

THE APPRENTICE ABOUT

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**NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY APPRENTICES ASSOCIATION INC.
(ACT INCORPORATION NO A04404)**

PO BOX 374, NORTHBRIDGE, NSW 2063

WEBSITE: [HTTP://WWW.AUSTARMYAPPRENTICE.ORG](http://www.austarmyapprentice.org)

PATRON: MAJOR GENERAL ANDREW FREEMAN AM (RETD)

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From the President

By Keith Lowe, 22nd Fitter and Turner, President AAAA, president@austarmyapprentice.org, 31 October 2024

I am pleased to report your Association conducted a successful Annual General Meeting on Saturday 26th of October. The meeting was followed by an informal dinner that evening with approximately 60 participants comprising members and partners.

With some committee positions due for election we had two of our position holders, Ray Wilson and Barry Minster OAM retire.

Ray Wilson, 15th Intake Plumber has served our Association as Public Officer since his initial election at the 2010 AGM. During this 14-year period Ray has ensured we have met all our regulatory requirements associated with our Incorporation.

Barry Minster OAM, 20th Intake Radio Mechanic is retiring as Welfare Officer. Barry has diligently performed the duties of this position for the past four years. He also served the Association as our President for 18 months from the 2013 AGM.

The retirement of these two gentlemen created vacancies, so I am pleased to thank Jeff Heron for accepting nomination as our replacement Public Officer. Jeff will continue with his duties as Newsletter Editor as this is not an official committee position per se, and new to the committee is Grant Cotterill, 38th Intake Plumber & Gasfitter, who accepted nomination as replacement Welfare Officer. Thank you both for accepting these important positions.

An important decision taken by a unanimous vote is, following the rising of the 2024 Annual General Meeting, Widows/Widowers of financial members at the date of their death shall be offered, at no cost to themselves, Associate Membership of our Association.

It was determined the 2025 Annual General Meeting shall be held at Bandiana (subject to the Museum conference room being available) at 1030 hrs local time Saturday 25th October 2025. As 2025 is 30 years since the cessation of the Australian Army Apprentice Scheme, a formal dinner will be held to acknowledge this important event in our history. Please make a note in your diaries. More information will be circulated in due course.

Members may view my report to the Annual General Meeting at <https://austarmyapprentice.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Reports-Binder-2024-AGM-1.pdf>.

Until next time please stay safe and reach out to any Apprentice you may know of who is not in the best of health.

Best wishes,

Keith Lowe, President



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Apprentices in the news

Major Steve Howells, 28th Intake Electronics Tradesman, and WO1 Russ Cliffe, 28th Intake Vehicle Mechanic, 50 years' dedicated service

Photos and information courtesy RAQ Friday Files, 11 October 2024

In early October 2024, the RAEME Corps Conference was held in Townsville. The keynote address was delivered by Major General Richard Vagg, Head Land Capability, who outlined the evolving capabilities of the Army, changes to its structure, and the future of warfare. Further presentations set the stage with insights into key areas such as littoral manoeuvre, the Land Domain Support System, long-range fires, and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), laying the groundwork for deeper discussions.



During the Conference, the HOC RAEME, Brigadier Ben Slaughter presented Major Steve Howells, 28th Intake Electronics Tradesman with a Corps painting in recognition of his 50 years' dedicated service to the Corps.



BRIG Slaughter also presented WO1 Russ Cliffe, 28th Intake Vehicle Mechanic with a recognition of service scroll. Russ was farewelled from the Army, having also served more than 50 years.

Major Graham Anderson, 31st Intake Motor Mechanic, @ 2024 Bathurst Repco 1000 Supercars

Courtesy RAQ Friday Files, 25 October 2024

Below: "MAJ Graham Anderson entered the racing track to showcase Team Army's 'Matilda' Mercedes-Benz G-Wagen during the 2024 Bathurst Repco 1000 Supercars event at Mount Panorama, New South Wales.



The ADF values the support of the local community and is proud to support community events such as Repco Bathurst 1000 – Supercars.

Participation provides an opportunity for Defence to showcase its technological capabilities and diverse career opportunities to the Bathurst community and broader Australian public.”

Celebrating 125 years of Nursing service to the Australian Defence Forces

From Simon Brooks, 40th Intake Motor Mechanic, Secretary AAAA



You can dress them up and apparently you can take them out! My wife Marina and I caught up with Brian Daley OAM (14th VM) and his wife Barbara at an event to mark 125 years of Australian Military Nursing.

If anyone asks, I don't know anything about the 40th crab spraypainted out the back of the Officers' Mess— at South-Eastern District RSL.

Cyclone Tracy 50th Anniversary Commemorations

From an email by Ed Zielinski, 23rd Intake Vehicle Mechanic

Ed Zielinski has posed the question, “Who went to Darwin to support the recovery after Cyclone Tracy?” While this is an open-ended question, replies to news@austarmyapprentice.org will be collected and forwarded to Ed. A later article or articles may provide updates on any results of the efforts by many veterans seeking recognition for their deployment to support Darwin's residents in 1974.



You can subscribe to Cyclone Tracy commemoration updates on the Website below. *“By subscribing to this mailing list, you will receive updates and information about the upcoming commemoration events, including details on memorial services, community gatherings, and educational initiatives. We encourage you to take part in these activities as we come together to remember, reflect, and look towards the future.”*

Source: <https://cyclonetracy.darwin.nt.gov.au>

“Planning is underway for a program of activities, events and projects led by City of Darwin, the Cyclone Tracy Commemoration Advisory Committee and community groups.

The program aims to commemorate, raise awareness of and recognise the significant impact of Cyclone Tracy on the Darwin community, and assist with the ongoing healing process for survivors.

The program will include, but is not limited to, events, exhibitions, editorials, broadcasting, installations, storytelling, commemorative memorabilia, memorials and documentaries.

Submit events and projects

To support the commemoration of Cyclone Tracy, organisations and individuals are encouraged to submit their activities for listing on this website by clicking on the icons [\[on the Website above\]](#).

Events, documentaries, podcasts, artwork, and other projects that tell stories or pay tribute to this significant moment in history are encouraged.

Tips for planning commemorative events are available [\[on the Website above\]](#).”

