



## APPRENTICES' PROFICIENCY AWARDS

With the approaching graduation of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Intakes in December 1951 a series of Proficiency Awards were approved for achieving Army Apprentices. The following is the actual approval for the most coveted award "The Governor Generals Medal".

FOR PRESS :

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### MEDALS FOR ARMY APPRENTICES.

"The Governor-General's Medal," to be awarded to the most outstanding trainee of the Army Apprentices Training School, is included in a list of prizes for annual competition, announced today by the Minister for the Army (Mr. Jos. Francis).

The Governor-General (Mr. McKell) has approved of the title for the silver medal which will be presented to the apprentice gaining the highest aggregate points in trade, subjects, sport, regimental training and qualities of leadership in the graduation class each year.

Members of the first intake of apprentices will complete their three years' training at the School at Balcombe (Victoria) in December this year.

Other awards to first, second, and third year trainees provide for first and second prizes of silver and bronze medallions for the highest proficiency in each of the metal, electrical and building trade wings.

Bronze medallions will be awarded in six classes of general education subjects, and a silver medallion will go to the apprentice gaining the highest aggregate for trade progress, sport, regimental training, and qualities of leadership.

First prize for the best exhibit made in leisure hours in each of the three trade wings will be a bronze medallion.

It is anticipated that approximately 100 apprentices will qualify at the three year graduation stage of their training in December, 1951. They will then leave the School to begin their final apprenticeship year in various Army workshops.

After the Graduation Parade in December, 1951, senior classes will graduate twice yearly to correspond with half yearly intakes of apprentices until the School reaches the maximum strength of 450. Intakes will then be once annually. Present strength is 343.

The initial passing-out parade will be a ceremonial inspection and march past, followed by an official presentation of awards.

CANBERRA.

July 12, 1951 - P.M.



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### THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S MEDAL

The Governor General's Medal was awarded to the most outstanding Apprentice of the Graduating Class in consideration of trade and educational subjects, regimental training and ability and qualities of leadership.

The award was the most coveted award of those given out at the graduation parade.

The first medal to be presented was to Apprentice WO2 R,J, Scott of the first Intake.

On the first Graduation Parade for Apprentices from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Intakes on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1951 the recipients of The Governor General's Medal were:



*(Photo from "1952 Journal of the Army Apprentices School")*



Obverse – AAS Badge



Reverse - Engraved

The medal was 47mm in diameter and was of gilt silver.





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The obverse displayed the crest of the Army Apprentice School. There is a 7 pointed star at the edge on the sides of the Crown and around the lower edge is 'ARMY APPRENTICE SCHOOL'.

The revers has a laurel wreath with a ribbon tie at the base. Below the tie it is marked 'STGSIL' and the makers name 'STOKES'. Around the top edge is engraved 'GOVERNOR GENERALS MEDAL'. Inside the wreath in two lines is 'AWARDED TO'. The recipients Service No., Name and year were engraved in the space below.

### MILITARY TRAINING PROFICIENCY AWARD

A silver medal modelled on The Governor General's Medal also presented on the graduation parade. The award is made to the most outstanding Apprentice of the Graduating Class in consideration of military skills, including regimental, physical and recreational training and qualities of leadership.



### THE GULLIDGE MEMORIAL MEDAL

(Image not available)

This medal is awarded each year to the most outstanding Apprentice Musician for musical proficiency, regimental training and qualities of leadership.

### THE P.K. RUSSELL MEMORIAL TROPHY

(Image not available)

Presented on behalf of the parents of the late Apprentice Peter Keith Russell. The trophy is awarded annually to the outstanding athlete of the graduating class.

### OTHER AWARDS

Initially all awards and certificates were presented to Apprentices on the graduation parade. However, from 1961 as the intakes grew larger, new arrangements were put in place to present the lesser important awards and certificates to the graduating Apprentices in the morning, before the afternoon graduation parade. This was introduced because it took one to one-and-a-half hours to complete the presentation of the lesser awards and certificates to 100 or more graduating Apprentices.



