

THE APPRENTICE ABOUT

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NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY APPRENTICES ASSOCIATION INC.

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PATRON: MAJOR GENERAL ANDREW FREEMAN AM (RETD)

907

From the President

By Keith Lowe, 22nd Intake Fitter and Turner, President AAAA, president@austarmyapprentice.org, 12 April 2025

Regrettably since writing my last report we have lost another nine (9) *[now 15 Ed]* Apprentices which brings the total number of names recorded in our Vale List to 1391 *[now 1397 Ed]*. Very sobering.

A detailed list of those we have lost since our February newsletter is included later in this edition.

Lest We Forget

Twenty-nine years ago, who would have become the 50th intake, (subsequently recognised by our Association as such) were in the early stages of the Army Apprentice selection process that we all experienced.

The wisdom of the Australian Government of the day took the decision at some time late in 1994 that defence training of apprentices as we knew it would cease. However, this seems to have not been effectively communicated through Defence (surprise surprise) to those who would be affected by the change until after their enlistment in early 1995 when they were transitioned to the 1/95 trade trainee scheme.

As many are aware, following representation from members of the January 1995 Intake, our Association took the decision that as they had been recruited as Apprentices, we would recognise them as the 50th Intake. Disappointingly very few have shown any interest in our Association with only three (3) being current financial members.

With the Army Apprentice Scheme formally being wound up 30 years ago, our last AGM determined we would have a reunion in conjunction with our 2025 AGM to commemorate the cessation of the Scheme. This has been widely publicised with requests for expressions of interest to assist with planning. The opportunity to submit an expression of interest has now closed with the next step being invitations to be sent to all who responded to formalise their registration and pay the relevant fee.

Our committee has taken the decision that the Association should recognise our loyal members by discounting the per head cost price for financial members and their partner. The fee for all others will be the cost to the Association for conducting the event. This is not a fund-raising exercise.

Please keep an eye out for your invitation that will be mailed by mid-May.

Scattering of Ashes

Many would be aware there has been for some time an impasse with the placement of cremated remains at our Memorial in the Bandiana Memorial Park. This impasse appears to have originated from a RAEME Corps Instruction that forbids the scattering of ashes at the nearby Craftsman Memorial.

I am pleased to report, following negotiations by our Heritage Officer Rob Minato with the Bandiana Base Management, we are permitted to have cremated remains placed at our Memorial.



When our Memorial was designed, it was the intent that the weapons pit facsimile (i.e. the brick enclosed space in front of the gates that houses the badge) would be the repository for the ashes of deceased Apprentices and their partners should they wish.

Moving forward should anyone wishing to have ashes interred at the Army Apprentices Memorial, please contact myself so the Association can assist with arrangements.

Bulk Emails

Most would be aware our bulk emails are distributed via mailing software called Mailchimp. Generally, most emails are delivered without difficulty, however those that aren't are automatically rejected due to either the recipient having UNSUBSCRIBED from something from another source via Mailchimp or their emails are not opened so, after some attempts to deliver, those addresses are no longer processed.

To facilitate communicating with those Mailchimp rejects we must revert to other methods. This is time consuming and is an impost on our voluntary resources, so can I appeal all to please keep your active email address up to date by visiting your profile at <https://austarmyapprentice.org/edit-profile/>.

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

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The Association of Australian Army Apprentices

Life of the Association

By Jeff Heron, 21st Intake Radio Mechanic, AAAA Public Officer and Newsletter Editor

The reduction of available Apprentices over time to remain or join as Association members means that the Association committee is examining ways to increase membership in the short to medium term and then to maximise the life of the Association. With the current average life expectancy in Australia of about 83 years, one could predict that the average 50th Intake Apprentice (born as late as 1979) will pass away in about 2062.

So, will the Association last for the next 40 or so years? Possibly not, but it is now in its 19th year with the 20th anniversary of its founding on 12 April 2026. Another 20 or more years should be possible.

The current membership of 901 is about 11.2% of the possible maximum number of those available (based on the average life expectancy). By 2062, at that rate, the number of members would reduce to 13 – almost certainly insufficient numbers to sustain the Association! The only way, therefore, to maximise the life of the Association is to increase the number of members by increasing the percentage joining from the available numbers. With an increase of 1%, we could expect the number of members to remain above 900 for the next 5 years. A 2% increase would extend that to 8 years. If the Association can exist with less members, say 50% of the current number, it could exist at the current rate of 11.2% until beyond 2046.

Clearly, the best way to maximise the life of the Association is to increase the membership now. So how do we do that? Your input is welcome.



Benefits of being a member

The objectives of the AAAA, from the Constitution, are:

- a. To enable constant communication between members to promote the interest of members through the Association.
- b. To promote the welfare of members and their partners.
- c. To promote the maintenance of the Army Apprentices Memorial at Bandiana, the Marine Gates and plaques, Mace Oval, Citation Oval and the Parade Ground at Balcombe, the Apprentice Active Service Memorial at Bonegilla, the intake trees at Bonegilla, the Apprentice Governor General's Banner, the Apprentice collection and display at the Army Museum Bandiana, and the products of the SPAASSM Project. With respect to the Army Apprentices Memorial at Bandiana, the Association is responsible for its ongoing maintenance.
- d. To create and maintain a record of the history of the Association, the members, and the Schools.
- e. To support any related museum and relics.
- f. To promote the recognition of the contribution of members to Australia and the Army.

Responsibility for achieving these objectives is with the Committee, whose members conduct and manage such activities as: regular committee meetings and AGMs; Association-level reunions; the Website, the official Facebook group, a LinkedIn group, Newsletters and other digital communications; Regional activities and assistance with intake and other related get-togethers, including promoting them and providing insurance cover where requested (see below); purchase, storage and sales of relevant merchandise; regular inspections and maintenance of Army Apprentices Memorials; creation and maintenance of Web-based documents and other historical records; Association finances; compliance with ACT Government legislation for Incorporated Associations; liaison with other organisations which may provide support to Apprentices and Association members; maintenance of a nominal roll of Apprentices, including recording deaths notified to the Association and a register of members of the Association; support to the Balcombe Grammar School and its Anzac Day and other military-related activities; attending funerals for, and maintaining contact with the families of, deceased members where possible and where requested; and assistance with placing remembrance plaques and pavers on the Army Apprentices Memorial.

Members of the Association and, to some extent, all Apprentices benefit from these activities. The more members there are, the greater the numbers of Apprentices and their families who benefit and the more it will be likely that the Association continues to provide these benefits for years to come.

Insurance for Association events

This is a reminder that events where Apprentices are attending can 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.

To notify of an event, Regional Representatives or Association members can use the AAAA Website form (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.

It is also useful to notify the AAAA so it can be listed on the Website for all to see and potentially more people will know about it and attend.

