



The Apprentice About

Newsletter for the Australian Army Apprentices Association Inc

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DEC 2011

From the President

It has been just over a month now since the AGM and the Canberra reunion and life is back to normal. I trust all who attended the reunion had a great time catching up with old mates and reliving past glories and triumphs – all of which will no doubt have become monumental feats with the passing of years.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank two people, both men have chaired our Association.

Frank Poole is no stranger to anyone who is reading this. His efforts over an extended period of time cannot be underestimated. To get the Association to its current position of strength – 600 plus members and growing – takes a commitment not found in every person. The road to where we are now has not been without its pot holes and Frank managed to ride through the tough times as well as the good.

Barry Teal is the other gentleman. Without Barry's influence and guidance I would certainly not be putting fingers to keypad and typing a President's Report. Barry's contribution as President from February this year, when Frank Poole had to unfortunately step down, was immense on more than one front. Barry was able to keep the Association operating and take on extra tasks himself that the membership expect to be carried out, play a pivotal part in the appointment of our new Patron, compile the Compendium for the reunion which everyone who attended obtained a copy, and all while his own health was not as he would have liked. It is not understating the point to say we nearly did not have Barry at all, which only makes his contribution all the more amazing. *(continued)*

AUSTRALIAN ARMY APPRENTICES ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

ACT Incorporation No A04404
GPO Box 2072, CANBERRA, ACT, 2601

www.austarmyapprentice.org

Patron: Brig David Luhrs, CSC



Membership Matters

The AAAA membership is still growing steadily and we currently have 614 members.

When you are completing your membership renewals, could you please ensure that you add your surname and membership number in the remarks field of your bank deposit.

Also make sure that you send in the renewal form and a copy of the bank receipt to the Treasurer, we generally process a couple of hundred renewals at a time and we get a number of deposits with the word "membership" as the only identifying feature. We then do not know whose membership it is and without the renewal form, we have no idea as to where to start looking.

Craig Malcolm (31st ET)

Membership Secretary

Membership@austarmyapprentice.org

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Merry Christmas to all





To Frank and Barry, and on behalf of the committee and the membership, I sincerely thank you, for without your efforts we would not have our Association, and if I am half as good at this caper as you were I will have succeeded.

Our outgoing Patron LtGen Ken Gillespie and Barry Teal are to be congratulated on their foresight and excellent decision to seek out Brig. David Luhrs for our new Patron. Brig. Luhrs impressed everyone at the reunion dinner when he spoke and I am looking forward to working with him over the next 2 years. To our outgoing Patron LtGen Gillespie, thank you for all that you did for our Association over a number of years, congratulations on an extraordinary career and good luck for whatever the future holds.

On returning to Melbourne after the reunion I called in on Jack Westernhagen who was unable to attend the reunion for health reasons and presented him with his Life Membership Badge. Jack was in good spirits and was delighted to receive this honour. Jack has been a stalwart of the Association in all its forms over the years and thoroughly deserved this award.

The next significant function on the calendar we will be involved with is the Balcombe Military Heritage dedication. At the recent Committee meeting in Canberra it was decided that this event will likely take place in early to mid 2013. There will be ample notice given to all who would like to make the trip to the Mornington Peninsula for this event and hopefully we will be value adding for those who attend. More to come on this soon. Peter Muir 25th VM, now a project manager, has stood up and volunteered his services to the cause here and I am sure his input will be well received by the sub-committee.

I will, in the future, be emailing our membership with regular updates on Association activity and all things relevant, but in the meantime I urge you all, if you have anything you wish to have published in future editions of the Apprentice About newsletter, do not be shy. We do get a lot of positive feedback and the newsletter is eagerly awaited and well read. In the months leading up to the reunion Barry Teal had been communicating to each member individually, and as I said I will be endeavouring to keep up this form of communication.

Finally, to everyone who had a hand in making the reunion the success it was, especially the two Franks – Poole and Maloney – thank you.

Lucas

Lucas McGann - President
president@austarmyapprentice.org

Memorial

The memorial has always been intended to be a “living memorial”, meaning that it will be used by Apprentices over the years to perpetuate their memories of Apprentices School, recognising trades, intakes and mates, in memory of specific departed loved ones and in recognising in particular those Apprentices lost in action.

