# THE APPRENTICE ABOUT

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***NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY APPRENTICES ASSOCIATION INC.***
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## *From the President*

*By Keith Lowe, 22nd Intake Fitter and Turner, President AAAA, president@austarmyapprentice.org, 25 Oct 2026*

It gives me much pleasure to report our Association conducted its 19th AGM on Saturday 24 Oct in Melbourne. The attendees included members from a wide range of intakes – 11th through to 40th with the 22nd and 40th having the majority, which pleasingly indicates to me interest is growing from our younger members.

As is the requirement of our Constitution a number of position holders were required to stand down. Consequently, Welfare Officer Grant Cotteril (38th), Committee members Michael O'Donnell (22nd) and Bill Amor (20th) did not seek re-election. I thank these three gentlemen for their support of our committee and membership during their respective tenures.

Treasurer Richard Pike (21st) is back for another term while Vice President Greg Haggett (40th – 11 year veteran in the job) and Membership Secretary Graeme Smail (35th) have switched roles as part of our succession plan.

Our Public Officer Jeff Heron (21st) did not seek re-election to allow him to concentrate on his other Association activities principally Newsletter Editor. Hence I am pleased to introduce Gerard Ogden (34th) as our new Public Officer.

Liz Fitzgibbon (40th) & Jeff Heron (21st), both valuable retiring members have been re-elected unopposed to the committee and Steve Howells (28th) joins us as a new committee member and will be the Treasurer's assistant.

Welcome back those returning and welcome to the new members to committee.

Following acceptance of Proxies for the meeting, Standing Orders were suspended. This was to allow me the great pleasure to surprise our Vice President Greg Haggett with Life Membership of our Association. Greg's citation will be available on the Website under the Honour Board tab.

Upon attempting to have Standing Orders resumed I was instructed to wait and I must say very surprised and humbled when Greg stepped forward and presented me with my Life Membership. This honour is very much appreciated and totally unexpected. I do what I do for the Association and Apprentices at large because I am interested in all aspects of, I guess simply put, our heritage and generally all things Army Apprentice.

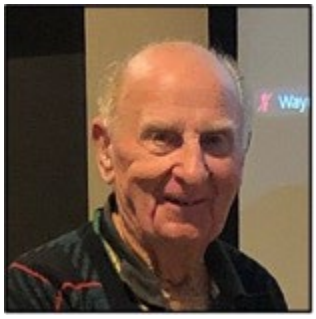
The meeting did eventually get underway.

My report to the AGM is available to members under the Reports Tab on our Website; however I wish to share an extract from it with our readers.

*"Our Trustee since 2014 Jim Hislop now approaching his ninetieth year has advised it is time for him to step aside. Jim is our third Trustee and the only one who is one of us. He is also a former CO of the Apprentices School during the time of its relocation from Balcombe to Bonegilla. Besides his duties as Trustee Jim was quite involved with the Bandiana Museum. During the planning for the 1998 national reunion it became apparent to that event's organising Committee that Jim was a driving force behind the establishment of the Apprentices section of the*

*Museum continuing his involvement until recently. With the establishment of our Apprentices Memorial Jim again assisted with its local oversight. With assistance from his fellow 9th Intake mate Charlie Myhill they managed and laid the named pavers, the installation of all plaques, simple maintenance tasks and the co-ordination of major refurbishments.*

*Despite this Jim also found time to be proactive in the fight for better DFRDB outcomes for all relevant Veterans.*



*Jim has served this Association and Veterans extremely well. Whilst our Constitution has strict guidelines for the award of Life Membership it is my belief that this Annual General Meeting can make exceptions. I therefore recommend the acceptance of my report shall include the award of Life Membership of the Australian Army Apprentices Association to 58606 Lt Col (Retd) James Glen Hislop OAM, 9th Intake Fitter and Turner, Association Membership No. 45."*

My report was received and accepted unanimously. I was able to speak with Jim and his wife this morning (Sunday 25 Oct) to advise him of his Life Membership. The advice was received with great appreciation and he now looks forward to a visit for the formal presentation.

I think on that happy note and in the interests of not taking too much of our Newsletter's available space I shall leave it at that for this time. All the very best to all. Keith

## Also in this edition:


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## Association members in the news

### New Life Members Oct 2026

As mentioned by our President, Jim Hislop, Greg Haggett and himself were all elevated to Life Membership at the recent AGM. Jim's citation is above. Citations for Greg and Keith were as follows:

**Greg Haggett, 40th Intake P&G**

Shortly after joining the Association in 2015, Greg was elected to the position of Vice-President in Oct 2015. He continues to hold the position and is always available to assist the Association Presidents. He played a key role in the organisation of the major national event leading the Anzac March in Canberra in 2018. Greg coordinates Regional Representatives.



*Greg and Keith at the October AGM*

**Keith Lowe, 22nd Intake F&T**

Joining the Association in 2007, Keith served as Secretary from 2017 to 2019. He has then served as President since 2019. During his tenure as Secretary, he helped guide the Association through the 70th Anniversary in Canberra and in his position as President, he has overseen review and amendment of the Constitution, applied numerous procedures and administrative actions to align the Association with current legislative requirements, and has long been the point of contact for vale notifications and member welfare.

## *Crown Prince of Brunei Visit – Canberra – MAJGEN Andrew Freeman AM, AAAA Patron*

*Image and article from RAQ Spanner News Weekly 14 Aug 2026, adapted courtesy of Defence*

On 13 Aug 2026, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, the Hon Richard Marles MP met with His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office of Brunei Darussalam at Australian Parliament House in Canberra. While in Australia, His Royal Highness also met with the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia Her Excellency the Hon Sam Mostyn AC, Prime Minister the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, and Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator the Hon Penny Wong. His Royal Highness also visited Western Sydney University, HMAS Waterhen, and Holsworthy Barracks.




*Above: Major General Andrew Freeman AM, Host Officer, Strategic Engagements, His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office of Brunei Darussalam at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra*

## *Belated congratulations – Paul Prickett CSM, 28th Intake Electrical Mechanic (AAAA Member #416)*

*From* https://www.rslaustralia.org/latest-news/rsl-anzac-of-the-year-awards-2026

The Anzac of the Year Awards are presented 'to recognise the efforts and achievements of up to seven Australians who have given service to their fellow Australians and to the community in a positive, selfless and compassionate manner.'

The 2026 awards, presented on 24 Apr 2026, included:
"Paul Prickett CSM of Western Australia in recognition of 42.5 years of service in the Australian Army, retiring at the rank of Major and honoured with the Conspicuous Service Medal has seamlessly continued in civilian life through tireless work as Commemorations Officer and Vice President of the Cockburn RSL Sub-Branch. He personally organises Anzac Day services, an Anzac Youth Parade involving over 20 schools and 1,500 students and has driven Sub-Branch membership growth of over 100 members while raising more than $7,000 for veteran mental health through Soldier On."

## *Cockburn RSL Sub-Branch Veterans Support Centre Opening*

*From Facebook, courtesy of Bob Coventry, 22nd Intake Radio Mechanic (AAAA Member #952)*

On 30 Aug 2026, the Cockburn RSL Sub-Branch officially opened its new Veterans Support Centre, with City of Cockburn Lord Mayor Logan, and WA Labor Member for Bibra Lake, Sook Yee Lai MLA, attending. The Veterans

Centre is a safe, private, clean, and modern space dedicated to helping and supporting veterans within the community.

