

106 Field Workshop SVN - Lost Unit Records

Listed below is a chronological list of e-mails involved in the search of 106's HQ records from South Vietnam. The end result of the search is that the records appear to have been lost or relocated from 3 BOD, Bandiana, with no trace remaining.

NB: Additional information has been received; see Addendum p.5

Search Record

From: Steve Cartner
Sent: 25 January 2018
To: Claude Palmer
Subject: 106 Fd Wksp Vietnam Documents

Claude,

In response to your concerns below, I am resending the result of my efforts in searching for 106's Orderly Room records back in 2015.

I reached dead ends with all enquiries, including Bandiana 106 RAEME officers listed in my 27 Nov 15 below.

By some remote chance, records could still be misplaced at 3BOD, re WO2 N. R. A physical, time consuming search and examination of any destruction records would only determine this. Short term the Australian National Archives is worth a visit.

Rgs,
Steve

From: Claude Palmer
Sent: 24 January 2018
To: Steve Cartner & Others
Subject: 106 C'tee, WINDUP & BEING FINANCIAL

Hi All,

Just accessed the AWM website. Back in the 1990's, I sent to the AWM copies of all our Monthly Reports & War Diaries up to Jan 1970. These were duly catalogued, and stored with later War Diaries, personally accessed them on several occasions. But today, AWM search revealed only mention of our Assn! Knowing the Public Service, perhaps our records were 'misplaced' in the AWM's revised website? Anyway, the inability to access is SERIOUS!

My last visit to the AWM back in the 1990's was interesting. I gave the (then) Director Steve Gower (ex Arty ARA) info on the 106 up armoured M113A1 then recently added to the collection. To my disgust, notwithstanding that our up armouring had saved dozens of lives, the arrogant prick was not interested! Also, a copy of our Historical Video was sent to the late AWM Historical Researcher I G Mc Neill (ex Inf ARA). Likewise, LOST!

Anyway, winding up or down, the apparent 'loss' of 106 Records needs to be rectified. Before I start action, would others please confirm my concerns?

Cheers, Claude

From: Steve Cartner
Sent: 27 November 2015 10:15 AM
To: 106 Committee Members & ex 106 Officers
Subject: 106 Fld Wksp Vietnam Documents

Hi All,

Further to my contact with you all back in March, I have exhausted my search for 106 Orderly Room records (and maybe Workshop Officer's records) and have the NAA reply below which relates to OC's monthly reports. I still believe there may be more at the AWM, but would require a physical search starting with the ANA ref.

Alternatively, the records placed in storage at 3BOD have over the years been lost or destroyed after receiving the response pasted below.

Regards,
Steve Cartner

From: reftracker@naa.gov.au
Sent: 22 October 2015
To: Steve Cartner
Subject: NAA1000128335 Response to your reference inquiry [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Attachments: AWM298.docx; AWM298 item list.docx; AWM95 item list, 106 Field Workshop.docx

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your inquiry.

As far as I can ascertain, the records of 106 Field Workshop RAEME are held by the Australian War Memorial.

I have attached some descriptive material and lists of individual records taken from the online Record Search database which we share with the War Memorial. To obtain access to the material, please contact the War Memorial directly - <http://www.awm.gov.au>.

If there is anything further we can help you with, please do not hesitate to contact us again.

Sincerely,
W. E.
Reference Officer
National Reference Service
National Archives of Australia

From: Steve Cartner
Sent: 3 July 2015
To: ref@naa.gov.au
Subject: 106 Field Workshop SVN Lost Records

Dear Madam/Sir.

I am an ex Officer of 106 Field Workshop (RAEME) that returned from Nui Dat, South Vietnam to Bonegilla in October 1971 at the time of disbandment. It is believed the Unit's HQ documents were sent to Bonegilla, Vic in a container with other items, then forwarded to a warehouse at 3 BOD, Bandiana, Vic to be unpacked and stored before returning the container. I have since spoken to the then RAEME Quartermaster who arranged the unpacking at that time.

106 has since been reformed at Coopers Plains, Enoggera in 1980 where it is currently located. The history of 106 is still been recorded but a number of facts remain omitted due to the Unit's Vietnam HQ documents not being found. A thorough search has been made by a number of people over the years, and recent enquiries have been made at the RAEME Museum Bandiana with no results. The Museum has advised us to contact your Department.

Can you please advise if any 106 Field Workshop's documents are located/stored at the National Archives, or if you have any knowledge of where record may exist.

Thank you,
Steve Cartner (Maj Retd)

From: N. R. WO2
Sent: 2 July 2015
To: Steve Cartner
Subject: 106 Field Workshop SVN Lost Records

Hi Steve,

My apologies for not replying sooner. We have drawn a blank on any documents/records however; we have found a list of names of 106 Wksp soldiers who were in Nui Dat just before they became non-operational in Sep 1971.