Welfare and Vale notices

Contact: Association Welfare Officer Grant Cotterill, 38th Intake Plumber & Gasfitter, welfare@austarmyapprentice.org

The Welfare Officer:

- supports members in determining welfare and other Commonwealth and State Government entitlements
- by helping them locate organisations who may assist
- liaises with similar service bodies on welfare matters
- on advice of the death of members, ensures that information is correct and that NOKs are being cared for, sends condolences, and advises the Secretary of updates required on the Website
- on advice of members in hospital, sick or otherwise indisposed, arranges visits to ensure his/her welfare.

Outgoing Welfare Officer’s Report – November 2024

Approximately five years ago, I offered to take on the role of the Association’s Welfare Officer – succeeding Kevin Noon who had created and maintained a great network of support across our membership.

In the past few years, I have represented our Association at several events including speaking at the Annual Anzac Day memorial service held by Balcombe Grammar School, which recognises our heritage and welcomes all former Army Apprentices to their various activities.

I have also attended several funerals of former Apprentices offering support and condolences to the bereaved family.

On receipt of notice of the death of an Apprentice, I send a condolence message and often this is received with sincere thanks and words of appreciation that the deceased always valued their association with the Apprentices.

We are truly a wonderful group who do care for one another.

Additionally, I have begun to reach out to all of our members on the occasion of their birthday, by either sending a text or an email to their last known contact.

Occasionally I receive sad news – generally from their wife or daughter or son – “SORRY TO INFORM YOU, BUT DAD PASSED AWAY LAST YEAR.....”



It is inevitable that we will all cease to exist but whilst we do – we should always know that there are many fellow Apprentices who are here to support each other in times of need and definitely in times of joy.

Social Media has become the main stream of communications (I'm a 20th Radio Mech and a Sig as well), so I can affirm that daily or weekly contacting amongst the many social groups is assisting us all to maintain contact either electronically or indeed in person by reminding one another of various events or travelling both within Australia or overseas – there is bound to be another Appy nearby who will greet you like a brother or sister even if you have never met before.

In deciding to retire from my Welfare duties, I am hoping to remain connected to all members and to encourage non-members to join in and get the benefits of membership of our Association.

I thank the committee for allowing me to be a part of the team and look forward to many more years of meeting up with you all. BARRY MINSTER OAM, 20th Radio Mechanic

Veteran Health Check

From: Vetaffairs — Vol 40 No.2 August 2024

Any veteran who has served at least one day in the ADF is eligible for a Veteran Health Check, fully funded by DVA. The Veteran Health Check is a comprehensive health assessment completed by your GP to help you better understand your health and wellbeing.

The check can help you manage your own health, take action to stay well, address health concerns early and develop a relationship with your GP.

There are two types of checks veterans can access:

An annual check. Veterans who have served at least one day in the ADF and transitioned out of the ADF from 1 July 2019 are eligible for an annual Veterans' Health Check for up to 5 years after transition.

A one-off check. Veterans who have served at least one day in the ADF and transitioned out of the ADF at any time before 30 June 2019 are eligible for a one-off Veteran Health Check.

Next time you see your GP, ask for a Veteran Health Check. For more information, visit the [DVA website](#).

Veterans' and Families' Hubs Network

From: Vetaffairs — Vol 40 No.2 August 2024

“The Veterans' and Families' Hubs Program aims to provide improved access to a range of services and supports tailored to local needs, including some outreach services to the broader community. Hubs facilitate access to services that aim to improve health, wellbeing, social, housing, employment and economic outcomes.

Hubs now operating:

Adelaide (SA): SA Government
Burnie (TAS): North West Tasmanian Veteran Welfare Board
Caboolture (QLD): Lives Lived Well
Darwin (NT): Mates4Mates
Nowra (NSW): RSL LifeCare
Perth (WA): RSL WA
Townsville (QLD): The Oasis Townsville
Wodonga (VIC): RSL Victoria.

New Hubs being established:

Hawkesbury region (NSW): RSL LifeCare
Hunter region (NSW): RSL LifeCare
Queanbeyan (NSW): RSL LifeCare
Tweed/North Coast region (NSW): RSL LifeCare
Surf Coast/Geelong (VIC): RSL Victoria
Tasmania (hub and spoke network): RSL Tasmania
Ipswich (QLD): RSL Queensland
Northern Adelaide (SA): Lives Lived Well
Southwest Perth (WA): RSL WA.”

Vale notices

The untimely passing of a former Army Apprentice is always a sad occasion. It is important when notifying of the passing that we are clear about the details of the notice. Whilst Facebook posts draw our attention to the passing of Apprentices, occasionally there is insufficient information to assist in maintaining the Apprentices nominal roll.



The AAAA Website [Vale Notification Form](#) prompts for the necessary information. If you don't have all requested information, then send what you have, and we can follow it up. Thank you to all those who have provided details. This edition's Vale summary below includes two historic entries.

Intake	Reg No	Name	Trade	Passed away
15	48605	Robert Ashton (Bob) PARKES	Carpenter & Joiner (DNG)	29 Feb 2024
18	18791	Michael Brett DALTON	Vehicle Mechanic	13 May 2024
12 (13)	243028	Kevin Thomas FLEMING	Carpenter & Joiner	13 Aug 2024
11	58644	Ross Melville BIGNELL	Vehicle Mechanic	15 Aug 2024
18	64359	Reginald Oscar BROWN	Blacksmith	18 Aug 2024
18	243345	Clifford John STRAHAN	Radio Mechanic	19 Aug 2024
19	18852	Rodney Oliver McCORMACK	Vehicle Mechanic	26 Aug 2024
30	224680	Brian Thomas (Possum) DEVENEY	Electronics Tradesman	27 Aug 2024
6	18515	Allan Edwin DITTMAN	Fitter & Turner	1 Sep 2024
10	48545	David Edward MOON	Fitter & Turner	12 Sep 2024
23	218145	Denis Seaton SMITH	Vehicle Mechanic	22 Sep 2024
21	342996	Ian Laurence BARTON	Vehicle Mechanic	1 Oct 2024
18	18826	William Barry STEELE	Electrical Mechanic	4 Oct 2024
27A	315655	Stanley James WATSON	Musician	16 Oct 2024
8	18540	John Michael REIMERS	Fitter and Turner	18 Oct 2024
42	555876	Shane Bradley SCOTT	Motor Mechanic	28 Oct 2024

Vale 58644, Major Ross Melville BIGNELL (Retd), 11th Intake Vehicle Mechanic

Born in Wiluna on 10 August 1940, WA, Ross Bignell joined the Army as an Apprentice Vehicle Mechanic in January 1956, graduating in December 1958. He graduated from the Officer Cadet School, Portsea in December 1964 and served in Vietnam as a Temporary Captain with the AFV Detachment, 1st Division Supply Transport Workshop from 6 August 1969 to 6 August 1970. On 1 August 1977, Ross was amongst the recipients of the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal.