Also present were these Apprentices below (L-R): Mal Anderson, 40th Intake Motor Mechanic, Dean Reyniers, 34th Intake Electronics Tradesman (AAAA Member #1661), Paul Prickett CSM, 28th Intake Electrical Mechanic (AAAA Member #416) and Bob Coventry, 22nd Intake Radio Mechanic (AAAA Member #952).



### *Apprentices still in uniform – RAEME*

*From Wayne Davis, 50th Intake Electrical Fitter, AAAA Committee Member*

"I attended the RAEME Corps Conference last week. Attached is a photo of some of few remaining Appy's in uniform." [With the CO ASEME, Ed]



*Front row seated (L-R): Marcellin Chee 45th MM; Mick Waters 42nd F&T (AAAA Member #1316); Duane Maggenti 42nd MM; Jason Ballard 42nd MM; Wayne Davis 50th EF. Back row standing (L-R): Mick Nolan 44th F&T, Paul Cooney 45th MM (AAAA Member #1186); Mark Warde 47th MM; Marc Craigie 46th MM (AAAA Member #1187);Tim Costin 47th F&T; Leigh McNabb 49th MM; Dave Shepherd 44th EF (AAAA Member #1151); and CO ASEME LTCOL Hans Hamilton*

### *Meredith Burgess, 40th Intake Motor Mechanic, (AAAA Perpetual Member #1308)*

Congratulations to Meredith on her election to Acting State President, RSL SA, NT & Broken Hill.

## *Non-Association members in the news*

### *New Master Artificers*

*From: RAQ Spanner News Weekly Friday 23 Oct 2026*

New appointments announced at the recent RAEME Corps Conference included Master Artificer ECN 412 Technician Avionics, WO1 Kent Herrmann, 47th Intake Electronics Tradesman. Congratulations Kent.

## *Welfare and Vale notices*

*Contact: Association Welfare Officer TBA, welfare@austarmyapprentice.org*

### *Position vacant*

At the recent AGM, the previous Welfare Officer Grant Cotterill 38th Intake Plumber and Gasfitter, stood down and was not available for re-election. Hence the position is now vacant. If you or anyone else you may know are suitably interested in the role, please contact the President.

### *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).

### *Veterans' and Families' Hubs supporting communities across Australia*

*From: Vetaffairs Vol 42 No2 Aug 2026*

Eleven Veterans' and Families' Hubs (with more Hubs on the way) operate nationally providing a mix of in-person and outreach services tailored to local community needs:

**In operation**

* Adelaide – SA Government
* Burnie – North West Tasmanian Veteran Welfare Board
* Caboolture – Lives Lived Well
* Darwin – Mates4Mates
* Hunter (Maitland) – RSL LifeCare
* Queanbeyan – RSL LifeCare
* Northern Adelaide – Lives Lived Well
* Nowra – RSL LifeCare
* Perth – RSL WA
* Wodonga – RSL Victoria
* Tasmania (state-wide hub-and-spoke model) – RSL Tasmania

**Upcoming**

* Hawkesbury region & Ingleburn – RSL LifeCare
* Tweed/North Coast NSW – RSL LifeCare
* Ipswich – RSL Queensland
* Surf Coast/Geelong – RSL Victoria
* Southwest Perth – RSL WA
* Bendigo – TBC

### *Stakeholder Kit to support release of the Queensland Veterans and Veterans' Families Strategy*

*From an email by Veterans Queensland, Governance & Engagement, Department of the Premier and Cabinet on 27 Aug 2026*

On 10 Aug 2026, the Premier and Minister for Veterans launched the *Queensland Government's Queensland Veterans and Veterans' Families Strategy*, the state's first whole-of-government plan developed to improve outcomes and maximise opportunities for Queensland veterans and their families, over the next six-years.

The Strategy is built around five pillars: Education and employment; Health, housing and support; Veterans in business; Community and sport; and Commemoration and recognition. A Stakeholder Kit (link above) has been developed, which includes key messages, suggested social media posts, newsletter content, and other resources to support raising awareness of the Strategy.

For further information, contact Megan Read, Executive Director, Veterans Queensland, at *veterans@premiers.qld.gov.au*.

### *I'VE GOT YOUR 6 FOUNDATION – Household Services Support*

*From an email from I've Got Your 6 Foundation (IGY6)*

IGY6, a veteran-focused not-for-profit Ex-Service Organisation supporting veterans and Defence families across Australia, has notified the AAAA of its DVA Household Services program.

"*IGY6 is now providing DVA Household Services (HHS) support nationally, with coverage across every Australian state and more than 300 locations. Speak with your compensation advocate about applying for DVA Household Services. IGY6 can also help you understand the process and what to do next.*"

For further information, including assistance to determine your eligibility, you may contact IGY6 direct:
Email: *hello@igy6.com.au* Phone: (03) 7018 2300 Monday to Friday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm AEST

### *Commemorative coin to recognise Afghanistan service*

*Adapted from, and image copied from DVA (here)*




DVA has released a commemorative coin to mark 25 years since Australian service in Afghanistan began in 2001. It recognises Australians who served in Afghanistan, honours those who lost their lives during or as a result of their service, and acknowledges the lasting physical and mental impacts on veterans and their families.

Coins were made available to all attendees at the national commemorative service on Sunday, 11 Oct 2026. Veterans and families who were unable to attend can collect a coin in person from 5 Nov 2026 at selected Open Arms locations across Australia.

A postal option is also available by registering via the *DVA online registration form*.

### *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 **two** historic entries and one with no known date.

| Intake | Reg No | Name (AAAA Membership no) | Trade | Passed away |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 242626 | Maxwell Denis WELCH (#1088) | Carpenter and Joiner | 1 Jun 2026 |
| 3 | 58520 | Ronald Ernest SLAUGHTER | Vehicle Mechanic | 14 Jul 2026 |
| 27 | 62404 | Phillip Craig LOWE (#600) | Fitter Maintenance | 2 Aug 2026 |
| 28 | 57467 | Rhett Steven TURLEY | Vehicle Mechanic | 2 Aug 2026 |
| 28A | 316504 | William Arthur NORRIS (#1399) | Musician | 4 Aug 2026 |
| 13 | 58688 | Jiri (George) Antonin Josef SULC | Radio Mechanic | 10 Aug 2026 |
| 14 | 243140 | Mervyn Clifford LEWIS | Carpenter and Joiner | 15 Aug 2026 |
| 22 | 1201083 | Ernest Charles (Spider or Bill) BLAKE | Fitter and Turner | 21 Aug 2026 |

| Intake | Reg No | Name (AAAA Membership no) | Trade | Passed away |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 38 | 231572 | Paul Frederick HILE | Carpenter and Joiner (RAE) | 23 Aug 2026 |
| 23 | 44632 | David Robert COCKER | Vehicle Mechanic | 26 Aug 2026 |
| 38 | 325503 | Gordon John SMITH | Electronics Tradesman | Unknown |
| 17 | 18772 | Mitchel SITARZ | Clerk | 20 Sep 2026 |
| 15 | 342864 | David Frederick WAIN | Fitter and Turner | 26 Sep 2026 |
| 9 | 342634 | Robert Keith (Bob) PUNCH | Vehicle Mechanic | 6 Oct 2026 |
| 11 | 242994 | Robert John BOYLE | Plumber | 8 Oct 2026 |

### *Vale – Brian Thomas Boughton CSC OAM – RSM, Army College of TAFE Dec 1990 to Dec 1992*

*From a Facebook post on 13 Aug 2026 by Heath Arblaster, 47th Intake Motor Mechanic (AAAA Member #1662)*



**From East Maitland RSL**. It is with great sadness that we must advise of the passing of sub-Branch member Brian Boughton CSC OAM, RA Inf. Brian passed away last evening (12 Aug 2026) with his family by his side, after a short illness.

