

# 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)**

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## From the President

*By Keith Lowe, 22<sup>nd</sup> Intake Fitter and Turner, President AAAA, [president@austarmyapprentice.org](mailto:president@austarmyapprentice.org), TBA July 2025*

### Memorial

Through the efforts of Heritage Officer Rob Minato, we now have an answer concerning the “Scattering of Ashes” at our Memorial. Consequently, we will develop a protocol so Australian Army Apprentices families may have access to the Memorial so ashes may be interred there without the uncertainties we have been experiencing in the past.

In the interim if anyone wishes to have ashes placed at the Memorial please contact our Secretary who will start the approval process which will be as simple as possible bearing in mind we have to gain base access.

### October Reunion

As I prepare this report Events have received 59 formal registrations with payments. There are still the odd expressions of interest coming in.

Whilst the cut-off date for formal registrations for those who submitted EOIs isn't until the end of August, I encourage those who have not completed their registrations to please do so as soon as possible to save the last minute rush.

### Kings Birthday Honours/Awards

Congratulations to member #216 Mal Botfield, 19<sup>th</sup> Intake Carpenter and Joiner on the award of the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM). The award is for outstanding service to Veterans, which unlike many award recipients Mal's would have been for unpaid voluntary service. Incidentally Mal was the 19<sup>th</sup> Intake's BSM and recipient of the Apprentice Governor-General's Medal in 1966. [\[See later pages for more details from the Australian Honours Lists. Ed\]](#)

### Membership

At the Committee's scheduled ordinary meeting on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> July last those present unanimously took the decision to introduce Perpetual as a further level to the term of membership. This is in addition to the established terms of one-, three- or five-year terms. The new Perpetual term shall be available to all classes of membership subject to payment of the following fee/fees:

- Those who have remained financial members continuously for a period of ten (10) or more years may elect to convert to Perpetual membership upon the payment of a fee of \$25.00.
- Those who have remained financial members continuously for a period of five (5) but less than ten (10) years may elect to convert to Perpetual membership upon the payment of a fee of \$125.00.



- Those who have less than five (5) years continuous membership may elect to apply for Perpetual membership upon payment of a fee of \$225.00.

Please note unlike the current one-, three- and five-year subscriptions for Retired and Associate memberships there is no discount applied for Perpetual membership.

For all (i.e. Ordinary, Retired and Associate) new members who may wish to join and apply for Perpetual membership the fee shall be \$235.00 which includes the standard \$10.00 joining fee.

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### ***End of Life Planning***

Perhaps not the happiest of subjects but it is an important one we as individuals should consider particularly to assist those who are left behind to navigate the necessary processes.

I recently received some information from one of our members concerning this subject so rather than publish it all here I have had it placed on our Website within the Welfare page accessible via the links below.

The information is provided by DVA titled “Planning Ahead A GUIDE TO PUTTING YOUR AFFAIRS IN ORDER PREPARING FOR AND COPING WITH BEREAVEMENT” and comes with a Check List.

Information Booklet: <https://austarmyapprentice.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/P00063-Planning-Ahead-Book-for-web.pdf>

Check List: <https://austarmyapprentice.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/P00068-PLANNING-AHEAD-CHECKLIST.pdf>

Think about it. It might just make it a little easier for your loved ones.

As this is our last Newsletter before our AGM and Reunion, I hope to catch up with many of you on that weekend. Those travelling distance please do so with care. Until next time all the very best to all. Keith Lowe – 10 July 2025

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### ***Association members in the news***

***Mal Botfield, 19<sup>th</sup> Intake Carpenter & Joiner, AAAA Member #216, Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the General Division***

*From: <https://www.gq.gov.au/kings-birthday-2025-honours-list>*

Congratulations to Major Malcolm Wayne John Botfield (Retd), North Rocks NSW 2151, for service to veterans:

- \* 21 Construction Regiment Association: President since 2014
- \* Castle Hill Sub-Branch RSL: Welfare Supervisor, Memorabilia Restoration Team Leader, and Recruiting Team member
- \* Blacktown Branch, NSW TPI Association: President, & Quarterly Newsletter Editor
- \* Ex-Service Organisations: Recruiting Team Member, Far Western Metropolitan





District Council RSL since 2022, and Planning Group member, Reserve Forces Day Council, 2010-2019

- \* Community: Former President, North Rocks Rugby Club, Former Team Manager Eastwood District Junior Rugby, and Muirfield Golf Club Member
- \* Defence Service: Australian Army, 1964-1985, and Army Reserve, 1985-2008
- \* Awards and Recognition include: President's Commendation, Castle Hill Sub-Branch, RSL, 2022, and Defence Service medals including Australian Active Service Medal 1945-75 with Clasp.

### ***Brunei armed forces receives courtesy call – Brunei – Major General Andrew FREEMAN AM, 40<sup>th</sup> Intake Electrical Fitter, Patron AAAA***

*Image and information courtesy of Brunei Defence Force via RAQ Friday Files 25 July 2025*



“On 10 June 2025 – Yang Mulia Brigadier General (U) Dato Seri Pahlawan Mohd Sharif bin Dato Paduka Haji Ibrahim, Acting Commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) received a courtesy call from Yang Mulia Major General Andrew Freeman, Head of Australian Army Strategic Engagements, Australian Defence Force (ADF), today. Also in attendance was the Director of Intelligence, Ministry of Defence.

During the call, the Acting Commander of the RBAF sincerely acknowledged the robust and long-standing bilateral defence relations that exist between the RBAF and the ADF. Both sides appreciated the ongoing support and active collaboration, especially in training and professional courses, highlighting their commitment to strengthening the defence partnership.

*Above: (L-R) Major General Andrew Freeman and Yang Mulia Brigadier General (U) Dato Seri Pahlawan Mohd Sharif bin Dato Paduka Haji Ibrahim, Acting Commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF).*

Major General Andrew Freeman is in Brunei Darussalam from 9 June to 11 June 2025 to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of Operation OBOE.”

### ***Non-Association members in the news***

#### ***Donation to Back on Track Charity Gold Day***

*From a Facebook post by Paul McFie, 25A Intake Musician on 17 May 2025*

In the last edition, we advertised the Back on Track Retreat Charity Golf Day at the Laidley Golf Club on 25 May 2025 in aid of Veterans/Defence Personnel and all First Responders. Prior to the event, a generous donation of \$300 by LiveLife Pharmacy was made to Paul McFie (pictured).



#### ***King's Birthday Awards – June 2025***

**WO1 Tony CROFT OAM**, 37<sup>th</sup> Intake Electrical Mechanic, for meritorious service in support of Australian Army Aviation. “Warrant Officer Class One Croft has provided dedicated service in a range of technical and maintenance roles, and capability sustainment functions, for more than 40 years. He has consistently demonstrated technical mastery, initiative, leadership and adaptability in enhancing Army Aviation operational capability. His sustained meritorious service has ensured the highest levels of maintenance and sustainment support to numerous Defence rotary and fixed wing combat systems.”

**LTCOL Nathan Thomas ROBINSON CSM**, 47<sup>th</sup> Intake Electronics Tradesman, for meritorious devotion to duty as Staff Officer Grade One Command Support Trade and Training, Defence Command Support Training Centre.



"Lieutenant Colonel Robinson has demonstrated superior dedication, expertise and leadership to lead the Trade and Training processes across a significant proportion of the Joint Signals Intelligence, Cyber, Military Policing, Public Affairs, Music and Intelligence capabilities in the Australian Defence Force. His dedication to duty, knowledge and highly attuned skill has enhanced the current and future training provided across critical capabilities within Defence to ensure they are postured to enable the Joint Force."

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### ***WA Bushfire Brigade Medal and National Medal for Ron CAUDWELL, 14<sup>th</sup> Intake Fitter & Turner***

*From Shane Caudwell, 37 Intake RAAF Engine Fitter via Facebook*

Bit of a good news story, my Father Ron Caudwell, 14<sup>th</sup> Intake F&T is still going strong at 82. Australia day 2025. Ron, 14<sup>th</sup> Intake F&T, and Shane 37 Intake RAAF Engine Fitter received their WA Bush Fire Brigade Medals, 15 years and 20 years respectively. Proud moment for me to share the ceremony with the old man. He recently received his WA Bushfire Brigade medal, and has now received the National Medal for 30 years of volunteer service, proud son moment.



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### ***Basil George GIFFARD, 3<sup>rd</sup> Intake Vehicle Mechanic***

*From a Facebook post on RAEME Mates by Basil Giffard on 13 Jun 2025*

On this day, June 13<sup>th</sup> 1949, I with 5 other Tasmanian young men were interviewed for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Intake of AAS Balcombe, where we arrived just 6 weeks later, one year after the start of AAS.

It was my fifteenth birthday. Today It was my 91<sup>st</sup> birthday celebration and my daughters took me out for an excellent dinner as a surprise celebration. It was interesting that we had table 3 in a busy establishment, Claremont Hotel Tasmania. Close to the Cadbury chocolate factory and where the first Tasmanian ANZACs trained for WW1.

