



# Military English

## Lesson: A Soldier's Biography - Listening

**TEACHER'S COPY**

### Overview:

This lesson practises listening in the context of a soldier's biography and related vocabulary of military service. (tell ss that the word biography is often shortened to bio /baɪəʊ/)

### In this lesson, you will:

- ✓ listen for specific information
- ✓ listen for gist
- ✓ learn the meaning of new words
- ✓ use new words in context

### Prepare for Listening

1) Look at the pictures and discuss the questions with a partner. You could start by eliciting the word promotion. Ask a student what rank they are and when they will move to another (higher) rank. Then ask if anyone knows what the word in English is. Get students to discuss the questions in small groups (2 or 3). Monitor and note who gets a good answer. Then, when it comes the time for feedback, ask those students who gave good answers to say it aloud to the rest of the class.

- a. What is happening in pictures A, B and C? A – a soldier is teaching other soldiers, possibly from overseas. B – this is a promotion ceremony. The two colleagues are changing the rank slide of the person being promoted (in the middle). C – soldiers are doing training at the firing range (marksmanship)
- b. What is the person's job in picture A? He is a teacher.
- c. How do military personnel\* get these? They have to do something special, like an act of bravery.

\* **military personnel** – anyone in uniform who works for the military.  
pronunciation: /,pɜːsə'nɛl/



## Listening

2) You will listen to a recording about a ceremony.

ceremony – a special event to celebrate or mark something important.

pronunciation: /'serəməni/

- read the questions below
- listen and choose the correct answer (1, 2, or 3) to each question.
- then, compare your answers in small groups

Make sure students know the meaning of ceremony. Students read the questions first, then listen. Get students to discuss their answers in small groups, then ask a few students to give their answers to the class.

a. Where did CAPT Smith train to become an Army Officer?

1. **Royal Military College**
2. Task Group Taji 3
3. Land Warfare Centre – Canungra

b. What is CAPT Smith's job today?

1. Training team leader
2. **Education Officer**
3. Artillery Officer

c. When did CAPT Smith start working as an Education Officer?

1. in 2014
2. in 2017
3. **in 2023**

d. What type of ceremony is happening in the listening? Before playing the tape, make sure you elicit / check the words to describe the images 1 = graduation, 2 = promotion, 3 = memorial service. Image 3 shows a typical ritual in a promotion ceremony where the rank slides are changed by the promoted personnel's colleagues (sometimes by their family members as well).

1.



3.



2.



- 3) Listen to the audio again. Fill in the blanks to complete the sentences correctly with the words you hear. Check your answers with a partner after you have finished. Tell students this is the transcript for the audio. Ask them to fill in the gaps as they listen (not after). For feedback, ask each random student to give the answer to the class. If their answer is incorrect, ask another student.

“Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, we are here for a special occasion to celebrate the **promotion** of LT Jane Smith. This is an important moment that highlights LT Smith’s hard work. LT Smith made a significant commitment when she **joined** the **military**. Being a **commissioned officer** means she has an important **duty** to her country. Let me tell you more about LT Jane Smith.

LT Smith, a dedicated Australian Army officer, was born in Port Melbourne, Victoria. LT Smith joined the Australian Regular Army in January **2014** and **graduated** from the Royal Military College in June **2017**. Upon **graduation**, she **posted** to the 8th/12th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery.

In 2020, LT Smith **deployed** to Iraq on Operation OKRA with Task Group Taji **3** as a training team leader. In this **deployment**, LT Smith conducted Advanced Marksmanship courses, and trained **personnel** from the Iraqi **infantry**.

In 2023, LT Smith **transferred** to the Royal Australian Army Education **Corps** and **posted** to the Land Warfare Centre – Canungra. There, she started **work** as an Education Officer. LT Smith’s current **posting** is at the Army Education Centre – South East Queensland.

Her **awards** include the Australian Operational Service **Medal** – Greater Middle East Operation.

