



# The Apprentice About

Newsletter for the Australian Army Apprentices Association Inc

Volume 2, Issue 1

February 2014

## From the President

As your new President, I wish to thank my predecessor, Lucas McGann, for his sterling effort over the past two years (remember Lucas, you are still Immediate Past President). I also wish to acknowledge the efforts that retiring members of the Committee have put in over the past year or so, especially into the Balcombe Commemoration - outcome - 10/10.

I thank every member of the new Committee for their tireless efforts in maintaining a watch over our responsibilities, and remind each of them of their roles and hope we can move forward to strengthen ties and improve our outcomes even more efficiently.

Our Association continues to find new members, which is encouraging but, as we are no longer "making" Army Apprentices, we are eventually going to cease growing and slowly disappear - not a pleasant thought but a realistic one.

We have the opportunity to build upon the recent activities of the Balcombe Commemoration and subsequent public display, which will ensure our history remains for even the casual observer.

We also need to ensure our Bonegilla history is maintained, especially the Army museum, as it is now the only visible relic of our history. Please encourage your fellow Apprentices, family and friends to take the

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## AUSTRALIAN ARMY APPRENTICES ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

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

[www.austarmyapprentice.org](http://www.austarmyapprentice.org)

Patron: Brig David Luhrs, CSC



## Vale - Jack Westernhagen

It is with great sadness that we advise that Jack Westernhagen, 3<sup>rd</sup> Intake Vehicle Mechanic, passed away on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2013.



Jack was the founder of the first formation of the Army Apprentices Association on 8 June 1970 and was founding Vice President of the current version of the Association in 2006.

For his service to Apprentices, Jack was elevated to Life Membership of the AAAA in 2011. He

was also a long-time member of the RAEME Association, Victoria, becoming a Life Member of that Association in 2003.

Our sincere condolences to Jack's wife Mary and their family. Jack was the proud father of 6 children, grandfather of 15 grandchildren and great-grandfather of 5 great-grandchildren.

A Funeral Mass was held in St Mary Magdalene's Church, Baradine Street, Chadstone, on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2013, followed by a Private Cremation.

The family has advised that donations to the Heart Foundation in Jack's memory would be appreciated.

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journey to the Museum, which is really not far off the main track between Melbourne and Canberra.

Immediate focus for our Association must be on gaining membership and being available for all Apprentices as a focal point when planning reunions, etc. We have a large amount of history in our SPAASSM photo files and there are also links to members and possible members through social media, FACEBOOK. Take the time to re-engage your fellow classmates by contacting them and look to attracting them by showing it is still fun to be an Apprentice.

I would hope that we can get more support for our Regional Representatives; there are several vacancies. The tasks are not hard and only require electronic communications, as we are merely an email away.

Finally, I hope that my term as President will provide each of us with a renewed focus on our Association. I am looking to visit each state and territory over the next year or two and, hopefully, I will arrange a local meeting of members to meet and greet you all.

Barry Minster (20<sup>th</sup> Radio Mech)

President AAAA Inc

[president@austarmyapprentice.org](mailto:president@austarmyapprentice.org)

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

## Membership Matters

As at 11 Mar 2014, there were 529 financial members, ie:

- Ordinary Members           259
- Retired Members           262
- Associate Members         7
- Life Members                1

Unfortunately the number of renewals is declining, despite attempts by the Committee and Regional Representatives to follow up the non renewals. A break down of the current non-renewal status is:

- Due Mar 2012                8
- Due Sep 2012               24
- Due Mar 2013               32
- Due Sep 2013               68

With March 2014 fast approaching, any efforts by members in contacting (ex) members and perhaps those who have yet to join our proud ranks would be appreciated. Any suggestions for reducing the resignation rate or increasing recruitment are very welcome on the email contact on the next page.

## AAAA Memorial report

The Memorial continues to be developed with the drainage problem now resolved and catch drainage installed on the right side of the pavement.

It is gratifying the number of donations received from members specifically for the upkeep of the Memorial, and I thank all those donors for their help in ensuring that monies are available to continue development and ensure maintenance is kept up. Planning includes purchase of a couple of replacement flags and addition to the Memorial wall of the names of Apprentices KIA and the theatre in which they were serving.

I also intend to have printed post cards and Christmas cards featuring the Memorial. The Memorial brochure has been distributed and if anyone wants a copy or a number required for reunions or luncheons please contact me.

Pavers and intake plaques are still available. Just remember that, if you wish a memorial plaque to be attached to the Balcombe or Bonegilla Wall on your passing, then you should complete an application and include this with your will. Details and application forms can be found on the Association Web site <http://www.austarmyapprentice.org>

Frank Poole (10<sup>th</sup> Architectural Draughtsman)

Chair, Memorial Sub-Committee

[memorial@austarmyapprentice.org](mailto: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.