Any legal documents required to be retained for a period of time, may have been sent to National Archives of Australia? Worth a try? They are in Cbra 02 62123600. Hope this helps.

WO2 N. R.
3 BOD, Bandiana

From: Steve Cartner
Sent: 2 March 2015
To: 106 Committee Members & ex 106 Officers
Subject: 106 Field Workshop SVN Lost Records

Hi All,

I have been in contact with a number of people over the past months, involved with the location of 106's documents and records sent from SVN to Aust. At this stage they have not been located and may never be, but there have been some good recent leads to work on.

I have compiled a distribution list of those involved or interested in locating the records, the only one missing is Frank Busby (Ord Room Sgt, Bonegilla). I hope this doesn't turn into a 'Ben Hur', but I thought the matter would interest everyone and some brain matter may tick over with a contributing thought.

I had some good info from Ron Bade (ex 1st Aust OC) a few days ago, and today I spoke with David Cole who was his QM at 106 when it was set up in Bonegilla in '71. David recalls arranging the transfer of a container from SVN to 3 BOD where a warehouse had been allocated to unload the contents before returning the container; he was not too familiar with the contents, but some documents were included. The container appears to have been packed by Ron Coxon in SVN who arranged its delivery to Bonegilla where he was subsequently posted.

Assuming the 3 BOD warehouse is the best place to start the search, can anyone else pls confirm or add to this lead before I approach 3 BOD?

Other leads to follow are:

- Frank Busby (I have no contact)
- SO2 Corps Heritage, Bandiana (I have no contact)
- RAEME Museum Bandiana (I have contact)
- Museum?, Coopers Plains (I have no contact)

I'll wait a week for any comments before the next move. When replying please 'Reply to All'.

Regards to All
Steve Cartner

From: Ron Bade
Sent: 28 February 2015
To: Steve Cartner & ex 106 Officers

Subject: Re: 106 Fld Wksp Vietnam Documents

Hi Steve,

Good to hear from you. Unfortunately I am not able to solve the riddle of the missing records. Yes, I was OC 106 Fd Wksp when it returned to Australia and we set up in the old migrant centre at Bonegilla. As for becoming Field Training Wing, I cannot recall if it had actually happened when I left for the UK. I remember that I had been in discussions with Mike Ford who was then CO RAEME Trg Centre, but I don't believe that 106 Fd Wksp had actually been disbanded when I left.

When the skeleton workshop set up in Bonegilla, Ed Sullivan (now passed on) was my Adjutant and he had set up an Orderly Room. Ed was still there when I left and he in fact drove me to the airport. My replacement was John Power (the other John Power not J P Power who was at 1 Armd Regt Wksp for many years) so he might be able to shed some light on the whereabouts of the records.

The other officer with me was David Cole who was QM so he probably got the task of disposing all of 106's bits and pieces to RTC. He might be able to help with your search.

Regards to all,
Ron

From: Steve Cartner
Sent: 26 February 2015
To: Ron Bade & Others
Subject: 106 Fld Wksp Vietnam Documents

Hi Ron,

It's been many years since we last communicated, but your name came up in discussion yesterday with a few of the cc above. Hopefully you can throw some light on a subject.

Last Aug, all of the above were endeavoring to determine what happened to the Orderly Room records of 106 Field Workshop when the Unit returned to Aust in '71 so as to access them and resolve some matters. No conclusion, other than it was thought they went to Bonegilla. Until now we did not know who the Officer was at Bonegilla that would have received them.

It is understood that you were there as OC 106 to establish it at Bonegilla, only to reform it into 'Field Training Wing' a few months later. So, did the records go to you, and if so do you know where they went to or are now?

Best Regards
Steve Cartner
Perth

ADDENDUM TO PREVIOUS 4 PAGES (Received Nov 2018)

Subject: <Lost 106 SVN Unit Records>

Date: Tue, 27 Nov 2018 12:33:29 +0000

From: Fred Pallas

To: fuddvarga

Hi Fudd,

I have just read the saga of our records being missing. I believe that I can add to the intelligence.

I was posted into 106 on return from SVN. I left SVN early November and proceeded on leave. Sometime possibly before Christmas 1971 I dropped into the Unit <106> at Bonegilla. The Chief Clerk was Jim Bates.

I returned to the Unit after a period of leave. Ron Bade was OC and Ed Sullivan was Adjutant. We had a number of National Servicemen posted into the Unit for whatever reason. We simply played cards a lot until they were all discharged.

Back to the records. As far as I can recall, all of 106's records were in a number of filing cabinets, (somewhere between 5 and 8 along the wall of the Orderly Room). I distinctly recall reading <through> many of them, and one that springs to mind was the list of corporals in 106 who had been granted subject B for Sergeant on the basis of their operational activities in theatre. After the national servicemen were discharged we did not have much to do so there was plenty of opportunity to peruse the files.