Unfortunately, after 76 years, I am the only surviving member of the Tassy 3<sup>rd</sup> Intake, and not many if any others of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Intake and the other early intakes. I have always said, given the same circumstances would do it all again. My best wishes to all those who over the years have had the privilege of being ARA Apprentices.

[Congratulations Basil. And if anyone knows of any other surviving 3<sup>rd</sup> Intake Tasmanians, please let us know. Ed]

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### ***Marcellin CHEE, 45<sup>th</sup> Intake Motor Mechanic, 35 years' dedicated service***

*From a Facebook post in RAEME Mates by MAJ Kate Thorne, OC 101 Field Workshop, Darwin*

Congratulations Marcellin, ASM 101 Field Workshop, 1 Combat Services Support Battalion.

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### ***John FENTON, 9<sup>th</sup> Intake Fitter & Turner, "Legend of the Nepean"***

*From the Nepean News on 25 June 2025, via a Facebook post on 29 June by Michael Fenton (RAEME, son)*

"John Fenton is a Vice President at the City of Penrith RSL sub-Branch, a volunteer Advocate with Blue Mountains Vietnam Veterans and Associated Forces Inc at Springwood, a member of the Regional Implementation Group, over-viewing volunteer Advocates in NSW/ACT/WA, and a volunteer Advocate and Regional Mentor for service and ex-service personnel, who consider training as volunteer Advocates to assist their fellow veterans.

John said, "In 2023, I was humbled by being recognised by the City of Penrith Council with a Community 'Making a Difference' Award and, in 2024, I was honoured with Life Membership of the RSL Australia."

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### ***Suzanne SHIPP (TAYLOR), 46<sup>th</sup> Intake Electronics Tradesman wins 2025 Women in Industry Excellence in Energy Award – Brisbane***

*Image and Information courtesy of LinkedIn via RAQ Friday Files, 27 June 2025*

"RAQ Life Subscriber and Women in RAEME Committee member Suzanne Shipp has been awarded the prestigious "Excellence in Energy" honour at the 2025 Women in Industry Awards, recognising her outstanding leadership and impact in the energy sector.

*(Pictured below is Suzanne with the award finalists)*





Suzanne, a valued leader at APA Group, described the recognition as both an honour and a privilege. In her speech, she acknowledged the high calibre of all nominees and finalists, saying she was “truly humbled” to be recognised among them.

“This award belongs not just to me, but to every woman who has paved the way, and to every man who has advocated for us,” she said, expressing heartfelt thanks to her mentors, colleagues, and family who supported her journey.

Suzanne’s path to success began with humble beginnings, joining the Australian Army as an apprentice at just 16 years of age. That formative experience instilled in her the resilience, discipline, and determination that continues to define her career.



“Once, I was often the only woman in the room. Today, I’m proud to be surrounded by many capable and inspiring women tackling the energy industry’s biggest challenges,” she said, encouraging young women to believe in themselves and pursue careers in STEM and infrastructure.

As a passionate advocate for inclusion, Suzanne reaffirmed her commitment to mentoring future leaders and helping build a diverse, sustainable future for Australia’s energy sector.

“Together, we’re not just building energy infrastructure – we’re building a better Australia for everyone.”

RAQ congratulates Suzanne on this outstanding achievement and continuing to inspire and lead by example.”

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## Welfare and Vale notices

Contact: Association Welfare Officer Grant Cotterill, 38<sup>th</sup> Intake Plumber & Gasfitter, [welfare@austarmyapprentice.org](mailto:welfare@austarmyapprentice.org)

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### 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).

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### 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 social media posts draw 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, send what you have, and we can follow 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
32	48955	Jeffrey William McNEIL	Electrical Mechanic	TBA 2011
18	48646	David Thomas SHALES	Radio Mechanic	21 Mar 2022
18	243328	Paul Joseph Cameron BOSLEY	Vehicle Mechanic	27 Jan 2025
1	31603	David Francis Colthurst (Spike) EDWARDS	Carpenter and Joiner	22 Mar 2025
18	342933	Tadeusz SZELEST	Vehicle Mechanic	12 May 2025
23	1201770	Mark Russell SIMPSON	Vehicle Mechanic	2 Jul 2025
20	48691	Ronald John (John) BLIESCHKE	Radio Mechanic DNG	7 Jul 2025

### **Vale Chaplain (LTCOL) Denby Holmes, Balcombe mid-1970s, passed away on 22 July 2025**

*From a Facebook post by Mark Langford, 31<sup>st</sup> Intake Musician, 24 July 2025*

*"For any appys who were at Balcombe in the mid 70's I just wanted to announce the passing of a great mentor to many of us in Chaplain (Lt Col) Denby Holmes. Denby passed away peacefully at home this past Tuesday. Denby introduced many of us to gliding as well as guiding our souls throughout life. RIP Pard."*

[Chaplain Holmes served at Balcombe from 1975 to at least 1976. Ed]

### **BonTR update, 16 July 2025**

*From Nicholas Swadling, 24<sup>th</sup> Intake Carpenter & Joiner, via Facebook*

Nicholas reported that Simon (42MV) and Karen (trucker) Hawker bought the Wyandra Pub in May and the kitchen now caters for meals. He recommends a camp/caravan stay along the Warrego River at one of the free camps or caravan park. So stop at the Wyandra Pub, have a drink, a meal and a yarn with Simon and Karen.

## **Membership matters**

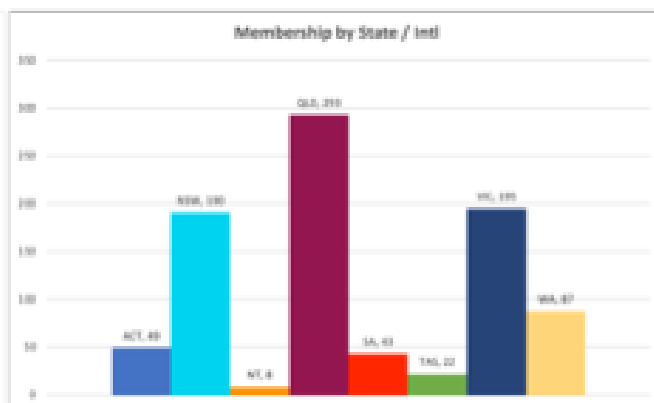
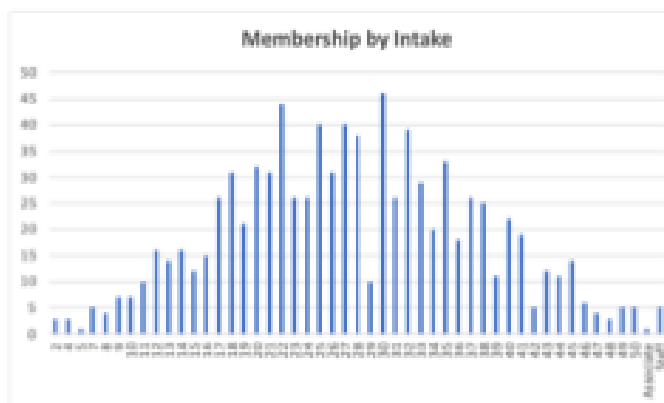
*By Graeme Smail, 35<sup>th</sup> Intake Electronics Tradesman – Membership Secretary, [membership@austarmyapprentice.org](mailto:membership@austarmyapprentice.org)*

### **Membership Status**

The current state of the membership (as at 27 Jun 2025) is 894 financial members (at right). These figures show a decrease in membership of 21 since the last committee meeting in Mar 2025. Since then, 38 memberships have lapsed and not been renewed, three related to deceased members. There have been 18 new members and one who renewed a previously lapsed membership.

Type	27/6/2025	24/2/2025	Change
Life	3	3	-
Ordinary	572	597	-25
Retired	312	307	+5
Associate	7	8	-1
TOTAL	894	915	-21

### **Membership analysis**



The 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> Intakes are the only ones not currently represented. Our last 1<sup>st</sup> Intake member passed away in March 2025 having been a member since 2008.



## Events reports

### **Balcombe Grammar School ANZAC Service, 24 April 2025**

The Principal, staff and students at Balcombe Grammar School invited former Army Apprentices to attend the School's 2025 ANZAC Service on 24 April. Randall Todd, 33<sup>rd</sup> Intake Electronics Tradesman, one of our Association members, said it was a very worthwhile and enjoyable morning. He supplied the photograph below of the Apprentices who attended.