Unfortunately, a living memorial also involves maintenance and repair. Already our gates are growing rust blisters and rabbits and kangaroos are scattering soil over the pavement. The gates are being removed so that they can be sandblasted and powder coated. We are building up the sides of the flower beds to prevent soil being scattered onto the pavement. We have Jim Hislop, Charlie and Capt. Phil Craig and his Museum staff to thank for looking after these issues.

Several new pavers, memory bronze plaques and a memorial plaque have now been added to the Memorial, with more pavers and memory plaques due to be installed soon.

Greg Mulcahy has looked after the ordering and manufacture of these, assisted by Jim in the delivery and collection of pavers and the laying of pavers and plaques The Memorial Wall to be erected behind the gates, which will have mounted the Apprentice KIA plaque that RAEME have kindly allowed relocation from the RAEME memorial, has been put on hold as funds have had to be allocated for the preservation of the gates.

The web page has been updated and redesigned and now allows on line ordering of plaques and pavers. It is intended in the new year that a small bi-fold brochure will be produced explaining the significance of the memorial and the Army Apprentices scheme. This is primarily for visitors to the memorial and stocks will be held at the Army Museum.

Over the past year we have had just over \$4000 donated by members with their membership renewals, through regional lunches, raffles and generous Apprentices. Thank you to those who donated, your money is essential for the development and upkeep of our memorial.

Frank Poole
 Chair – Memorial sub-committee



CALENDAR OF EVENTS - REUNIONS

Do you have a reunion or event that you would like to announce to the membership?. If so, please let us know.

Apprentices Together 2011 Wrap up

The Apprentice Together reunion was held in Canberra over the weekend of 27 to 30 Oct 2011. The organizing Committee comprised Frank Maloney and Frank Poole. Several other Committee members in particular the Treasurer Owen Reynolds also played significant roles to ensure the success of the reunion. Added to that a lot of assistance was given by non Committee volunteer members who reside in Canberra, and through the local reunion co-ordinator Frank Poole, provided the individual supervision of each function.

Whilst we were elated with the results and attendance of the 2008 reunion at Bandiana, we noted that it was the first AAS reunion in 10 years and that we had constructed a Memorial within the Gaza Ridge barracks adjacent to the Army Museum. We recognised that that our Canberra reunion would not have those strong drawcards so it was necessary to come up with a theme that would appeal to the members and the partners. For Canberra we arrived at an attendance figure of 450 to 550 which we considered was reasonably achievable given the success the Association was enjoying at the time in terms of membership and reputation. This proved a little optimistic, but manageable as we got closer to Oct.

Having access to an event software package that Frank P possessed made budgeting a fairly simple process and we established that it would be prudent to set the breakeven point at 350 attendees. This subsequently proved to be a most appropriate estimate. The budget contained fixed costs, and variables which were related to the number of attendees and in this way we were able observe the estimated financial position as the registration numbers flowed in. Credit must go to Frank Poole (10th) here as he was able to monitor our financial position on a daily basis with the number of attendees, and an estimate only of the financial position at any one time. We can and should do much better with our financial management with any future activities of this type. Those charged with the responsibility of conducting the event can rightly expect that when seeking financial information progress, that it will be available to them.

Thanks to the local Canberra team several accommodation locations were identified and published on the website. The response from a number of members proved the value of providing this sort of information. Several of our "grey nomads" expressed their thanks for the effort in relation to camping and caravan parks.

We are fortunate that the nature of the reunion is that the cash flow is generally positive and this event proved no different. Reunions really up the workload of the Treasurer Owen Reynolds (13th) with the processing of hundreds of attendee payments in a short period of time. One of the difficulties he faces is in the source of revenue via the direct deposit process where the individuals have not identified themselves. Hours are spent resolving this so that we are correct in our accounting but also ensuring we have the attendance register accurate. Unfortunately we always have cancellations at the last minute where people are not able to attend. Our intention is to offer refunds in these circumstances and this has been done for this reunion. If anyone has been overlooked please contact me without delay.