Association members in the news

Major General Andrew FREEMAN AM, 40th Intake Electrical Fitter, Patron AAAA – International Engagement Royal Thai Army – Canberra

Head of the Australian Delegation, Major General Andrew Freeman, met with his counterpart from the Royal Thai Army, Major General Tawin Thesanathum, to discuss key bilateral activities during the 2nd Army to Army Staff Talks in Canberra.

The Thai delegation conducted several office calls and working groups with key Australian counterparts and took part in a Last Post Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial over their visit, 10-12 March 2025.



Left: Major General Andrew Freeman AM, Head of the Australian Delegation, and Major General Tawin Thesanathum, Director of Policy and Plan of the Royal Thai Army, during the Last Post Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Image and information courtesy of Defence via RAQ Friday Files

Other Apprentices in the news

Federation Star – Warrant Officer Class 1 Anthony Max Sever, 37th Intake Electrical Fitter

From RAQ Friday Files 14 February 2025

Right: MAJ Shad Marsh with WO1 Anthony Sever at the award ceremony.

“On 7 Feb 2025 WO1 Anthony Sever received his Federation Star (Fifth Clasp to the Defence Long Service Medal) at Army HQ in Canberra. He was also awarded his Fourth Clasp to the Defence Long Service Medal as well as the National Emergency Medal for Bushfire Assist 2019-2020. Anthony joined the Australian Defence Force as a 37th Class Army Apprentice on the 12 Jan 1982 and his first posting was to the Army Apprentices School in Balcombe.

Other postings included: 2 Base Wksp, 102 Fd Wksp, HQ 18 Tpt, 17 Construction Sqn, 3 BASB, 10 FSB, Force Logistics Sqn – East Timor, 1 CSU, Land Systems Division, HQ 4 Bde and 4 CSSB. Anthony’s operational history includes Operation Tanager (East Timor) in 2000, Operation VICFIRE Assist in 2009, Op Bali Assist 2004 and Operation Bushfire Assist 2020.

On hand for the presentations was MAJ Shad Marsh, a fellow 37th Class Army Apprentice [*Motor Mechanic*], also working at AHQ. On behalf of the RAQ, Tony, congratulations on this great achievement!”



WO2 Jason Ballard, 42nd Intake Motor Mechanic – QLD Police District Officer’s Certificate of Appreciation

Source: Townsville Bulletin, 27 Mar 25 via RAEME in ACTION, April 2025

“On 30 Jun 2024, a terrible bus accident took the lives of 3 tourists who were visiting our Sunshine State. First on the scene was one of our own, WO2 Jason Ballard. Jason was recognised for his life saving efforts with a District Officer’s Certificate of Appreciation from the Queensland Police Service.”

Picture: Shae Beplate





Kokoda Track Commemorative Trek, 20 August – 1 September 2025

From a LinkedIn post on 9 April 2025 on behalf of Scott Babington, 40th Intake Fitter & Turner

See the flyer under [Upcoming events](#) below for further information.

1RAR Battalion Group Meritorious Unit Citation for service in Somalia – Townsville, Monday 7 April 2025 – WO1 Dean Goninan, 43rd Intake Fitter & Turner, 3rd Brigade HQ

Images and information courtesy of Defence via RAQ Friday Files 11 April 2025

On Monday afternoon at Lavarack Barracks, Townsville, members of the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR) Battalion Group were formally recognised for their service during Operation SOLACE in Somalia, with the presentation of the Meritorious Unit Citation.

Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, served as reviewing officer for the parade and presented the citation, reflecting on the efforts of those deployed in 1992–93, as well as the support of their families and the broader significance of the mission.

Among those remembered was Lance Corporal Shannon McAliney, who died in Somalia just over 32 years ago, aged 21. His service, and that of all members of the Battalion Group, was acknowledged for its role in enabling the safe delivery of humanitarian aid under difficult and dangerous conditions.



Above: L-R WO1 Dean Goninan from 3Bde HQ awards Australian Army soldiers from 1RAR, their Meritorious Unit Citation for the units' service in Somalia, at Lavarack Barracks. WO1s Huck Berry and Dean Goninan at the post event function.

A number of Somalia veterans attended the event, amongst them two RAEME Veterans WO1 Dean Goninan and WO1 Huck Berry. Dean was a Craftsman with 102 Field Workshop/3 BASB during the original deployment. He was invited by the 1RAR Regimental Sergeant Major to present citations to members on parade, an honour he described as a privilege.

He also reconnected with WO1 Huck Berry (ARES), who had travelled from Rockhampton with family for the occasion. Huck, then a Corporal in 1RAR's TSP, served in the same operation. The ceremony was a meaningful opportunity for veterans and current members alike to reflect on the enduring legacy of the deployment and the role it played in shaping Australia's modern peacekeeping effort.



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 the organisations who may assist
- liaises with similar service bodies (e.g. Returned and Services League, Vietnam Veterans Federation, Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Association) on welfare matters
- on the advice of the death of a member, verifies that the Vale notice is not already on the Association Website, ensures that information received is complete and correct (e.g. spelling, missing regimental number), ensures that the NOK is being cared for and sends condolences, advises the President, Secretary, Membership Secretary, and Newsletter Editor of updates required
- on the advice of a member in hospital, sick or otherwise indisposed, arranges a visit from a member to ensure his/her welfare (through a Regional Representative if applicable).

New veterans' legislation

From <https://www.dva.gov.au/news/latest-stories/parliament-passes-new-veterans-legislation>

On 13 February 2025, Parliament passed the Veterans' Entitlements, Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Act 2024 (the VETS Act) in response to the Interim Report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, which recommended the Government simplify and harmonise the framework for veteran rehabilitation, compensation and other entitlements.

From 1 July 2026, the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (VEA) and the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation (Defence-related Claims) Act 1988 (DRCA) will close to new compensation claims. All claims received on or after 1 July 2026 will be determined under an improved Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act (MRCA). Payments being received under the VEA and DRCA prior to 1 July 2026 will be grand-parented, meaning that those payments will continue uninterrupted.

Amongst other things, the Act will implement a range of improvements, including:

- The Repatriation Commission will be able to specify injuries and diseases that can be accepted on a presumptive basis where they are known to have a common connection with military service.
- Eligibility for household services and attendant care will be expanded.
- Allowances and other payments will be standardised, including acute support packages, education schemes, and additional compensation for children of severely impaired veterans.
- Veterans receiving DRCA incapacity payments will automatically transition to MRCA incapacity payments on the date of commencement.
- The Repatriation Commission will be able to determine circumstances where a veteran must receive financial advice before receiving a lump sum payment, helping you make the right decisions.