L-R: Desmond Poulton – 6<sup>th</sup> Intake Fitter and Turner, Wayne Rudland – 22<sup>nd</sup> Intake Vehicle Mechanic, Randall Todd – 33<sup>rd</sup> Intake Electronics Tradesman, David Isted – 20<sup>th</sup> Intake Radio Mechanic, and Michael Botten – 33<sup>rd</sup> Intake Vehicle Mechanic

After the event, Rev Cindy Waters, Balcombe Grammar School Chaplain wrote to the Secretary:

*"Dear Simon,*

*Tracy Heard forwarded your email to me. Thank you for the photograph and your email. The gentleman on the far left [of the photo above] is Desmond Poulton; 6<sup>th</sup> Intake apprentice Fitting and Turning, a local friend of Balcombe who attends our School Service each year.*

*Please find attached some photographs [24] the School photographer captured on the day.*

*We look forward to the former Balcombe Army Apprentices joining us again in 2026 for the Balcombe ANZAC Service (usually the closest school day preceding ANZAC Day – I will confirm the date at the beginning of 2026 when I send my usual request for a Speaker recommendation). Thank you for suggesting Wayne Rudland this year. He was a fantastic choice. He presented with relevance and connected well across the broad age range. A particular highlight being when he related his age when commencing with the students present. That really brings home how young the recruits were.*

*The School are so appreciative of his sharing on the day and of the ongoing connection to the former Balcombe Army Apprentices. Thank you!*



One of the photos (above) is of Wayne Rudland, 22<sup>nd</sup> Intake Vehicle Mechanic speaking at the Service.





*If you have any difficulty receiving the attached emails please let me know and I will forward them via an online link instead. Thanks.*

*Kind regards, Cindy"*

### ***VE Day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Albury Wodonga, 8 May 2025***

*By Rob Minato, 31<sup>st</sup> Intake Electronics Tradesman, AAAA Member #342, AAAA Heritage Officer*

*"Took the GPW out for VE80 commemoration drive at Albury Wodonga today."*







**Above top L:** Rob's Ford GPW, with 31/76 RAEME "Tac sign". **Top R:** In 1918 Lieutenant Albert Borella VC led a platoon in an attack to straighten the front line beyond Villers-Bretonneux, from which a major British offensive was launched a few weeks later. While ahead of his troops, he single-handedly captured a machine-gun. Then, after clearing a trench and dug-outs, he inspired his men to hold out during heavy enemy counter-attacks. This memorial is located on Borella Rd, East Albury and the Borella VC Club is at Gaza Ridge Barracks Bandiana. **Bottom L:** Rob's GPW (behind) at the Albury and District War Memorial. This prominent feature on Monument Hill pays homage to those who died in service in WW1. **Bottom R:** More vehicles

## **26<sup>th</sup> Year of the Annual South East Qld Army Apprentices Reunion – and it's still going!!**

*By Brian Daley OAM, 14<sup>th</sup> Intake Vehicle Mechanic, Life Member and South Qld Regional Representative*

On Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2025, approx. 80 Army Apprentices from the 44<sup>th</sup> to the 2<sup>nd</sup> intake, enjoyed the company of many other apprentices at the annual South East Qld Reunion at the Bulimba Bowls Club. Many faces were familiar, and others not so familiar. It was a great turn out and a fantastic atmosphere, all in all, a great day. The Bulimba Bowls Club is a top venue. Brian and Barb Daley continue to organise and run this event, but on a much lower commitment. This year we took the easy way out to feed the troops – 60 pizzas were enjoyed by those in attendance. The highlight was Keith Fox (below wearing the RAEME cap), who came over from Macleay Island in Moreton Bay. Keith is a 2<sup>nd</sup> Intake Vehicle Mechanic, and although on a 'walker' he manages very well, and he enjoyed the day immensely. He also confirmed that he is a member of the Apprentices Assn, but he has experienced trouble getting onto the Apprentices site, as he is not that computer literate. At 96 years young, that is pretty understandable!! We are looking at assisting him with this problem.



Keith, 2<sup>nd</sup> & Ty Bodle, 44<sup>th</sup> Motor Mech – oldest and youngest



Keith – "on fire"



Pete Matthews 37<sup>th</sup> MM, Keith & Ty (Brian behind in green)



(L-R) Simon Brooks (40<sup>th</sup> MM), Tony Bell (30<sup>th</sup> VM), Richard Legge & Pete Matthews (37<sup>th</sup> MM) & Greg Burke (38<sup>th</sup> MM)







The 32<sup>nd</sup> Intake were the most represented on the day. Below is a photo of the next oldest group with Keith and Ty – the 14<sup>th</sup> Intake (L-R): Brian Daley VM, Phil (Doc) Livingston Plumber, Keith Fox VM, John Nickols VM, Ty Bodie VM, Bill Proudfoot F&T, Dave Grant VM, and Dave Haxton Elec Mech.



The final act (above left) was Robert (Blip) Hendricks, 25<sup>th</sup> Intake Vehicle Mechanic, lowering the Apprentices Flag at the end of the day.

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### **ACT Region Quarterly Lunch, Ainslie FC, Wednesday, 11 June 2025**

*By Jeff Heron, 21<sup>st</sup> Intake Radio Mechanic, ACT Regional Rep – thanks to Bill Mertin, 22<sup>nd</sup> Intake Vehicle Mechanic for details*

Although I couldn't make it due to a head cold, 19 (13 Apprentices and 6 partners) attended. It's great to see more and more partners being involved, and we hope that the trend will continue. Intakes from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 33<sup>rd</sup> again were represented, with the 25<sup>th</sup> leading this time (2 x Electrical Fitters and 1 x Vehicle Mechanic). Odds far outweighed evens by 9 to 4. Again Radio Mechanics/Electronics Tradesmen (4) were the highest represented trade. The next lunch will be held on Wednesday, 10 September 2025, so we hope that the beginning of spring will help to bring more out from winter hibernation.

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### **20<sup>th</sup> C Company reunion, 60 years on, at Bribie Island Hotel**



All Radio Mechs except where indicated. Note the genuine C Coy flag behind, cleverly saved on Crab Night 1967.

**Standing (L-R): Bob Murray, Ian Barker, Dennis Curran, Garry Hodgson, Lembit Liiv, Russell Gordon, Bob Hollingsworth, Steve Byrnes (Elec Fitter), and Ewan McLeod**

**Seated (L-R): Barry Minster (past-AAAA President), David Isted, Malcolm Rudd, and Chris Bell (Elec Fitter)**





## **Royal Australian Engineers 123<sup>rd</sup> Birthday, Latchford Barracks, 1 July 2025**

*By Jeff Wouters, 39<sup>th</sup> Intake Carpenter & Joiner, from Facebook 2 July 2025*



Traditional cake cutting by the oldest and youngest Sappers there for the event.



Plumber speak..... RAAF instructor and 35<sup>th</sup> Plumber Danny Fitzpatrick.

A great extended morning at Building Trades Wing, Latchford Barracks celebrating the 123<sup>rd</sup> Birthday of the Royal Australian Engineers.

Caught up with 35<sup>th</sup> Plumber Danny Fitzpatrick and also 39<sup>th</sup> Motor Mech Marcus Bevis who came along for a look and managed a quick tour of the MV Wing with his son Jett....



Jeff, 39<sup>th</sup> C&J with Marcus Bevis, 39<sup>th</sup> MM and his son Jett.



Current Apprentices and visitors.

Plenty of chitter chat with past and present members and current apprentices. Topped off with a great bbq lunch and more chitter chat..!!!

Thanks again to all staff for their hospitality.

UBIQUE





## Upcoming events

### AAAA and Apprentices functions

- \* **SA All Intakes Reunion, Largs Bay RSL, Sat 2 August 2025**, wives and partners welcome, contact Michael Thompson, 26<sup>th</sup> Intake Vehicle Mechanic via Facebook, Army Apprentices we; were the Cream of Australian Youth, posted 30 March 2025.
- \* **ACT Region Quarterly Lunch, Ainslie FC, Wed, 10 September 2025**. Please let me know if you will be there.
- \* **All Intake Appy Muster, Cockburn RSL – 5km from Fremantle, Sat 4 October 2025**, contact Bob Coventry, 22<sup>nd</sup> Intake Radio Mechanic.

**30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion to commemorate cessation of the Army Apprentice Scheme and AGM, Albury Commercial Club, Friday 24 to Sunday 26 October 2025**, contact [events@austarmyapprentice.org](mailto:events@austarmyapprentice.org).

**Registration and Meet and Greet – Friday 24 Oct, 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm**, Albury Commercial Club, 618 Dean St, Albury:

**Registration**, bar open from 3.00 pm to 8.00 pm, drinks at own cost, tea and coffee, **Food** from 5:00 pm, **Welcome and official opening** at 6.00 pm.

**AGM – Saturday 25 Oct, 10:30 am to 12:00 noon**, Albury Commercial Club:

Please arrive before 10:00 am for registration and be seated by no later than 10:20 am. Tea and coffee available. Send AGM agenda items to [secretary@austarmyapprentice.org](mailto:secretary@austarmyapprentice.org).

**Free time – 12:00 noon to 6.30 pm:**

Attendees may wish to arrange separate intake get-togethers or visit local attractions.