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## Membership Matters (contd)

### 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. If anyone knows of any members who may have changed their contact details, please ensure they advise Gary.

Gary Byard (21<sup>st</sup> VM)  
Membership Secretary  
[membership@austarmyapprentice.org](mailto:membership@austarmyapprentice.org)

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### Our new President

Regimental number 342976, Apprentice Barry Edward Minster joined the Army as a 20<sup>th</sup> Intake Apprentice Radio Mechanic in January 1965. After three years at Balcombe, Barry graduated with the rest of his Class and was posted to the School of Signals - also at Balcombe - for six months Corps training to complete his apprenticeship.

As an RA Signals Corps member, Barry served with the 1<sup>st</sup> Signal Regiment in Ingleburn NSW, and then applied for Vietnam service. He completed jungle training in Canungra in February 1969 and arrived in South Vietnam on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1969, posted to 110th Signal Squadron. As a highly skilled technician, his duties included System Control Officer in Saigon and, after six months, he was promoted to Lance Corporal. Reaching his end of duty, he was offered a second stripe to extend his tour of duty to 19 months; this he did and returned home in October 1970 after 576 days overseas.



His posting back to the School of Signals was short-lived and Barry successfully resigned his Army contract in July 1971. On discharge, Barry commenced employment in the broadcast television world with RVN2 Wagga Wagga, where he married his first wife Lynn Ballantyne. They travelled to Scotland where he worked with Scottish television 1973-1975. Barry returned to Australia as a proud father and commenced work with numerous local television companies: HSV7, ABC2, SBS, and ATV0.

Retiring from full time work in 1996, Barry has been involved with several Olympic Games broadcasts, World Cup Soccer and Tennis championships. He enjoys computers, especially social media.

Barry's other love is Freemasonry and you can find him being involved with Victorian Masonic Lodges as well as directing the live streaming of Freemasonry every month on the Internet as well as the Channel 31 program "Inside Freemasonry". Although he likes Rolls Royces, his toys only extend to a 1966 MGB as well as a new VW Polo GTI. Barry and his second wife Judith live in Collingwood, Melbourne.

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### Our new Website

Having got a lot of the contractual details out of the way, the development of our new Website is at last underway. Our test and acceptance team (Ian Morris, Jeff Heron, Gary Byard, Barry Minster & Lucas McGann) has just been given access to the development site for testing.

The initial reaction is good. There is still a lot of work to be done; however, it is a very interesting stage in the project. There will be more progress reports as we get into the detailed testing.

Ian Morris (12<sup>th</sup> Radio Mech)  
Webmaster  
[webmaster@austarmyapprentice.org](mailto:webmaster@austarmyapprentice.org)

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## Canberra luncheon

A Canberra region luncheon was held in mid-December at the Golden King Restaurant with 20 Apprentices attending. The fare was obviously Chinese and this was our second visit to this restaurant. Again the food was varied, tasty and plentiful. Many went home with containers for dinner!!!

This lunch was our Christmas lunch and we had crackers, funny hats, lucky cracker prize (won by Owen Reynolds) and our usual raffle in aid of the Memorial fund.

I had invited Navy and Air Force Apprentices to join us but we had no takers, probably because local contacts couldn't be found. (*Editor's comment. Buck Jones, you need to work on your colleague!*) I will be working on this for our next lunch. Invitations are also emailed to Apprentices on the South Coast and southern NSW and regular attendees from Sydney.

We try to have three or four lunches a year and to vary the venues and menus. For those regional representatives planning on running a lunch, I look for a venue that has room to seat on one table up to 25 (ACT numbers) without disturbing other diners, nearby parking, a menu that allows for party service for about \$25, licensed or with a BYO close by and located as convenient as possible to work/living areas of Apprentices. For interest, I run a raffle and hand out car stickers and Memorial brochures. It is also an opportunity to give an update on Association matters. I use the Association membership list to email invitations; Gary Byard (Membership Secretary) can help with this.