Today, LT Smith is **promoted** to the **rank** of **Captain**.

Congratulations, Captain Jane Smith!

Let’s hear from Captain Jane Smith...”



## Learning Military Vocabulary



4) The words in bold in the text are important military vocabulary that you should learn to use. Match the military words on the left to their definitions on the right on tables one and two.

Look at the example. Note that the word form in the column on the left is as it appears in the text. However, the definition (right hand side column) is written as the base form e.g. joined – to start a new job (not started a new job).

Table one

celebrate the <b>promotion</b> of Jane Smith (n)	<b>f</b>	a. an officer who has higher rank and leadership responsibilities than a non-commissioned officer (NCO)
She <b>joined</b> the military (v)	<b>c</b>	b. = job, responsibility
a <b>commissioned officer</b> (n)	<b>a</b>	c. to start a new job
an important <b>duty</b> (n)	<b>b</b>	d. to pass a course
she <b>graduated</b> from the Royal Military College (v)	<b>d</b>	e. to start doing something new in the military e.g. work in a different unit, at a different place If this is a new concept to students, explain that in the Australian Defence Force (ADF), most personnel move from job to job (they get posted) every two to three years. Often this new posting is in another state, or even overseas.
She (was) <b>posted</b> to the 8th/12th Regiment (v) It is common in the ADF for the verbs post, promote, deploy to be used in active voice ('he posted to Iraq', instead of 'he was posted to Iraq'). Although this is grammatically incorrect, it is used even in formal writing. If students haven't learned passive yet, it's best not to mention this.	<b>e</b>	<b>f. a move to a higher military rank e.g. when a soldier moves from the rank of Lieutenant to Captain</b>

Table two

LT Smith (was) <b>deployed</b> to Iraq (v)	<b>h</b>	g. to move to another area in the same organisation
<b>infantry</b> (n)	<b>i</b>	h. to send military personnel to a place for a mission
LT Smith <b>transferred</b> to another unit (v)	<b>g</b>	i. soldiers who fight on foot 
the Royal Australian Army Education <b>Corps</b> (n) (corps is pronounced /kɔː/) although the word corps ends with an 's', it is silent, and in this case, it is singular, be careful as ss may want to pronounce all the letters and say '/kɔːps/' which is a different word in English 'corpse' means 'dead body'	<b>m</b>	j. 
the <b>rank</b> of captain (n)	<b>k</b>	k. the position or level that military personnel have e.g. Captain, Major, Lieutenant Colonel, etc
<b>awards</b> (n)	<b>l</b>	l. a prize to a soldier because they did something special, brave or courageous
<b>medal</b> (n) a medal is an award	<b>j</b>	m. military units that are part of a bigger group; they work together and have the same goal

5) Now let's practise saying the words. Listen and repeat.

6) Look at the verbs and their nouns in the table below. Then, select the correct word form **in bold** (verb or noun) for each sentence a-d. *The table below is related to word families. Being aware of this helps students memorise more vocabulary. A link can be made between this and whatever stage students are in their General English learning journey.*

Verb (present tense)	Verb (past simple and participle)	Noun
graduate	graduated	graduation
promote	promoted	promotion
post	posted	posting
deploy	deployed	deployment

- My colleague's **promotion** // **promote** ceremony is at 0900 tomorrow.
- MAJ Anderson's **posting** // **posted** in Bangkok ends at the end of the year.
- The cadets **graduation** // **graduated** last week. It was a beautiful ceremony.
- The Australian Defence Force **deployment** // **deploys** peacekeeping forces to different parts of the world.

- 7) Complete the sentences below with words from Exercise 4.
- General is the highest **rank** in the Army.
  - A Sergeant is a non-commissioned officer; a Lieutenant is a **commissioned officer**.
  - An **infantry** soldier fights on foot and uses weapons such as rifles and grenades.
  - After the successful mission Corporal Singh received a **medal** for his acts of bravery.
  - Major Fraser used to be a Lieutenant Commander in the Navy. He **transferred** to the Army about two years ago.
  - A soldier's most important **duty** is to defend their country and follow orders with discipline.

