# APPRENTICES' PROFICIENCY AWARDS

With the approaching graduation of the 1st and 2nd Intakes in December 1951, a series of Proficiency Awards was approved for achieving Army Apprentices. The following is a press release of the actual approval for the most coveted award, "The Governor-General's Medal".

FOR PRESS : 648

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.

# 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. In 1951, this was initially a silver medal, awarded to the apprentice who gained the highest aggregate marks in trade, education and regimental training on graduation.

The award was the most coveted of those given out at the graduation parade. The first medal to be presented was to Apprentice WO2 R.J. Scott of the 1st Intake.

On the first Graduation Parade for Apprentices from the 1st and 2nd Intakes on 17th 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 is 47mm in diameter and is of gilt silver)*

The obverse displays the crest of the Army Apprentices School. There is a 7-pointed star at the edge on the sides of the Crown, and around the lower edge is 'ARMY APPRENTICES SCHOOL'.
The reverse has a laurel wreath with a ribbon tie at the base. Below the tie it is marked 'STG SIL' and the maker's name 'STOKES'. Around the top edge is engraved 'GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S MEDAL'. Inside the wreath in two lines is 'AWARDED TO'. The recipient's Service No., name and year are engraved in the space below.

# MILITARY TRAINING PROFICIENCY AWARD

A silver medal, modelled on The Governor General's Medal was also presented on graduation parades. The award was 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.

# TRADE PROFICIENCY PRIZE MEDALS

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, again modelled on the above-mentioned medals, are engraved with the winner's name, Service No., 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 (this Award was occasionally referred to as the "Academic Excellence Award").

**Apprentice Musician Prizes:**

**Progress Medal** - 1 for first term and 1 for second term.
**- Junior Intake**
**Proficiency Medal**
**- Intermediate Intake**

# THE GULLIDGE MEMORIAL MEDAL

The Gullidge Memorial Medal was awarded each year from 1955 to 1982 (when the School of Music moved from Balcombe to Watsonia) to the most outstanding Band Boy and then Apprentice Musician for musical proficiency, regimental training, general ability and qualities of leadership.

The Medal, again modelled on the above-mentioned medals, is engraved with the winner's name, Service No., the year, and the type of award.

# OTHER AWARDS – IMAGES NOT AVAILABLE

## Apprentice of the Year Award

The Apprentice of the Year Award was presented to the most outstanding apprentice in the graduating class in consideration of trade performance and attitude. For some years the award was names the 17th Graduating Class Apprentice of the Year Award. The award was later presented for military skills which include regimental and physical training, sport and leadership.

## The P.K. Russell Memorial Trophy

Presented on behalf of the parents of the late Apprentice Peter Keith Russell, the P.K. Russell trophy was awarded annually to the outstanding athlete of the graduating class.

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.

## Albury Sub-branch The Returned Servicemen's League Trophy

The Albury Sub-branch The Returned Servicemen's League Award was 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 Trophy was first awarded from about 1979 to 1982 (at Balcombe), and then at Bonegilla from 1983 to at least 1994.

## Melbourne Legacy (Peninsular Group) Trophy

The Melbourne Legacy (Peninsular Group) Trophy was presented to the sportsman who displayed outstanding qualities of leadership, ability and dedication to sport during the year. The last award was at Balcombe in 1982.

## Albury/Wodonga Legacy Trophy

The Albury/Wodonga Legacy Trophy was presented at Bonegilla, from 1983, to the sportsman who displayed outstanding ability and dedication within sport during the year.

## Lohse Memorial Trophy

The Lohse Memorial Trophy was presented on behalf of the parents of the late Apprentice Corporal S.M. Lohse. The Trophy was awarded each year to the most outstanding Apprentice Corporal of the Graduating Class in trade training, military training and sporting activities. The Trophy was first presented in 1981.

## The Allan Award

The Allan & Co Music House Award was presented from 1952 to 1970 to the outstanding Band Boy and then Apprentice Musician of the graduating class for musical excellence. The award was a gesture to foster musical education in the Army.

## Boosey & Hawkes Prize

The Boosey & Hawkes Prize was awarded to the outstanding Apprentice Musician instrumentalist of the graduating class from 1972 to 1982 (when the School of Music moved from Balcombe to Watsonia).

## Major Mitchell Memorial Award

The late Major Mitchell was intimately involved with the move of the Army Apprentices School from Balcombe to Bonegilla, and the construction and development of Latchford Barracks. In his memory, the Major Mitchell Memorial Award went to the graduating Apprentice Motor Mechanic who, through dedication and perseverance, attained results worthy of commendation. It was first awarded in 1983.

# APPRENTICESHIP COMMISSION OF VICTORIA
# Department of Labour and Industry
# ANNUAL AWARDS TO OUTSTANDING APPRENTICES

The following information has been extracted from "Apprenticeship Awards 1970 Programme".

The Apprenticeship Commission of Victoria awards coincided with Apprenticeship Week that was commenced in 1951, culminating with a presentation 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 were presented to the Outstanding Apprentice trained by the following (the apprentice selected was in each case the best of the apprentices of all trades for which training was provided):

**Australian Military Forces**
*School*: Army Apprentices School, Balcombe

**Royal Australian Air Force**
*Schools*: RAAF School of Radio
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology

**Trans-Australia Airlines**
*Schools*: TAA Engineering School
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology

**Victorian Railways**
*School*: Victorian Railways Technical College

***(57mm diameter silver medallion)***

*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.*

***References:***


- *Association records*
- *Book "From Boy to Soldier" review committee notes*
- *Book "From Boy to Soldier" by S.H. Cheeseman AM JP 4th Intake Vehicle Mechanic 2003*
- *AAS Prospectus 1951*
- *1952 The Journal of the Army Apprentices' School*
- *Graduation Programmes from 1969 and 1970 and others*
- *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*
- *Australian Army Band Corps Association Inc Website*


*This version prepared by Association President, Keith Lowe 22nd Intake Fitter & Turner June 2021 with updates by Jeff Heron dated 30 January 2022 and 6 July 2024.*