For more information, visit the Website above, plus: the dedicated DVA Legislation Reform page (www.dva.gov.au/legislationreform) and the DVA news page (<https://www.dva.gov.au/about/news>).

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 four historic entries.



Intake	Reg No	Name	Trade	Passed away
12	243033	Blair James NANCE (12 th Intake App/RSM)	Plumber	3 Nov 2021
12	58660	Barry John BOOTH	Fitter and Turner	14 Dec 2024
11	342748	Brian James TICKNELL	Plumber	1 Jan 2025
27	1204090	Hans Bryson (Jimmy) MARK	Electronics Tradesman	22 Jan 2025
17	48625	Richard George HEDGER	Electrical Mechanic	8 Feb 2025
19	243394	Nicholas LOJKIN	Electrical Fitter	19 Feb 2025
30	1205575	Ulrich Karl Josef (Rick) RACK	Fitter Maintenance	27 Feb 2025
23	218149	Gary John WILLIAMS	Plumber	18 Mar 2025
13	243115	Robert Francis LUDLOW	Electrical Mechanic	2 Apr 2025
37	554213	David BOLTON	Electrical Fitter	4 Apr 2025
23	61882	John Bruce LENNOX	Fitter and Turner	13 Apr 2025
16	18726	Gerard Donald NEWMAN	Electrical Mechanic/Fitter and Turner	25 Apr 2025
20	342979	Rodney Peter SIMMONDS	Fitter and Turner	Unknown
5	342537	Patrick Graham SCOTT	Fitter and Turner	27 Apr 2025
36	553935	Daron John HARVEY	Motor Mechanic	30 Apr 2025

Membership matters

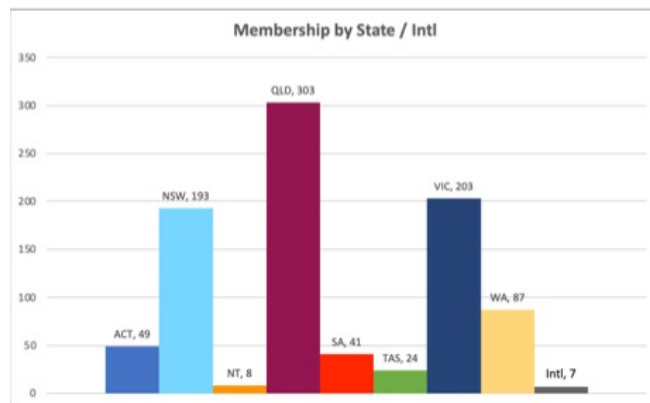
By Graeme Smail, 35th Intake ET – Membership Secretary, membership@austarmyapprentice.org

Membership Status

The current state of the membership (as at 24 February 2025) was 915 financial members (at right). These figures showed a pleasing increase in membership of 20 since the last AGM in Oct 2024.

Type	24/2/2025	16/10/2024	Change
Life	3	3	-
Ordinary	597	591	6
Retired	307	297	10
Associate	8	4	4
TOTAL	915	895	20

Membership analysis



Membership drive

We are again, albeit very slowly, approaching 1000 financial members. Since February 2022, when there were 927 members, the numbers have fluctuated from a peak of 1070 in July 2022, through a low of 876 in October 2023, to the current number of 901 as at 30 April 2025, averaging just over 900. It is expected that the upcoming Reunion in Albury Wodonga this October will again cause a spike in numbers, perhaps surpassing 1000. **As an incentive, and to increase the financial membership, prizes will be presented to new members who bring the financial membership up to 920, 930, 940, 950, 960, 970, 980, 990, and 1000. Prizes will be selected from baseball caps, key rings, stubby holders and photo cards. Existing members are encouraged to urge their non-member mates to join.**

Events reports

ACT Region Quarterly Lunch, Ainslie FC, Wednesday, 5 March 2025

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



Yet another good roll-up with 15 attendees, comprising 12 Apprentices and 3 partners. Intakes from the 2nd to the 33rd were represented, with the 22nd (2 x Radio Mechanics and 1 x Vehicle Mechanic) leading. Again Radio Mechanics/Electronics Tradesmen (5) were the highest represented trade. The next lunch will be held on Wednesday, 11 June 2025, so we hope to see a greater roll-up.

Upcoming events

AAAA and Apprentices functions

- * **ACT Region Quarterly Lunch, Ainslie FC, Wed, 11 June 2025.** Please let me know if you intend to be there.
- * **Celebrating 76 years of Army Apprentices 1948 to 2025, the 26th year of the reunion and still going, Saturday 7 June 2025, Bulimba Bowls Club, 1100 – 1600,** FREE sausage sizzle, but feel free to bring your own, for the large outdoor barbecue, drinks at the bar, no raffle, no registration, wear your name tag, open to Apprentices, their families, ex-members of staff, and others associated with Apprentices and wish to renew old friendships, *RSVP to Brian Daley, 14th Intake Vehicle Mechanic, bjdaley14@gmail.com.*
- * **20th Intake C Coy reunion, Bribie Island, June 2025.,** no more details available.
- * **SA All Intakes Reunion, Largs Bay RSL, Sat 2 August 2025,** wives and partners welcome, *[contact Michael Thompson, 26th Intake Vehicle Mechanic via Facebook, Army Apprentices we; were the Cream of Australian Youth](#)*, posted 30 March 2025.
- * **26th Intake 55th Year Reunion, Wodonga, 20-22 March 2026,** send your interest to *[Michael Thompson, 26th Intake Vehicle Mechanic via Facebook, Australian Army Apprentices Association \[official\]](#)*, posted 18 March 2025.

30th Anniversary Reunion to commemorate cessation of the Army Apprentice Scheme



- * **Venues** – Commercial Club, Albury and Army Apprentices Memorial, Bandiana.
- * **Meet & greet** – all-intakes get-together, Friday afternoon/evening, casual dress, all drinks at attendees' cost, finger food provided.



- * **AGM** – Saturday morning from 1030 hrs AEST, tea/coffee provided. Members' attendance is appreciated to see what is happening with the Association and to nominate or vote for Committee positions. Send AGM agenda items to secretary@austarmyapprentice.org
- * **Formal sit-down dinner** – for all Apprentices and partners, Saturday evening at 1830 hrs AEST for 1900 hrs, seating at round tables, coat and tie, miniature medals optional, entree, alternate drop main and dessert, tea/coffee.
- * **Memorial service and BBQ (to be confirmed)** – Sunday, Army Apprentices Memorial, Bandiana – details to follow.
- * **Costs** – Members and their partner \$50.00 each, non-Members and their partner \$75.00 each. Current non-Members wishing to attend at the Member price have until 30 August to commit to a 3- or 5-year membership.
- * **Registration forms** – will be made available from mid-May and will be emailed to all who have submitted an expression of interest to attend. It will also be available from our [Website](#).
- * **Questions** – send any questions to events@austarmyapprentice.org.