**Reunion Dinner – Saturday 25 Oct, 6.30 pm to 11:00 pm**, Albury Commercial Club:

- Seating:** by Intake tables.
- Arrive:** 6:30 pm for a 7:00 pm dinner commencement – please be seated no later than 6:50 pm.
- Dress:** men, coat and tie; ladies, after-5 wear; miniature medals as appropriate, optional.
- Dinner:** 3 courses – entrée, and alternate drop main and dessert.
- Drinks:** at own cost, tea and coffee included.

**Visit the Australian Army Apprentices Memorial and Sausage Sizzle Lunch – Sunday 26 Oct 2025, from 10:00 am** – subject to Defence site access approval and confirmation:

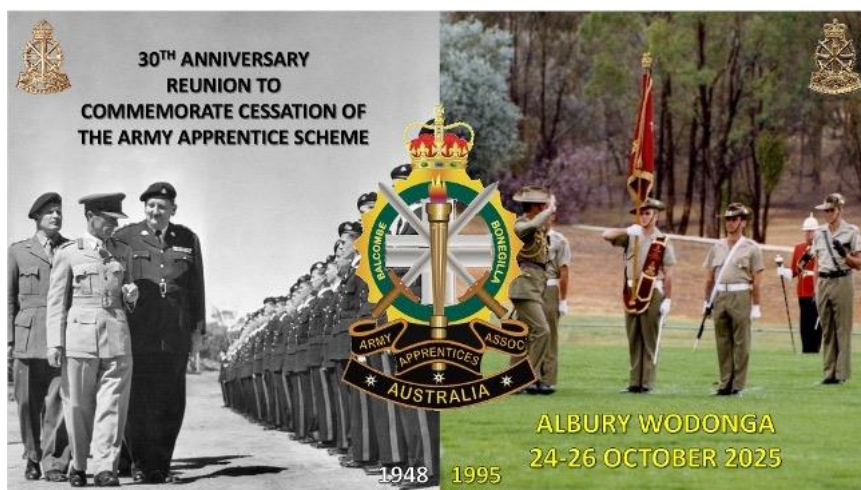
- Short memorial service** at the Australian Army Apprentices Memorial.
- Sausage sizzle** lunch with catering by Everyman's Welfare Service.

**Please note:** Unfortunately, the **Army Museum Bandiana** will be closed for major renovations, so the planned visit will not be possible.

**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** – are available from our [Website - here](#). Please submit your registration forms ASAP.





- \* **26<sup>th</sup> Intake 55<sup>th</sup> Year Reunion, Wodonga, 20-22 March 2026**, send your interest to Michael Thompson, 26<sup>th</sup> Intake Vehicle Mechanic via Facebook, Australian Army Apprentices Association [official], posted 18 March 2025.
- \* **31<sup>st</sup> Intake, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion at Maroochy RSL, 23 to 28 April 2026**, contact TBA.

### **Other associations, etc**

- \* **Invitation to all Vietnam Veterans, Vietnam War Memorial Walk** – the Yorke Peninsular Council have developed a Vietnam Veteran's Walk from Edithburgh to Coobowie. It includes tributes along the way to the various Corps and Units involved in the conflict, as well as a number of military-related specially designed seats strategically placed along the Walk. The official opening is on (Vietnam Veteran's Day), **Monday 18 Aug 2025, 10:30 am for 1100 am**, Edithburgh Golf Course, corner Giles Tce and O'Halloran Pde, followed by a luncheon at Edithburgh Sports and Social Club, then a concert event at Light Church, Edithburgh, at 2:00 pm with John Schumann and the Vagabond Crew, tickets are limited and [bookings are essential – here](#).
- \* **RAE Association Victoria Inc.**, contact [RAE Future Events](#)
- \* **RAE Association WA Inc.**, contact <https://wasappers.com.au/events/>.
- \* **RASigs Association**, contact <http://www.rasigs.com>.
- \* **RASigs Certa Cito 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 2025**  
Visit <https://rasigs.org/certa-cito-100/> for more details or contact Mr Bruce Long [prontobrl@gmail.com](mailto:prontobrl@gmail.com) or Gavin Lee [gavin.lee18@hotmail.com](mailto:gavin.lee18@hotmail.com).

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:**

- \* **Dates** – Freedom of Entry parade, City of Banyule, and RA Sigs Units combined, RSL activity, Museum modernisation event (contd)
- \* **10-14 November** – Corps Week:
  - 11-18 November – National Reunion of Veteran Community at Healesville (Veteran led)
  - 11 November – DFSS rehearsal for VVIP 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 – VVIP visit, welcome guard & demonstration of virtual training – IET & ROBC engagement, 138 & 108 Sig Sqn demonstrations, lunch, Veteran engagement, Corps Museum visit, Corps Dinner @ Government House (TBC), National Event
- 14 November – Gold afternoon, RACV Club Healesville and then BBQ run by Lions club
- 15 November – National RASigs Reunion Dining In Night, Rochford Winery, Yarra Valley, \$70, only 300 seats, contact Bruce Long – [prontobrl@gmail.com](mailto:prontobrl@gmail.com)
- \* **2 December** – DFSS 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday celebrations (Unit led)
- \* **9 or 10 November (TBC)** – Canberra, National Corps Day Commemorative Parade.
- \* **17 Const Sqn Wksp UNTAG Namibia Reunion**, 29 Nov 2025, Brisbane, contact [dbuckland52@gmail.com](mailto:dbuckland52@gmail.com)
- \* **RAEME National Network**, contact <https://raeme.org.au>.
- \* **Women in RAEME (WIR3) Cocktails** – Friday 28 November 2025, 1800-2000, Gaythorne RSL.
- \* **Central Victorian Veterans Group**, monthly get-together, Bendigo RSL Club Terrace, 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month, 1830 hrs, contact Jonathan Crust, 48<sup>th</sup> 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: →→→→**

August – 8th & 22nd  
September – 5th & 19th  
October – 3rd, 17th & 31st  
November – 14th & 28th  
December – 12th



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## Letters to the Editor

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### ***Plaques for Busselton RSL***

*From Anthony (Sam) Prince, 22<sup>nd</sup> Intake Vehicle Mechanic*

Editor

Being a member of the Busselton RSL here in the southwest of WA, I had noticed that there wasn't either a RAEME or AAS plaque amongst the substantial display.

So, on one fellowship evening, I made a presentation to our El Presidento, Stephen Mott. This was April 2023 but nonetheless good news at the time.

If you are visiting our beautiful part of the world, our fellowship night is of a Friday, and you are very welcome to attend.

Best regards



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### ***The Green Flag, Just a Bloke's Story by Barry Green with Gordon Kirby***

*From Barry Green, 23<sup>rd</sup> Intake Vehicle Mechanic*

1. G Day Jeff, Would you have any interest in a box of books to hand out at the re-union and share amongst the group? I wrote a book about my career that may interest some but not all.

There are 10 books in a box, I would send more but shipping costs are ridiculous. If you would like them please send an address. Cheers Barry

2. G Day Jeff, I am very sorry I didn't tell you the whole story in the first email.

I have lived in the USA for a long time now and got very involved in professional motor racing. The book is about me, growing up in Australia, the Army Apprentice[s] School and my career in motor sports which started in Australia and finished in the US.

I would have loved to come to this reunion but it cannot happen this year and yes, I would love to give a box away; I guess it is my way of being there. However, ten won't go far but they could be passed around and they are big "coffee table" books as you can see in the photo I have attached.

Please Jeff, only if you think it is appropriate and I have no problem with your opinion either way. Someone will have to organize at your end and you probably already have way too many responsibilities already.

Look forward to hearing from you, cheers, Barry.

3. G Day Jeff, So, all sounds good on the book and at the end of the day you decide once you have the package.

There are a couple of 23<sup>rd</sup>'s that have the book because they helped me get some photos to use in the book.

I will get the shipment off as soon as I can so you can do something for the newsletter, but, again, only if you decide it is worth it. Cheers, Barry.

**See the book review below, and note that Barry has generously donated 10 of his books and they will be available for free at the reunion in October for those who can make the best argument as to why they should have one. [Ed]**

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### ***Balcombe articles***

*From Neil Mackintosh, 19<sup>th</sup> Intake Clerk*

Thanks for this Jeff.

I notice there is never any mention of the Apprentice years at Balcombe! I was there in the class of 19<sup>th</sup> Intake.

Best wishes, Neil.

**[Editor's reply to Neil.** "If you mean in the Newsletters, the May edition had a letter to the Editor from the 33<sup>rd</sup> Intake, and a Citation Oval article. In the February edition, Robert 'Rawby' SAWFORD, 32<sup>nd</sup> ET, Andrew McADIE,





34<sup>th</sup> MM and Alan GOSTELOW, 14<sup>th</sup> VM all trained at Balcombe; the Cyclone Tracy article is from 1974/5; and the recruiting articles in the History section are all Balcombe-based.”]

Also, in August last year, there was an article about the opening of the Matthews Club, Balcombe; the May 2024 edition featured Ken Osborne, a 9<sup>th</sup> Intake Balcombe Apprentice; the February 2024 edition included the Balcombe Theatre (Anzac Hall), the first issue of the AAS Journal, and a copy of a 1955 newspaper recruiting article; and the November 2023 Newsletter included an article on the Balcombe Gates.

