



ARMY APPRENTICES SCHOOL – SOME FACTS AND FIGURES

Between 2 August 1948 and 16 January 1995, 9,409 young men and women enlisted into the Australian Army for service as Army Apprentices.

Note: Some of the detailed figures below, originally compiled as at 3 September 2016, do not include the 112 50th Intake (or Class) Apprentices who were recognised by the Association in October 2019. Those that are current are marked with an asterisk, while the remaining figures will be amended as further details are gathered.

Of those who enlisted, there were 1,789* non-graduates, including 26* apprentices who died whilst at AAS. Of the non-graduates, 446 went on to service in the Regular Army.

Trades*

There were 7,620 graduates into the following trades:

- Architectural Draughtsman – 12 (10th and 11th Intakes)
- Blacksmith – 61 (ended with 25th Intake)
- Bricklayer – 52 (ended with 24th Intake)
- Carpenter and Joiner – 797 (all intakes)
- Clerk – 120 (ended with 19th Intake)
- Electrician – 88 (ended with 11th Intake)
- Electrical Fitter – 343 (from 12th Intake)
- Electrical Mechanic – 367 (from 12th Intake)
- Fitter and Turner – 1,229 (up to 25th Intake and from 31st Intake) and Fitter Maintenance (from 26th to 30th Intakes)
- Motor Mechanic – 2,251 (1st Intake and from 31st Intake) and Vehicle Mechanic (2nd to 30th Intakes)
- Musician – 385 (from 7th to 37th Intakes)
- Plumber – 291 (1st to 27th Intakes and 30th Intake) and Plumber & Gasfitter (28th and 29th Intakes and from 31st Intake)
- Telecom Mechanic – 1,616 (1st to 8th and 10th Intakes), Radio Mechanic (9th and 11th to 26th Intakes) and Electronics Tradesman (from 27th Intake)
- Welder – 8 (2nd to 5th Intakes).

Female Apprentices*

Commencing with the 39th Intake in 1984, there were 118 female Army Apprentices, of whom 49 did not graduate. For those who did graduate, their trades were:

- Electronics Tradesman – 34
- Motor Mechanic – 29
- Fitter and Turner – 5
- Carpenter and Joiner – 1.

Operational Service

Note: This section is a work in progress as there are known discrepancies awaiting further information to facilitate as accurate as possible inclusion. For example how many served in West Papua or the Army's Navy (Small Ships). Readers with information are encouraged to advise the Associations Secretary secretary@austarmyapprenticeassoc.org.

Many Army Apprentices have participated on overseas operational service, both warlike and non-warlike. Some Apprentices have been on multiple operations. As at 3 September 2016, the number of individual Apprentices who have partaken in all these operations totalled 2,563:

- Afghanistan – 288
- Balkans – 8
- Bougainville – 255
- Borneo – 198
- Cambodia – 138
- Ethiopia – 2
- Iraq – 227
- Kashmir – 3
- Korea – 34
- Malaya – 271
- Middle East – 18
- Mozambique – 3
- Namibia – 131
- Pakistan – 7
- Rhodesia – 5
- Rwanda – 40
- Sinai – 29
- Solomon Islands – 94
- Somalia – 43
- Sudan – 2
- Thailand – 10
- Thai/Malay Border – 30
- Timor – 678
- Vietnam – 1,125 (includes 71 non-graduates)
- Western Sahara – 12

Note: The above figures include 145 non-graduates who partook in 205 operations.

Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV)

There were 15 Apprentices posted to the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV), including members from the 1st, 6th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 14th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st Intakes.

SASR

As at 3 September 2016, there were 74 Apprentices who had qualified to wear the SAS fawn beret.

Officers and Warrant Officers

As at 3 September 2016, there were 766 Apprentices who had reached officer rank. This included 34 non-graduates. There were six padres in that total. A total of 382 Apprentices graduated from OCS/RMC/ADFA, 263* of whom graduated from OCS.

Note: The OCS figure above was obtained from a Web document “The Australian Army Apprentices School and the Officer Cadet School, Portsea (<http://online.fliphtml5.com/bspxy/vhuq/#p=1>) by LTCOL Reg Elder (RETD), 7th Intake Telecom Mechanic.

In the higher ranks, at that time, there were: one Lieutenant General (OCS*), one Major General (RMC*), six Brigadiers (three from OCS*), 20 Colonels (12 from OCS*) and 117 Lieutenant Colonels (68 from OCS*).

*Note: Add to the above our current Patron, MAJGEN Andrew Freeman AM, 40th Electrical Fitter (RMC).**

There were 741 WO1s and 749 WO2s.

One female Apprentice had reached the rank of Major, two of Captain, three of WO1 and one of WO2.

Still serving

As at 3 September 2016, only 449 Apprentices remained in uniform: 273 Regulars and 176 Reservists (includes 8 x Airforce and 2 x Navy personnel). The oldest still serving at that time were Reservists LTCOL Ian McLean, 22nd Intake (who has now retired in 2020*), MAJ Robert Hudson, 22nd Intake; and Regular WO2 Gary Kalem, 26th Intake.

Initial statistics supplied by: Wally Rotow, 18th Intake, supported by Phillip Scholz, 35th Intake, and updated by Jeff Heron, 21st Intake.