Another area that is interwoven with the Reunion and the financials is membership. I seek to remind all that the principal driver of the 2008 Bandiana reunion was to increase Membership, and to that end it was very successful. A recruiting drive formed only a part of Apprentices Together however I am informed by Craig Malcolm (31st) Membership Manager, that again we achieved a good result with new members and renewals, so that our financial membership is now in excess of 600 which is the highest achieved by the Association since it's inception.

Credit must go to Frank Poole for his fine efforts for Apprentice Together 2011. In the last few weeks leading up to the reunion Frank also picked up a lot of the Association workload following the resignation of Barry Teal (10th) as President, and Lucas McGann (35th) assuming the duties of acting President. As the Secretary Neil Bennett (13th) was enjoying a well earned overseas holiday with his wife at this time, Frank stepped up to the mark and dealt with matters secretarial prior to the AGM. This was done in a most professional manner, and in addition to his responsibilities as Reunion Co-ordinator. Take a bow Frank!

The Meet and Greet at EPIC on 27 Oct 2011 was the first of the functions and was lively and most enjoyable. The venue was bigger than we eventually needed and a little out of the way, but it was close to the Australian War Memorial Annex. A mini bus was hired, and operated by Laurie Wiseman with his unidentified loadmaster, and they conveyed most of the attendees to visit this very interesting complex.



The registration desk was manned by Jeff Heron (21st) with wife Jan and were the friendly face of the AAAA to administer all the arrivals, and even though the line was at times quite long, they remained unflappable, and all were processed most efficiently. Special thanks to a good team there.

The Brian & Barb Daley Raffle Inc. in the company of their assistants Trisha Richardson and Lorraine Grant to name but two, once again took total control of the raffle and raised over \$ 1200 for the kitty.

The Australian War Memorial was the place for our Reunion Wreath Laying on Friday 28 Oct 2011 at 2 pm. This was indeed a highlight of the Reunion. The AWM organisation was excellent in the planning and conduct of the service, including our Association participants. The weather was good and the setting perfect, so together with the Wallabies choir, the Royal Military College band, and the well researched and powerful Eulogy delivered by Norman Wells (14th). With the assembly of some 200 of us we created a highly emotionally charged gathering.

Our Trustee Fred Millar was foremost with the AAAA wreath followed by four donated wreaths of the sponsor Corps, i.e. RAEME, RA Sigs, AABC and RAE. All the wreaths were created in the Association and Corps colours as appropriate, and were spectacular in their arrangement. A good number of private wreaths completed the impressive display.

This was followed by afternoon tea and free guided tours by AWM staff of this truly National treasure. Credit must go to Michael Kusternig (17th) for his good work with AWM on behalf of the Association to ensure that the wreath laying proceedings went without a hitch. During the ceremony Mike also recited *The Ode* in a most dignified and respectful manner.

The Annual General Meeting was held at 10 am on 29 Oct 2011 at the Southern Cross Club. This was a well attended meeting with over 100 participants. It dealt with the things that are the province of an AGM and the minutes are available on the website. Life Memberships for Frank Poole and Jack Westernhagen were announced and accepted by the meeting.

The Partners Gathering was held in conjunction with the AGM. It was most encouraging to see the number attending. This activity was included to provide a relaxed format whilst being informed of the way in which Defence Community Organization care for dependents and families of our troops on active service overseas. Many had lived through the tough times, particularly during the Vietnam conflict, and were eager for knowledge of how it is done these days. The hostess for the event was Mrs Jodie Luhrs, wife of our new Patron Brig David Luhrs (35th). Mrs Luhrs created a most enjoyable session with the many willing participants in the room, and endeared herself to all.

The Reunion Dinner had us back to the Southern Cross Club at 6.30 pm on the same day. Over 300 were seated to enjoy the evening at tables of 10. Every attempt was made to keep the microphone silent, but on occasions such as this that is not so easy to do. Patrons, past and present were in attendance and wise words delivered by both. The new patron, Brigadier David Luhrs, briefly addressed the gathering and made it very clear that he felt honoured to be the Patron of the Association and would take a very keen interest in its affairs. He then presented Frank Poole with his Life Membership badge, and unfortunately Jack Westernhagen was unable to attend the reunion. Frank delivered words of thanks on behalf of he and Jack. As always the raffle draw of some 15 prizes was a lot of fun, particularly with Jodie Luhrs in her new role as 'AAAA barrel girl' drawing the winners from Brian Daley's (14th) barrel for the announcing of winners.

