

President's Letter August 2011

Dear Member,

We've had our last full committee meeting before we go to our Annual General Meeting in October in Canberra. The committee meeting was held at Bandiana, on the 30th July. We appreciated being given access to space to hold our meeting in the Borella Club building at Gaza Ridge Barracks.

We ate in the OR's Mess and were considerably better looked after than the majority of us remember OR's messes. We were a source of some curiosity amongst the serving men and women who shared the line up at the servery windows with us. Might have had something to do with our average age approaching sixty and perhaps something about our general condition which would not have served us well on a 0.1km run.

Back to the AGM. This AGM will of course be part of the October event in Canberra and I invite you to attend that meeting if you can. All of our members and recipients of this letter will receive formal notice of the meeting in due course but I thought you might like to know that one of the key items that will be addressed is a motion to make some changes to your Constitution.

Constitutional Review

The original constitution was drafted by Frank Poole and the document has served us well since inception. The environment in which we operate as an incorporated association has changed a bit and the Committee felt that some of the operational provisions needed an update. Jeff Heron and his team were charged with collating suggestions from the Committee and bringing proposed changes back to the Committee.

In the proposals that were brought to the Committee the overall structure and major provisions that formed the core of Frank Poole's original document have remained unchanged. There were changes needed to some clauses that we thought would make the Association more administratively efficient. You will receive notice of these in another document ahead of the AGM where the final decision will be up to you.

Sub Committees

The Memorial Sub Committee is chaired by Frank Poole and for the time being I continue to Chair the Balcombe Sub Committee. In both cases the work of the sub committees is progressing quite well. Much of the Memorial activity is focused upon maintaining the Memorial which in the main has fallen to Jim Hislop to manage with the support of the Museum. We are very grateful that Jim is active in that area. The memorial is a static memorial but is now 3 years old and like everything that is open to the elements, it has to be maintained.

At Balcombe the project to put in place a Heritage Site is progressing and the rededication of the site is scheduled to be one of our major events in 2012. We're receiving heaps of support from the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council and Staff and they recently added another \$2,000 to our fund raising. We now have \$12,000 in hand and need about the same again to complete the job. The saving grace is that we're managing and sharing the project with the three other schools; Signals, Survey and Music which all occupied the site in the past and we're looking to them and a number of other units to 'kick in'. We are confident that although we may have to do a bit of drum banging we will close the gap.



While I am on the subject of fund raising -- I thought you might like to see a couple of the merchandising items that we intend to use as fund raisers. They both feature the new badge which was formally adopted by the Committee Meeting.

These are just two of the range that will be introduced at the October Event. These two are generic items in the sense that they can carry an additional embroidered message for the various events that we have. There are two parts to this. The items with the badge embroidered as shown will be available through distribution arrangements being made with the Museum.

Both of the items shown here are hitech fabrics and the polo shirt is made of a miraculous fibre that keeps the wearer warm in winter and cool in summer. The towel is also hi tech and is about seven times more efficient than ordinary towelling. The towel is a gym towel, but it can be equally used on the golf course, in the car or wherever. They look and feel pretty good.

These items can be made available for various intake related and other functions or special events. So it will be possible to order these with your intake number or some additional embroidered text. In the case of the Balcombe Heritage Project I am proposing to include on the polo shirt. the words Balcombe Military Heritage Project 2011, will be tastefully done around the badge.



Finance and Administration

We're in pretty good shape at the moment with around \$45,000 on hand. Bearing in mind that our bank balance includes \$10,000 term deposit and the general account has been boosted in recent times by the inflow of funds for the October Event. The biggest ongoing expense is bringing people together for Committee Meetings. We try to limit these face to face meetings to about three a year and use Skype wherever possible.

We currently operate what are essentially separate membership, secretarial, events and treasury systems. As part of making ourselves more efficient in reporting and responding to enquiries we are currently looking at updating some aspects of this. Our treasurer, Owen Reynolds has his hands full with the flow of funds in and out particularly when there is a large event coming up and like the rest of us Owen is a volunteer and much valued. If we can make the system a bit more cohesive then it will serve the membership better and those that give of their time to administer the Association a bit more time to focus on what's ahead.