Another series of files I distinctly remember was the PR files and photographs. There were several of them. Anyway, I do not believe they were sent to 3 BOD in a container. By the time I marched into the Unit after leave, there was nothing left of our stores. I do not recall re-packing a container, nor there <having been> any major uplift of material. So it is my belief that the Orderly Room records were unloaded at Bonegilla and later transferred to where ever - I believe this would have been in the first quarter of 1972.

It is interesting that the painting that was purchased for \$900 by the Regt. Funds Account of 106 SVN evidently turned up in 1991 and was sold for \$6000 <as a fund-raiser for the Borlace Club to be built at Enoggera>. The painting was purchased to prevent our 'money' being absorbed by the central amenities fund. Where was this painting held during the period 1972-1991? What else went with the painting?

I believe the painting was held at RTC, probably in the Officers Mess. I know Lt Col Bob Law was trying to formalise a museum at RTC. There was quite a lot of material there in the early 1980's and WO1 Brian Langridge was imported to establish the museum. I don't think it really got off the ground.

Anyway, my recollections may help the next person who sets out to find them.

Regards, Fred

Subject:<Lost 106 SVN Unit Records>

Date:Wed, 28 Nov 2018 03:49:30 +0000

From:Fred Pallas

To:fuddvarga

Hi Fudd,

The plot thickens. I have just checked my posting history and it reveals that 106 appears to have lived on for longer than I thought. My posting history <wrt 106> is as follows <and> from this it can be deduced that 106 was removed from the Order of Battle sometime in late 1973:

28 Oct 71, 106 Fd Wksp

1 Nov 72, 106 Fd Wksp

1 Sep 73, 106 Fd Wksp <Unit ?disbanded?>

1 Sep 73 U/L 3MD Reposting RAEME Trg Centre Location.

The last members of the 106 Fd Wksp Sgts Mess were: **Frank Busby**, Don Lampre, Marinus Laarhoven, Ray Beer, John Beere, Steve Seinor, **Ron Wilson**, **Fred Pallas**, Vic Reading, Ross Pauline, Bob Mills, **Dick Lowe** and Dave Gray. <in bold = 106SVN> I believe that Don Lampre took over from Ron Coxon as QMS. The rest of us apart, from Marinus Laarhoven were instructors at "Fd Wing." Initially, with the Craftsmen Field Traing Course, but eventually the Sgt Supervisor and WO Qual courses.

Now the painting*. When we were advised that 106 was to be wound up, Newton Ellaby and another person, possibly Capt Cole, went to Melbourne to purchase a painting. The logic was that property would be held in trust till some future time. Money in bank accounts however, would be transferred to the central amenities fund, never to be seen again. From memory, the painting was of a Banana plantation and cost \$900.00. I only mention it as it may jog a memory, or provide a lead.

I have just received this information about 106 files from Mike Kusternig, who was at Field Wing for a time and then became RSM of RTC.

"All the files went to RTC in Nick the Gardner shed by the fence beside the Sgt's Mess. I found them when I came back as RSM/PMC. The mess property became part of Sgt's Mess. God knows what happened to everything when the Sgt's Mess closed and all was bulldozed in one day. "

Mike was RSM between June 79 and Feb 82. < cut> So perhaps the presidents of the mess who followed him can throw some light on the topic. I always thought that the documents went to RTC, but I was busy working ridiculous hours per week.

Anyway, construct what you can out of this. I hope others will be able to follow the leads to wherever our documents reside. **Are they filed under RAEME TRAINING CENTRE somewhere???**

Regards, Fred.

Subject:<Lost 106 SVN Unit Records>
Date:Wed, 28 Nov 2018 06:36:46 +0000
From:Fred Pallas
To:fuddvarga

Hi Fudd,
Mike Kusternig has given me another piece of information.

When he was a volunteer at the Army Museum, Bandiana, he was taken to a large shed which was owned by the RAEME HOC (Head of Corps) cell. He says he was gob smacked by all the files, photo's etc that were stored there by the Corps.

I wonder if anyone has researched this potential resting place of our files, or at least some aspects of our files.

Just another thought.

Fred

Subject:<Lost 106 SVN Unit Records>
Date:Wed, 28 Nov 2018 23:28:15 +0000
From:Fred Pallas
To:fuddvarga

Hi Fudd,
<cut>

I have also attached a photo of the members of the Sgts Mess when the unit was ?disbanded?. <This photo can be viewed on the site by selecting "Cookie Jar" and then "106 Disbanded":>

<cut>

If anything else comes to mind, I will pass it on. I think the trail is a bit warmer now than the old 3 BOD trail. Good luck.

Stay in touch. Fred

*** click here for more about the painting:**
<http://106fdwksp.com/sites/default/files/content/28.pdf>

"It is and will continue to be of great concern that so much documentation concerning a Unit that did so much, could just vanish." Frank Owen, 4 Dec 2018, (SVN 68-69)