Our retiring Patron Ken Gillespie (23rd) briefly addressed the gathering in his usual and forthright manner which was very well received by the *mob* particularly when he referred to his time as an army apprentice and that he would gladly do it all again for another 43 years. President Lucas McGann presented Ken with a mounted photograph of the gathering at the 2008 reunion at Bandiana.

Peter Thornton (35th) is to be thanked for his audio visual display which ran all evening and created an enormous interest, with many requests for purchase of a copy of the DVD coming forth. This is to receive priority attention by Merchandising in the new year. Bill Mertin (22nd) was the team member who managed all aspects of the Southern Cross Club functions.

A last minute inclusion in the evening agenda was a recital by Robert Ludlow (13th) of a poem he created for the jubilee reunion of the 13th in 2010 at Tweed Heads. The title of the poem is "Say goodbye to Mum" and at the conclusion of his reading there was much reaching for the tissues.



The Memorial Church Service held at St Pauls Church at the Royal Military College, Duntroon on a beautiful Sunday 31 Oct 2011 was a fitting location for our last reunion activity. The attendance was such that we almost filled the church. We were treated to a couple of expert dissertations on the construction of the impressive complex in the early sixties, by two of our own who were involved at the time, namely Herb Taylor (2nd) and David Wilson (12th). The service was conducted by our Chaplains, Craig Potter (38th), Bryan Nicholls (11th) and Keith Noldt (14th). How fortunate we are to have three of our own pedigree as Chaplains of our Association and that they were able to leave their parishes over the weekend to attend our event. The Canberra Vietnam Veterans are to be thanked for the morning tea and bikkies which rounded off a most pleasant morning, and concluded the Apprentices Together 2011.

The 14th Intake at the Canberra Yacht Club. As advertised a number of the 14th assembled at the Canberra Yacht Club for a wind down session on Sunday afternoon. Quite a number from other intakes supported this group, which then headed off to Tuggeranong for an Asian meal that evening. Special mentions must go to my associate Frank Poole and his Canberra team, for their excellent planning and hard work to make it all happen and especially to those Apprentices and partners, who travelled from all parts of Australia, at considerable time and cost, to support their Association.

Thank you all,

Frank Maloney
AAAA Events Manager

SAY GOODBYE TO MUM

*A ballad performed for the 50th Anniversary Reunion of the 13th Intake of Army Apprentices
by Bob Ludlow*

"Say goodbye to mum, get on that train, the loco's set to go,
You're heading off to Balcombe Beach, which is only just a throw",
That must be right, 'cause the brochure said, "the beach was just nearby",
Perhaps the stone was not so big, as the Army wouldn't lie.

The DCO, three stripes on show, strides up and down the aisle,
"Where's your bed; is that a joke?", he says with hidden smile,
"It'll only take a day or two, and you're travell'n second class,
Until we're there you'll have no sleep, you'll be sitting on your arse".

"Like hell I will!", I need my sleep, and settled in the racks,
That made more room for my new mates, now sleeping on their backs,
We'll stop a while, or maybe two, there's food but not so much,
I'm a growing lad, just out of school, and want my bloody lunch.

The time arrived, the trip went fast, only three more years to go,
I hope my bedroom's oh so nice, a little bit like home,
"What sleep in that! Its just a hut, of tin and floors so bare,
And what about those other blokes: you mean we have to share?"

The shower's cold, we've got no walls, the Corporal's just a prick,
Sleeping in his donga there, not caring what we think,
"Make up your beds, clean up your boots", he yells at every dawn,
"Get on parade, don't mind the frost, and you'd better be well shorn".

But I know we'll learn a thing or two, a lot more than they think,
To trust our mates, to roll a fag, and how to get a drink,
To learn a trade, to run a mile, and how to shoot a gun,
And how to keep from being sad, turning hardship into fun.

And fun we had, and stuff the rules, our mateship stood us well,
Our drinking on the sly, and more, but no-one there did tell,



It was as if we'd sworn a pledge, unspoken but so strong,
And those were there, they stood as one, no matter right or wrong.