Ross had been a great help to the Army Apprentices Association by providing research into Apprentices' deaths. From our Website, *"The Association acknowledges research work voluntarily undertaken by both Wally Rotow (18th Intake) in locating names of many of those not previously notified and Ross Bignell RIP (11th Intake) confirming actual dates of deaths for those unknown prior to early 2020."*

Ross passed away on 15 August 2024 and was laid to rest in Midland, WA on 4 September 2024.

Arte et Marte, Rest in Peace

Vale 48545, Major David Edward MOON (Retd), 10th Intake Fitter & Turner

By Major Chris MOON, 32nd Intake Carpenter & Joiner

Dear Army Apprentice[s] Association, I have the sad duty to advise that my father Major David Edward Moon (RAEME, Retd) passed away this morning [12 September 2024] aged 85.

Dad was born 25 May 1939 in Adelaide. He enlisted in the Army in 1955 as a 10th Intake Army Apprentice Fitter and Turner. Dad served for over 27 years, retiring from the Army in 1982.

Some of Dad's posting[s] include:

- * AAS, Balcombe
- * Central Comd Wksp, Adelaide
- * Armourer SGT, 4 RAR, Adelaide
- * Tech SGT, 1 Avn Wksps, Amberley
- * Aeronautical Engineering Course (REME), UK
- * WO Art Aircraft, 1 Avn Wksp, Amberley
- * WO Art Aircraft, 183 Recce Flight, Lae, PNG
- * PI Comd, Engineering & Servicing PI, 1 Avn Wksp, Amberley
- * Instructor Tech Trg, 5 Base Wksp Bn, Oakey
- * OC, 173 Gen Spt Sqn, Oakey
- * Project Offr, HQ Spt Comd, Melbourne
- * OC, 1st Avn Regt Wksp, Oakey

After the Army he was involved with the 4WD community, as President of the Queensland and National Associations and ran his own 4x4 training company. Dad was also a keen shooter, greatly involved with [the]



Toowoomba gun club in various offices including Club Captain and was also an office bearer with the Bundaberg and Fraser Coast SSAA clubs.

He passed away peacefully in Hervey Bay. Funeral details will be advised in due course.

Rest in Peace. Thank you.

Vale notices for non-Apprentices

Many readers will have known and worked for or with the following Army members who have passed recently.

Major General Arthur Douglas (Doug) POWELL (Retd), 19 November 1929 to 12 August 2024

RAEME in ACTION, ACT RAEME Association reported the passing of MAJGEN Powell, who was Director General of RAEME from 1978. See <https://raeme.org.au/index.php/notices/vale-alt>.

Major (Retd) Raymond Graham 'Norm' Norman OAM, 3 May 1944 to 29 October 2024

Ray Norman’s service culminated in his appointment as the RAEME Corps Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) in 1982 and, for his exemplary service as RSM – Logistic Command, he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Military Division in 1987. See <https://raeme.org.au/index.php/notices/vale-alt>.

Many who are currently serving or have recently served will remember Ray from his dedication to RAEME’s “Operation Spanner Pack”. Spanner Packs were packed and distributed from Ray’s own garage on the Sunshine Coast. More details are available at: <https://raeme.org.au/index.php/72-operation-spanner-pack>.

Membership matters

By Graeme Smail, 35th Intake ET – Membership Secretary, membership@austarmyapprentice.org

Membership Status

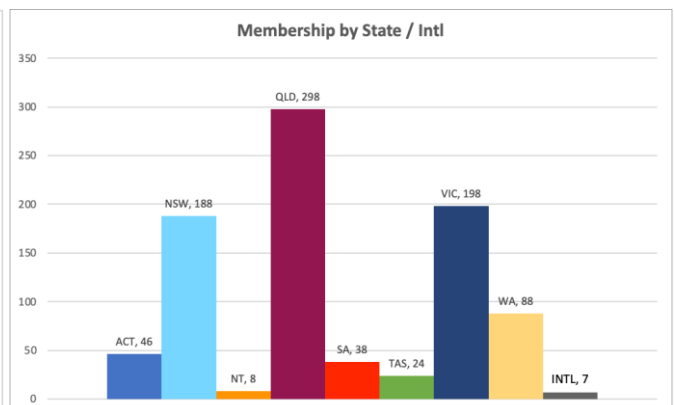
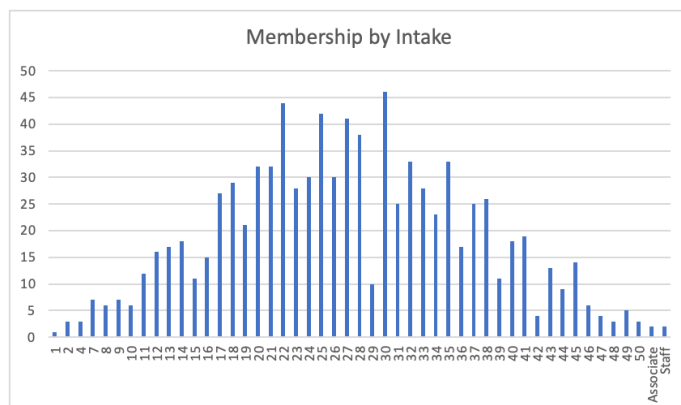
1. The current state of the membership (as at 16 Oct 2024) is 895 financial members (right).

2. These figures show a pleasing increase in membership of 19 since the last AGM in 2023. Since the last AGM in Oct 23 there have been 40 new member registrations, down from 83 during the previous AGM to AGM period.

Membership Type	2024 16 Oct	2023 18 Oct	2022 15 Oct	YTY
Life	3	3	3	-
Ordinary	591	616	722	(25)
Retired	297	250	179	47
Associate	4	7	5	(2)
TOTAL	895	876	909	19

3. 61 memberships have lapsed and not been renewed since the last AGM. Similar to last year, a mailout to all expired members will be conducted during Nov 24 in an attempt to reduce this subset of the population.

