



# The Apprentice About

Newsletter for the Australian Army Apprentices Association Inc

Volume 1, Issue 2

November 2010

## From the President

Welcome to our second edition of The Apprentice About, I trust that you will all find the content informative and enjoyable reading.

The 4<sup>th</sup> AGM of the Association was held in Canberra on 23<sup>rd</sup> October. I thank all who made the effort to attend and who enjoyed a BBQ lunch provided by the VVF. The turnout was disappointing and I hope reflects the confidence members have in their Committee rather than apathy!!!!? I hope we will have better support for events in the coming year.

We have received a couple of queries as to why it takes so long to get entries posted to the Vale page on our web site. After early experience, when we posted a non-deceased member on what appeared good advice, we instituted a system of confirmatory checks and sometimes it takes time for that process to be finalised. We are now going to try a "provisional" posting to speed up the process.

After four years, it is time we reviewed our progress and projects/responsibilities, along with the Constitution. The first step will be taken at the next Committee meeting to be held at the Army Museum Bandiana in February when an in depth strategic review will be undertaken. The Committee has the first of three discussion papers for consideration now.

October next year sees our 2<sup>nd</sup> national event, Apprentices Together 2011. This will be held in Canberra and will focus on Intakes, a formal wreath laying ceremony at the Australian War Memorial and our reunion dinner. Watch the web site from December on for all the latest news and registration form. Get your intake together to take advantage of this gathering to hold your own intake functions. →

## AUSTRALIAN ARMY APPRENTICES ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

ACT Incorporation No A04404  
GPO Box 2072, CANBERRA, ACT, 2601  
[www.austarmyapprentice.org](http://www.austarmyapprentice.org)

**Patron:** Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie, AO, DSC, CSM, Chief of Army



It was my pleasure to present engraved Association wall plaques to Ray Wilson, our inaugural Treasurer and to Peter Thornton for his work with SPAASSM and his sound council to the Association. Jim Hislop will be presenting a plaque on behalf of the Association to Maj(R) Graham Docksey for his dedication as Manager of the Army Museum at Bandiana for his interest in the Army Apprentice corner and in the help and support he provided during the construction of our memorial and during our 60<sup>th</sup> celebrations.

I am hoping that our Regional Representatives can start organising social activities and local support networks in the next few months. To date only S. Qld and Canberra regions hold regular social functions. How best to assist Regional Representatives in this will be a subject for discussion at the strategic review.

The redevelopment of the Marine gates environ at Balcombe has had a boost with the appointment of Barry Teal as Planning Officer. At last we have been able to contact the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division who is most supportive of the project.

Enjoy The Apprentice About and let your Committee know of any comment you may have about the Apprentice About or the Association.

My very best of wishes to you and your families for Christmas and the coming year, and if you're driving, safe travels.

**Frank Poole**  
**President**

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 From the President
- 2 Army Apprentice Memorial
- 3 Around the states
- 4 Calendar of Events , Book Review
- 5 Short Story
- 6 Member Profile, AAAA Committee



## Army Apprentice Memorial

The Memorial at Bandiana continues to be developed with only the Memorial Wall behind the gates to be built. This Wall will silhouette the gates and provide a repository for the ashes of Apprentices and their partners. Memorial plaques may now be placed on the respective school wall (Balcombe or Bonegilla). Details are available on the web site.

My many thanks to all who included a contribution to the Memorial fund with their last membership fees; we have some very generous Apprentices out there.



## Significance of the Elements of the Memorial

I have been asked if the elements of the Memorial have any particular significance. They certainly do:

