

106 Fd Wksp RAEME Association Inc
50th Year Anniversary Reunion 2018 - Brisbane
Report by John Strachan (President)

All the reunion activities went smoothly; I could not have wished for better outcomes for each event. I think that all those who attended would have thought the same. These were the sentiments conveyed to me.

25th April 2018.

The **ANZAC DAY MARCH** and **Get Together** afterwards were great. We had about 75 of the 106 veteran members from all over Australia participate in the march through Brisbane City. It was the best ever turn out of 106ers in this type of march. We had two jeeps and nine golf buggies for the 'geriatrics' so everyone was accommodated. It was a very fitting way to celebrate the 50th year since 106's establishment at Nui Dat in 1968.

Our only disappointment was that the approval to march with the Prince Phillip Banner was withdrawn by the RAEME Head of Corps office a couple of weeks before the march – despite having got their approval well over a year earlier. Also, arrangements to have soldiers from 106 7CSSB Enoggera continue to march with us on the day as an accompanying party (guard) also failed at the last moment because of 3 Brigade transport (train) arrangement difficulties on the day. Despite both setbacks, we were an impressive bunch of oldies marching behind the Association banner as the lead group of the post-World War II marching contingent, with those unable to march being transported behind our marching members.

It was a great effort all round.

After the march, we had about 110 106ers and spouses attend the post-march lunch and drinks at Brisbane's Port Office Hotel. The venue was exceptional and our host Nick Grigorski, the publican, and his Events' Coordinator, Lucy Forsythe, provided the most amazing service. As to the buffet, it was spot on with plenty of seconds. The overall staff could not do enough for our group and the entire event on the day was exceptional and everything went like clockwork.

We must thank Yellow Cabs and Phillip Bond's contacts for organizing the shuttle bus service at no charge to the 106 Fd Wksp RAEME Association/veterans - some 60 of our members and their wives/partners were given a lift from the Hotel Grand Chancellor to the ANZAC Day March assembly area designated for the disabled and others not marching. We were also thankful for the shuttle service that was also provided by Yellow Cabs from the Port Office Hotel back to the Hotel Grand Chancellor in the afternoon.

We will post some Anzac Day photos on the website later.

26th April 2018.

Meet and Greet: Venue. Hotel Grand Chancellor Brisbane.

A Meet and Greet function was conducted in the Hotel Grand Chancellor's Courtyard area – a mainly semi enclosed covered area but also had a roomy uncovered area, a good area for all to mingle. It was a mild evening with no rain.

The serving of canapes and the informal format made for a very relaxed event for the 120 odd who attended. For those who wanted to just chat, the good casual seating was a bonus.

A great start for day two of our reunion.

Photos later on the website.

27th April 2018.

Venue. Hotel Grand Chancellor Brisbane

Special General Meeting (SGM)

In the afternoon, a duly advertised SGM was conducted at the hotel specifically to consider a motion to wind up the Association by the end of 2018. Without going into all the details discussed at the SGM, the wind up motion was CARRIED by a majority vote. Full minutes from the SGM will be published on the website in due course.

It was agreed at the meeting that a full 106er Contact List (as accurate as we could make it) would be compiled so 106ers had the capacity to make private arrangements for future smaller group get togethers. I undertook to get this done sooner rather than later. Attached with this mail therefore is the Contact List I have compiled. The list is compiled on a State basis as some may offer to become facilitators for local or state based activities. I'll leave 106ers to initiate those sorts of arrangements as they see fit.

Known email addresses and telephone numbers have been included where allowed and there may be instances where some of our members have moved since. It does not include data where members had previously declared that their data was not for publication. Deceased 106ers are not included.

The Contact List is a complete list of personnel known to have served with 106, so it does include names of those for which current contact data/location is not known or ever was provided. These are included in the event some may have that info privately and want to add it to their list or share it with others as they see fit.

Reunion Dinner

The 50th Year Reunion Dinner was held in the Hotel's main functions' facility. It was a fabulous dinner in a splendid setting – attended by 114 106ers and partners.

Reunion Dinner (Continued)

Our special guests were:

CO 7CSSB - LTCOL Steve Cleggett (RAEME). LTCOL Cleggett was our official guest speaker ([see Pg. 5 for his speech](#)), and

OC 106 Fd Wksp Coy 7 CSSB - MAJ Troy Hollis. He was also invited to say a few words ([see Pg. 7 for his speech](#)).

Claude Palmer, as a past OC of the workshop in SVN, also gave a short speech and offered a toast to the unit ([see Pg. 8 for his speech](#)).

Claude, as the oldest 106er at the function, was given the privilege of cutting the 50th Birthday cakes we had arranged (two slab cakes in fact to cater for 120 slices). One was topped with an edible image of the RAEME Corps Flag and the second with an edible image of “The Punch Behind the Task Force Fist” sign that was on the roof of the Borlace Club building in Nui Dat. The cakes just didn’t look good they tasted good as well! *(Note from Phil Bond: I have to say well done by John Strachan for the art work as will be seen in our photos).*

I tried to keep in the background for this function; but I did manage to read a message sent from the Association’s Patron, His Excellency General The Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd) ([see Pg. 9 to read his letter](#)).