Brian was a Life Member of the RSL and a past President of both the East Maitland RSL sub-Branch and the Hunter Valley District Council, and a State Councillor. For many years, Brian has been the Marshall of the Anzac Day March in Sydney.

He served in the Australian Army from 1968 to 2004, reaching the position of RSM of the Army from Mar 2001 to 19 Dec 2003 prior to his retirement.

Our thoughts are with Brian's family at this time of sorrow. Lest We Forget.

*By Les O'Heir, 30th Intake Vehicle Mechanic*

For our members who were at AAS. RSM Brian Boughton was an exemplary leader and great mentor of all his soldiers. He loved his Apprentices and loved taking the Beat the Retreat ceremony "on tour". He played an influential part on so many lives. RIP Brian, have a beer with Blackie and Gary Elston. Condolences to your family.

### *Vale Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Robert J Boyle, RAE, RACT, OCS Class Jun 1964, 11th Intake Plumber*

*By Paul ASBURY, OCS Alumni*

Bob died in Queensland after a long illness on 8 Oct 2026. Aged 86 years. Bob joined the Army as an apprentice and graduated from AAS Balcombe as an RAE plumber. On graduating from OCS, he was again allocated to RAE and served with 30 Terminal Squadron RAE and then 32 Small Ship Squadron RAE.

Vietnam Service: 1966 – 68. Served as 1st Mate on both LSMs and AS John Monash.
Attended Australian Staff College in 1977.
Bob's final posting was as Commanding Officer, 10 Terminal Regiment RACT in 1986 – 87.

A good officer and gentleman who will be sadly missed by many. R.I.P.

### *Vale Willem Arnoldus (Bil) Mus, RAA, PTI Balcombe 1967-70*

*From a Facebook post by Kevin Blackman, 24th Intake Fitter and Turner, 16 Oct 2026*

Billy Mus, PTI and coach of the soccer team in the late 60s passed away in Dec 2024 [19 Dec 2024]. He also coached the athletics team in 1967-69. He served in Vietnam from 20 Aug 1970 to Sep 1971 with the Australia Force Vietnam Amenities and Welfare Unit.

## *Membership matters*

*By Graeme Smail, 35th Intake Electronics Tradesman – outgoing Membership Secretary, membership@austarmyapprentice.org*

### *Membership Status*

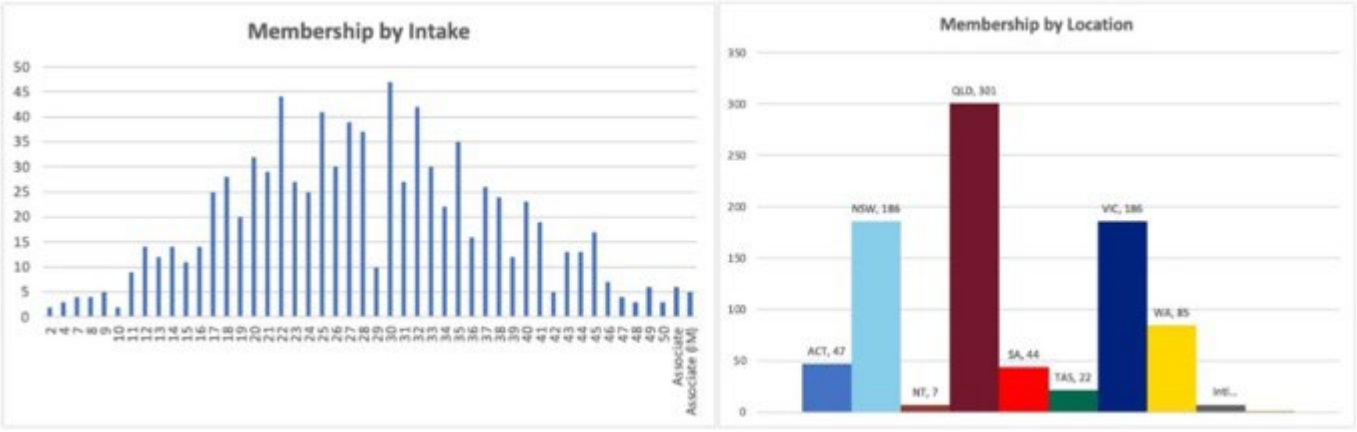
The current state of the membership (as at 18 Oct 2026) is 886 financial members (see right).

| Type | 18 Oct 26 | 17 Oct 25 | YTY |
|---|---|---|---|
| Life | 4 | 3 | 1 |

Net figures show a fairly static position since the last AGM with a small decrease of 4. However, worthy of note: 33 new members, 11 members no longer with us, 5 spouses/nok of deceased members taking up Associate membership, and strong growth in those transferring to, or joining as, Perpetual.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Perpetual** | 25 | 2 | 23 |
| **Ordinary** | 538 | 571 | -33 |
| **Retired** | 308 | 308 | - |
| **Associate** | 11 | 6 | 5 |
| **TOTAL** | **886** | **890** | **-4** |

### *Membership Analysis*




## *Events reports*

### *36th Intake 45th Anniversary of enlistment, Mornington and Balcombe, 9-12 Jan 2026*

*From a Facebook post on 10 Sep 2026 by Dale Williams, 36th Intake Electrical Fitter*

"Mace oval Balcombe 2026. A great turn out. All looking fit and ready. For those who know Rex Whip, zoom in. His Delta Coy shirt still fits him. Legendary."



*Rex is in the back row, 4th from the right with the yellow shirt, and Dale is in the 3rd row, second from the left*

"And remiss of me to pass on our massive thankyou to Lutz *[Preusche]*. He was very welcoming and offered his time to guide us through what was Balcombe.

We had our main function on Saturday night, 10th Jan at the Dava. Last count was 102 people turned up but that includes wives/partners."

## *ACT Region Quarterly Lunch, Ainslie FC, Wednesday, 9 Sep 2026*

*By Jeff Heron, 21st Intake Radio Mechanic, ACT Regional Rep*




Nineteen attendees enjoyed an excellent lunch, with representatives from Intakes 2, 14A, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 33, and 40. We welcomed Dave and Trudy Giles, 40th Intake Carpenter & Joiner (C&J) from Esperance, making two from that trade. The electrical trades were most heavily represented (eight), then two Vehicle Mechanics, one Fitter & Turner, and one Musician. Our elder statesman, Herb Taylor, 2nd Intake C&J brought along his tank (actually it's a cigarette box under the sliding turret with a space for matches under the hinged gun – see image) that was built in 1951, and has the names of all 12 x 2nd Intake C&J graduates.

Herb also brought along a Canberra Times special centenary list "*Canberra 100 list: the Canberrans who made our city*" from 3 Sep 2026, which included Chic Henry, 19th Intake Blacksmith, the Summernats founder who sadly passed away in 2022.

## *Apprentices at the Sunshine Coast RAEME luncheon, Maroochydore RSL, 12 Sep 2026*

*By Liz Fitzgibbon, 40th Intake Electronics Tradesman, AAAA Committee Member, on Facebook on 13 Sep 2026*

A good number of Apprentices at the Sunshine Coast RAEME luncheon. A wonderful day.