Good dining and good company

Frank Poole  
ACT Regional Representative  
[memorial@austarmyapprentice.org](mailto:memorial@austarmyapprentice.org)

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## Association merchandise

The Association has the following items for sale:

- |   |  |                        |
|---|--|------------------------|
| • Association tie .....                   |  | \$25.00 (+\$5.00 P&H)  |
| • Lapel badge .....                       |  | \$10.00 (+\$1.00 P&H)  |
| • Car sticker .....                       |  | \$5.00 (+\$1.00 P&H)   |
| • Plaque .....                            |  | \$45.00 (+\$10.00 P&H) |
| • Baseball cap .....                      |  | \$12.50 (+\$2.50 P&H)  |
| • Key ring (old badge) .....              |  | \$5.00 (+\$1.00 P&H)   |
| • AAS flag (old badge) .....              |  | \$175.00 (+\$9.50 P&H) |
| • 60th Anniversary (2008) DVD .....       |  | \$15.00 (+\$7.50 P&H)  |
| • Balcombe Commemoration (2013) DVD ..... |  | \$30.00 (+\$7.50 P&H)  |
| • SPAASSM Collection DVD .....            |  | \$25.00 (+\$7.50 P&H)  |



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

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## SPAASSM Collection DVD

In late 2006, Peter Thornton (35<sup>th</sup> ET) discovered a large quantity of photographic material and documents relating to the AAS, from both Balcombe and Bonegilla, at the Army Museum, Bandiana Vic, including photographs, slides, negatives, video tapes, movie films, journals, graduation booklets, standing orders, handbooks and histories. About 16 boxes 600mm x 500mm x 400mm and four smaller boxes were stored on shelves in an old warehouse. The material was in good condition but the storage location was less than ideal. The Army History Unit owns the material. Lt Col Jim Hislop (Rtd) had rescued the items from almost certain destruction at the closing of the Schools at Balcombe and Bonegilla. This material was relocated from Bandiana to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. After a detailed survey, the SPAASSM team assessed that the archive contained 7300 photos, 750 x 35 mm slides, 30 videos, 1 film, and about 10,000 pages of documents.

Peter decided that, to be preserved, the material needed to be surveyed, digitised, catalogued and put into archival standard storage. The longer term outcome and aim is to make the digitised material publicly available via the Web for the general enjoyment of all Apprentices and visitors and to eventually make more complete the catalogue record for each item. Because of the size of the task, he realised a formal approach would be necessary to acquire the necessary resources. Peter developed project proposals, ToRs and all necessary documentation to get the project started. Finally, in early 2007 Project SPAASSM, (*Special Project for Army Apprentice School Special Material*) was established by the AAAA with the generous support of (the then) Chief of Army, Lt Gen Ken Gillespie, AO DSC CSM. Peter was appointed Project Manager and a project team set up, consisting of: a **core group** including: Peter Thornton (35<sup>th</sup> ET), Ian Morris (12<sup>th</sup> RM), Frank Poole (10<sup>th</sup> Architectural Draughtsman) and Bill Mertin (22<sup>nd</sup> VM); and a **variable group** including, from time to time: Chris Moon (32<sup>nd</sup> C&J), Rod Eagleton (24<sup>th</sup> F&T), Chic Henry (19<sup>th</sup> Blacksmith), Ray Dawes (21<sup>st</sup> F&T) and Ian MacLean (22<sup>nd</sup> Musician).

Archival storage materials were purchased and the items moved from Bandiana to the Australian War Memorial, which provided space for the work. Over the next three years, Project SPAASSM transformed the miscellaneous assortment of photos, slides, and documents etc into the "AAAA Inc Historical Collection" (archivally stored items, digital images on DVD, a catalogue written in MS Access 2007, and accompanying documentation).

Peter continued in the role of Project Manager until ill health forced him to stand down in 2009. Ian Morris took over until completion of the Project. On 5 May 2010, a function was held at the AWM to officially mark the end of the Project. The Collection was handed over to The Army Museum Bandiana on 7 Aug 2010 where it is now stored.

Work is underway to make the digitised images available on the revamped AAAA Inc Website and copies of the material on DVD may be purchased via the Merchandise section on the Website.

*An image from the SPAASSM Collection.*

**First email received by the Forum Moderator with the correct names of both Apprentices above wins a copy of the SPAASSM DVD (Committee and subject members excluded)!**

Jeff Heron (21<sup>st</sup> Radio Mech), Website Forum Moderator  
[moderator@austarmyapprentice.org](mailto:moderator@austarmyapprentice.org)





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## Upcoming events

### 44<sup>th</sup> Class reunion

The 44<sup>th</sup> Class is looking to hold a 25-year reunion in March 2014. They are looking at Brisbane as the venue, mostly because that's where the two principal organisers, Jamie Sharpe and Shane O'Neil, live. 44<sup>th</sup> Class Apprentices (and others) are asked to spread the word and to contact as many of the Class as possible. Anyone with contacts for venues, accommodation and possibly a golf course in Brisbane, should contact the organisers or Wesley Lynch, 44<sup>th</sup> VM and President, RAEME Association WA, mobile: 0477 308475, email: [wesley.lynch@kiv.com.au](mailto:wesley.lynch@kiv.com.au)

### Events Manager's report

New year greetings to all.