### ***British Army Apprentices School, Colin Blackburn***

*From Steve Muir 25<sup>th</sup> Intake Fitter and Turner*

“Hi Jeff, I tried earlier to connect but something must have gone wrong.

Whilst on an extended holiday in South Africa last year (which included visiting Isandlwana and Rourke’s Drift), I was introduced by a mate to an elderly gentleman, Colin Blackburn, a Fitter Armourer graduate from the British Army’s Appy School back in the sixties – a bit before our individual times in Balcattraz.

Colin is an amazing fellow with what was an exciting and interesting career, so I asked him to compile his memories and organise some pics for our lads to read about over here. I have in mind a two-part series for The Apprentice About because it is just too much for one edition with pics etc. When you read his story you and our lads will be amazed at the parallels and experiences of brother Appys (including senses of humour below ;) ... ).

I am attaching what he sent to me as well as a pic of myself at our first meeting ... a meeting at which he had tears rolling down his cheeks discovering that we have such a strong brotherhood and association here in Oz, especially when I told him he’d find kindred spirits here who’d be genuinely interested in his life, and also when I read him my various poems of our own brotherhood experiences here.

Cheers, and I hope we get to see this in upcoming editions. Please do not hesitate to call me if you want to talk about this any.”

*(Right): Colin (left) with Steve*



[Colin’s story is over 2,000 words, so only part of it is copied here with a couple of his photos. It is planned that the rest of the story and a few more of his photos will be included in the November edition. Ed]

“Hello Stephen, Hope the following can work for you and the boys.

*From apprentice tradesman Colin Blackburn (A/T)*

I was born in the UK in 1945. My father married during the war in Kenya, East Africa. Upon demob from the service corp[s] where he was running convoys from Nairobi to then [Abyssinia] for the war effort, they returned to the UK on a troop ship. I was born. They hated the UK and emigrated back to Kenya in 1948. I was sent to boarding school at 6 yrs old and I now know that the colonial system had fine standards of education and disciplines. When I reached 14 yrs and passed my final exams, my father said, “nothing for your technical mind here, you are going to the UK and joining the army.”

So off I went and stayed with my grandmother. Applied at the local recruiting office to become an A/T (Apprentice tradesman) and they said only if you are suitably educated will you get into an apprentices college. I sat the exams and waited while attending a secondary modern school where all I did was play Rugby and cricket. The girls also looked better each day. I soon received notification that I had passed the exams and I must report to the recruiting office to sign on for my career. Very excitedly I got there and signed on with the Queen’s shilling and swore allegiance to Queen and country. Then found out that at 14 yrs I was too young to start. They would notify me in due course when and where I was to report. Pissed off. Eventually I got a telegram and a rail warrant instructing me to report to the guardroom at Hadrian’s Camp in Carlisle. I was 15 and 3 months.

Found my way there along with another 120 blokes who all looked like a bunch of hooligans. A sergeant from a guards regiment arrived and addressed us through a torrent of spit and language that would curl the hair of most



of the boys who were in the style of the day. He sort of assembled us and tried to march [us] to the quartermaster store, [where we had to] hold two arms out where a more senior A/T threw uniforms and bedding into unwilling arms. Our billets were a spider prefab from the war. We were each allocated a billet of 20 boys and a bloke called Rick who I had [a] brief chat with grabbed me and said run for the end of the billet. This I did and we claimed a locker each. He became my best mate, and he was an outright street fighter. He taught me a great deal in self-preservation at all costs. The senior divisions used to claim a batman from new recruits. This never happened to Rick and me due to our combined resistance.

Next day, we got sorted into platoons and were introduced to our drill sergeant who was from the Black Watch Regiment, injured in Korea with a grenade and became an instructor on light duty. Sergeant David Maynard was tough and rough but fair. First stop was [the] barber shop. Then back to billets to fit studs to new boots and sew buttons onto greatcoats with tools from a little green pouch called a housewife. Those who could not sew a button on or do their boot studs were immediately helped by those that could, our first lesson in comradeship and it stayed with us all throughout our basic training. When we got good at square bashing, we each were issued a 303 rifle and started rifle drill. The army at that time was being issued with SLR rifles (FN) so we had to start rifle drill over. We learnt how to bull boots, blanco belts and puttees and polish brass. After 6 weeks of painful training our platoon won the drill competition, parents and guardians were invited to attend. Rick and I didn't have [anyone] so we had the day off at the snooker table in the WVS room (Women's Voluntary Service).

We soon learnt as we progressed that you are considered a soldier first then a tradesman. After aptitude tests I was to become gun fitter. Rick became a vehicle mechanic. Only during our trade training were we separated, trade training PM, drill AM. Theory and further education evenings, [and] some afternoons were gym and sport. Saturday morning was drill and recreation afternoons. After [the] first six weeks we could book out and go to town in Mufti. We used to hide our fashion winkle pickers in the hedge along the road and change before trying to engage with young women in town. We did not stand a chance with short back and sides in those fashion days. Regimental police used to patrol the whole town and broke up many battle grounds between us and civilians. I ended up in a guardroom cell having been caught up in one, which lasted two weeks of scraping red paint off fire buckets and repainting them.



The Camp Commandant was a keen archaeologist and had a private excavation on top of Hadrian's wall which he used us naughty boys as labour, to find artefacts. Preferable to scraping buckets. Gun fitter trade training went well, especially fitting, hydraulics and refrigeration.



We also had Armourers being trained in our college so as a gun fitter we had to complete and pass a three-month course in small arms repair and maintenance. I also joined the drum band as a bugler as we qualified for an extra day's leave, and I was very proud to be chosen to sound the last post in Edinburgh Castle.

There is always one clown in every group. Ours was A/T Newport. He spent many hours being thrashed by a PTI in the gym because of his antics. On one occasion he put the heads of unsafety matches behind the firing mechanism of a 25-pounder gun during a make safe lesson. The bang could be heard in next door buildings. Another time he scratched his initials in the paint on a 5.5" artillery gun which served to keep him occupied for some weeks during recreation time while he scraped and repainted the relevant part.

I entered Army Apprentices College under Intake 60c, the last intake of 1960. After much learning and growing up I passed all my trade, theory and military training exams. We were drilled for many weeks in preparation for our passing out parade to be held exactly three years after entry. Parents were invited, [but] my father was still in Kenya and my mother passed on when I was 12 yrs, so I left as a well-trained and very proud soldier. From an intake of 120 long-haired louts, we had a brilliant passing out parade with only 73 young men left to do it. The others had either got Daddy to buy them out or the army discharged them as being totally useless and untrainable. We were now ready to go and serve wherever we were sent in the world as we had still to do 9 years with the colours. [continued next edition]



### **SPAASSM competition**

From Jamie Sharpe, 44<sup>th</sup> Intake Fitter & Turner

Hey, Thanks again for another fine newsletter.

Regarding the photo on P12, I do believe those guys are working as a butts party. More specifically, they are likely poking holes through the bullseye of the target with a Pencil, Wooden, Hole-forming, 7.62 mm. They would be doing this to ensure that their mates pass, thus avoiding more time at the range, either in the butts party, dry firing, or getting yelled at for being idle and not dry firing. Regards

### **No names, no pack-drill!**

Elicited from the May SPAASSM competition above were a few stories of interest:

*They are in the bunker behind the rifle range raising the targets. Not sure where we did this, but it was either Holsworthy or Townsville. One of the Apprentices was shot by a ricochet whilst I was doing this, but not sure if it was at this particular event.*

*I can recall doing a range practice at Williamstown range and going for marksman. I just missed out, possibly because one of the target guys got splinters from the target stick that I hit while he was taking it down!*

*My brother-in-law claims that I was never shot at, and I always mention my mate being shot next to me, probably in that pit. I was also shot at in Holsworthy picking up target mechs. We were on an empty range, and I asked what that ping, ping noise was. The sergeant then realised what was occurring and we jumped in the Falcon ute. But he ordered me out to pick up one of the target mechs! Of course, I argued with him, but he pulled rank.*

*I also forgot the time we were on a bush track in single file and a NSW Police Officer on the range turned and pointed his loaded shotgun at the section behind him. They all hit the dirt. The range master wasn't too happy.*





## SPAASSM Collection

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



### May 2025 solution (left)

**Q:** What are these guys doing?

**A:** SPAASSM Ph I Image 03709 shows personnel manning rifle range butts, as confirmed by Randall Langdon, 38<sup>th</sup> Intake Motor Mechanic – first again!

As Randall has already won a SPAASSM USB, he said to let someone else have a go. So Ian Wooten, 32<sup>nd</sup> Intake Fitter & Turner was the next “winner”. Congratulations Ian.



### August 2025 competition (above right)

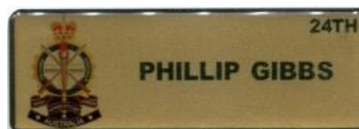
**Q:** What year was this? What Intake was the last for Apprentice Musicians? The first person to send the correct answers (both questions) to [news@austarmyapprentice.org](mailto:news@austarmyapprentice.org) will win a copy of the SPAASSM Collection on USB.