The event was hosted by LTCOL Alex McDonald (on behalf of Colonel Commandant Queensland, COL Piers Cambridge). Guest Speaker was Suzanne Shipp, 46th Intake Electronics Tradesman, an executive with over 30 years of experience in engineering and strategic leadership.




*L-R: Liz Fitzgibbon, 40th Intake Electronics Tradesman, AAAA Committee Member; Mick Patman, 46th Intake Fitter and Turner; Peter Matthews, 37th Intake Motor Mechanic; Ian Malcolm, 27th Intake Vehicle Mechanic; Ross Grant AM, 17th Intake Fitter and Turner, AAAA Member #300; Ian? 9th Intake; ? (RAEME coloured face); Suzanne Shipp, 46th Intake Electronics Tradesman; ?; Mal Norrie, 30th Intake Fitter Maintenance, AAAA Member #858; Tony?; Roger Smith, 38th Intake Electronics Tradesman; and Gary Sargent, 23rd Intake Electrical Fitter, AAAA Member #573*

## *Transfer of the 23rd Intake "Lucky Door" to Australian Army Museum Bandiana, 23 Sep 2026*

*From James Atkin, 23rd Intake Fitter and Turner (AAAA Member #1371)*

On Wednesday the 23rd Sep 2026, a group of ex-Army Apprentices from the 23rd Intake journeyed to Bandiana to visit the Apprentices Memorial and the Australian Army Museum.

The reason for the visit to the Apprentice Memorial was to pay our respects to those of our intake that have passed, and the visit to the Army Museum was to formally pass our intake mascot ("Lucky Door") to the Australian Army Museum Bandiana

***Paying tribute at the Apprentices Memorial.***

At the Apprentices Memorial, James Atkin gave a short introduction to the gathering, which included Major Wendi McAdie, Manager of the Army Museum Bandiana, and Lieutenant Colonel Hans Hamilton, Commanding Officer and Chief Instructor of the Army School of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering.





Then, as a tribute to those members of the 23rd Intake that have passed away since our enlistment in 1968, Vyn Harris *[Vehicle Mechanic, AAAA Member #748]* read the names of the 32 "brothers by other mothers" that we are missing.




***Transfer of the 23rd Intake "Lucky Door" to the Australian Army Museum***

The 23rd Intake "Lucky Door" was first unveiled at our 50th Anniversary. The significance of the door is that it has become an important symbol for our intake, and carries the Names and Regimental Numbers of every single member of the 23rd Intake, along with a Poppy symbolising each of our brothers that have passed since 1968.

The Australian Army Museum Bandiana had recently agreed to become the new owner and custodian of the door, and this day was the formal transfer.

To describe this event, I refer to the eloquent story written by Captain Krysten Manuel from the Army Logistic Training Centre:

***From a prank lucky door prize to a treasured piece of Army history…***

'*Yesterday, the 23rd Intake of Army Apprentices returned to Bandiana to formally present their iconic "*Lucky Door*" to the Army Museum Bandiana, ensuring the story of their intake and the friendships it forged will be preserved for future generations.*

*Handcrafted by members of the intake, the door carries the names of every apprentice from the 23rd Intake alongside a poppy honouring those who have since passed away.*

*What began as a tongue-in-cheek reunion prop, inspired by a famously rigged "*lucky door prize*" raffle involving an actual car door, evolved into a symbol of mateship, memories and a brotherhood spanning nearly six decades.*

*As intake spokesman James Atkin reflected, many of the group have remained close since joining Army in 1968, sharing life's biggest moments together, from weddings and children to reunions more than 50 years later. He described the door as representing "*the camaraderie of our intake*" and one of the many stories that still brings a smile to those who were there.*

*Commanding Officer Hans Hamilton said the presentation highlighted the enduring bonds formed through Army service. As he observed, "*the apprentice's scheme was the cream of Australian youth*", with friendships formed early and strengthened through shared experiences that continue to bring the group together decades later. He noted that it always amazes him how Army relationships become "*these amazing bonds, unbreakable bonds that last decades.*"*

*A fantastic day of stories, laughs, memories and a healthy dose of apprentice larrikinism.*

*Thank you to the 23rd Intake for entrusting the Lucky Door to the museum and for reminding us that while skills and trades may start a career, it's the people and friendships that stay with you forever.'*








*[The wording on the window reads:]*

This door is symbolic of the 23rd intake of Army Apprentices.
Created in 1968 to form part of a much larger organization.
All were molded using the same program and are unique.
They performed many and varied tasks in the service of their country with distinction and courage.
With the passage of 50 years with some vital parts missing, damaged, dented and rusty they still scrub up well and know how to "Bung it on."
Veni Vidi Vici
*The cascading poppies represent those that have passed.*
**Lest We Forget**

### *AAAA AGM, Saturday 24 Oct 2026, Fawkner RSL*

The President's report, the following images, and the Committee list at the end in this Newsletter sum up the major activities around the AGM. A major outcome of the meeting was agreement of the location and timing for the 2028 80th Anniversary of the Commencement of the Army Apprentice Scheme and the Army Apprentices School – see Upcoming Events below.

## *Upcoming events*

### *AAAA and Apprentices functions*

* **ACT Region Quarterly Lunch**, **Ainslie FC, Wed, 2 Dec 2026, 1200**, please let me know if you will be there.
* **32nd Class Army Apprentices 50th Reunion, Maroochydore, 5-8 Feb 2027**. Friday 5th meet and greet, Saturday 6th formal dinner at Maroochy RSL, Sunday 7th lunch and afternoon entertainment at Mudjimba RSL, *contact: Phil Sullivan, appy32nd@outlook.com, Facebook: 32nd Class AAS (and other old Appy's)*
* **41st Intake Reunion, meet and greet, Blazing Stump Hotel, Wodonga, 19 Feb; and tour of Latchford Barracks, tour of Army Museum Bandiana and Australian Army Apprentices Memorial, and reunion, Sodens Hotel, Albury, 20 Feb 2027**.
* **AAAA Committee Meeting, via Zoom, 6 Mar 2027.**
* **Possible ECN 147/418 reunion for former Army Electrical Fitters and Technicians, Wodonga, around mid-2027**, to register your interest, *visit Facebook, "Army Apprentices we; were the cream of Australian Youth", post by Dale Williams, 36th Intake Electrical Fitter, on 17 Sep 2026*.
* **27th Intake 55th Reunion, Hellenic Club, Woden, 15 Sep 2027**.
* **80th Anniversary of the Commencement of the Army Apprentice Scheme and the Army Apprentices School, Albury Wodonga, 22-24 Oct 2028**, following the traditional format of Meet & Greet on Friday afternoon, AGM & Committee Meeting on Saturday morning, Dinner on Saturday night, and a Memorial Service and Museum visit on Sunday morning. Requests for registrations of interest will be sent out shortly to Members. Watch for further updates on Facebook and in upcoming Newsletters. **From Peninsula Essence Sep 2024**: "*Following a competitive selection process, on 2 Aug 1948 the first intake of 63 army apprentices started their training in eleven various trades while residing in the camp's old unheated huts.*" [The Army College of TAFE stated seven trades, but in fact, there were nine trades as listed in the official roll maintained by the AAAA. Ed]

### *Other associations, etc*

* **RAE Association Victoria Inc**., *contact RAE Future Events*
* **RAE Association WA Inc.,** *contact* https://wasappers.com.au/events/
* **RASigs Association**, *contact https://rasigs.org/events/category/rasigs-association-events/*
* **RAEME National Network**, *contact https://raeme.org.au*
  **Women in RAEME 2026, The Ship Inn, South Brisbane, 27 Nov 2026, 1800-2000**. $25 per person, RSVP essential – register on the RAQ Website (*here*).
* **78th WRAAC and Australian Women's Veterans Reunion, 12–16 Feb 2029**, Sunshine Coast, *contact wraac78threunion@outlook.com*.
* **Veterans Coffee Club, Wed 18 Nov, & 2, 16 & 30 Dec 2026**, Greensborough RSL, 1000-1200 – Members Bar.