1. The walls and support columns are representative of the Marine walls at Balcombe and are of the same design and colour and laid in the same English bond. Each wall represents a School and the names BALCOMBE and BONEGILLA are at the top of their respective walls. Memorial plaques for departed Apprentices can be placed on the respective wall. The columns contain plaques recognising the donors who helped to make the Memorial possible.
2. The gates are copies of the iconic US 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division gates from Balcombe and to the entrance to Latchford Barracks. These gate were built as a gift by ASEME with material donated by the RAEME Association.
3. The paved area represents the parade grounds of the Schools with the engraved pavers representing the thousands of Apprentices who spent hours on these parade grounds. In Army tradition parade grounds are hallowed ground.
4. The flag pole has been fabricated at and donated by SME and stands in the centre of the memorial supporting the flags of Australia and Apprentices. These flags remind us of our pride, loyalty and honour to our country and our mates.
5. The central pit containing the Apprentice School badge sculpture and the dedication plaque represents a weapons pit to remind us that we were all bloody good soldiers.
6. The Apprentice School badge sculpture, the dominant feature of the Memorial signifies the excellent education, trade and military training received by Army Apprentices and was donated by Ray Bertazzo.
7. The rose garden contains dark red and white roses representing the black and white colours of the Army Apprentice flashes.
8. The Memorial Wall to be built behind the gates will silhouette the gates (they are currently lost against the dark vegetation behind) and will hold the ashes of Apprentices and their spouses. Its position behind the gates also represents a symbolic march out through the gates when ashes are interred.
9. The dedication plaque reminds us all of our worth and for what the Memorial stands for.

Soon to be completed, the Memorial Wall will hold ashes of Apprentices and their partners. In these days of high funeral costs this represents a saving of at least \$3000 over a burial and has the assurance of perpetual care and being remembered by all Apprentices visiting the site. An appropriate ceremony will be arranged for each interment. Again, details will be shortly on the web site to organise "bookings".

We may also have to relocate to the memorial the intake and KIA plaques from the memorial drive at Latchford Barracks, which is now inside a secure area and there are problems maintaining the trees.

Submitted by Frank Poole

President AAAA Inc. and Chair of the Memorial Sub-Committee.



## AROUND THE STATES AND REGIONS

### North QLD

At the start of Oct I was fortunate enough to be able to attend the annual RAEME Association annual dinner held at Townsville RSL Club. Many thanks to the NQ RAEME Association President Brian Tuohy for an excellent event.

The dinner was well attended and included the RAEME Corps Director BRIG David Creagh, serving Officers, WO/SNCO's, OR's, retired members of the corps and guests.

One of the highlights of the evening was the raffles in aid of the provision of 'Spanner Packs' for RAEME soldiers deployed on operations overseas. The 'Spanner Pack' is an assortment of creature comfort items provided for the soldiers and is a great initiative of the RAEME Associations.

I managed to get some photos of Apprentices in attendance (apologies to any I missed and names I did not get).

### APPRENTICES AT THE NQ RAEME ASSOCIATION ANNUAL DINNER OCT



Neil Butcher (24<sup>th</sup>)



Bob Lauro (27<sup>th</sup>) and Darryle Wheelhouse (33<sup>rd</sup>)



Un-named (sorry) and Duane Maggenti (42<sup>nd</sup>)



Mick Obrien



Dave Young (30<sup>th</sup>) and Darryle Wheelhouse (33<sup>rd</sup>)



Mick Harris (38<sup>th</sup>)



The last two intakes Brad Bargaquist (48<sup>th</sup>) and Gayle Walkom (49<sup>th</sup>)



Wayne Nutchey (40<sup>th</sup>), Rob Pontifex (40<sup>th</sup>), Amir Tito (41<sup>st</sup>) and Andrew Freeman (40<sup>th</sup>)



RAEME Corps Director BRIG David Creagh and LTCOL Piers Cambridge



The Future - Trainee Tradesmen - Ben Wheadon (F&T), Morgan Hocevar (F&T), Adam Little (VM) and Phil Mc Kracklin (F&T)

Of course our competitiveness between the intakes and terminology is alive and well with the odds and evens, sprogs, etc. One example was; certain person who will remain nameless whose first name starts with W wrote down the names of his group for me and listed Amir Tito's intake as 41<sup>st</sup> sprog (seniors were/are good like that).

It was excellent to see the new trade trainees at the dinner; perhaps the Apprentice Scheme will one day be resurrected - we can only hope.

**Dave Young 30 F&T**



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS - REUNIONS

Do you have a reunion or event that you would like to announce to the membership?. If so, please let us know.

