the evening. Colonel Lawrence is an Associate Member of the AAAA.

Throughout the evening, our willing band of retailers continued plying their trade and conducted both the raffle and the retailing with great success. Brian (14th VM) and Barbara Daley along with Val Bennett Wife of Neil 13th VM), and Trish and Alf Richardson (14th VM) are the people to be thanked for the level of sales and profit return.

All through the evening the dining room exuded strong goodwill and fellowship. Ron Jervis (7th C&J) took on the task of creating a mild military theme for the décor. This was done over preceding weeks and the end result



fitted the occasion perfectly. Towards the end of the evening, my thoughts turned to the tidy up and what to do with Ron's items. As they were far too good to be binned, we announced that they were for sale and for people to see Barbara and helpers, make a selection and then a reasonable offer. The offers were very good, they all sold, and a sizeable sum was generated for the Commemoration funds.

The MRC final bill to us for the Dinner was for 470 "plates" and we were delighted with the attendance of so many. A number of those making the pilgrimage travelled from WA, FNQ and all points in between. Such was the drawing power of one word, BALCOMBE.

But it was the Sunday activity when the veterans really rallied. We assembled adjacent to the Mornington football ground from about 8.30. The Australian Army Band Melbourne took their place at 8.45 and the marchers scrambled to form up. This was all staged by Kevin Noon (14th Musn) a former Army Ceremonial guru, so the Memorial Service and March Day commenced right on time. Having gained the approval of VicRoads and MPSC, we headed down Main St, Mornington with drums beating and under cover of numerous flags and a huge banner identifying us to the local community. Eight hundred metres on saw us at the Mornington Memorial Park for the Memorial Service conducted by our own Chaplains Bryan Nicholls (11th VM) from Ballarat and Alan Kelb (25th F&T) from Albury. The school Cadets from Frankston provided the Catafalque party and did themselves great credit and received vigorous applause at the conclusion of the event.

So ended a wonderful weekend of celebration, reflection and mateship. To all those who made the effort to attend, I hope we did you proud. I have received the final copy of the DVD that was made over the weekend so it should be available shortly; watch the AAAA Website for details.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the following people for their invaluable support: Peter Muir 25th, Owen Reynolds 13th, Frank Poole 10th, Ron Jervis 7th, Bruce Keevers 16th, Jeff Heron 21st, Norm Wells 14th, Kevin Noon 14th, and Bob Ludlow 13th.

I must also offer thanks to the ladies that made a very big contribution to the success of the Commemoration event. They were Barbara Daley, Trisha Richardson, Val Bennett, Jan Heron and Tina Mills.

Frank Maloney, 13th VM

Events Manager

events@austarmyapprentice.org

Apprentice Luncheon – Canberra

All ACT and NSW-based Apprentices are invited to attend the Canberra Regional Apprentice Luncheon on 4th September in Canberra. Details are on the Website at:

http://www.austarmyapprentice.org/forum_phpBB3/ or email frank.poole@grapevine.com.au

Looking for employment?

The Association's Website Forum (http://www.austarmyapprentice.org/forum_phpBB3/) provides a job advertising and hunting service for Apprentices and their families and friends to either advertise positions that are available or to look for positions for themselves.

To participate in the Forum and to search for Job Ads, visit:

http://www.austarmyapprentice.org/forum_phpBB3/viewforum.php?f=34

To advertise a position or for other information on jobs, email the Website Forum Moderator:

moderator@austarmyapprentice.org.



AAAA Committee

Position	Appointment	Position	Appointment
Management Sub-committee:		Other Committee Members:	
Office Bearers:		Heritage Officer	Norm Wells
President	Lucas McGann	Webmaster	Ian Morris
Vice President	Barry Minster	Chair – Memorial Sub-committee	Frank Poole
Treasurer	Owen Reynolds	Member	Jeff Heron
Secretary	Neil Bennett	Member	Jock McWhinney
Plus:		Member	Bill Mertin
Membership Secretary	Gary Byard	Member	Peter Muir
Public Officer	Ray Wilson	Member	Bill Van Ree
Welfare Officer	Russell Evans	Member	Vacant
Events Manager	Frank Maloney		

The Balcombe Army Camp, established in early 1940 as a permanent military camp, was named after A.B. Balcombe, the Colonial owner of the nearby heritage estate, "The Briars", which had once contained the Camp. The son of the 1820s Colonial Treasurer, Lord Balcombe, he was born on St Helena Island where his father had cared for the exiled Napoleon Bonaparte.

**ARMY
APPRENTICES SCHOOL
1948-1982**

Balcombe Camp housed, over time: 39th Militia Bn, 1st Div USMC, RAAF Staff School, a Z Special unit, the School of Signals, the School of Survey, the Army Apprentices School, the Army School of Music and numerous other minor units. 30 WRAAC Barracks was nearby in Mt Martha. The Camp was decommissioned in 1983 and the site transferred to the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council.



The left-hand side plate on the gates is inscribed:
"THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS HERE RECORDS ITS APPRECIATION OF THE FRIENDSHIP AND CORDIAL HOSPITALITY WHICH WERE EXTENDED TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE 1st MARINE DIVISION BY THE PEOPLE OF THIS DISTRICT IN THE CRITICAL YEAR 1942."

**1st DIVISION
USMC
1942-1943**

The right-hand side plate on the gates is inscribed:
"THESE GATES HAVE BEEN ERECTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY AS A MARK OF APPRECIATION OF THE FIGHTING QUALITIES OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS. IT WAS TO BALCOMBE CAMP THAT THE 1st DIVISION OF THE MARINE CORPS CAME IN 1942 FOR REST AND REFIT AFTER THE BATTLE OF GUADALCANAL. NEAR HERE THE DIVISION RECEIVED THE PRESIDENTIAL CITATION FOR ITS EPIC FIGHT."

Balcombe Barracks Commemoration Dinner Place Mat