## *Letters to the Editor*

### *Over Open Sights – An Apprentice fighting on the frontline at Fire Support Base Coral, Việt Nam*

*From Michael Kusternig, 17th Intake Clerk (AAAA Member #660) and Image from AWM*

Another two Apprentices who served during the Battle of Coral and Balmoral were Bob Lowry, 18th Intake Clerk, and 18814, John (Joe) McNeil, 18th Intake Radio Mechanic.

*From Ian Morris, 12th Intake Radio (Wireless) Mechanic, (AAAA Member #12) & Past AAAA Webmaster*

Dear Jeff

It truly was a bumper edition. An excellent article on Coral/Balmoral.

The late Joey Hill (13th VM) was another Apprentice who was also there. As 2IC of the Armoured Regt LAD, Joe led the support for the tanks.

Regards, Ian

## *Update*

*Research by Jeff Heron, 21st Intake Radio Mechanic, Editor*

From "THE EYES and EARS" 131 Locators Association Historical Timeline, "Australian troops were committed to SVN under 1 Australian Task Force in 1965-66. 131 DLB [Divisional Locating Battery] was called on to contribute a Detachment. This first Detachment:

- was formed and commanded by Captain Townley, to begin service in SVN in 1966
- the Artillery component consisted of Survey, Radar and Artillery Intelligence personnel for a strength of 72
- arrived together with three AN/KPQ-1 radars in SVN on 27 May 1966."

According to the 131 Locators Association Newsletter No 6, Jun 2017, there were two other Apprentices at Coral/Balmoral: Stephen (Shorty) Palmer and Janis (Limbo) Strautins, both 18th Intake Radio Mechanics.

According to "12 Fd Regt (Vietnam) Association Nominal Roll First Tour Vietnam", the OC of the LAD during the Battle was Ross Bland, 5th Intake Fitter and Turner and the Jun 1953 Apprentice BSM and Governor-General's Medallist. Apprentices known, therefore, to have been at Coral/Balmoral were:

- **242606, Ross Frederick Bland**, 5th Intake Fitter and Turner. (RIP)
  As a TCAPT, Ross commanded 12 Fd Regt LAD from 9 Apr 1968 to 11 Mar 1969. He retired as a MAJ.
- **243117, James Joseph (Joey) Hill**, 13th Intake Vehicle Mechanic (RIP).
  LT Hill served as 2IC of the Armd Regt LAD, leading support for the tanks. He served with 1 Armd Sqn Wksp from 14 May 1968 to 9 Oct 1968 and then 1 ATF HQ LAD from 10 Oct 1968 to 14 May 1969. He retired as a LT.
- **64357, Robert Wayne (Bob) Lowry, 18th Intake Clerk** (AAAA Member #1276).
  Bob was the 2LT commanding Gun No 2 of 102 Fd Bty that was overrun and damaged by the NVA that Kelvin then inspected. He served with 12 Fd Regt, RAA from 4 Mar 1968 to 4 Feb 1969. Bob Retired as a LTCOL and was also Military Attaché in Jakarta Indonesia.
- **18814, John Joseph (Joe/JJ) McNeil OAM**, 18th Intake Radio Mechanic (RIP).
  Joe served as a CPL Radar Mechanic with Det, 131 Div Loc Bty Wksp from 16 Apr 1968 to 14 May 1969. Joe retired as a MAJ.
- **18820 Stephen Edward (Shorty) Palmer**, 18th Intake Radio Mechanic. (RIP)
  Shorty served as a TCPL with Det, 131 Div Loc Bty Wksp from 12 Apr 1968 to 30 Apr 1969 and retired as a SGT.
- **243346, Janis (Limbo) Strautins**, 18th Intake Radio Mechanic.
  He served as a SGT with Det, 131 Div Loc Bty Wksp from 16 Apr 1968 to 14 May 1969, and retired as a WO1.

The last three above were Radar Mechanics, responsible in the main for maintaining the AN/KPQ-1 radars of the Detachment. The radars remained in Vietnam until they were withdrawn in Jul 1970 and returned to Australia.

The Battery was raised in 1952 as the 31st Locating Battery and re-designated as the 131st Locating Battery on July 10, 1954. The Detachment described above served in South Vietnam from Apr 1966 to May 1971.

The Battery now operates as 131st Surveillance and Target Acquisition Battery (131 STA Battery) part of the 20th Regiment, RAA, based at Gallipoli Barracks, Enoggera, specializing in intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance (ISTAR). Personnel and equipment have deployed to East Timor, the Solomon Islands, Iraq, and Afghanistan.




*Above: Fire Support Base Clowes, ? Phước Tuy Province, Vietnam, 1968: left to right: CAPT Don Tait, Arty Offr B Coy, 1RAR; 2LT Bob Lowry, Right Sect Comd, 102 Fd Bty; 2LT Matt Cleland, Left Sect Comd, 102 Fd Bty; LT Ian Ahearn, Gun Position Offr, 102 Fd Bty; CAPT David Brook, BC, 102 Fd Bty*

### *Copy your Newsletter to your mates who aren't AAAA members*

*From Brian Daley OAM, 14th Intake Vehicle Mechanic, AAAA Life Member (#) & SQld Regional Rep*

Congratulations Jeff

What a great newsletter full of stories about apprentices. I enjoyed it from top to bottom even if I was a little bit biased. I have sent it out to all my 14th brethren; it's too good for them to miss.

Well done, Cheers, Brian

### *Recognition for Cyclone Tracy support*

*From Ed Zielinski, 23rd Intake Vehicle Mechanic (AAAA Member #567)*

Great read

Still campaigning for Cyclone Tracy to be recognized by the federal gov for all Navy, Army, Air Force boys and also the Salvation Army.

Ed Zielinski

### *Australian Service Medal 1945-75 – eligibility*

*From an AAAA Website Contact Form on 26 Aug 2026 by Bob Stone, 22nd Intake Vehicle Mechanic (AAAA Member #955)*

**Re: Singapore Service** – The Australian Service Medal 1945-75 was approved in 1995, for service in, or in connection with declared non-warlike operations in the period from 3 Sep 1945 to 16 Sep 1975.

This entitled those who served in Singapore for more than 30 days to this medal with SE Asia clasp.

There are many ex appys who served in Singapore that wouldn't know this. I only found out by requesting a copy of my service record and they supplied a "Certificate of Service" with the medal listed.

Sadly some that served there have passed but they are still entitled to this medal. If you know the NOK of those, reach out and see if they wish for you to apply on their behalf.

Here is a link to **check all other qualifying service** for the Australian Service Medal: *https://www.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/honours-awards/australian-awards/australian-service-medal-1945-75*.