The Benzine Project

The Committee came to the conclusion that we have gone about as far as we can with the resources that we have on this project. Jock McWhinney initiated the project when it appeared that a significant number of the older intakes were falling victim to exposure to benzine during their training and in later service. We will collate the information received and pass that on to a more appropriately resourced organisation.

Resignations from the Committee

Regrettably we noted the resignation from the Committee of Geoff Martin and Mike Farrar.

Geoff Martin, who served in Korea was recently hosted back to Korea with a number of other Korean Veterans. He answered in the affirmative when I asked him if he was up to doing it all again; but on reflection he thought he couldn't manage both. So the Committee work would have to go. Geoff will continue to receive the material coming from the Balcombe Sub Committee which he chaired until last year. We wish both Geoff and Mary safe passage and thank them for their contribution to the Association.

Mike Farrar also tendered his resignation for reasons associated with his 'other' role as a welfare officer for the RSL. I am also sorry to lose Mike from the Committee because his efforts were directed at working up an Intake liaison roll. That's a little more difficult than it sounds and Mike's contribution was much appreciated.

New Secretary

On a brighter note I am very pleased to advise you that Neil Bennett (13th) has wilted under a sustained campaign by the other members of the Committee (and me) to take on the role of Secretary of the Association. I thank him for accepting the position and also thank Val, Neil's very talented wife, for her forbearance in the matter as well. Our wives are inevitably caught up in the to and fro of the Association.

Post Script

I would like to thank those members that have replied to the previous "letters"; the feedback was sincerely appreciated and contained a lot of good information. I welcome any ideas you might have and look forward to hearing from you; good, bad or otherwise.

Two reasons for a short report: First, most of the work of the Association has been reported upon in the two previous letters and I don't want to bore you beyond what I have but rest assured the various projects are proceeding. Second, **THE NEXT PAGE IS REALLY IMPORTANT** it will be of significant interest to those members who have not yet registered to attend the October Event. We need your support and Frank Maloney (does anybody know why Frank's nickname is 'Speed'?) and Frank Poole have put together a great program.

On behalf of your Committee

Barry Teal.

President Australian Army Apprentices Association Inc

ps. I hope you have not forgotten that there are two vacancies on the Committee. There's no point in looking the other way. We all did "Clever ways to avoid volunteering 101", and those tricks will not work at the AGM,

The 2011 Event in Canberra ACT 27th October to 30th October 2011

Our arrangements are well in hand for the Apprentices Together 2011 event in October. How are your's going ? Time is the enemy and although we have the arrangements in place we're still looking for more support from you for your individual intakes.

Although it's hard to imagine that any Army Apprentice will not have seen or heard about what's commonly being referred to as the "Canberra Event" but just in case; here are some brief details.



It's called Apprentices Together 2011 and will extend from the 27th October 2011 until the last formal event on Sunday the 30th with a Church Parade at the Royal Military College, Duntroon. Remember?- We built the Chapel.

Registrations begin on 27th October 2011 (Thursday) The meet and greet will be at the EPIC park Canberra and those that have been on the ball and registered early -- will be able to get a tour through the much protected AWM Annexe. The public rarely gets to see what's in there -- but we're special!

Friday we will stand to at the AWM to remember our own. This event has been a collaborative effort with the Australian War Memorial Management. We will have access to the garden and it will be a formal wreath laying.

The AGM and a great dinner are key events on the Saturday. Intake tables are being booked now. The hub of the formal activity is at the Southern Cross Club and it is there that we'll hold our AGM, have dinner, get a beer and the elders will struggle with "I know the face - but I can't think of his name."

This event is designed to provide an opportunity for all of us to get together and over the same time and place the program creates a great opportunity to make it an Intake by Intake event as well. We have focussed on making time available for each of the intakes to be able to have their own time together.

The 14th are in their Golden Anniversary year; no doubt we'll hear a lot from them. This time they've promised to remain lucid. If you're a 14th and haven't caught up with your peers now's the time.

The entire program and all the details including your registration form are on the web. If you haven't been on the website then time is definitely the enemy. If you can find some of that precious resource hop off your tail and have a look.

www.austarmyapprentice.org(click on Reunion Canberra 2011)

You could also just pick up the phone and call

Frank Maloney 0418 728 181 or Frank Poole 0416 193 387.