Other associations, etc

- * **RASigs Association**, [contact http://www.rasigs.com](http://www.rasigs.com).

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

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:

Victoria (some still tentative):

- * Dates TBC – Freedom of Entry parade, City of Banyule, & RA Sigs Units combined, RSL activity, Museum modernisation event
- * 31 May – Australian Commando Association (126 & 301 Sig Sqns and 1st & 2nd Cdo Regts), 1200 hrs, Montmorency/Eltham RSL (bookings essential by 24 May – contact gavin.lee18@hotmail.com for how to book)
- * 30 June – 108 Sig Sqn 50th Birthday (Unit led)
- * 2, 5 and 10 July – Royal Corps of Signals (UK) Rugby Tour:
 - vs RA Sigs Rugby Club (Brisbane),
 - vs RA Sigs Spartan Rugby Club (Brisbane)
 - vs Mercury Marauders (Canberra)
- * 10-14 November – Corps Week:
 - 11-18 November – National Reunion of Veteran Community at Healesville
- * 11 November – DFSS rehearsal for VIP visit and Open Day for RA Sigs Community (current serving, associations, Ex-serving and their families) with a centralised morning tea, sanitised demonstration of capability and Corps Museum visit (Regional and unit focussed event).
- * 12 November – VIP visit, welcome guard, demonstration of virtual training, IET & ROBC engagement, 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, \$70, only 300 seats, [contact Bruce Long – prontobrl@gmail.com](mailto:Bruce Long – prontobrl@gmail.com)
- * 2 December – DFSS 23rd birthday (Unit led)
- * **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.



- * **Kokoda Track Commemorative Trek, 20 August – 1 September 2025**, see below for further information.
Bookings via info@ourspirit.com.au.

Kokoda

Kokoda Track Commemorative Trek

Honouring History, Embracing the Challenge

Have you got a close mate or family member that you've always wanted to share the Kokoda pilgrimage with? Have you always wanted to trek Kokoda but feel that you are not physically capable of safely completing the Trek?
Are you capable of completing the Kokoda trek and have a close mate or family member that would love to share the experience with you but is physically not able to trek?

If your answers are "YES" - then this Kokoda Trek is the one for you



Why Join this Trek?

Commemorate: Honour key moments of Kokoda's history | **Challenge Yourself:** Experience the mental and physical resilience needed to conquer the Track | **Connect:** Walk in the footsteps of Australian soldiers while sharing this profound experience with like minded individuals. | **Learn:** Gain insights from expert guides, historians and veterans along the way.
Experience History: Participate in this journey, irrespective of physical capacity.

20 August - 1 September 2025 [Book Now](#)

[@ourspiritadventures](#) info@ourspirit.com.au [OurSpiritPtyLtd](#) 

Trek Itinerary

Kokoda Track Commemorative Trek

Honouring History, Embracing the Challenge

Step into history and experience the Kokoda Track on this once in a lifetime trek, honouring the sacrifices of those who came before us. Our fully inclusive journey caters to everyone, irrespective of physical capacity, and is times to commemorate significant historical events, ensuring a deep and meaningful connection to Australia's wartime legacy.

Key Historical Dates

VP Day - 15 August 1945 | Battle of Isurava - 26 - 31 August 1942
Bruce Kingsbury VC Action - 29 August 1942 | Japanese Surrender Signed - 2 September 1945

Phase 1: Trek Commencement	Phase 2: Non-Trekker Experience (We acknowledge that everyone, irrespective of physical capacity, should have an opportunity to experience our history.)	Phase 3: Completing the Journey
20 Aug: Arrive in Port Moresby 21 Aug: Owers Corner - to Imita Base 22 Aug: Imita Base - Oli Creek 23 Aug: Oli Creek - Agulogo 24 Aug: Agulogo - Efogi 25 Aug: Efogi - Diggers Camp 26 Aug: Diggers Camp - Bombers Camp via P40 at Myola 27 Aug: Bombers Camp - Templeton Crossing 28 Aug: Templeton Crossing - Isurava 29 Aug: Isurava - Kokoda <i>Optional Extension: Continue to Gorari - Oli and the Northern Beaches for an additional night before returning to Port Moresby</i>	26 Aug: Arrival - Port Moresby 27 Aug: Helicopter transport to Isurava to overnight and experience the battle site and local culture 28 Aug: Meet Trekkers upon arrival Battlefield exploration incl Isurava Memorial, B Coy position and Kingsbury's Rock; Evening battlefield briefing incl discussions on PTSD and mental resilience; Group dinner 29 Aug: Dawn Service at Isurava Memorial 30 Aug: Visit all WWII sites incl MacDuff, Bootless Bay, sites of the 2/3rd Air Disaster, and more 31 Aug: Meet up with the trek group for dinner	29 Aug: Trekkers continue to Kokoda, staying one additional night 30 Aug: Possible extension to Gorari, Oli, Awala and the Northern Beaches 31 Aug: Flight from Popondetta to Port Moresby * Group meets non-trekkers to visit Bomana War Cemetery * Explore Port Moresby before attending formal closing function 1 Sept: Depart Port Moresby for home

Join us for an unforgettable journey of remembrance, endurance and camaraderie.
Limited spots available - Secure your place today! **\$5,700 fully inclusive**





- * **Army Museum of SA, Festival Launch, 80 years since WWII, Building 34A Keswick Barracks, Wed 14 May 2025, 1200.** This annual 2-course lunch and 45-minute talk and discussion will be held during the History SA Festival to promote the history and traditions of Army activity in SA, AMOSA members \$25, non-members \$35, drinks for purchase at the bar, to book visit <https://reg.planetreg.com/E1522843156470>, or to be part of a RAEME table, contact Greg Rosser, gregrosser@adam.com.au.
- * **“Back on Track” Retreat, Charity Golf Day, Laidley Golf Club, Wehlow Rd off Gatton-Laidley Rd E, Laidley QLD, Sunday 25 May 2025, 0730 & 1230**, in aid of Veterans/Defence Personnel & all First Responders, 2 Person Ambrose, Shotgun Start, Morning Field 0730, Afternoon Field 1230, to nominate go to <https://www.laidley-golfclub.com/copy-of-corporate-days>, or phone the Clubhouse on (07) 5465 1518, \$45 per player + buggy if riding, over \$6,000 worth of prizes, nominations close Sunday 18 May 2025.
- * **RAE Association Victoria Inc.**, contact [RAE Future Events](#)
- * **RAE Association WA Inc.**, contact <https://wasappers.com.au/events/>.
- * **RAEME National Network**, contact <https://raeme.org.au>.
- * **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.
- * **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 we; were the Cream of Australian Youth](#), posted 26 July 2022.
- * **Greensborough RSL Friday Veterans Coffee Club 2025**, 1000-1200hrs, Members’ Bar
Dates: →→→→



May – 2nd, 16th & 30th
 June – 13th & 27th
 July – 11th & 25th
 August – 8th & 22nd
 September – 5th & 19th
 October – 3rd, 17th & 31st
 November – 14th & 28th
 December – 12th

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

33rd ET’s cap badge

From Randall ‘SLOTH’ Todd – 33rd Intake Electronics Tradesman

“Dear Editor,

There’s a piece of what I believe to be some extremely unique history regarding the 33rd ET’s based at Balcombe in Admin Coy (our 3rd year) that you may perhaps be interested in.