### *Update on Bernie Sullivan, 7th Intake Vehicle Mechanic (AAAA Member #122)*

*From Jenny Sullivan, 6 Oct 2026*

Hi Jeff,

It has taken me this long to get back to you on the membership fees. I did discuss it with Bernie and he wants to pay $125.00 for perpetual membership. I think that is the right one, if not let me know. I found a certificate that records Bernie's membership fees are not due till 2029 however he wants to go ahead with the Perpetual membership. I would like to pay by direct banking but do not have the bank details.

Bernie will not be attending any of the lunches, but he feels a close connection as an apprentice of the 7th intake. He is very proud of that. Bernie is doing quite well. I have afternoon tea with him every day we read all things Army that come his way.

Bernie is living a quiet life enjoying his TV shows and visits from family, as long as he doesn't have to contend with crowds. He enjoys his meals in the evening and the glass of red wine and of course his nightly glass of whisky before bed.

Hope all is well with you, Cheers, Jenny

## *SPAASSM Collection*

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

### *August 2026 solution*

Last edition's secret answer was on page 17, in the "Electronics Trades" article. The images of the 28th Intake ETs were from the AAS Journal '74 (SPAASSM PhII, Binder 10, Item 24). There were no correct answers!

### *November competition*



*SPAASSM PhI Images 02263, 02264 and 02265*

Colour photography didn't become widely available in Australia until the late 1960s to early 1970s, so all early photos in the SPAASSM Collection and even most later images remained in black and white. Some of the earlier colour photos in the Collection include these three (above) from 1980, which include the RSM WO1 Dick Boyce welcoming 35th Intake Queenslanders and Carpenters and Joiners to Balcombe.

For a free copy of the SPAASSM Collection, find the secretly hidden answer in this edition and send your answer by email to *news@austarmyapprentice.org*. The first correct answer will receive the free copy.

## Merchandise

***AAAA SHOP: https://austarmyapprentice.org/shop/***

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

***Notes:***

1. Postage is calculated on ordering. **Shipping is free for Sale items**.
2. When ordering a Name Badge, include your preferred first name, and Intake/Class.
3. When ordering a Key Ring, ask if a number (between 1 and 1000) you would like is still available.

| MERCHANDISE ITEMS | PRICES (Note 1) |
|---|---|
| 2013 Balcombe Commemoration or 60th ANNIVERSARY DVD | $10.00 |
| 70th Reunion STUBBY HOLDER (Canberra) | $5.00 |
| AAAA Badged CAP (BALCOMBE on the RHS and BONEGILLA on the LHS) | $20.00 |
| AAS CLOTH BADGE – Balcombe or Bonegilla – Large (260 mm x 210 mm) | $25.00 |
| AAS CLOTH BADGE – Small – 100 mm x 70 mm | $20.00 |
| AAS Flag (Original Badge) (1800 mm x 900 mm) | $175.00 |
| Association Car Sticker | $5.00 |
| Association Lapel Badge | $10.00 |
| Association Name Badge **(Note 2)** | $16.50 |
| Association Name Badge with 70th Anniversary Reunion Photo Card Promotion **Sale** **(Notes 1 & 2)** | $30.00 |
| Association Name Badge with Key Ring Promotion **Sale** **(Notes 1, 2 & 3)** | $30.00 |
| Association Tie | $25.00 |
| Badged Face Mask (both AAS & AAAA badges) | $5.00 |
| Baseball Cap (AAS Badge) | $15.00 |
| DVD – 1998 50th Anniversary Video (Albury Wodonga) **(price includes postage)** | $10.00 |
| Key Ring (Association Badge) **(Note 3)** | $15.00 |
| Plaque (Association Badge or School Badge) | $85.00 |
| Polo Shirt (M, L, XL, 2XL,3XL, 4XL) | $35.00 |
| Reunion Cap (70th) (Canberra) | $12.50 |
| Reunion PHOTO CARD (70th) (Canberra) | $10.00 |
| SPAASSM Collection USB (card) | $25.00 |
| Stubby Holder (AAS Badge) | $5.00 |

## AWM update



While the last edition of TAA indicated that the AWM's major expansion programme was nearing completion, there is still plenty of activity to interest those who are in Canberra or the region, or who might be thinking of visiting Canberra before the end of this year. One such item is the special temporary installation (until Dec 2026) commemorating 100 years of the Royal Australian Corps of Signals. The Certa Cito Centenary Cube sculpture in the main entrance foyer was created by Canberra-based artist and sculptor and ADF Veteran Richard Barrett. It reflects on the Corps' 100th anniversary and its role. The sculpture was unveiled at Simpson Barracks on 10 Nov 2025 and was designed by members of the Signals Community who also assisted the artist with its construction.

In the Simpson Barracks Centenary Booklet (*here*), we read that "*the diamond shape represents the global reach and secure nature of the Corps, with each side telling part of the Signals story: the lightning bolt of*

*communications, the raven of electronic warfare, the Corps' engineering roots, the evolution of technology, the motto Certa Cito "Swift and Sure" and the Remembrance Poppy. The surrounding masts and fine connecting wires honour the families and communities who sustain the Corps, symbolising care, connection and commemoration - the three goals of the Certa Cito Foundation.*"

## History

### *Seven useful trades*

In 1976, recruiting efforts for the Army Apprentices School included many brochures, including one which included this page.

# Seven useful trades.

You could be forgiven for wondering what sort of useful trade you can learn in the Army, what with all those blokes leaping out of helicopters, firing guns and so on.

Let's simply say that without Army tradesmen, Army fighting men would be sharpening sticks to make bows and arrows. Tradesmen are the backbone of today's Army.

And, in the Army, you can choose from several trades, any one of which will stand you in good stead in the world outside, should you decide to call it quits one day. It is important to remember that each of the Army trades is recognised by all State apprenticeship authorities.

So here's a rundown on the Army's seven trades . . .

Electronic Tradesman. If you've always wanted some sophisticated sound equipment, you could be building your own by the time you finish this course. You'll have a balanced diet of theory, practical and lab work in all aspects of modern communications systems. By the end of the course you'll be building transmitters and FM Generators.

Out of the Army, you'll be in demand as a fully qualified Electronic Technician.

Electrical Mechanic. At the end of this course, you'll be a fully-fledged electrical mechanic. During your time, you'll cover all trade aspects including house and factory machinery and appliances. You'll be an expert in all things electrical — from lighting through to Commutator Motors. Out of the Army, Electrical Mechanics are among the better paid tradesmen.

Plumber and Gasfitter. A vital trade both in and out of the Army. You'll end up knowing all there is to know about plumbing and drainage, particularly from the building construction angle. And that takes in a wide field of skills including plastic welding, roof plumbing, the ins and outs of water supply, even the supply, storage, distribution and safe handling of liquefied petroleum gas. Out of the Army, the world's your oyster.

Carpenter and Joiner. Like your colleagues the plumbers, you'll be in the Building Trades Area. During your four-year course, you'll build everything from a lean-to right through to a three-roomed house. As in all trades except electronics, the second half of your course is spent on-the-job, with some outside study at technical colleges. (Electronics apprentices spend one year on the job.) And, when you finish, you'll be almost at the level of Clerk of Works—well ahead of civilian apprentices. Out of the Army, your training will put you at the top of the heap.