Membership analysis



Top five Intakes

Over the years that we have reported the Membership Status, until now the 22nd Intake has led the way.



But this year, the 30th Intake has taken the lead with 46 members. The 22nd holds 2nd place with 44, the 25th is in 3rd with 42, the 27th has 41, and in 5th place is the 28th with 38. This time last year, it was 22nd – 48, 30th – 40, 27th – 39, and both 25th and 28th – 38.

The challenge has been set – which Intakes will feature next time? Enlist your mates.

Membership historical status

In the November 2014 edition of TAA, we reported membership numbers as shown at the right. In the last 10 years, we have more than doubled our total membership, a testament to the dedication of your committee and their efforts in organising reunions like the one we have just experienced. But this is no time for complacency. We must continue to increase our membership base to ensure continuation of the Association into the future.

Membership Type	No
Life	1
Ordinary	213
Retired	223
Associate	6
TOTAL	443

Events reports

ACT Region Quarterly Lunch, Ainslie FC, Wednesday, 2 October 2024

By Jeff Heron, 21st Intake Radio Mech, Newsletter Editor and ACT Regional Rep

It was a fine spring day in Canberra – a perfect day to venture out for lunch with fellow Apprentices and their partners. We had 23 in attendance, of whom seven were partners. Intakes represented were from 15th to 43rd, comprising 7 x Radio Mechanics/Electronics Tradesmen, 3 x Fitters and Turners, 3 x Vehicle Mechanics, 2 x Electrical Fitters, and 1 x Plumber. The next lunch will be held on 11 December.

AAAA AGM and Dinner, Maroochy RSL, Saturday 26 October 2024

From Simon Brooks, 40th Intake Motor Mechanic, Secretary AAAA, via LinkedIn

Sharing photos of a few highlights from the 2024 AGM at Maroochy RSL.

Thanks to everyone who joined. By all accounts, it was an excellent weekend.

Congratulations to our re-elected office bearers and committee members. And a big congrats to our incoming Welfare Officer Grant Cotterill (38th P&G) and new committee member Liz Fitzgibbon (40th ET).

Thanks also to committee member and Newsletter Editor Jeff Heron (21st RM) for adding the Public Officer responsibilities to his repertoire, and to all our continuing regional representatives.”



Above left: 3 x 40th Intake committee members! Simon Brooks, 40th Motor Mechanic, Secretary, Liz Fitzgibbon, 40th Electronics Tradesman (new AAAA Committee Member), and Greg Haqett, 40th Plumber & Gasfitter, AAAA Vice-President.

Above right: Some members at the casual dinner on the Saturday evening.



Presentation by Quilts of Valour Australia, 26 October 2024

From Simon Brooks, 40th Intake Motor Mechanic, Secretary AAAA, via LinkedIn



“An emotional moment at today’s AAAA Annual General Meeting, as Michelle Lafferty from Quilts of Valour Australia makes a surprise presentation of hand-made quilts to (L-R) President Keith Lowe [22nd Fitter & Turner], Treasurer Richard Pike [21st Vehicle Mechanic] and Vice-President Greg Haggett [40th Plumber & Gasfitter]. Well done gents and thank you for your service — at Maroochy RSL.”
[Congratulations gents. Should come in handy in NQ Greg! Ed]

[Quilts of Valour Australia aims to award quilts to Veterans, Service Personnel of the Australian Defence Force and our Allies as well as immediate family of Veterans and Defence Personnel who have passed. These awards are in recognition of their Service, Sacrifice and Valour for their country. See <https://quiltsvalour.com.au> Ed]

More dinner photos

From Greg Haggett, 40th Intake Plumber & Gasfitter, AAAA Vice-President

Apologies to those not identified. [Ed]



Baden Jeffery, 7th VM on the right



21st Intake table



21st Intake table, photo bombed by Greg Haggett



Left: Jenny Middleton; centre: Kevin Middleton, 12th F&T; seated at right: Liz Fitzgibbon, 40th ET; standing Brook Haqgett



Centre left, Charlie Myhill, 9th F&T; on his left Stu Wools-Cobb 4th Telecom Mech



Bottom left: Charlie Myhill; on his left: Stu Wools-Cobb



19th Intake table



Committee table – left to right:

Bob Clarke, 22nd VM, Committee Member

Keith Lowe, 22nd F&T, President and Ann Lowe

Sue Low (Bob Clarke's partner)

Marina Brooks and Simon Brooks, 40th MM, Secretary



Upcoming events

Notification of upcoming events

For Regional Reps or Association members organising events where Apprentices are attending, notify the AAAA so the event can be listed on the Website for all to see. Potentially more people will know about it and attend. It can also be “sponsored” by the AAAA and be covered by our insurance so, if there is an incident or the like, the organiser may not be out of pocket. For members to notify of an event, there is a form on the AAAA Website at <https://austarmyapprentice.org/association-forms/>. This information is then sent to the Secretary who will minute the event and have the notice added to the Website; the insurance cover will then attach.

AAAA and other Apprentices functions

- * **“All Appy” get-together**, with partners, Bundaberg Services Club, **Sat, 6 December 2024**, 1200.
 - * **ACT Region Quarterly Lunch**, Ainslie FC, **Wed, 11 December 2024**. Our annual lucky door prize draw will be conducted for a small entry fee. Any profits will be donated to the Army Apprentices Memorial Fund. Please let me know if you intend to be there.
 - * **40th Intake 40th Year Reunion**, Albury Wodonga, **9-12 January 2025**, former 40th Intake instructors/military staff welcome: golf, meet & greet, tour of Latchford Barracks, dinner. If not registered, get your registration form & payment in soon or you may be too late. If you’re not getting emails from organisers, email fortieth-class-reunions@outlook.com.
 - * **30th Intake 50th Reunion**, Maroochydore, **7-9 February 2025**, *contact Don Hewett, 30th Intake Electrical Mechanic, dhewett5865@gmail.com or Ian CLEGG, 30th Intake Vehicle Mechanic, icclegg@bigpond.net.au.*
 - * **AAAA Committee Meeting**, via ZOOM, **1 Mar 2025**. Agenda items to secretary@austarmyapprentice.org.
 - * **35th Intake 45 year Anniversary**, Mudgee NSW, **28-30 March 2025**, *contact Dave (Clemo) Clements, 35th Intake Motor Mechanic, clemacdc1@gmail.com or Bill Burns, 35th Intake Motor Mechanic, willyb1963@gmail.com or visit 35th Intake Army Apprentices Facebook Group.*
 - * **20th Intake 60th Reunion**, Pinjarra WA, RSL etc, **4-6 April 2025**, *contacts Fred Santich or Bob Bandy via FB Messenger.*
 - * **AAAA AGM and Formal Dinner**, Albury, **25 October 2025**, to recognise cessation in 1995 of the Australian Army Apprentice Scheme, further details to follow. AGM agenda items to secretary@austarmyapprentice.org.
-