## Merchandise

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

For enquiries, contact the Treasurer: [treasurer@austarmyapprentice.org](mailto:treasurer@austarmyapprentice.org)

MERCHANDISE ITEMS		PRICES	POSTAGE
<b>DVDs</b>	1998 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Albury Wodonga <b>OR</b> 2008 60 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary <b>OR</b> 2013 Balcombe Commemoration	\$10.00	\$10.00
<b>70<sup>th</sup> REUNION ITEMS</b>	Stubby holder	\$5.00	\$5.00
	Photo card (USB)	\$16.50	\$3.50
	Cap	\$15.00	\$15.00
<b>AAAA BADGED ITEMS</b>	Baseball cap	\$20.00	\$10.00
	Car sticker	\$5.00	\$1.50
	Lapel badge	\$10.00	\$3.50
	Tie <b>OR</b> SPAASSM Collection USB wafer	\$25.00	\$10.00
	Name badge – <i>to order, include preferred 1<sup>st</sup> name, and Intake/Class</i>	\$16.50	\$3.50
	Key ring – <i>when ordering, ask if a number you would like is available</i>	\$20.00	\$3.50
AAAA Name badge (with 70 <sup>th</sup> Reunion USB photo card <b>OR</b> AAAA Key ring)		\$30.00	\$3.50



Sale



MERCHANDISE ITEMS		PRICES	POSTAGE
<b>AAS</b>	Cloth badge large (260 mm x 210 mm) – Balcombe <b>OR</b> Bonegilla	\$25.00	\$3.50
<b>BADGED ITEMS</b>	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
<b>AAAA/AAS</b>	Plaque (with AAAA badge <b>OR</b> AAS badge)	\$85.00	\$14.00
<b>BADGED ITEMS</b>	Face mask (with both AAAA and AAS badges)	\$15.00	\$5.00



## History

### *Australian War Memorial's Mail Call*

*From WM Magazine Issue 1 Autumn 2025*

The new-look magazine from the War Memorial (*WM*) replaces the previous “Wartime”, which ceased in its original form with Issue 106 in 2024 after 17 years. This new edition’s theme is the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of the Second World War. It can be accessed [here](#).

One of the articles “Mail Call” invites readers to share their own stories. *WM* would like to hear from veterans and their family members who have personal connections to service, and readers who have inherited interesting objects relating to Australia’s military history. Stories may be featured in future issues of *WM*. Write to or email The Editor, War Memorial Magazine, Australian War Memorial, GPO Box 345, Canberra, ACT 2602 or [WM@awm.gov.au](mailto:WM@awm.gov.au).

### *Contribute to an Illustrated History of RASIGS*

To mark its 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.

### *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](mailto: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.

### *Epidemics and pandemics at AAS*

This was inspired by a Facebook post by Roy Vincent, 12<sup>th</sup> Intake Vehicle Mechanic on 2 May 2025 and comments from others. Comments or more evidence to the Editor are welcome.



A few epidemics/pandemics are mentioned in the “All About” document “Brief History of the Army Apprentice Scheme, the Army Apprentices Schools and the Australian Army Apprentices Association” on the Website (<https://austarmyapprentice.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Brief-History-of-the-AAS-AASA-20240706.pdf>). This document includes mention of German measles epidemics in 1949 (see below) and 1952 and the Hong Kong flu in 1968. It will now need to be updated to include some of the ones below.

*From Trove – The Sun News-Pictorial (Melbourne, Vic. : 1922 – 1954; 1956) Thu 22 Sept 1949, Page 7*

**“Army blood For Measles Serum.** EIGHTY youths from the Australian Army Apprentices School at Balcombe will help to maintain urgently needed supplies of serum for expectant mothers suffering from German measles. A month ago, the Balcombe camp had a measles epidemic – 10 of the 94 cases were German measles. Tomorrow, the apprentices will be brought to the Royal Melbourne Hospital and each will give a pint of blood. The blood will be “banked” at the hospital, and supplied as required to Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital.”

*From Roy Vincent, 12<sup>th</sup> Intake Vehicle Mechanic*

*“We all remember Covid and the problems it caused. But in 1957 we had Asian flu which was quite rampant. At the time the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> intakes were at Balcombe, and it ran thru the unit like steam. The whole camp was told if you feel unwell stay in bed. The local papers stated that 86 percent of the camp was down with the flu. Of course, many stayed in bed that were not crook, and the RAP staff were going hut to hut armed with thermometers; lo and behold so many were cured! Some smart guys sucked toothpaste which they claimed to give a higher temperature. I missed out and was turfed out of bed. Some were genuinely crook, and you had to feel sorry for them. It was unusual for so few of us to be on parade in a time I won't forget.”*

*From Baden Jeffrey, 7<sup>th</sup> Intake Vehicle Mechanic*

“Same event occurred in ‘53 – created some problems in that you had to have two weeks clear to get a leave pass! I had an invite to a wedding and “no way” could I get leave!

Solution!! One KE G offered to sleep in my bed; “Blue” L went on parade Saturday morning (was going to Rugby, stood in the back row and answered my name) and I made the wedding and remarkably, I met my future wife! Thanks guys - anyone reading this recall the occasion?”

*From Peter Golding, 32<sup>nd</sup> Intake Electronics Tradesman*

“Balcombe 1977 camp had flu shots. Whole camp wiped out. Got bronchitis on top of the flu. Ah the good old days.”

*From Lyn Board, Staff Member*

“There was a German measles outbreak in about 1966 just before June leave. Appies were told that if there were any more cases reported the camp would be quarantined and no June leave. Some people were using foot powder to cover up the rash.”

*From Dennis Small, 22<sup>nd</sup> Intake Plumber*

“I had the German measles in April 1968; came out in the rash morning of my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday; spent 4 days in Navy Hospital; a lot of the camp had already been infected.”

*From Patrick Johnson, 37<sup>th</sup> Intake Musician*

“I remember practically our whole class going down with glandular fever in our first/second year? Help me out anyone in the 36<sup>th</sup> class who still can remember.”

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### **Apprentices during the Malayan Emergency**

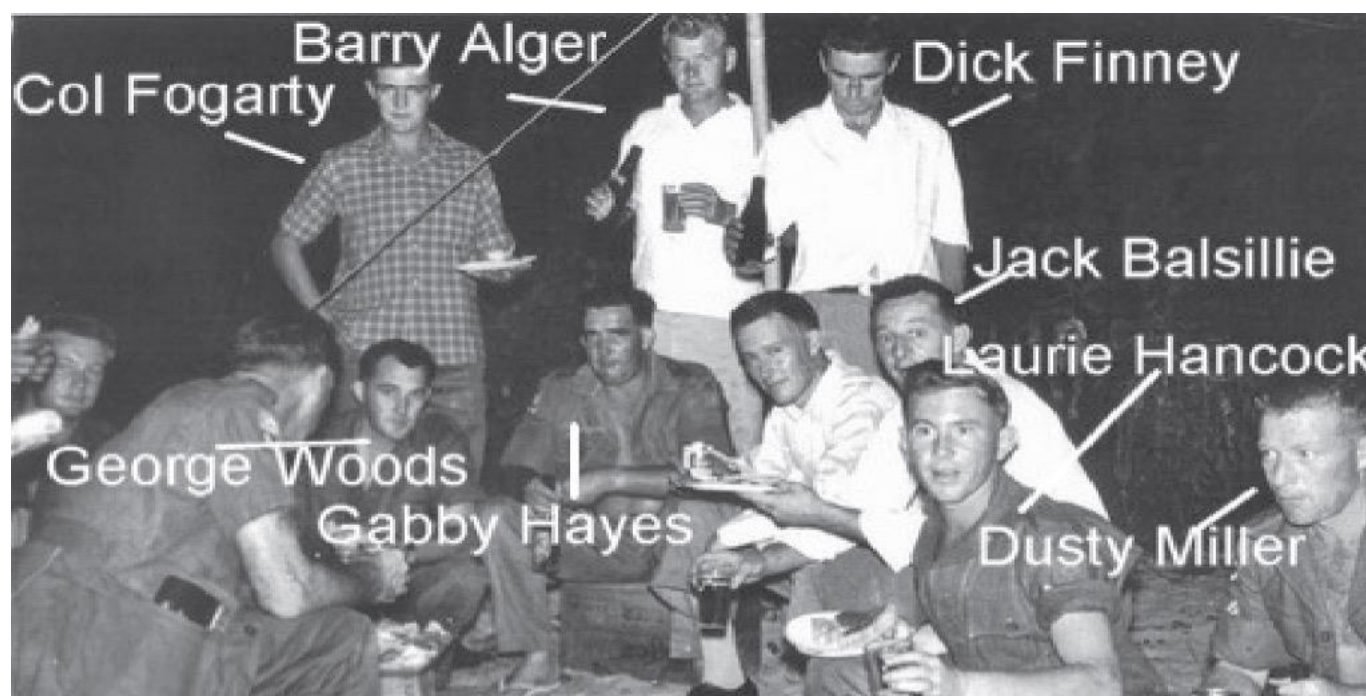
*From RAQ Friday Files, 23 May 2025 – extracted from the RAEME Corps History Book 'With Skill and Fighting - Craftsmen of the Australian Army 1942 - 2014' (<https://qld.raeme.org.au/index.php/shop/souvenirs/corps-history-book-1-detail>)*

While many Apprentices served during the time of the Malayan Emergency, from June 1948 to July 1960, the above article mentions just a couple of our well-known brethren (to at least the older intakes). The image and





extracts below are from the RAEME Corps History Book, and include: Jack Balsillie, Colin Fogarty, Laurie Hancock, Gabby Hayes, Mel Myers [not identified] and Ben Goddard [not identified].