Fitter Maintenance. You're one of the 'heavy metal kids', thoroughly understanding metals from their base components to their use in completed mechanics. When you finish, you're virtually a maintenance engineer—not only qualified to fit, but also to repair, service and make equipment. You'll be involved with refrigeration, engines and pumps—so you won't be stuck inside four walls all the time.

Vehicle Mechanic. You'll start off with small stuff, but before you know it, you'll be right into gear boxes, turbo transmissions, differentials, tank air-conditioning systems and marine engines. You'll even study steering geometrics. You won't get better mechanical training anywhere. Out of the Army, you'll just about write your own ticket.

Musician. Most guys your age would give their eye teeth to learn an instrument. And you have a golden opportunity to get paid while you're doing it. You'll learn to play drums for a start, then you get together with the staff to decide which instrument you'll specialise in full time. And you'll have plenty of time to play your own kind of music in your own groups. Out of the Army, musical opportunities are getting better every day.

*SPAASSM PhII, Binder 06, Item 04, Image 00003*

So the seven trades offered in 1976 were Electronic Tradesman, Electrical Mechanic, Plumber and Gasfitter, Carpenter and Joiner, Fitter Maintenance, Vehicle Mechanic and Musician– *secret answer*.

## *TRADESMEN for the REGULAR ARMY*

*Images below from Australian Army Journal No. 3 Oct.-Nov. 1948*

Noting that approximately 6,900 of the 9,409 (nearly 75%) Army Apprentices who enlisted were born after 1948 (those from about the 20th Intake), the article below appears to have been written not to convince people of a need for Army Apprentices, but to inform them of the existence of the Army Apprentices School and its purpose.

The author, COL George Henry Sangrove Moran (later BRIG GHS Moran OBE) was born in 1899. In 1940, as a MAJ, he led a convoy of 12 armoured cars manufactured at the Railways Workshop at Islington, SA being driven through Adelaide en route to Victoria. Later that year, he was promoted to LTCOL and commanded 2/2 Army Field Workshop (AFW) in the Middle East. By Dec 1945, while in Lae, New Guinea, he was acting Deputy Director of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (DDEME) for the First Army.

COL Moran transferred to RAEME in Jun 1951 and served as Head of Corps (HOC) for the Corps of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (AEME later RAEME) from Feb 1952 to Aug 1955, attaining the rank of Brigadier. In 1952, he was instrumental in arguing with AHQ that the RAEME Training Centre should be established in North Bandiana. He was Honorary Colonel of Southern Command (Victoria) from Mar 1963 until Mar 1968.

If one didn't see the date of the article, written 80 years ago, at the beginning, one could almost believe it was being written in the current climate: "*There probably never was a time when an army was able to function without the services of highly skilled tradesmen.*" and "*The army of to-day is a complex technical organization which cannot function in peace or war without the services of competent tradesmen.*"

The principles set out in the article remain today, the need for Army (indeed the three Services) to train their own tradespeople. Without the Army Apprentices School (and those of the Navy and RAAF) however, the Services now rely on various, similarly focused organisations to provide the tradespeople required. These organisations include the Army Logistic Training Centre (ALTC) part of Forces Command, established on 1 Dec 1995.

As well as Army trades personnel, soldiers and officers from the Army's logistics corps and small numbers of RAN and RAAF personnel undertake various courses at ALTC as part of initial employment training, or as part of corps-specific promotion courses. Training around 5,000 students a year, ALTC works closely with Wodonga TAFE, Monash University and RMIT, to provide nationally recognised qualifications to military personnel. On completion of employment training, graduates are posted to various combat, combat support and service support units.

ALTC is headquartered at Gaza Ridge Barracks, Anderson Road, South Bandiana, VIC 3691. The Centre's role is to provide combat service support and logistic training for Australian Army officers and soldiers, covering transport, ordnance, electrical/mechanical engineering, health, logistics operations, and chaplaincy.

Current redevelopment at ALTC is part of the Albury Wodonga Military Area (AWMA) Redevelopment Project, which is valued at approximately $395.7 million. The AWMA Redevelopment Project modernises aging infrastructure across the multi-site training facility to sustain personnel throughput and scale up the ADF permanent logistics workforce. The scope includes:

- construction of a modern 240-bed residential facility for trainees,
- a new combined mess precinct alongside extensive site-wide service and utility overhauls,
- relocating the main base entrance at South Bandiana to a signalized intersection on the Murray Valley Highway to improve traffic safety,
- a shared training and logistics hub for Cadets and Army Reserve, and
- large-scale rooftop solar panel arrays and net-zero electrification initiatives.

The timeline includes: 2023 - Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works approval; 2025 - construction commenced; late-2026 – construction underway, including practical completion of a major barracks upgrade at North Bandiana; and late-2033 – final stages of the program.

# ★ TRADESMEN ★
## *for the*
# REGULAR ARMY

Colonel G. H. S. Moran, OBE
Corps of Australian Electrical
and Mechanical Engineers

THERE probably never was a time when an army was able to function without the services of highly skilled tradesmen. Even the "bow and arrow" armies of long ago required trained specialists to maintain the weapons and armour with which they were equipped.

Until comparatively recent times the equipment used by armies was very simple, and could be kept in working order by a few tradesmen in each unit. Since the beginning of this century, however, the quantity and variety of military equipment has steadily increased. The army of to-day is a complex, technical organization which cannot function in peace or war without the services of competent tradesmen.

Until the outbreak of the recent war the Australian Army was able to obtain all the tradesmen it required by enlisting men who had served their apprenticeship and become qualified tradesmen in civil life. It soon became apparent, however, that this source of supply could not meet the demands for tradesmen of the three fighting services and the numerous munition factories which were established to provide the services with weapons and machines.

To overcome the difficulty the Army set up schools to train men in army trades. These schools gave the trainee sufficient skill to enable him to perform a limited scale of specialist duties; they made no attempt to turn out qualified all round tradesmen. Because of the restricted nature of their training and experience these men on their return to civil life, could not be recognized as journeymen tradesmen unless they completed a further course of training.

### Post War Army Requirements

In the re-organization of the fighting services after the close of hostilities the strength of the peace time Regular Army was fixed at an overall figure of 19,000 officers and other ranks. This regular nucleus forms the hard core of the Australian Army. If it is to fulfill its function it must be a highly trained force containing a large proportion of specialists and competent tradesmen.

Experience soon showed that the Army had little prospect of obtaining the tradesmen it required from the pre-war sources. To-day there is a shortage of skilled men in nearly all trades, and, in addition, industrial activity is probably greater than it has been in our history.

To meet this situation the Army resolved to train its own tradesmen. Since the urgency of war was no longer a factor to be considered more time could be devoted to this training. Instead of producing a man of limited skill it was determined to turn out a fully qualified tradesman who could, at the conclusion of his military service, readily find lucrative employment in civil life.

After consultations with Employers' organizations, Trade Unions and Apprenticeship Authorities, it was decided to establish an Army Apprentices' School. These organizations agreed to recognize as a fully qualified tradesman any boy who has qualified at the School and has had one year's practical experience in an Army workshop.

### The Army Apprentices' School

The Army Apprentices' School is situated at Balcombe, an ideal, healthy site near the popular seaside resort of Mornington, Victoria. Ample facilities for recreation exist in the School grounds or on adjacent land, and there are safe, sheltered beaches within easy reach.

Provision has been made for teaching the following trades at the School:—

*Metal Trades Group*

Fitter, general
Fitter, mechanical vehicle
Fitter, instrument
Turner
Armourer
Blacksmith
Draughtsman
Welder.