Other associations, etc

- * **Scootaville 2024** – “If you’re feeling like some adventure this year, consider switching gears and nominating to ride in this year’s Scootaville – either in Queensland [now completed, Ed] or New South Wales [The New South Wales journey starts in Windsor on 19 November, travels through Singleton, Mudgee, Dubbo, and more, finally returning to Windsor, covering 1,699 km, Ed]!” Support the RAAF Association and Legacy by visiting <https://raafa.org.au/join-the-adventure-scootaville-2024-needs-you/>
 - * **RAE Association Victoria Inc.**, [RAE Future Events](#).
 - * **17 Construction Sqn Wksp UNTAG – Namibia Reunion**, Kedron-Wavell Services Club, Chermside, Qld, **19 July 2025**, *respond to the events section on the UNTAG Namibia – 17 Construction Squadron Facebook page.*
 - * **RASigs Association**, <http://www.rasigs.com>.
 - * **HQ 1st Aust Task Force and D&E PI**, Torrens Trg Depot, Adelaide, **21-25 November 2024**, *contact John Verhelst, 0437 212121, jeverhelst@gmail.com, www.hq1atf.org.*
 - * **RAEME ACT**, *contact <https://act.raeme.org.au/index.php/notices/events>*
 - * **RAEME QLD**, *contact functions@qld.raeme.org.au, <http://qld.raeme.org.au/index.php/notices/events>*
 - * **RAEME SA**, *contact <https://sa.raeme.org.au/>*
 - * **RAEME TAS**, *contact <https://tas.raeme.org.au>.*
-



* **Central Victorian Veterans Group**, monthly get-together, Bendigo RSL Club Terrace, 1st Thursday of the month, 1830 hrs, [contact Jonathan Crust, 48th Intake Carpenter & Joiner via Facebook, Army Apprentices are the cream of Australia's Youth.](#)

* **RASigs Certa Cito 100th Anniversary, 2025**

“On 14 February 1925, Australian Army Order (AAO) 71 was issued, stating, “Approval has been given for the Signal Engineer units of the Citizen Forces to be formed into a separate corps and designated the ‘Australian Corps of Signals’.”

Commemorating 100 years of the Corps, reflecting on the past, present, and future, by ARA/ARES Signals units across Australia, concluding in November 2025, major events are being planned for SE Qld, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne, including (more details to be provided in Jul 2024):

Victoria (some still tentative):

- * 1 February – 138 Sig Sqn 30th Birthday
- * 14 February – Launch of Certa Cito 100, parade in Melbourne consisting of Royal Guard & the Corps Banner, & the Shrine of Remembrance
- * 25 April – RA Sigs Units & Associations lead Anzac Day march, & recognition at Anzac Day AFL match, MCG
- * Dates TBC – Freedom of Entry parade, City of Banyule, & RA Sigs Units combined, RSL activity, Museum modernisation event
- * 30 June – 108 Sig Sqn 50th Birthday
- * 2, 5 and 10 July – Royal Corps of Signals (UK) Rugby Tour vs RASigs Rugby Club (TBC Melbourne), vs RASigs Spartans (TBC), and vs Mercury Marauders (TBC)
- * 11-18 November – National Reunion of Veteran Community at Healesville
- * 11 November – DFSS rehearsal for VIP visit and Open Day for RA Sigs Community
- * 12 November – VIP visit, welcome guard, virtual training demonstrations, 138 & 108 Sig Sqn demonstrations, lunch, Corps Museum visit, Corps dinner @ Government House (TBC)
- * 14 November – Gold afternoon, RACV Club Healesville & then BBQ run by Lions club
- * 15 November – National Dining In Night, Rochford Winery, Yarra Valley
- * 2 December – DFSS 23rd birthday

Canberra:

- * 9 or 10 November (TBC) – National Corps Day Commemorative Parade.



Visit <https://rasigs.org/certa-cito-100/> for more details or contact Mr Bruce Long prontobrl@gmail.com or Gavin Lee gavin.lee18@hotmail.com.

Contribute to an Illustrated History of RASIGS

To mark the centenary, The Royal Australian Corps of Signals is seeking to produce a coffee table style book in the form of an illustrated history which covers the Corps from its inception to the present day.

Visit <https://rasigs.org/an-illustrated-history/> for details.

Letters to the Editor

August Edition of TAA

From Gary Byard, 21st Intake Vehicle Mechanic

Thanks Jeff, It is always good to garner the latest from our Association.

Trusting you are well, Cheers

From Ross McMurray, 16th Intake Fitter & Turner

Good morning Jeff, Thanks for your involvement in the Association. The time and effort you put into the newsletter is much appreciated. I always enjoy reading it, enjoying the articles, and recognising some old friends.

Thank you, and best regards



SPAASSM Collection

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/tcmowfh3ulz8rr7/SPAASSM%20Index%20and%20Cover.pdf?dl=0>

August 2024 solution



SPAASSM Ph I Image 00835

Q: What Class of Ship is pictured on the left (one of four), which was operated by the Army between 1959 and 1971? For extra kudos, what were the numbers and names of this ship and the other three in the Class?