In keeping with our Event history over the few years of our existence, we have always attempted to have a significant activity every 2-3 years. This has been favourably accepted by the membership as demonstrated by their good attendance at the previous reunions. So it appears that we should turn our attention to years 2015/2016. The Committee is generally in acceptance of this timeframe and that the location should be Bandiana/Wodonga/Albury.

Now to the theme which is always an essential ingredient for any gathering. My research tells me that 2015 represents the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the graduation year of the last intake of the AAS and, hence, the closure of the Australian Army Apprentice Scheme. That is very significant and could provide the basis for a successful gathering. There are a couple of alternatives of equal value that could also be added to such an agenda though, whilst looking very good, as they are still in the "melting pot" at this time, they remain a tad sensitive. I am confident of a resolution within the next few months.

So that's the situation at this time and I suggest that you make Oct 2015 for Bandiana a date claimer. In the meantime please provide any ideas that you may have in this regard to me, or any Committee Member. Your ideas will be most welcome.

Best wishes to you all and your families and loved ones for 2014 - stay well.

Frank Maloney, 13<sup>th</sup> VM  
AAAA Events Manager  
[events@austarmyapprentice.org](mailto:events@austarmyapprentice.org)

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## Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal

Harry Hoger (20<sup>th</sup> RM) has supplied information regarding the establishment of the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal, via which: a) an individual is able to directly seek review by the Tribunal about their eligibility for a Defence honour or award but only after an application has been refused by Defence, and b) the Government is able to refer general eligibility issues relating to Defence honours and awards to the Tribunal for inquiry and recommendation. Serving and ex-serving members should first apply to Defence at: [www.defence.gov.au/medals](http://www.defence.gov.au/medals). You can contact the Tribunal via:

Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal  
CP2-3-061

Locked Bag 7765 Canberra BC ACT 2610

Telephone: (02) 6266 3486

E-mail: [DHA.Tribunal@defence.gov.au](mailto:DHA.Tribunal@defence.gov.au) Website: [www.defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au](http://www.defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au)



## AAS - some facts and figures

Here is an update to the figures provided in [The Apprentice About](#), September 2012. The latest full version is at [http://www.austarmyapprentice.org/files/AAS Fast Facts 6 Sep 2013 v1-1.pdf](http://www.austarmyapprentice.org/files/AAS_Fast_Facts_6_Sep_2013_v1-1.pdf)

### Trades

9,297 young men and women enlisted into the Australian Army to serve as Army Apprentices. There were 1781 non-graduates, including 24 Apprentices who died whilst at AAS. Of the non-graduates, 446 went on to serve in the Regular Army.

7,516 Apprentices graduated into the following trades: Architectural Draughtsman - 12, Blacksmith - 61, Bricklayer - 52, Carpenter and Joiner - 781, Clerk - 120, Electrical Fitter - 335, Electrical Mechanic - 365, Electrician - 88, Fitter and Turner - 1214, Musician - 385, Plumber - 287, Radio Mechanic/ Electronic Tradesman - 1584 Vehicle Mechanic - 2224, Welder - 8.



Mr. Hill instructor with electricians

### Female Apprentices

There were 115 female Army Apprentices, of whom 49 did not graduate. 66 female Apprentices graduated into the following trades: Electronics - 32, Vehicle Mechanic - 28, Fitter and Turner - 5, Carpentry - 1. One is now a Major, two are Captains and four have reached WO2.



### Operational service

Many Army Apprentices have participated on overseas operational service, both warlike and non-warlike, some serving on multiple operations. The number of individual Apprentices who have partaken in all these operations totals 2563: Afghanistan - 288, Bougainville - 255, Borneo - 198, Sinai - 29, Iraq - 227, Korea - 34, Malaya - 271, Middle East - 18, Balkans - 8, Rhodesia - 5, Rwanda - 40, Solomon Islands - 94, Somalia - 43, Thailand - 10, Thai/Malay Border - 30, Timor - 678, Pakistan - 7, Cambodia - 138, Namibia - 131, Vietnam - 1125, (includes 71 non-graduates), Western Sahara - 12, Ethiopia - 2, Mozambique - 3, Sudan - 2, and Kashmir - 3.

**Notes:** 1. These figures include 145 non-graduates who partook in 205 operations.

2. Anyone concerned about their eligibility for awards resulting from the above service should refer to the article on page 4 about the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal.