It's late at night, you scale the fence, Lights-Out has come and gone,
I'm in the shit, the Sargeant's there, and he knows I'm in the wrong,
"You're on the mat, now in the cell, you scrawny little brat,
What's in the pockets of your coat, and don't tell me it's your hat".

A quart of plonk, and one of ale, and my baccy tin so dear,
A coin or two, my money's gone, till pay a week from here,
So I'm off to see the Colonel now, but I doubt he understands,
"Twas just a touch of weakness Sir", I plead with shaking hands.

"See here my lad, I've told you once, and won't tell you any more,
Its fourteen days in barracks now, plus a fine to keep you poor",
So the kitchen is my home 'till then, but its not so bloody bad,
There's lots of bread, and butter too, with sauce and heated snags.

Our mid year passed by quickly, with that odds and evens game,
As we learned to mind our P's and Q's, at the sharp end of a cane,
Our mentors were a toughened mob, but I wonder if they knew,
How we learned to beat the System, and to outwit Mick the screw.

We're seniors now, one year to go, and it's our turn to rule,
Two groups have gone, two more have come, to this our Boys-town school,
From boys to men, in such short time, we've changed in many ways,
We know we will remember all, as we move through future days.

And our history from that distant page, is recounted to this day,
But slightly more embellished, as some small truths fade away,
So stuff all those who worry, if we add a little bit,
As our aging minds assemble, just what put us in the shit.

That bemedalled sarge, 'twas on that train, departed long ago,
But now I understand too late, he was much more than show,
He did his job, he went to war, was not his choice or call,
And with respect, I now do know, he was father to us all.

I'd trust my life to all were there, and to them would also give,
That same regard, and selfless help, as long as I shall live,
For friends that form and share what's hard, together when they're young,
Will stay together through the years; just as we have done.

After all the years since when we left, we've gathered now once more,
To spin some yarns, remember mates, who've passed on well before,
'cause once you wear that badge with pride, a family you become,
To meet as if was yesterday, when we said "goodbye to mum".



Bluey Heritage and Metal Trades

Things 13th Intake AAS blokes didn't know.

I know a lot of ex Balcombe blokes in the 1960s era didn't like Sgt. Blue Heritage Royal Australian Infantry Corps. A Regimental Training Instructor (RTI) at the Army Apprentices School at the time of the 13th Intake, 1958-1960. Blue was ex WW2 and Korea and knew his "stuff" with regard to all aspects of foot drill, rifle (SMLE .303) drill, dress and barrack room requirements. He was firm but fair in my opinion and Ron Mathers and I decided to test his fairness on three occasions that I well remember after all these years. Yes there will be people who think I'm nuts and just because these things happened then that was the way it was supposed to be. WRONG. I will attempt to lay out the three items I remember below.

13th Fitters and Turners had been, coincidentally, in A Company 3 Platoon (1958), then A Coy. 2 Platoon (1959) and were destined to remain in 2 Platoon for year three (1960). Ron and I saw the progression through the company from Platoons 3 to 2 and realized that the progression should now go to 1 in our final year. Now; this really meant nothing to anyone, least of all the Army, however it made sense to two of us and so we approached Sgt. Heritage with our suggestion and he approved and that is what happened. My family, still, to this day think that is how one is advanced through the Army.

On a lesser note we also arranged for warmer looking barrack rooms. As you Balcombe by the bay people remember, the huts were built for the USMC back after the battle of the WW2 battle on Guadalcanal in the 1940s, by the time 1958 came around the plumbing and electrical reticulation was condemned and the Victorian winters were horrendous. As you remember bed rolls were an every morning requirement as was the need for dirty laundry to be kept to a minimum. The original bedroll had all five blankets, two sheets all wrapped in the bed spread leaving the mattress cover bare and covered only by the webbing laid out on top of it. Now these old beds sagged a lot in the middle and didn't lend themselves to a tight "bounce a two bob bit" in the middle. Stay with me here this can get complicated. Our thought was if we could use an issue grey blanket stretched tightly over the mattress it would give the whole barrack room a warmer feeling. OK so far? Now most of us had inherited bed boards from the graduating class before us, these were historically placed between the bed wire and the mattress to give a flat appearance for the equipment display and hence the "Hut of the day" award. Actually they were used to hide the dirty washing accumulated throughout the week and hidden between the wire and the board until a chance to hit the "laundry" occurred. Now as the boots and shoes (7 pair as I remember) had to be placed under the bed and subject to inspection it was soon found out about the secret stash of dirty jocks and sox. Luckily Blue Heritage was not around when the 11th intake graduated and so had not heard of some of the ruses Army Apprentices used to defeat the system; so if we could have the board moved up on top of the sagging mattress the contraband laundry could be hidden between the mattress and the board ergo not visible from underneath. BRILLIANT!