ASM WO2 Andrew **John (Jack) Balsillie** [dec], enlisted in the Permanent Army in 1945 as a **Workshop Apprentice**. [We have featured Workshop Apprentices in the past – “*The Early Apprentices*” by Norm Wells 14<sup>th</sup> Intake Vehicle Mechanic, then AAAA Heritage Officer” in [Vol 2 Iss 6, May 2015](#)]. As an ARA member he rendered operational service in Malaya and South Vietnam. Other postings included 26 Fd Regt, Melbourne Area Wksp, 3 Base Wksp and HQ Bty, 4 Fd Regt. He retired with the rank of MAJ in 1985. Jack had a strong interest in military history and also worked for the AWM. In 1970 Jack Balsillie’s work at the AWM was recognised with the award of the MBE (Civil).

CFN Electrician **Colin Fogarty** [member #583] enlisted in the ARA in 1955 [as a 10<sup>th</sup> Intake Electrician] and served at 3 Base Wksp, 101 Fd Bty LAD, 26 Fd Regt, and 1 Armd Regt. In 1964 he took discharge and joined the police force. In 1967 he enlisted in the CMF, again serving in RAEME, and rose to the rank of CAPT retiring in 1978. In 1985 he was awarded the Australian Police Medal.

CPL Armament Fitter **Laurie Hancock** [7<sup>th</sup> Intake Fitter & Turner – dec] enlisted in the ARA in 1952. After deploying to Malaya, he saw service with 26 Fd Regt LAD, 4 Base Wksp and 4 Fd Regt LAD. He was posted to RTC as a WO2 and later promoted to the rank of CAPT, serving at 1 Fd Regt LAD and 1 Base Wksp. He retired Army in 1979.

CFN Fitter & Turner Dale (**Gabby**) **Hayes** [member #598] enlisted in 1955 as a 10<sup>th</sup> Intake Army Apprentice and retired in 1985 as a WO1. He rendered operational service in Malaya during 1959 with 101 Fd Bty LAD and at Butterworth Airfield in Malaysia with 111 Lt AA Bty during 1964. Gabby rendered further operational service in South Vietnam as a member of 1 Aust Log Spt Coy from 17 September 1965 until 18 April 1966 when he was severely injured requiring medical evacuation to Australia. His numerous postings included Army Office, DGEME (Materiel Branch) and the Malaysian Armed Forces Manufacturing Wksp.

CFN Vehicle Mechanic Douglas (**Mel**) **Myers** [dec] enlisted during 1954 as a 9<sup>th</sup> Intake Army Apprentice and was discharged as a WO2 during 1969. He rendered operational service in Malaya, Borneo and in South Vietnam as a SGT with 17 Const Sqn Wksp from 11 April 1966 to 22 April 1967.

CFN Vehicle Mechanic Barry David (**Ben**) **Goddard** [dec] enlisted in 1955 as a 10<sup>th</sup> Intake Army Apprentice. His operational service was in Malaya with 101 Fd Bty and 103 Bty LAD, South Vietnam. In Australia he served at 2 Base Wksp. He was discharged in 1964.

*“This is an impressive record for a detachment with an authorised strength of just twelve men.”*



## Balcombe huts named after generals

Balcombe hut names have been visited before, but below is a list (as we know it) of hut numbers and names, and the generals and field marshalls after whom they were named. Some later Balcombe intakes were not aware of hut names, only numbers. If anyone has any information to help complete (or correct) the list, please let me know.

In 1966-68 (e.g.) Northcote, P9 (below left and arrowed right) was on the left side of the road on the north side of the camp that led from the parade ground. Further down on the right were the Apprentice messes (Q1 & Q2).



Hut No	Hut Name	Named after
P4N	BENNETT	GEN Sir Phillip Harvey Bennett AC KBE DSO
?	BERRYMAN	LTGEN Sir Frank Horton Berryman KCVO CB CBE DSO
?	BLAMEY	FM Sir Thomas Albert Blamey GBE KCB CMG DSO ED
P7	GARRETT	LTGEN Sir Alwyn Ragnar Garrett KBE CB
?	LATCHFORD	MAJGEN Ernest William Latchford MBE MC
P3N	LAVARACK	LTGEN Sir John Dudley Lavarack KCMG KCVO KBE CB DSO
?	MACARTHUR	GEN Douglas Macarthur
?	MACKAY	LTGEN Sir Iven Giffard Mackay KBE CMG DSO & Bar VD
P4S	MILFORD	MAJGEN Edward James Milford CB CBE DSO
P10	MONASH	GEN Sir John Monash GCMG KCB VD
N5S	MORSHEAD	LTGEN Sir Leslie James Morshead KCB KBE CMG DSO ED
P9	NORTHCOTE	LTGEN Sir John Northcott KCMG KCVO CB KStJ – note: is there a spelling error on the hut, or was the hut named after someone else?
P1?	ROBERTSON	LTGEN Sir Horace Clement Hugh Robertson KBE DSO
P2N	ROWELL	LTGEN Sir Sydney Fairbairn Rowell KBE CB
P1S	SECOMBE	LTGEN Victor Clarence Secombe CB CBE
P1N	VASEY	MAJGEN George Alan Vasey CB CBE DSO and Bar
?	WAVELL	FM Archibald Percival Wavell, 1 <sup>st</sup> Earl Wavell GCB GCSI GCIE CMG MC KStJ PC
P3S	WELLS	LTGEN Sir Henry Wells KBE CB DSO
P2S	WOODWARD	LTGEN Sir Eric Winslow Woodward KCMG KCVO CB CBE DSO KStJ
?	WOOTTEN	MAJGEN Sir George Frederick Wootten KBE CB DSO & Bar ED





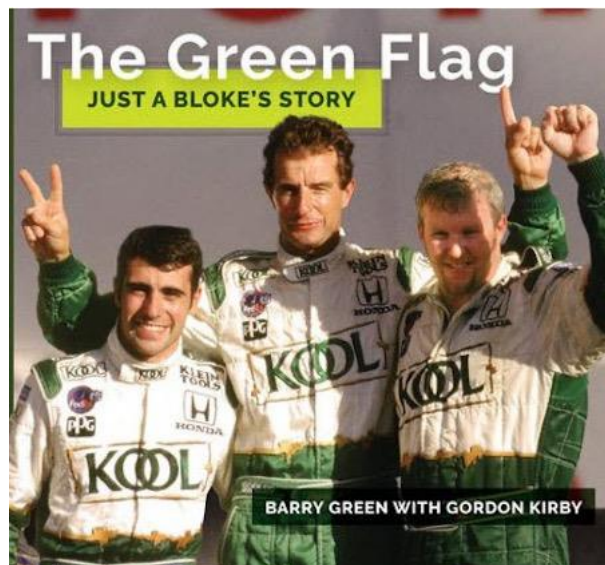
## Book review – *The Green Flag, Just a Bloke's Story*

*By Barry Green with Gordon Kirby, Racemaker Press, 2023, biography/autobiography, 288 pages, 190 b/w & colour photos, hardcover, ISBN 13: 978-1-935240-06-8*

*By Jeff Heron, 21<sup>st</sup> Intake Radio Mechanic, Newsletter Editor*

Growing up in Waterloo in rural Western Australia, Barry Green joined the Army as a 23<sup>rd</sup> Intake Vehicle Mechanic in January 1968. Waterloo is a small town on the South Western Highway a short drive from Bunbury and about 170km from Perth.

Barry's friend and co-author Gordon Kirby is a renowned motor sport author, journalist and magazine editor who has written and co-written many books on car racing, mainly in the US. He won 41 races as Formula Ford team manager in 1970-72 with driver David Loring in the US, Canada and England and tried unsuccessfully to put together a Formula 3 team in England for 1973 before concentrating on a career as journalist and writer.



Keen to seek a career in motor racing, Barry found that the Army wasn't for him so, after a couple of bouts of absenteeism (AWOL), Barry sought discharge and eventually "escaped" from the Army in 1970.