### **36<sup>th</sup> Intake reunion - Jan 2011**

Place: Perth – Western Australia

Time 13 – 17 Jan 2011

Contact Tom Esze [tom@eszeberryman.net]

### **Apprentices Together - 2011 Reunion**

Planning is now well underway for our next major national Association event that will be held in Canberra over the period **27<sup>th</sup> October – 30<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

The Association, in recognising that the Intakes were and still are the bonding focus of the AAS, intends to provide a "function umbrella", so that intakes are able to conduct individual reunions, and at the same time come together in a display of combined mateship from days past to the present. This gathering will cover four days and provide the flexibility that will allow the Intakes to do their own thing, plus plenty of time to enjoy all that Canberra has to offer for visitors. The Association will organize key functions to ensure that the reunion maintains its momentum, purpose and solidarity. A draft breakdown of the daily events can be found on the website.

For more information contact Frank Maloney, the Association Events Manager ([frmal@bigpond.com](mailto:frmal@bigpond.com)) and watch the web page at <http://www.austarmyapprentice.org/armyapprenticestogether2011.html>

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## BOOK REVIEW

Title. **Tracks of the Dragon.**

Authors. Keith.R.Ayliffe.BEM. and John.M.Posener.

Available. [www.warbooks.com.au](http://www.warbooks.com.au) [Sydney NSW]

History of Australian Locating Artillery AN/KPQ-1.

The nominal roll for all units associated with this equipment include 34 apprentices [radar mech RAEME].After qualifying from the course on the AN/KPQ-1 mortar locating radar, conducted at Bandiana, the posting was to Detachment 131 Divisional locating battery workshops SVN.

The history of radar used by Australian Artillery units here and overseas is exceptional as evidenced by the text and photographs. The information in this book has been researched in depth by the authors, the facts are correct.

Apart from being a pleasure to read and own, it has proved to be a remarkable reference source of evidence used in disability pension claims with Department of Veterans Affairs, both for initial applications and appeals.

This information is to highlight the idea that there are many books covering the army apprentice experience, this is one of them.

**Harry Hoger 20<sup>th</sup> Radio, Hut Wells, C Company.**



## THE NIGHT I WAS KILLED (TWICE) ON MT MARTHA

*A short (fictional) story By V.P. 'Jerry' Neale - 20<sup>th</sup> Plumber*

My two deaths took place on the night of the full moon in March 1967 at the big water tank on the top of Mt Martha. Google Earth shows that the tank is still there and squats in the South West corner of the now Mt Martha Golf course. In those days all was open farm land with some trees spread along the dirt road and nestling within the folds of the undulating land. The whole event started some hours earlier when at the end of the day's activities I had been summoned to the B Coy Orderly Room to see MAJ Max Jellie.

He told me to get ten men together, have them dressed in their overalls (green) along with their rifles complete with breech blocks and one magazine and then report to the mess hall for an early meal. Apparently we were to act as a guard detail around the big water tank located up on top of Mt Martha. The reason for all this was that it was a target for a Commando Raid that was to happen that night. Apparently NSW had declared war on the evil powers running the state of Victoria and the Mt Martha water tank was part of Victoria's strategic oil supplies. Well all this was pretty exciting stuff so there was no shortage of volunteers. After the meal we were loaded into the back of a truck with the B Coy 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. taking up the front seat, he was fresh out of OCS and was to be the brains of the show. For some reason I didn't have a rifle, maybe because I was the ASM and couldn't be trusted, but those who did have were issued with five blanks to load into their magazines and then we were driven out to the site.

The tank itself was surrounded by a chain mesh fence topped off with a couple of rows of barbed wire, outside of the fence was open grass land. By now we had got the full bottle that this was a CMF Commando exercise and we were to be part of the game. It also explained the buzz that had been going around Balcombe all that day. Apparently a group from one of the Company's who just happened to have been doing a bit of moonlighting on the beach opposite the WRAAC Barracks had watched in dumbstruck awe as a submarine popped out of the water not too far off shore and a couple of rubber duckies had landed on the beach. So much for secrecy as all had been watched by the 'wannabe' lovers from Balcombe.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. posted the guard amongst the trees near the water tank and we all settled down for the long wait. Around midnight and with the full moon directly overhead he decides that he and I should take a walk around the fence perimeter to check it out, maybe see if any oil had been stolen or something like that. We moved out into the open from the cover of the trees and approached a group of sheep at one of the corners of the chain mesh fence. Suddenly a rock or something flew out from among the sheep and one of them jumped up and yelled "that was a grenade and you're both dead". First death.