The 33rd ET’s minted their own cap badge in 1980 which I believe no other intake previous or after ever did (photo attached which is my screen saver on my phone). The pseudo-Latin inscription of Maximus Elitus loosely translated to the language of the time to be ‘Bulk Good’. The laurel around the outside was purely for presentation impact as far as I recall, bolts of lightning were representative of our electrical based career and the 33rd ET is self-explanatory.

We wore the cap badge on black baseball caps with matching white T shirts with the same insignia printed on the front on a sports parade once as I recall (I think it was at Battalion level on the parade ground) but other than that, they really weren’t exposed all that often.

The designer was Trevor Riessen (Member No 1569) – Trev bought it to me for reasons lost in time and I somehow arranged with the Everyman at the Apprentices Club to have them minted (he kept a few) but the rest of say 40 odd badges were purchased by the 33rd ET’s of Admin Coy. So, there’s only about 40 in existence.





We also minted a 33rd forever as a Crab Night Badge at the same time along with the T shirts and black baseball caps. I gave my 33rd Crab Badge to a visiting Army team member to Fiji who was an Army Apprentice at Bonegilla when I was living in Fiji as a Helicopter Air Ambulance pilot back around 2020 so I don't have that now.

I've still got my cap badge though (that's the picture attached) – my ex-wife has another which she wore on the lapel of her black leather jacket and I still have a T shirt (though the T shirt hasn't fit me for 40 years) - later in life I had my black leather motorcycle vest embroidered with the same badge (still have that but it's in storage in Fiji). The thought was that the vest may be seen by other 33rd class ET's in my travels (never happened though).

Unfortunately, photography wasn't as prevalent or easy back in 1980 so I'm not aware of any photos ever taken (there must have been I guess but by who and who has them now is a challenge 45 years on). Maybe Trev Riessen has some history – maybe a photograph of all of us or know where he can get it and a better recollection he can add, and I hope this story is perhaps of some interest.

Best Regards"

SPAASSM Collection

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

February 2025 solution



Q: What is the building in this image? Where is it? Is it still there?

A: *SPAASSM Ph I Image 05585* shows the Bonegilla Theatre or Assembly Hall or Concert Hall, on Mt Martha St, Bonegilla, and yes it's still there (see the image below left from Google Maps, dated 2025). But, as advised by Randall Langdon, 38th Intake Motor Mechanic, it's fenced off and can't be used.

There was only one other response, unfortunately incorrect. And nobody appears to know who the bandsmen were or what the occasion was.

Congratulations Randall, your USB has been sent to you. In his return email wrote, *"There is a lot of info on there, will take a bit to look through. Brings back some memories."*

For those who have a copy of the SPAASSM Collection, yes, there is a lot of information in it. The index that comes with the USB is useful to help find specific items, even though it is far from complete. The index is being updated slowly, and the latest version is on the Website at

<https://austarmyapprentice.org/photos/>.

If anyone recognises someone or something in the collection, and it's not included in the index (or the index is incomplete or wrong), your input to improve it is always appreciated. Just send your comments to news@austarmyapprentice.org.

May 2025 competition

Q: What are these guys doing?

The first person to send the most correct answer to news@austarmyapprentice.org will win a copy of the SPAASSM Collection on USB.



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
70 th 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
	Tie	\$25.00	\$10.00
	SPAASSM Collection USB wafer	\$25.00	\$10.00
	Key ring – <i>when ordering, ask if a number you would like is available</i>	\$20.00	\$3.50
	Name badge – <i>to order, include preferred (1st) name, & Intake/Class</i>	\$16.50	\$3.50
PROMOTIONS	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
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
AAAA & AAS BADGED ITEMS	Plaque (with AAAA badge OR AAS badge)	\$85.00	\$14.00
	Face mask (with both AAAA and AAS badges)	\$15.00	\$5.00



AAAA key rings – some ideas – reprinted from the November 2020 edition



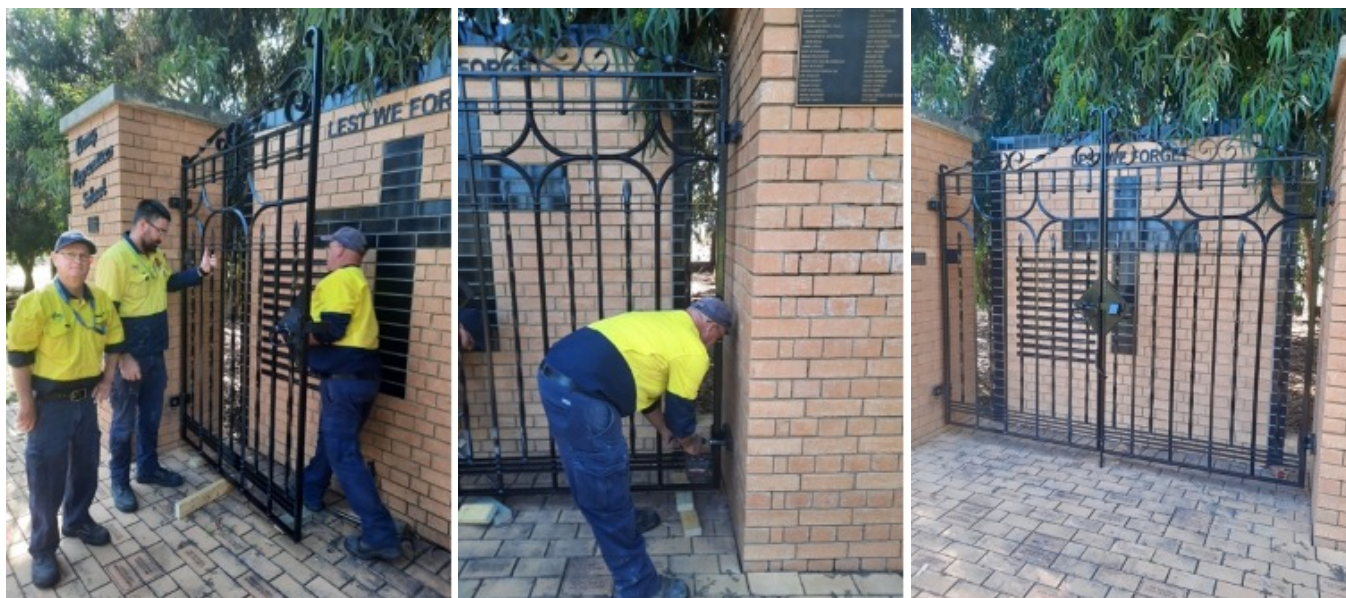
Many members will know that there are a lot of key rings remaining to be sold. At \$20 plus postage, people might not immediately see their value or might think that the leatherette backing is bulky. Of course, you can save by combining a key ring purchase with an Association name badge for only \$30. But here's one idea. Why not buy a key ring (or a name badge as well) and modify the key ring like this: 1) remove the leatherette backing; 2) place the remaining badge onto your keys; and 3) show it to win a shout at the bar from others who don't have any evidence that they are Apprentices. Or you could file off the loop and glue a pin, clip or magnet onto the back for a nice badge or brooch to wear (35mm dia).