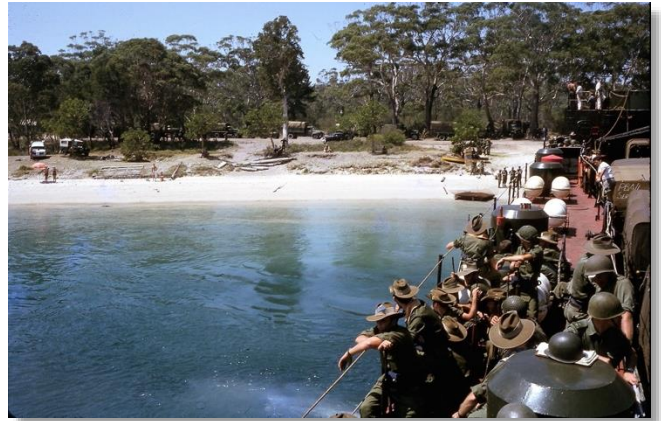
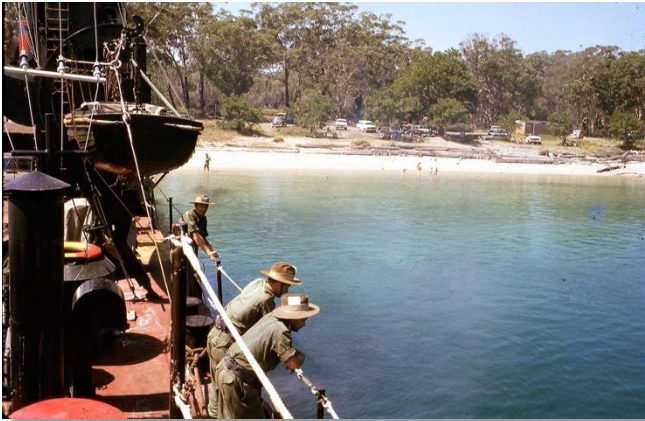
A: LSM-1 Class Landing Ship Medium. This one appears to be Army Vessel (AV) 1356 Clive Steele. The others were AV 1353 Harry Chauvel, AV 1354 Brudenell White, and AV 1355 Vernon Sturdee.

There were seven correct answers this time, with the first from Harry Henderson, 21st Intake Radio Mechanic, who answered, "So is it the AV Clive Steel (AV 1356)? The sister ships include Vernon Sturdee (AV 1355), Brudenell White (AV 1354), and Harry Chauvel (AV 1357)." Harry declined the offer of the USB prize, asking that it go to the next correct answer.

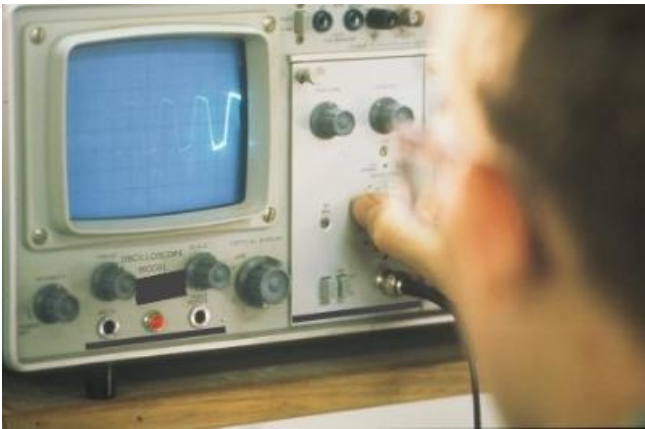
That was from Brian Clulow, 19th Intake Fitter & Turner, who wrote: "The four ships were LSM Class (Landing Ship Medium). They were: Harry Chauvel (AV 1353), Brudenell White (AV 1354), Vernon Sturdee (AV 1355), and Clive Steele (AV 1356). At the same time there was a cargo vessel John Monash (AS 3051). All were part of 32 Small Ship Squadron RAE. Crewed with a great number of Army apprentices."

Readers may recall Brian's 32 Small Ships article in the February 2022 edition of TAA, and below are some more of Brian's images of AV1353 Harry Chauvel at Little Beach Port Stephens.



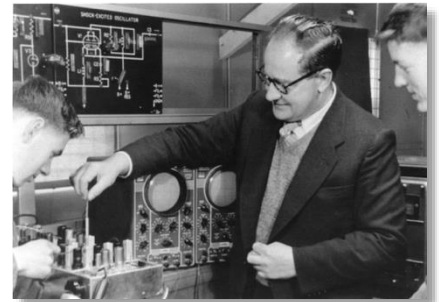


November 2024 competition



Q: For the boffins, what make (and model if you're really good) is this 'scope (left)? The first person to send the most correct answer to news@austarmyapprentice.org will win a copy of the SPAASSM Collection on USB.

And (right) here's a couple of even older 'scopes (SPAASSM Ph I Image 07196).



Merchandise

AAAA Shop: <https://austarmyapprentice.org/shop/>

For enquiries, contact the Treasurer: treasurer@austarmyapprentice.org

MERCHANDISE ITEMS		PRICES	POSTAGE
DVDs	2013 Balcombe Commemoration	\$10.00	\$10.00
	60 th Anniversary 2008	\$10.00	\$10.00
	50 th Anniversary Albury Wodonga 1998	\$10.00	\$10.00
70th REUNION ITEMS	Stubby holder	\$5.00	\$5.00
	Photo card (USB)	\$16.50	\$3.50
	Cap	\$15.00	\$15.00
AAAA BADGED ITEMS	Baseball cap	\$20.00	\$10.00
	Car sticker	\$5.00	\$1.50
	Lapel badge	\$10.00	\$3.50
	Name badge – <i>to order, include preferred (1st) name, & Intake/Class</i>	\$16.50	\$3.50
	Tie	\$25.00	\$10.00
	Face mask	\$15.00	\$5.00
	Key ring – <i>when ordering, ask if a number you would like is available</i>	\$20.00	\$3.50





	MERCHANDISE ITEMS	PRICES	POSTAGE
PROMOTIONS	SPAASSM Collection USB wafer	\$25.00	\$10.00
	AAAA Name badge with 70 th Reunion photo card (USB)	\$30.00	\$3.50
	AAAA Name badge with AAAA Key ring	\$30.00	\$3.50
PLAQUES	AAAA badge OR AAS badge	\$85.00	\$14.00
AAS BADGED ITEMS	Cloth badge large (260 mm x 210 mm) – Balcombe OR Bonegilla	\$25.00	\$3.50
	Cloth badge small (100mm x 70mm)	\$20.00	\$3.50
	Flag (1800 mm x 900 mm)	\$175.00	\$14.00
	Baseball cap	\$15.00	\$14.00
	Polo shirt (M, L, XL, 2XL,3XL, 4XL)	\$35.00	\$14.00
	Stubby holder	\$5.00	\$5.00
FACE MASK	With both AAAA and AAS badges	\$15.00	\$5.00



Sailing On sets up in Sydney

From: [Vetaffairs — Vol 40 No.2 August 2024](#)

In last August’s edition, we reported that “After starting in Perth three years ago and now with 6 yachts in the west, we are setting up Sailing On in Sydney. A not for profit, designed to improve mental health in veterans through sailing. We are buying GunRunner, she has been in three Sydney to Hobart races, as our first Sydney yacht.”