*Electrical Group*

Fitter, electrical
Mechanic, telecommunications.

*Building Trades Group*

Bricklayer
Carpenter and joiner
Plumber.

The syllabus provides for theoretical and practical training to a standard equal to that required by apprentices in civil life. This training involves instruction up to the standard of the Lower Trades Certificate (Theoretical) in addition to practical trades training.

The apprentices are also given basic military instruction to ensure that they are trained soldiers by the end of the third year of the course.

Facilities are provided to enable the apprentices to attain the general educational standards which will make them eligible to apply for entry to the Royal Military College, Duntroon.

At the end of the third year successful students are transferred to an Army workshop for one year's practical experience.

### Qualification for Entry

Candidates for the Army Apprentices' School must be medically fit and must be British subjects of European descent. They must have attained the age of 15 years, but must not have attained the age of 17 years on the first day of the month of entry into the School. In general education they should preferably have reached intermediate standard, but consideration will be given to candidates who have Junior Technical Certificates or have reached sub-intermediate standard.

### Terms of Engagement

Successful candidates engage to serve for a period of nine years. The first three years are spent as a student at the School, and the fourth year in gaining practical experience in an Army workshop. The student is then rated as a soldier tradesman, and serves five years in a workshop or with a field unit. He may then take his discharge or engage for a further period of service.

### Pay and Allowances

From the time he joins the School no financial responsibility whatever devolves upon the apprentice's parents. He is housed, clothed and rationed at public expense, and receives free medical and dental attention. Pocket money is paid at the following rates:—

First year—5/- (2/- deferred) per week

Second year—7/6 (2/6 deferred) per week

Third year—15/- (2/6 deferred) per week

The deferred portion of the pocket money is saved for the apprentice and paid to him in a lump sum when he leaves the School.

The Army pays the cost of the apprentice's journey to the School, and also pays the return fare to his home for leave twice a year. During these leave periods he is paid a ration allowance of 4/6 a day in addition to his pocket money.

When the apprentice goes to the Army workshops at the beginning of his fourth year of service he is paid the full adult rate for a skilled soldier tradesman. In addition he receives the same free initial issue of clothing and necessaries as any other soldier of the Australian Regular Army.

### Homely Atmosphere

The Commanding Officer of the School, Lieutenant-Colonel F. B. Oldfield, has set out to make the whole environment of the establishment as homely and pleasant as possible, and to eliminate the old style atmosphere of the military barracks. Soldiers of the old school get quite a shock to see bright coverlets on the beds and snowy cloths on the dining tables.

### Self-Government Code

To provide for the maintenance of good order and discipline the Commanding Officer has introduced a code of self-government by student members of the School. Under this scheme offenders against the well-being of the little community are dealt with by the students themselves. This is accomplished by means of an Apprentices' Court comprising:—

The Judge, who is a member of the School Staff.

A Jury of not less than four apprentices.

A Prosecutor and a Defending Counsel, both apprentices.

Proceedings before the Apprentices' Court are conducted in strict conformity with proper legal procedure. Care is taken to ensure that harsh or unjust penalties are not inflicted, and every offender has the right of appeal to a higher Court, in this case the Commanding Officer.

### Moral Welfare

Every care is taken to ensure that the boys leave the School with a strongly developed sense of moral values. At least once a week the School is visited by Chaplains from each denomination who take their own boys in separate groups for religious instruction.

### Recreation

A competent physical training instructor is attached to the School, and ample provision has been made in the syllabus for recreational activities. All the usual team games are played, and expert instruction is given in gymnastics, boxing, wrestling, swimming and life saving.

A selected programme of up-to-date feature films is shown at the School three times a week. Concerts, designed not only to give immediate enjoyment but to inculcate an appreciation of good music and literature, are arranged at frequent intervals.

There is, of course, a library well stocked with technical books and general literature.

### Official Opening

On 2 August, 1948, the first intake of 63 students, drawn from all States of the Commonwealth, entered the School. The first fortnight was occupied in getting the boys accustomed to school routine and gradually settling down to serious work.

On 20 August the Minister for the Army, the Honourable Cyril Chambers, officially opened the School in the presence of the largest gathering of senior officers assembled in Australia since the war.

It is intended to take in 150 new students each year. When the scheme is in full operation, therefore, the School will have 450 apprentices, all learning under ideal conditions to be good soldiers, good tradesmen and good citizens.

## Our committee

### Committee changes at the AGM

As outlined in the President's Report, the following changes have occurred:
**Stepping down**: Greg Haggett, 40th P&G, Vice-president; Graeme Smail, 35th ET, Membership Secretary; Grant Cotteril, 38th P&G, Welfare Officer; Jeff Heron, 21st RM, Public Officer; Michael O'Donnell, 22nd Bricklayer, Committee member; Bill Amor, 20th F&T, Committee member; Jim Hislop, 9th F&T, Trustee; and Bob Coventry, 22nd RM, WA Regional Rep.
**Elected/appointed**: see *below.

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

***Patron*** ..... Major General Andrew FREEMAN AM (Retd), 40th Intake Electrical Fitter

***Office-bearers***

**President** ..... Keith LOWE, 22nd F&T
..... Life Member
**Vice-president** ..... *Graeme SMAIL, 35th ET
**Secretary** ..... Simon BROOKS, 40th MM
**Treasurer** ..... Richard PIKE, 21st VM
..... Life Member

***Committee Members***

**Heritage Officer** ..... Rob MINATO, 31st ET
**Membership Secretary** .. *Greg HAGGETT, 40th P&G
..... Life Member
**Welfare Officer** ..... vacant
**Public Officer** ..... *Gerard OGDEN, 34th EF

***Ordinary Committee Members***

**Member 1** ..... Liz FITZGIBBON, 40th ET
**Member 2** ..... Bob CLARKE, 22nd VM
**Member 3** ..... *Jeff HERON, 21st RM,
..... Life Member
**Member 4** ..... *Steve HOWELLS, 28th ET
..... Assistant Treasurer
**Member 5** ..... Steve DOUDLE, 25th VM
**Member 6** ..... Wayne DAVIS, 50th Elec Fitter

***Appointees***

**Legal Adviser** ..... Rod PERKINS, 24th F&T
**Auditor** ..... Gary LANCASTER, 22nd F&T
**Chaplain** ..... Rev Canon Alan KELB OAM,
..... 25th F&T
**Merchandise Officer** ..... Richard PIKE, 21st VM
..... Life Member
**Newsletter Editor** ..... Jeff HERON, 21st RM,
..... Life Member
**Social Media Admin** ..... Simon BROOKS, 40th MM

***Regional Representatives***

**NT** ..... Charles (Bill) ALLOM, 25th VM
**Southeast Qld** ..... Brian DALEY OAM, 14th VM,
..... Life Member
**North Qld** ..... vacant
**NSW** ..... Richard PIKE, 21st VM
..... Life Member
**Riverina NSW (new)** ..... *Darryl BRITTON, 28th EM
**ACT** ..... Jeff HERON, 21st RM,
..... Life Member
**Vic North** ..... Rob MINATO, 31st ET
**Vic Metro, Central and South** all vacant
**SA** ..... Michael THOMPSON, 26th VM
**WA** ..... vacant
**Tas** ..... Steve BRAMICH, 23rd C&J

## Contributions to The Apprentice About

The Apprentice About (TAA) is published quarterly (in Feb, May, Aug and Nov). 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

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