Apprentices Memorial Gates refurbishing – a follow up

On 21 February, the refurbished Memorial Gates were returned and replaced. Associated with refurbishment of the Gates, Rob Minato, 31st Electronics Tradesman, Heritage Officer reported that he is managing a general cleanup of the Memorial, including removing weeds, etc and fixing up the drainage. Thanks also go to the Army Museum whose staff are assisting.



Above: left and centre – refurbished Gates being replaced; and right – in place. Photos by Rob Minato

Army Museum Bandiana temporary closure

Rob Minato, 31st Electronics Tradesman, Heritage Officer also reported that the Army Museum at Bandiana is currently closed for major renovations, including recladding of the outer walls. For further information, go to <https://armymuseumbandiana.com.au>.

History

Centenary of Royal Australian Corps of Signals – Uncirculated Coin

From: <https://eshop.ramint.gov.au/2025-one-dollar-uncirculated-royal-australian-corps-of-signals>

“From its beginnings with signal flags and Morse code, to providing communications today as well as electronic warfare and cyberspace operations support across the tri services. This support enables command and control of deployed forces in peace, crisis and conflict on any operation anywhere in the world.

This stunning coin design also includes coded messages in both Morse and binary code.”



Did you know? – Citation Oval, Balcombe

During WWII, the US 1st Marine Division fought in the Guadalcanal Campaign in the Solomon Islands. The Operation (Watchtower) won the Division its first of three World War II Presidential Unit Citations (PUC). The battle would cost the division 650 killed in action and 1,278 wounded in action.

Following the Guadalcanal Campaign, the Division's Marines were sent to Melbourne, Australia for rest and refit. Elements of the Division set up camp at Balcombe and, in 1943, four members of the Division were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honour and the Division was awarded the PUC. Three of the awards were presented during a parade held on 21 May 1943, now 82 years ago, at what later became known as Citation Oval.



AAS badge die and the Australian Army History Unit

From Rob Minato, 31st Intake Electronics Tradesman, Heritage Officer

The Australian Army History Unit (AAHU) has many of the original dies used to stamp corps, unit, etc badges. The AAS badge die pictured at right is one of them.

The AAHU is responsible for developing policy and programs for the collection, conservation, interpretation and promotion of Australian Army history. The unit manages the Army History Research Grants Scheme and the CEW Bean Prize, has over 200 books in publication, and operates 16 Military Museums across Australia:



- Army Museum of Western Australia, Fremantle
- Australian Army Armour and Artillery Museum Puckapunyal, VIC
- Australian Army Museum Bandiana, VIC
- Army Museum of South Australia, Keswick
- Australian Army Military Intelligence Museum, Canungra, QLD
- Fort Queenscliff Museum, VIC
- Australian Army Signals Museum, Macleod VIC
- Army Museum of Tasmania, Hobart
- Army Museum of North Queensland, Townsville
- Australian Army Flying Museum, Oakey, QLD



- Army Museum South Queensland, Brisbane
- Australian Army Museum of Military Engineering, Holsworthy, NSW
- Australian Army Infantry Museum, Singleton, NSW
- Australian Army Museum of New South Wales, Paddington
- Australian Army Military Police Museum, Holsworthy, NSW
- Australian Army Museum Duntroon, Campbell, ACT

Recruiting Apprentices in 1988

From The Age, Melbourne, 22 February 1988

THE AGE, Monday 22 February 1988

When your country doesn't need you

By GEOFF MASLEN

When the army advertised for 276 apprentices last year, it was overwhelmed by 18,527 inquiries.

The inquiries were followed up by 4200 formal applications for the jobs which were spread across seven main trade areas at the apprentice training centre at Bonegilla. The applicants, aged between 15 and 18, then had to sit written tests for mathematics and English skills as well as answering questions intended to measure technical aptitude. Those who passed had medical and psychological testing.

Of the 4000 young men who wanted to enlist, only 604 made it before a selection board, and of these only 260 were passed as suitable. But 22 of this group dropped out before the time came to sign up.

Among teenage girls, only 28 of the 200 original applicants got to the selection board and 11 of these passed. Only 10 became apprentices.

The application process came up with 248 young men and women — 28 short of its target.

Of the three eastern states, Victoria's young people were by far the worst at the army's mathematics test. About 66 per cent of the Victorian applicants failed, 10 per cent more than the New South Wales figure and 20 per cent higher than in Queensland.

"The army is very selective but once we get them to the training school, the drop-out rate is very low," said Major Mike Defina, the officer in charge of army recruiting in Victoria. "That suggests our selection methods are effective."

Major Defina did not believe that the army's record of only one in 16 teenage boys (and one in 18 girls) passing its screening tests was unusual. Discussions with

other big employers of apprentices around Australia supported the army's view that civilian organisations had similar difficulties.

"Where we differ is having strict medical and psychological requirements," Major Defina said. "Even so in Victoria, only 34 out of 700 applicants failed the medical test and five out of the 700 were considered psychologically unsuited to army life."

Young people seeking an army apprenticeship have to be between the ages of 15 and 18 1/2 years old and have passed year 9 at secondary school or be studying year 10. The academic tests are considered to be about year 10 standard.

Major Defina said he did not think the tests were too hard; nor had there been a sudden drop in the standard of applicants. He agreed the army was concerned that so few applicants succeeded, but said: "We have experienced a similar failure rate for the past few years."

THE OBSTACLE COURSE

	Boys	Girls
Inquiries	17,261	1,266
Formal applications	4,000	200
Failed screening	3,396	172
Appeared before selection board	604	28
Rated suitable	260	11
Apprenticeships	238	10

The article on the left was posted on Facebook by Rob Minato, 33rd Intake Electronics Tradesman, Heritage Officer.