### Officers and Warrant Officers

There have been 765 Apprentices who have reached officer rank. This includes 34 non-graduates. There have also been six padres, 719 WO1s and 760 WO2s. 382 Apprentices graduated from OCS/RMC/ADFA. In the higher ranks there have been: 1 x Lieutenant General, 5 x Brigadiers, 21 x Colonels and 113 x Lieutenant Colonels.

### Still serving

As of today<sup>1</sup>, only 527 Apprentices remain in uniform - 330 in the ARA and 197 in the ARES. Oldest serving in the ARES are Lt Col Ian McLean, Maj Robert Hudson and Maj Rodney Cox, all 22<sup>nd</sup> Intake. In the ARA it's WO1 Brian Bosworth and WO1 Greg Payne, both 25<sup>th</sup>.

### SASR

There have been 74 Apprentices who have qualified to wear the SAS beret.

**Note:** Photos are from the SPAASSM Collection.

<sup>1</sup> As at 6 Sep 2013. Statistics from Wally Rotow, 18<sup>th</sup> Intake, Central Army Records Office.



## Movie review “The Railway Man” (by Frank Poole)

The Railway Man is adapted from the bestselling autobiography of the experiences of Eric Lomax (played by Colin Firth) as a Signaller in the British Army, captured by the Japanese in Singapore and sent to work on the infamous Burma Railway. Although there are many “flash-backs” to his life and mistreatment in the Burma Railway camps, particularly after owning up to having built a radio, the film is located in England in the later post-war period.

The focus of the story is on the effect of Lomax’s treatment in the hands of the Japanese Kempeitai, particularly Lt. Takashi Nagase (played by Takashi Nagase) and the effect on his life, his fixation on railway timetables and on his relationship with his wife Patti (Nicole Kidman). Many will recognise the classic symptoms of PTSD, including the suicide of a fellow Burma prisoner from his support group.

With the support of his best friend Finlay and his wife, and with increasing psychological trauma, he finally agrees to return to the Burma Railway site where he finds his tormentor Takashi Nagase, now the curator of the Burma Railway museum. He attacks Nagase but cannot kill him as he intended and returns to England to collect Patti and take her back with him to make peace with Nagase and settle his demons.

For those who have difficulty explaining PTSD, this film graphically illustrates the greatly misunderstood effect of war on the mind and the flow-on effect to friends and family. A film well worth seeing.

## AAAA Committee

Management Sub-committee		Members (contd)	
<b>Office Bearers:</b>			Harry Cole - 7 <sup>th</sup> VM
President	Barry Minster - 20 <sup>th</sup> Radio Mech		Bill Van Ree - 25 <sup>th</sup> Elec Mech
Vice President	Vacant		Glenn Jones - 28 <sup>th</sup> C&J
Treasurer	Owen Reynolds - 13 <sup>th</sup> Elec Fitter	Merchandise	Richard Pike - 21 <sup>st</sup> VM
Secretary	Neil Bennett - 13 <sup>th</sup> VM	<b>Regional Representatives</b>	
<b>Plus:</b>		NT	Vacant
Membership Secretary	Gary Byard - 21 <sup>st</sup> VM	NQld	David Young - 30 <sup>th</sup> Fitter Maint
Public Officer	Ray Wilson - 15 <sup>th</sup> Plumber	SQld	Brian Daley - 14 <sup>th</sup> VM
Welfare Officer	Russell Evans - 23 <sup>rd</sup> Musician	NSW	Richard Pike - 21 <sup>st</sup> VM
Events Manager	Frank Maloney - 13 <sup>th</sup> VM	ACT	Frank Poole - 10 <sup>th</sup> Architectural Draughtsman
Heritage Officer	Norm Wells - 14 <sup>th</sup> VM	Northern Vic	Jim Hislop - 9 <sup>th</sup> F&T
Webmaster	Ian Morris - 12 <sup>th</sup> Radio Mech	Central Vic	Mark Ryan - 33 <sup>rd</sup> Motor Mech
Chair - Memorial Sub-committee	Frank Poole - 10 <sup>th</sup> Architectural Draughtsman	Southern Vic	Matt Bouma - 30 <sup>th</sup> C&J
<b>Members:</b>		Vic Metro	Lucas McGann - 35 <sup>th</sup> Elec Fitter
	Jeff Heron - 21 <sup>st</sup> Radio Mech	SA	Vacant
	Harry Hoger - 20 <sup>th</sup> Radio Mech	Tas	Gary Byard RFD - 21 <sup>st</sup> VM
	Bill Mertin - 22 <sup>nd</sup> VM	WA	Tom Esze - 36 <sup>th</sup> Motor Mech

Many thanks to those who have again stood for Committee duties and a hearty welcome to the new members.