



ARMY APPRENTICES SCHOOL – SOME FACTS AND FIGURES

Introduction^(Note 1)

Between 2 August 1948 and 16 January 1995, 9,409 young men and women enlisted into the Australian Army for service as Army Apprentices. Of those who enlisted, there were 1,792 non-graduates, including 26 Apprentices who died whilst at the Army Apprentices School (AAS). Of the non-graduates, 446 went on to service in the Regular Army.

Trades

There were 7,617 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 – 796 (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 – 2,250 (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 – 1,615 (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

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, including 145 non-graduates who partook in 205 operations.

- Afghanistan – 288
- Balkans – 8
- Bougainville – 255
- Borneo – 198
- Cambodia – 138
- Ethiopia – 2
- Iraq – 227
- Irian Jaya – >3^(Note 2)
- Kashmir – 3
- Korea – 34
- Malaya – 271
- Middle East – 18
- Mozambique – 3
- Namibia – 131
- Pakistan – 7
- PNG – 1^(Note 2)
- 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

Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV)

Sixteen Apprentices were posted to the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV), including members from the following Intakes: 1st (1), 6th (2), 9th (1), 10th (2), 11th (2), 14th (1), 17th (1), 18th (2), 19th (1), 20th (1), and 21st (2).

Special Air Service Regiment (SASR)

As at 3 September 2016, there were 74 Apprentices from the 7th to the 48th Intakes 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 Chaplains in that total. A total of 382 Apprentices graduated from the Officer Cadet School, Portsea (OCS – 263^(Note 3)); Royal Military College, Duntroon (RMC); or the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA).

Higher officer ranks have been achieved: one Lieutenant General (OCS), two Major Generals (RMC), six Brigadiers (three from OCS), 22 Colonels (12 from OCS), and 116 Lieutenant Colonels (68 from OCS).

Warrant rank has been achieved by at least: 746 (WO1s), 744 (WO2s), and one WOFF (RAAF).

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 eight Airforce and two Navy personnel).

Notes:

- Initial statistics in this document were compiled by Wally Rotow, 18th Intake and were current as at 3 September 2016. Some figures do not include the 112 50th Intake (or Class) Apprentices who were recognised by the Association in October 2019 and some have changed since 2016 (for example the numbers of officers and Warrant Officers and of those still serving). Some figures have been updated and the document will be further amended as details are gathered.
- The Operational Service section has known discrepancies awaiting further information to facilitate as accurate as possible inclusion. For example, how many Apprentices served in West Papua, Irian Jaya (Op Cenderawasih, 1976-1981), or on the Army's Navy (Small Ships)? Whilst not all overseas service qualifies as operational service, some does qualify for the award of the ASM, AASM or AOSM. We welcome any information to assist in correcting any omissions. Please advise the Association's Secretary secretary@austarmyapprentice.org.
- The OCS figures were 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.
- Support for this document has been provided by Phillip Scholz, 35th Intake, with updates by Jeff Heron, 21st Intake and Keith Lowe, 22nd Intake, and further supported by Wally Rotow, 18th Intake.