What the figures don't show of course are the statistics for that Intake after they commenced their training. According to the Association's records, the 43rd Intake comprised 241 enlistees, of whom 10 were females. So, the first statistic is that all 10 females arrived at Bonegilla, but 7 males didn't. Of those 241, 46 did not graduate (DNG).

Trades represented were:

- * Carpenter & Joiner — 30 (+7 DNG)
- * Electrical Fitter — 8 (+2 DNG)
- * Electrical Mechanic — 11 (+2 DNG)
- * Electronics Tradesman — 62 (of whom 1 graduated as an Electrical Mechanic and 12 DNG)
- * Fitter & Turner — 39 (+6 DNG)
- * Motor Mechanic — 82 (+15 DNG)
- * Plumber & Gasfitter — 9 (+2 DNG).

The 46 non-graduates represented 19% of the Intake, which is the same as the average DNG across the entire Apprentice population for all 50 intakes. Of the 46 non-graduates, 4 were females. One of the non-graduates remained in the Army, reaching the rank of Major.

At least 10 Apprentices from the 43rd Intake were commissioned, with one reaching the rank of Colonel, while at least 26 reached Warrant rank, including one female. Two males transferred to the RAN.

Noting the poor mathematics test results described in the article, it is worth pointing out that the supposedly worst state (VIC) had the largest number of graduating Electronics Tradesmen of the three states mentioned (VIC — 14, NSW — 6 with 2 DNG, and QLD — 6 with 1 DNG). WA had the largest number of ETs with 16, but 3 of them DNG.

Enlistees (and DNG) from each state comprised:

QLD — 43 (6)	NSW — 57 (13)	VIC — 46 (6)
SA — 41 (7)	WA — 42 (11)	TAS — 12 (2).



Delayed end to the Army Apprentice Scheme – 1994

From The Border Mail, early 1994 – copy supplied by Wayne Davis, 50th Intake Electrical Fitter, Committee member

Apprentice cut on hold

ARMY chiefs in Canberra have unexpectedly suspended plans to abolish the apprenticeship system that has trained tradesmen for almost 50 years.

Staff at the Army College of TAFE were told the news yesterday, following talks between Training Command and the Defence Minister, Senator Robert Ray.

The commandant of the college, Colonel Wayne Kendall, said the college had been directed to take another normal intake of apprentices in January.

This will be the 50th class intake since the school was founded at Balcombe and the 13th at Latchford Barracks.

Until yesterday, the Army had been proposing that this year's 49th intake of 112 apprentices aged 15-18 would be the last, but Senator Ray has not approved the idea.

Senator Ray is believed to be reviewing the training issue against a background of overall defence policy changes.

Already about a third of the college's students are "adult trade trainees", men and women aged 17-23 who had entered the Army previously through general entry or who were specially recruited.

Colonel Kendall said that abolition of the apprentice system

By HOWARD JONES

had been proposed for some time and would bring significant changes to the running of college, without diminishing its throughput.

If the apprentice system ceased, the college would take a similar number of adult trade trainees and would continue to have 400-500 students on campus.

"But instead of taking two years to train them, we would have done it in 18 months," Colonel Kendall said.

A month's saving would be achieved by dropping the four-week military induction period that all new apprentices undergo.

The annual January intake would give way to a system of accepting students for courses when required throughout the year.

"We will still get the same trainee at the end of the day because the technical training is exactly the same as under the apprentice scheme," Colonel Kendall said.

He said he wanted the Army to target Year 12 school-leavers.

"In Australia, the days of 15 or 16-year-old apprentices are virtually finished — they are a dying breed," Colonel Kendall said.

"By removing that limitation of 18, and making it 19, 20 or 25, we would widen our scope to get people in to do technical training."

Only two 15-year-olds were recruited this year.

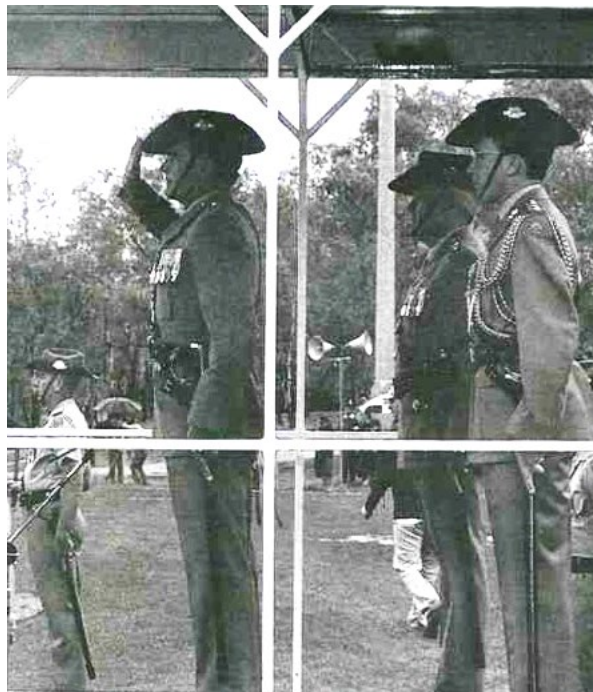
Senator Ray's decision does not affect proposals to amalgamate the five training establishments located at Bandiana and Bonegilla.

This week the Army engaged Kinhill Engineers Pty Ltd, of Sydney, to report on the appropriateness of rationalising the units under a single command.

The engineering firm has been told to report by April 15 and Senator Ray is also being briefed on this move.

End of the Army Apprentice Scheme – 8 April 1995

From the Army College of TAFE Journal 1995



Just over 30 years ago, "Saturday the 8th April 1995 saw the end of an era with the Army College of TAFE, Bonegilla. Almost 300 staff and apprentices were on parade to commemorate the cessation of the Army Apprenticeship Scheme and the introduction of the Army Technical and Trade Scheme. The parade was attended by a number of senior officers as well as almost 2000 ex-apprentices and their families.

The weekend festivities began with a cocktail party and a reunion for ex-apprentices on the Friday night followed by the Apprentice Battalion Parade on the Saturday. The parade was reviewed by the GOC TRG COMD MAJGEN S.N. Gower, AM. The band was formed by ex-apprentice musicians from all over Australia and despite only having minimal time to prepare, performed to an exceptional standard. After the parade the College of TAFE was open for visitors to view the training facilities and the RAEME TRG Centre provided a display of Vehicles, Weapons and Equipment."