The first five of the 30 chapters of the book describe Barry's parents' English background, their early life in Australia, and Barry's childhood, leading up to joining and then leaving the Army. He returned home and completed a trades certificate before getting a job as an automotive mechanic in a local garage.

Chapters 8 to 12 discuss his early ventures into motor racing in Australia, England and America, and two more chapters introduce us to Formula 3 racing. He started in Formula One in England as a mechanic with Team Surtees. Chapters 15 to 21 highlight Barry's forays into Can-Am (6 wins), Indy Cars (47 wins), Formula Atlantic, and winning the Indy 500 (2 wins) and CART Title (1995) with Jacques Villeneuve.

Five more chapters take us through the launch of his racing Team Kool Green and building Team Green.

His other keen interest is sailing and two chapters are dedicated to that, including attempting an around the world cruise. Barry's daughter Kathara's career in business is briefly described in chapter 29 and the final chapter is titled "Some Observations and Reflections".

Barry told me his book is a "coffee table book". Measuring 270mm by 270mm and 30mm thick, it weighs 1.7kg, so it's not a book you just pop into your bag, or read it from cover to cover (unless you're really into motor racing and have a fair bit of spare time). I can't profess to have read it all, but I found the detail extraordinary, those personal stories that I read captivating, the amount of input from his family and the many partners, drivers, mechanics and crew members surprising, and his rise from Army Apprentice Vehicle Mechanic to very successful motor racing team manager and owner a credit to his dedication and effort.

### Book giveaway

Thanks to Barry's great generosity, he has made available 10 of his books to give away at the October reunion. He can't be there so he was "*Hoping it helps my guilt complex a little for not being able to attend and you don't start calling me names for all the extra work you will have.*"

The books will be given to the originators (who will be attending the reunion) of the 10 best stories, in 25 words or less, why they should get a copy. Send your responses to me at [news@austarmyapprentice.org](mailto:news@austarmyapprentice.org) before 7 October 2025 and I will arrange for an independent review of the submissions and select the best 10. They will then be presented at the reunion. Any left over will also be made available at the reunion.





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## AWM update – Charles Bean Research Centre official opening

From <https://www.awm.gov.au/media/press-releases/legacy-in-stone-charles-bean-research-centre-opens-with-beans-family>

In the May 2025 edition, we advised that the Charles Bean Research Centre was open. Whilst the work was completed, the official opening didn't occur until 5 June 2025, led by Bean's granddaughter Anne Carroll OAM, along with Matt Keogh, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel, and Melanie Dodd, Project Manager.

At the opening, Ms Carroll was presented with her grandfather's personal notebooks, letters and diaries – starting from when he sailed with the First Australian Imperial Force in 1914.

The Research Centre is open to visitors Monday to Friday 10:00 am – 4:30 pm, and Saturdays 1:00 pm – 4:30 pm.

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## Canberra Services Club

In the February 2025 edition, we featured the Canberra Services Club that was destroyed in a fire on 27 April 2011. The Club had operated as a registered community club from 29 April 1948, having commenced as the Lady Gowrie Services Club on 13 March 1941. Since the fire, the Club has been working to rebuild its premises at its original site, but for this to occur, the Club firstly needed to have changed the type of lease that applies to the old site adjacent to Manuka Oval. We can now report that the Club has won that battle, paving the way to plan a seven-storey building with hotel accommodation on the upper levels. The next stage is for the Club to value the land for the lease variation charge to be calculated and paid out. And then the next battle will be to get the Development Application submitted and approved. Watch this space!

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## Our committee

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

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### Standdown of Committee Members

With the AGM to be held on Saturday 25 October, from 10:30 am to 12:00 noon at the Albury Commercial Club, please consider nominating for the various Regional Representative positions currently vacant, and/or for those Committee roles that will be subject to re-election for the next 2-year term. At this AGM, the following positions will be declared vacant: President, Secretary, Heritage Officer, and three (3) Ordinary Committee Members. Details on nominating for Committee positions are in the [AAAA Constitution](#) and the Nomination Form can be found in the Association Forms page on the Members' Website.

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### Current members

**Patron** ..... Major General Andrew Freeman AM (Retd), 40<sup>th</sup> Intake Electrical Fitter

#### Office-bearers

**President** ..... Keith Lowe, 22<sup>nd</sup> F&T

**Vice-president** ..... Greg Haggett, 40<sup>th</sup> P&G

**Secretary** ..... Simon Brooks, 40<sup>th</sup> MM

**Treasurer** ..... Richard Pike, 21<sup>st</sup> VM

#### Committee Members

**Heritage Officer** ..... Rob Minato, 31<sup>st</sup> ET

**Membership Secretary** .. Graeme Smail, 35<sup>th</sup> ET

**Welfare Officer** ..... Grant Cotterill, 38<sup>th</sup> P&G

**Public Officer** ..... Jeff Heron, 21<sup>st</sup> RM,  
..... Life Member

#### Ordinary Committee Members

**Member 1** ..... Liz Fitzgibbon, 40<sup>th</sup> ET

**Member 2** ..... Bob Clarke, 22<sup>nd</sup> VM

**Member 3** ..... Mick O'Donnell,  
..... 22<sup>nd</sup> Bricklayer

**Member 4** ..... Bill Amor, 20<sup>th</sup> F&T

**Member 5** ..... Steve Doudle, 25<sup>th</sup> VM

**Member 6** ..... Wayne Davis, 50<sup>th</sup> Elec Fitter

#### Appointees

**Hon Trustee** ..... Jim Hislop OAM, 9<sup>th</sup> F&T

**Legal Adviser** ..... Rod Perkins, 24<sup>th</sup> F&T

**Auditor** ..... Gary Lancaster, 22<sup>nd</sup> F&T

**Chaplain** ..... Rev Canon Alan Kelb OAM,  
..... 25<sup>th</sup> F&T

**Assistant Secretary** ..... Graeme Smail, 35<sup>th</sup> ET

**Merchandise Officer** ..... Richard Pike, 21<sup>st</sup> VM

**Newsletter Editor** ..... Jeff Heron, 21<sup>st</sup> RM,  
..... Life Member

**Social Media Admin** ..... Simon Brooks, 40<sup>th</sup> MM



### **Regional Representatives**

**NT** ..... Charles (Bill) Allom, 25<sup>th</sup> VM  
**South Qld** ..... Brian Daley OAM, 14<sup>th</sup> VM,  
..... Life Member  
**North Qld** ..... **vacant**  
**NSW** ..... Richard Pike, 21<sup>st</sup> VM  
**ACT** ..... Jeff Heron, 21<sup>st</sup> RM,  
..... Life Member

**Vic North** ..... Rob Minato, 31<sup>st</sup> ET  
**Vic Metro** ..... Ted Buchan, 46<sup>th</sup> ET  
**Vic Central and South ....** **both vacant**  
**SA** ..... Michael Thompson, 26<sup>th</sup> VM  
**WA** ..... Bob Coventry, 22<sup>nd</sup> RM  
**Tas** ..... Steve Bramich, 23<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:news@austarmyapprentice.org) or mail them to the address on the first page. Submissions close on the 15<sup>th</sup> 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.

### **2 CAV D Sqn Raising Ceremony – Townsville**

*Images and information courtesy of Defence via RAQ Friday Files, 9 May 2025*



**Above:** Soldiers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Regiment prepare for and conduct a parade, including vehicle movements. Interviews: Lieutenant Colonel Joshua Higgins, Commanding Officer, and Major Jodie McCart, Officer Commanding D Squadron – [link to the video and images here](#).

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Regiment (2 CAV) officially welcomed its second tank squadron at the T4 (D Squadron) Raising Ceremony on 23 April 2025, at Lavarack Barracks, Townsville. Making it the largest Royal Australian Armoured Corps Regiment and the only unit with the ABRAMS M1A2 SEPv3 tank in the Australian Army. To support the National Defence Strategy structural reform, the Australian Army mandated the consolidation of its heavy armour capability in Townsville, with operations to be conducted by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Regiment (2 CAV) under the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade. As a result, D Squadron was formally established on 20 January 2025.





## ALTC News, visit by Thai Army Training Schools

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

*"The Royal Thai Army Military Technical Training School (MTTS) dropped in at Army School of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (ASEME) earlier this month in the spirit of connection and shared learning.*

### 2025 visit



*The Schools began a re-establishment of a once close relationship dating back to the Vietnam War era [see below right. Ed], which saw Australian instructors teaching at (MTTS), Thai trainees learning in Australia and the @ADF donating tooling to the MTTS.*

*The visit was a fruitful one, with visions to share knowledge and trade training processes.*

*RAEME trainees at ALTC aren't just learning how to fix things.*

*They're learning how to do it under pressure — no shortcuts, no guesswork, and definitely no calling roadside assist.*

*Well-developed competencies - sound trade skill, up-to-date knowledge, and brilliant work attitudes."*



### 1962 visit to Balcombe



*Above right: From the SPAASSM collection, Phase II, Binder 34, Item 1, Image 00009  
MAJ Peters (XO) and COMD Sanit of the Thai Apprentices School in 1962.*