## Practice

- 8) Your Commanding Officer (CO) has asked you to write a text for him to read at a promotion ceremony. Read the notes he prepared below and write a speech in a separate piece of paper. Use the text on page 3 to help you. After that, with a partner, take it in turns reading your texts. **Project the text on page 3 on the screen so students can refer to it when they start planning /writing. You may consider asking students to do this in pairs, especially if there are lower level ones. In this case, they will discuss and plan the writing together. When it comes the time to write, they will each write the (same) text on their own sheets. Go around the classroom, monitor and offer assistance if needed. For feedback, choose a strong text to display in the screen as an exemplar for the others. It doesn't need to be perfect (and you can correct the mistakes as a class, asking students to help).**

Notes for LT Jones' promotion to the rank of Captain (CAPT) this Thursday:

- Name: Stuart Jones
- Rank: Lieutenant (LT)
- Place of birth: Ballarat, Victoria
- Joined: 2017 (Army)
- Graduated from Royal Military College (RMC): 2019
- Postings:
  - Royal Australian Regiment: 2019
  - Transferred to 8<sup>th</sup> Signal Regiment: 2022
- Deployment:
  - Peacekeeping Operation UNMISS (South Sudan): 2021
- Awards:
  - Champion Shots Medal: 2020



- For more practice with the words you've learned here, scan the QR code.
- This lesson links with → VB – Ranks in the Australian Army



**Write your text below: SAMPLE TEXT**

*Ladies and gentleman,*

Today, we're here for a special occasion to celebrate **the promotion of Lieutenant Stuart Jones**. This is an important moment. LT Jones, made a significant commitment when he joined the military. Being a commissioned officer means he has an important duty to his country. Let me tell you a bit more about LT Jones.

LT Jones was born in Ballarat, Victoria. LT Jones joined the Australian Army in 2017, **and** graduated from the Royal Military College (RMC) in 2019. He **then** posted to the Royal Australian Regiment in 2019. **After this**, he transferred to the 8<sup>th</sup> Signal Regiment in 2022.

LT Jones deployed to South Sudan on Peacekeeping Operation UNMISS in 2021.

His awards include the Champion Shots Medal, which he won in 2020.

Today, LT Jones is promoted to the rank of Captain.

Congratulations, Captain Stuart Jones.

Let's hear from CAPT Jones.

## Transcript:

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, we are here for a special occasion to celebrate the **promotion** of Lieutenant Jane Smith. This is an important moment that highlights LT Smith's hard work. LT Smith made a significant commitment when she **joined** the military. Being a **commissioned officer** means she has an important **duty** to her country. Let me tell you more about LT Jane Smith.

LT Smith, a dedicated Australian Army officer, was born in Port Melbourne, Victoria. LT Smith joined the Australian Regular Army in January 2014, and **graduated** from the Royal Military College in June 2017. Upon **graduation**, she **posted** to the 8th/12th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery.

In 2020, LT Smith **deployed** to Iraq on Operation OKRA with Task Group Taji 3 as a training team leader. In this **deployment**, LT Smith conducted Advanced Marksmanship courses, and trained personnel from the Iraqi **infantry**.

In 2023, LT Smith **transferred** to the Royal Australian Army Education **Corps** and posted to the Land Warfare Centre – Canungra. There, she started work as an Education Officer. LT Smith's current **posting** is at the Army Education Centre – South East Queensland.

Her **awards** include the Australian Operational Service **Medal** – Greater Middle East Operation.

Today, LT Smith is **promoted** to the **rank** of Captain.

Congratulations, Captain Jane Smith! [applause]

[applause fades] Let's hear from Captain Jane Smith...

[fade – Oh thank you, it's a great honour to be here...]