Colonel CM Sharp, Commandant, in his Foreword wrote, "On the 8th of April, the Army Apprentice Scheme ceased and was formally replaced by the Army Technician and Trade Scheme. To some, the move represented the end of an era of high quality trade training which began on the 2nd of August 1948 and produced over 6,000 tradesmen and women for the Australian Defence Force. My view is more optimistic. From my observations, I am confident



that the tradesmen and women we train today are of equal quality to their forebears and are worthy inheritors of the apprentice traditions."

SA Kokkin, Director, in his report wrote, *"After 11 years at the College it is interesting to look back on the changes that have taken place." ... "The change from the Apprentice Scheme to the Army Technical and Trade Scheme had a particularly strong impact on myself as I have had a long association with AAS. I made my first contacts with Army Apprentices in the early 1950 's while playing Rugby Union. The clearly exhibited strong bonds of friendship and team spirit that existed then were still evident in 1985 when I came to the Army Apprentice [sic] School as Principal. All trainees take from the College these very important Class friendship ties that will last them a lifetime."*

WO1 BJ Hatfield, RSM wrote, *"The highlights of the ceremonial activities for me were the 'Beating the Retreat', 'Final Apprentice Graduation Parade' and the 'VP Day Celebrations' in Albury. I think it was fitting that the last major ceremonial activity for 1995 was the VP Day Parade as this is the year Australia Remembers. The future of the Army College of TAFE lays in the formation of the Army Logistic Training Centre. Although there is still much work to be done it will create an opportunity for all staff to get involved and produce an organisation that takes us towards the year 2000."*

RAEME – Preserving our history – we need your help!

From RAQ Friday Files 20 December 2024

The RAEME Association Queensland (RAQ) and the North Queensland RAEME Association have a rich history of honouring the traditions and achievements of the Corps. To ensure this proud legacy is preserved for future generations, we are calling on members, past and present, to assist in maintaining and enriching our historical records and memorabilia.

The history of RAEME is not just about equipment and technical excellence, it's about the people, their service, and the enduring camaraderie forged over decades. Preserving this history is vital to understanding and celebrating the contributions of RAEME to the Australian Army and our nation.

We are initially seeking to document the formation of both entities. So, if you have photographs, documents or personal stories that showcase this, your material and personal stories will help keep our history alive.

If you would like to assist or contribute, please contact Peter Matthews via email (chairman@qld.raeme.org.au). Your support will play an essential role in safeguarding the heritage of RAEME for future generations to appreciate and learn from.

AWM Development Project – progress update

In the last issue, we provided some details about the ongoing work to upgrade the Australian War Memorial. According to the AWM, the project is still on track for completion on 30 June 2028. The Anzac Hall and Anzac Atrium will open in 2026. As promised, the large crane that was visible above the Memorial has been removed.





Main Entrance and Foyer, officially opened 3 February 2025

From <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/blog/main-entrance-officially-open>

"The Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has marked a major milestone at the Australian War Memorial by officially opening its new Main Entrance yesterday, Monday 3 February 2025.

Sitting underneath the Commemorative Entrance of the 84-year-old building, the Prime Minister unveiled a plaque in the new space which allows for accessible, weatherproof and safe access to the Memorial for all visitors.

"For nearly eight and a half decades, the Australian War Memorial has kept the memory of all who have served alive and strong," Prime Minister Albanese said. "The Australian War Memorial is one of our most precious national treasures. "The new Main Entrance opens the Memorial's heart even wider to all Australia."

The Director of the Memorial, Matt Anderson, said: "This new Main Entrance is a key stage in enabling the Memorial to be more accessible to more visitors in the decades ahead."

CEW Bean Building and Research Centre – now open

From <https://www.awm.gov.au/ourcontinuingstory/cew-bean-building-research-centre>

Charles Edwin Woodrow (C.E.W.) Bean was Australia's first official war correspondent in the First World War. He later wrote six volumes of the Official History of the war, and was a founder and driving force for the Australian War Memorial. The Charles Bean Research Centre holds written records documenting Australian involvement in war and operational service, as well as the historical background of conflicts in which Australia has been involved and their effects on Australian society.



Military items commenced relocation to the Memorial

Relocation of some of the military items to the War Memorial commenced in the first week of April 2025. The FA-18A Classic Hornet, a C-130 Hercules cockpit, and a Bushmaster Protected Mobility Vehicle (Bushmaster Debbie) were transported from storage in Mitchell, ACT to the Memorial and craned into Anzac Hall, which is scheduled for completion by Anzac Day 2026. The Hornet, A21-022, retired in 2020 after more than 6,000 flying hours, was the first RAAF fighter to drop bombs in combat since the Korean War and took part in patrol and combat missions over Iraq and Syria. The battle-damaged Bushmaster is one that protected Australian troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Anzac Hall and the Anzac Atrium will eventually house other large technology objects, events and facilities such as: the German V2 Rocket and Meillerwagen, RF-111 A8-134, CH-47D Chinook, G for George Lancaster Bomber, sections of HMAS Brisbane, Australian Light Armoured Vehicle (ASLAV), Black Hawk and Chinook helicopters, the Sydney-Emden battle 1914, the Battle of Milne Bay, Sydney Harbour Under Attack, Kandahar Workhorse, Conflict in the Middle East from 1990, War in Afghanistan: 2001 – 2021, Australian Peacekeeping, 1947 – today, and a café/restaurant with capacity for about 400 people.

New ADF pistol unveiled

Image and information courtesy of Defence (<https://www.defence.gov.au/news-events/news/2025-04-04/new-adf-pistol-unveiled>)

"With the new F9 sidearm weapon system (F9 SWS) in hand, personnel have begun pulling the trigger on a new chapter in close combat. The system is based on the SIG Sauer 9mm P320 X-Carry Pro, featuring a red-dot sight, torch and holster. It replaces the legacy 9mm Browning Mk3 pistol and is also supported by non-lethal training kit and Defence's Weapon Training Simulation System (WTSS)."





Our committee

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

Current 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

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Member 6 Wayne Davis, 50th Elec Fitter

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..... 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.

Twist to open...

From RAQ Friday Files, 21 February 2025

“All [RAEME] Corps members will know our Latin motto *Arte et Marte*, officially translated as “With Skill and Fighting”.... However, a humorous alternative translation has taken on a life of its own, 'Twist to Open'.

*This light-hearted take on the motto was even highlighted at the 75th RAEME Birthday Parade at the Australian War Memorial in 2017. During the Welcome Address, Wing Commander (Retd) Sharon Bown AM FACN recounted a conversation with her husband, a former Army helicopter pilot, who expressed his deep appreciation for RAEME personnel. He described them as the problem-solvers of the Army, always resourceful, always capable, and always prepared, even in the harshest conditions. He humorously concluded that *Arte et Marte* meant 'Twist to Open', a nod to the ingenuity, resilience, and, of course, the ever-present sense of humour within the Corps.”*