Vetaffairs August 2024 now reports that “As of 1 July, Sailing On is setting up base in New South Wales at the Royal Australian Navy Sailing Association at Darling Point in the heart of Sydney. They have bought the yacht Gun Runner from the Army. She has previously sailed as the Army entrant in 3 Sydney to Hobart races. Gun Runner will now be available to all services and all veterans to sail.”

Congratulations Guy Mewburn, 29th Intake Electronics Tradesman and the Sailing On team.

Mercy Ships

From Bill Amor, 20th Intake Fitter & Turner, ex-SSGT Artificer, AAAA Committee Member



Photo courtesy Mercy Ships



Activities since retiring

Colleagues

Since retiring in 2017 as a Defence Technical Officer Grade 4, I have been busy. My roles have ranged from volunteering at a council nursery, 12 months at BlazeAid Camp, tasks with Connecting Communities, Disaster Relief Australia, NQ TPI Association, and recently with Mercy Ships.

Mercy Ships

Global Mercy is one of two ships serving Africa, the other is Africa Mercy, and these ships enable hospital, medical, dental and supporting activities to be undertaken on either main coasts of Africa with all crew and ships staff being volunteers. The full details of Global Mercy and Africa Mercy are at the Websites [\[below\]](#).

Global Mercy is a large ship, modern and well fitted to undertake its role. The ship is diesel electric powered and is able to support the hospital when all types of operations are undertaken. Waste materials are treated on board in accordance with various maritime organisations.

Ships staff are accommodated in suitable cabins with married families accommodated in family sized cabins. The accommodation, messing, and food amenities on board were excellent; meals reflected the nationality of the galley staff with many African dishes.

Ships staff coming from many nations were excellent, helpful, kind and fun. Mercy Ships is a Christian organisation, but all are welcome; devotion services are held, and attendance is up to the individual.

Project Team

I applied for and gained a position as a Project Assistant with a Project Team on board Global Mercy during its Annual Maintenance Period (AMP) July/August 2024 in Tenerife, Canary Islands. I travelled to Tenerife via Madrid, Spain and returned via Newcastle, UK.

The Project Team consisted of 10 persons, from a variety of nationalities: Swiss, Dutch, Belgian, Canadian, American and myself. All except myself were Alumni, having *[been]* involved with other AMPs on either ship in other locations.

The Team's tasks varied in complexity and time and ranged from laying of heavy-duty coverings on Hospital Deck walkways, removal and replacement of 1300 ceiling tiles, modification of cabin furniture, installation of power points, removal of Video Wall and installation of screens projector/screens, replacement of ships lighting, enhancement of galley waterproofing, and many other tasks. Every task completed enables the ships to better provide services to patients.

The work was interesting, varied and, understanding the "WHY", the Team worked hard and long to complete all tasks.

Project Teams are recruited for every AMP and their makeup is dependent of the works planned to be undertaken.

Comment

I have applied to serve again on either ship in whatever role I am suited for and as needed.

I would recommend any reader who has an inkling to serve, check out the Websites as listed at References, noting that many skills and abilities are required to ensure Mercy Ships function and continue healing.

References

<https://www.mercyships.org> <https://mercyships.org.au/hospital-ships/>

Approved by Mercy Ships for publication.



History

End of the Army Apprentice Scheme

[*Information from Hansard, Thursday, 17 December 1992 Page: 4292*](#)

There has been much discussion on the merit of, and reasons for, ending the Army Apprentice Scheme in 1995. The last intake of Apprentices was in January 1995 (recognised by the AAAA as the 50th Intake), with the end of the Scheme commemorated by a parade at the Army College of TAFE on 8 April that year. But when was it decided to end the scheme?

Perhaps the writing was on the wall as early as 1992 if not before. Hansard (below) reported that in 1992, John Bradford, Liberal member for McPherson, Queensland (who graduated from the Officer Training Unit, Scheyville and was promoted Temporary Lieutenant whilst on active service in Vietnam between 29 Oct 1969 and 22 Oct 1970) asked about apprentice recruitment numbers.

“(Question No. 2110) Mr Bradford asked the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, upon notice, on 25 November 1992:

- (1) How many apprentices have been recruited for the January 1993 intake to the Army School of TAFE at Bonegilla, Vic.*
- (2) In which trades have the recruits been selected to train.*
- (3) Have quotas for each trade been filled.*
- (4) What is the school's capacity for each intake.*
- (5) Is the capacity being fully used; if not, why not.*

Mr Bilney —*The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:*

- (1) 194 applicants have been recruited for the 1993 intake to the Army College of TAFE.*
- (2) The recruits have been selected for training in all trades. The list of trades includes electronic tradespersons, electrical fitters, electrical mechanics, fitters and turners, plumbers and gas fitters, carpenters and joiners and motor mechanics.*
- (3) Quotas have been filled for all trades except for the electronic tradespersons. There is a shortfall of 20 electronic tradespersons because there were insufficient applicants of the required quality.*
- (4) The Army College of TAFE at present, has a maximum capacity of 520 apprentices.*
- (5) Utilisation of the capacity of the Army College of TAFE varies during the year, depending on the number of apprentices and adult trade trainees undergoing training at the time.”*

By that time, recruiting numbers had reduced from a **high of 306** with the 37th Intake in 1982 to a **low of 178** with the 47th Intake in 1992. The table at the right shows those numbers. Note (not shown in the table) that the overall peak was 310 enlistees with the 28th Intake in 1973, but that peak was followed by a low of 113 in 1974. Numbers then hovered around an average of 261 between 1975 and 1981.

The final three rows in the table show the numbers until the end of the Scheme. The small increase in 1993 was very short-lived with the next two years significantly reduced.

It's possible that the low numbers in 1992 prompted the questions from the member for McPherson. It's also possible that other developments in the early 1990's had prompted the questions.