Then the rest of the sheep jumped up – moonlight plays tricks on the eyes you know – two threw a cloth of some sort over the barbed wire, then the rest threw one of themselves over the top he then ran over to the tank and stuck a couple of wooden blocks to the side and then in a miraculous feat of gymnastics got back over the fence all on his own. Now B Company were renown for not being the brightest mob at Balcombe but even we were starting to cotton onto the notion that these may not be sheep after all and indeed could even be the anticipated Commandos.

Then they told us that we two were their prisoners and were going back to the beach with them – everyone including us forgetting the fact that we were already dead. On hearing this, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. bolted and made a clean break. Two seconds later I copied but the leather sole of one of my boots slipped on the grass and I went down on one knee, one of the sheep rather unkindly I thought hit me over the skull with the steel butt plate of the F1 he was carrying. This was their first and only mistake as it was a known medical fact that the skull of an appy was akin to the front armour on a Centurion so it was really a waste of effort on his part.

Not even feeling groggy I got to my feet and to the astonishment of the sheep bolted after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. who by this time had disappeared around the next corner of the fence. Only thing is that when I went around the same corner the rest of my miserable comrades had woken up and opened up in a yippee shoot killing me for the second time in just a matter of minutes. I don't know which was the scariest, being chased by a mob of sheep with F1s and bad attitude or running into the flashes of blazing SLRs on a moonlight night on the top of Mt Martha.

We then walked back to camp, me with a sore head and a bunch of excited appys who had just had a wonderful time having a yippee shoot in the dark – at one of their own. Next morning I awoke to explore a massive lump on the back of my skull. This really pissed me off as I thought the sheep had been unnecessarily rough so I made my way to the B Company OC Major Max Jellie. I put in my complaint and he laughed his head off. I left not knowing which hurt the most, my head or my pride.



## MEMBER PROFILE

**Name:** Frank Poole

**Intake:** 10<sup>th</sup>

**Nickname at Apprentice School:** Frank    **Trade:** Radio Mech/Architectural Draughtsman



**Current Occupation:**

Hazardous Material Assessor (casual)/Retired/Carer

**Interests:**

Fishing, SCUBA and snorkel diving, carpentry

**Places lived:** Dromana, Melbourne, Broadmeadows, Western Sydney, Georges Heights/Chowder Bay, Singapore, Canberra

**Current Town:**

Canberra

**Best Memories of Appy School:**

Mateship and motor bikes, shooting with Ian Harvey, snorkel diving at Mt Martha, guard duty with loaded pick helves and lock picking skills taught to survive cold nights on guard duty around the education huts.

## AAAA COMMITTEE

The AGM was held in Canberra on Sat 23 Oct and the following committee was appointed:

POSITION	NOMINEE	POSITION	NOMINEE
<b>Patron</b>	Lieutenant General Ken J. Gillespie, AO, DSC, CSM	<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Craig Malcolm
<b>President</b>	Frank Poole	<b>Heritage Officer</b>	Geoff Martin
<b>Vice President</b>	Jack Westernhagen	<b>Member</b>	Barry Teal
<b>Secretary</b>	Lucas McGann	<b>Member</b>	Michael Farrar
<b>Treasurer</b>	Owen Reynolds	<b>Member</b>	Glen Jones
<b>Welfare Officer</b>	Russell Evans	<b>Member</b>	Jeff Heron
<b>Public Officer</b>	Ray Wilson	<b>Member</b>	Bill Merton
<b>Events Manager</b>	Frank Maloney	<b>Member</b>	Jock McWhinney
<b>Webmaster</b>	Ian Morris		

The Apprentice About is published Quarterly (or thereabouts).

If you have any contributions to this newsletter (which would be greatly appreciated) please send them to: [membership@austarmyapprentice.org](mailto:membership@austarmyapprentice.org)

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