This then leads to the real reason for this subterfuge, if we cut enough off the sheet to cover the bed roll ply wood insert we used to make the sheets look tight then we could after two sheet changes have a dummy bed roll with the real bed completely made up under the blanket that was for 'warmth'. One blanket correctly folded within the bedroll could appear as four from the front, two dummy sheets all wrapped in that horrible pinkish/brown bed spread. Now the bedroll complete could be lifted from the made up bed, placed on the floor until morning and reduce the time required to get back from mess and ready for the first parade. BRILLIANT! Yep and Blue Heritage took the suggestion and it became Company rule.

Now here the Band guys may take exception to this topic that Ron and I took to Blue. For later intakes I need to say that the 13th were the first to have their graduation parade recorded albeit crude by today's standards as the recording was on a 45RPM disc. During the rehearsals it became very apparent that one 'QUICK MARCH' was



not being played and to us this was not an option so off to Coy. HQ we went. The march of course was 'OUR DIRECTOR' commonly known as 'WE'RE A PACK OF BASTARDS'. This tune had been part of our whole Balcombe life and our plea to Blue was upheld and the rest is history. The swagger on the graduation parade ground was electrifying to the graduating class and under grads as well. That 45RPM record stayed with me for years until one day..... it broke. If anyone reading this still has a copy of the entire parade I would be glad to receive same at radfordp@comcast.net

P Radford 13th F&T



Armygeddon

Jeff Heron had the pleasure of visiting ADFA for its open day. The items on display included the ASEME "muscle car" transport vehicle and "Armygeddon", the School's original Land Rover-based dragster.

LTCOL Tom Regener is the manager of the show and he was keen to show me the vehicles that were on display. Unfortunately, the latest project, the '78 Ford LTD "Project Digger" was not available, having "overlapped a couple of valves" according to Steve Baker, one of the young vehicle mechanic apprentices accompanying Tom.

Jeff spoke with Tom about possibly being in Canberra for the October event but they would be at the Gold Coast 600 over the weekend 21-23 October 2011 so there would be a problem.

Jeff and his wife Jan really enjoyed seeing the display and talking with Tom and his team. Jeff also included a couple of photos for our interest.





AAAA COMMITTEE

POSITION	Appointment	POSITION	Appointment
Patron	Brigadier David Luhrs, CSC, Commandant of RMC	Membership Secretary	Craig Malcolm
President	Lucas McGann	Heritage Officer	Jim Hislop
Vice President	Vacant	Chair – memorial subcommittee	Frank Pool
Secretary	Neil Bennett	Member	Gary Byard
Treasurer	Owen Reynolds	Member	Glen Jones
Welfare Officer	Russell Evans	Member	Jeff Heron
Public Officer	Ray Wilson	Member	Bill Merton
Events Manager	Frank Maloney	Member	Jock McWhinney
Webmaster	Ian Morris	Member	Vacant

Looking for:

Are you trying to track down old Appy mates, but don't see their name on our membership list. If you are looking for someone, let the membership secretary (membership@austarmyapprentice.org) know and their name and intake will be listed here.

If you know the whereabouts of any of the names listed, please get them to contact the Membership Secretary, and he will put them in contact with those seeking them.

Looking for:

John MacLeod - 19th C&J
 Paul Shambrook - 19th C&J
 Mark Cartwright - 19th C&J
 Greg Guy - 19th C&J
 Mirko Flaccus ,24th Fitter and Turner.
 Jeff Carr 20th VM
 Doug Potter 20th VM
 Jim Morrison, 5th Intake VM

The Apprentice About is published Quarterly (or thereabouts).

If you have any contributions to this newsletter (which would be greatly appreciated) please send them to: membership@austarmyapprentice.org

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