Year	Intake	Enlisted	Graduated
1982	37	306	256
1983	38	298	246
1984	39	261	203
1985	40	263	222
1986	41	211	177
1987	42	191	154
1988	43	241	195
1989	44	248	215
1990	45	247	203
1991	46	263	210
1992	47	178	146
1993	48	185	143
1994	49	113	91
1995	50	112	103



On 8 April 1992, a proposal to upgrade facilities in Bonegilla to accommodate Navy and Air Force trainees was mentioned in the Twin Cities Post. In the previous year, the Murray Regional Development Board had expressed concern that enrolments in the TAFE were being reduced. *“At the time of declining enrolments and dwindling apprenticeship opportunities in the private sector, we wrote to Mr Bilney, and the Defence Minister, Senator Rae [sic], urging them to reconsider the situation.”* [source: Twin Cities Post article, 8 April 1992 – SPAASSM Collection Phase II, Binder 11, Item 1, Image 00006]

Other newspaper articles between April 1992 and February 1994 indicated, on the one hand, a desire to retain apprenticeship training for Army and, if possible, Navy and Air Force enlistees whilst, on the other hand, stating that the 49th Intake would be the last. The *“abolition of the apprentice system had been proposed for some time and would bring significant changes to the running of college, without diminishing its throughput.”* And, apprentices would give way to adult trade trainees, which would allow *“the same trainee at the end of the day because the technical training is exactly the same as under the apprentice scheme”*. [COL Wayne Kendall, COMDT Army College of TAFE, 24 February 1994]. [source: SPAASSM Collection Phase II, Binder 11, Item 1, various images]

At the last minute, Senator Ray, Defence Minister had not approved the idea and was *“reviewing the training issue against a background of overall defence policy issues.”* [source: SPAASSM Collection Phase II, Binder 11, Item 1, various images]

And finally, *“The rank “Army Apprentice” will disappear on Saturday when the Army College of TAFE holds the final parade of its Apprentice Battalion. In future, young men and women being trained in technical trades will be known as craftsman, sapper, signaller according to their corps.”* *“... Colonel Wayne Kendall, said the change in the apprentice scheme was adapting to a changing society.”* [source: SPAASSM Collection Phase II, Binder 12, Item 1, Image 10, Border Morning Mail, 5 and 10 April 1995]

Recent demolition of the old School of Signals: 1970 – 2024

From Certa Cito, Spring – 2024 Newsletter of the Royal Australian Signals Association (Victoria) Inc, photos by Michael Ricks



Before



After

Australian War Memorial Commemorative Entrance

[From AWM Website – Commemorative Area](#)



The Commemorative Entrance has re-opened to the public for the first time since 2021. All visitors will now enter the Memorial through this entrance, accessible from the east and west grounds. This precedes the planned opening of the new main southern entrance in January 2025.

Our committee

<http://austarmyapprentice.org/about/committee/>

AGM 26 November 2024

The recent AGM saw only a few changes in your committee. A big thank you to those members who have decided not to continue with their roles. And a very warm welcome to the new committee members: Grant Cotterill, 38th Plumber and Gasfitter, Welfare Officer; and Liz Fitzgibbon, 40th Intake Electronics Tradesman, Committee Member.

Barry Minster OAM, 20th Intake Radio Mechanic, is the outgoing Welfare Officer after four years.



Ray Wilson, 15th Intake Plumber, is the outgoing Public Officer after 14 years. Ray served on the committee for a total of 18 years, as foundation Treasurer from 2006 for two years, as a committee member for two years, and then in the role of Public Officer from 2010.

Current Committee Members

Patron Major General Andrew Freeman AM (Retd), 40th Intake Electrical Fitter

Office-bearers

President Keith Lowe, 22nd F&T

Vice-president Greg Haggett, 40th P&G

Secretary Simon Brooks, 40th MM

Treasurer Richard Pike, 21st VM

Heritage Officer Rob Minato, 31st ET

Membership Secretary .. Graeme Smail, 35th ET

Committee Members

Welfare Officer Grant Cotterill, 38th P&G

Public Officer Jeff Heron, 21st RM,
..... Life Member

Ordinary Committee Members

Member 1 Liz Fitzgibbon, 40th ET

Member 2 Bob Clarke, 22nd VM

Member 3 Mick O'Donnell, 22nd Bricklayer

Member 4 Bill Amor, 20th F&T

Member 5 Steve Doudle, 25th VM

Member 6 Wayne Davis, 50th Elec Fitter

Appointees

Hon Trustee Jim Hislop OAM, 9th F&T

Legal Adviser Rod Perkins, 24th F&T

Auditor Gary Lancaster, 22nd F&T

Chaplain Rev Canon Alan Kelb OAM,
..... 25th F&T

Newsletter Editor Jeff Heron, 21st RM,
..... Life Member

Social Media Admin Simon Brooks, 40th MM

Merchandise Officer Richard Pike, 21st VM

Regional Representatives

NT Charles (Bill) Allom, 25th VM

South Qld Brian Daley OAM, 14th VM,
..... Life Member

North Qld vacant

NSW Richard Pike, 21st VM

ACT Jeff Heron, 21st RM,
..... Life Member

Vic North Rob Minato, 31st ET

Vic Metro Ted Buchan, 46th ET

Vic Central & South Both vacant

SA Michael Thompson, 26th VM

WA Bob Coventry, 22nd RM

Tas Steve Bramich, 23rd C&J

Contributions to The Apprentice About

The Apprentice About (TAA) is published quarterly (in February, May, August and November).

Contributions are greatly appreciated – please email them to the Editor at news@austarmyapprentice.org or mail them to the address on the first page.

Submissions close on the 15th of the month preceding each edition.

Disclaimer

Information, views and opinions expressed in “The Apprentice About” originate from many different sources and contributors throughout our membership. Please note that content does not necessarily represent or reflect the views and opinions of the AAAA.

Submissions to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide

Refer to <https://defenceveteransuicide.royalcommission.gov.au/submissions>

Submissions to the RCDVS opened on 8 July 2021 and closed on 13 October 2023. Over 5,000 submissions covered a range of issues relating to the Royal Commission’s terms of reference. To view these submissions, go to <https://defenceveteransuicide.royalcommission.gov.au/submissions>.

You may be interested in the submission by Rodney 'Michael' Gill, 7th Intake Fitter & Turner, on 10 August 2022.

Michael served in Vietnam on two occasions, from 30 Jun 1967 to 31 Jul 1967 with HQ Australian Force Vietnam (Army Component), and again from 7 May 1969 to 17 May 1970, as a rifle company commander with 6 RAR. He also commanded a Vietnamese Battalion on operations, in October-November 1969.