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### TRADE PROFICIENCY PRIZE

Anecdotally, and from some documents, evidence is that Apprentices' Trade Proficiency Prize Medals were awarded for excellence in trade progress, sport, regimental training, and qualities of leadership. The Medals were awarded annually, at least from 1951 and were awarded to junior, intermediate and senior intakes. In some years, there may have been only one Medal awarded per trade per intake and, in other years, two Medals (silver and bronze) were awarded. The Medals, modelled on the above mentioned medals, were engraved with the winner's name, the year and the type of award.

#### Silver Medals



#### Awarded for:

##### **Skill at Arms Award**

**Proficiency Medals** – Highest aggregate points for trade progress, sport, regimental training and qualities of leadership.

- **Junior Intake**
- **Intermediate Intake**

**Apprentice Musician Prize** - Theory of music medal.

- **Senior Intake**

#### Bronze Medals



#### Awarded for:

**Trade** - 1 Medal awarded per trade per intake.

**Education** – 4 Medals awarded to the Junior Intake, 2 to the Intermediate Intake and 1 to the Senior Intake.



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### Apprentice Musician Prizes

**Progress Medal** – 1 for first term and 1 for second term.

- **Junior Intake**

**Proficiency Medal**

- **Intermediate Intake**

*The following information extracted from “Apprenticeship Awards 1970 Programme”*

### APPRENTICESHIP COMMISSION OF VICTORIA

**Department of Labour and Industry**

#### ANNUAL AWARDS TO OUTSTANDING APPRENTICES

These awards coincide with Apprenticeship Week that was commenced in 1951 culminating with a prestation of awards ceremony at Melbourne Town Hall.

In 1970, various awards were presented but of particular interest to Army Apprentices is the SPECIAL AWARDS category where Silver Medallions to the Outstanding Apprentice trained by the following: (The apprentice selection is in each case the best of the apprentices of all trades for which training is provided).

Australian Military Forces

*School:* Army Apprentice School, Balcombe

Royal Australian Air Force

*Schools:* R.A.A.F. School of Radio

Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology

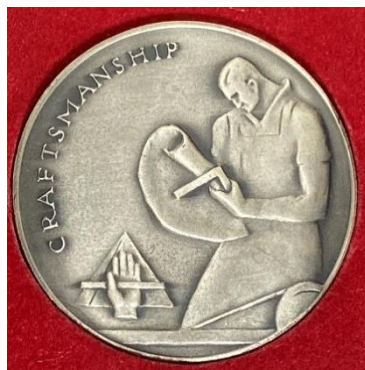
Trans-Australia Airlines

*Schools:* T.A.A. Engineering School

Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology

Victorian Railways

*School:* Victorian Railways Technical College



(57mm diameter silver Medallion)



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*This document remains a work in progress as it currently only contains the information available to the Committee up to the last revision. We welcome all other information of awards for Army Apprentices during their training at the various schools. Please forward all information to our Secretary, preferably via email to [secretary@austarmyapprentice.org](mailto:secretary@austarmyapprentice.org).*

*This original work prepared by Association President, Keith Lowe 22<sup>nd</sup> Intake Fitter & Turner June 2021.*

**References:**

- Association records
  - Book "From Boy to Soldier" review committee notes
  - Book "From Boy to Soldier" by S.H. Cheeseman AM JP 4<sup>th</sup> Intake Vehicle Mechanic 2003
  - 1952 The Journal of the Army Apprentices' School
  - Graduation Programmes from 1969 and 1970
  - Original work "APPRENTICES' TRADE PROFICIENCY PRIZE MEDAL" prepared by Association Committee Member and Newsletter Editor Jeff Heron – 21st Intake Radio Mechanic
  - Apprenticeship Commission Of Victoria – Apprenticeship Awards 1970 Programme
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