I was also pleased that I was able to engage entertainers for the function using my personal/family contacts. The entertainment group was from the Queensland Show Choir (Cabaret group of 7 singers). Their performance was universally proclaimed as fantastic by all and sundry. They really did top off the function. We have conveyed our heartfelt thanks to them for the extreme lengths they went to for their performance.

Phillip Bond managed to sneak in a few words complementing the Queensland Show Choir, regarding their selection of songs to our great nation and for those who helped make our country great but his main comments were regarding his mother who passed away 23rd March 2016 at a young age of 105y, 9m & 8days. He explained that on numerous occasions his mother patriotically stated that “[Australia was a mother to us. She opened her arms out and embraced us to her bosom and said you are my children.](#)” (Phil’s parents were refugees from Russia after World War II; they were categorized as ‘displaced persons’.).

After a few attendance apologies, Phil wound up his final speech with the Association after having been responsible for the Association’s birth and national Incorporation way back in 2004.

The seating on the night was round tables of 10 (ten); the Menu was exquisite beyond belief – [thanks to Phyllis Bond for the selections](#). Each table had 2 red and 2 white wines and for the toast to the Corps and the Association we had 2 bottles of commemorative Port on each table.

The evening concluded at 2359hrs (function closing time)..... but there were those that continued on.

Many photos to be published later.

28th April 2018.

Farewell Luncheon: Venue. Restaurant at Hotel Grand Chancellor Brisbane.

With everyone realizing this was our last sit-down meal/farewell national reunion function to be held by the 106 Field Workshop RAEME Association, this casual function turned out to be quite dramatic for the 96 who attended.

This last brunch/lunch commenced at 1130hrs and concluded at 1500hrs; at the farewell moments there were quivering voices with stern embraces with some ready to shed a tear.

Many promises were made to catch up at later dates, regardless of where each one was located - and to continue the one thing we all had in common - **CAMARADERIE for life.**

Again photos to share later.

General Impression

All attendees were in great spirits. Thanks for making it memorable – the best.

SGM decision taken graciously. No sour grapes.

Very good Venue accommodation.

Great function facilities, good food & excellent service.

No rain when it mattered!

A fitting 50th.....

A fabulous way to go out.

A special Thank You to the Reunion Team:

**Phillip Bond
John Bailey
Doug Goetze and**

Phyllis Bond (Indispensable Honourary 106er)

**2018 Reunion Dinner Speech by CO 7CSSB
LTCOL Steve Cleggett
27/4/18**

Ladies and Gentlemen, 106 Association President, John Strachan, former 106 Field Workshop OC, Claude Palmer, Current OC MAJ Troy Hollis, and most importantly, all former and current craftsmen, clerks, medics, caterers, and storeman of the 106 Field Workshop, I am incredibly honoured to be speaking to you tonight as the current Commanding Officer of the 7th Combat Service Support Battalion, and a proud RAEME man myself.

When preparing for tonight, it was clear and important to me to ensure that I recognised the history of the Company which you all worked hard to create, and give insight into the current demands on the Craftsmen of the mighty 106 Field Workshop.

And on review of the beginnings of the Company in Nui Dat Vietnam in 1968, 50 years ago this year on the 1st of November, it is clear that 106 Field Workshop established a legacy based on some fundamental attributes which made it, and continues to make it, the premier workshop in Army today.

These include:

- Technical expertise and quality workmanship
- Skill at arms
- Mission focus to always get the job done
- Technical Innovation, and
- Unparalleled camaraderie and a practical joke or two.

It is not hard to see why the legacy created by you in Vietnam resulted in the Company being referred to as the Punch behind the Task Force Fist.

I am extremely proud to say that today's 106 Field Workshop continues to embody these attributes and are the crown jewel of the 7th Combat Service Support Battalion. Specifically, this importance was recognised on ANZAC day this year where the Brigade HQ commentating the march stated that we were the most important unit in the Brigade and fundamental to its success.

In fact, Army's expectations of Troy and his soldiers have only increased in recent years.

Specifically, redistribution of maintenance main effort under force level restructures now sees the 106 Field Workshop undertake a dramatically increased proportion of maintenance and repair production work across the Brigade. In fact, the maintenance production control system developed by the current Battalion ASM of 106 Field Workshop is now the exemplar for Army and is being rolled out across the rest of the Combat Brigades and workshops. In addition, and on average, 106 Field Workshop crafties perform up to three times the maintenance production a week than their peers in any other Brigade.

Similar to the foundations set in Vietnam, our Craftsmen continue to operate independently at the Forward Edge to the Battle Area in order to ensure we can get the equipment back in the fight quickly. In particular, this will be tested on Exercise HAMEL this year where 106 Field

Workshop will participate in a live fire convoy counter ambush drill with Artillery in direct support. Our recovery mechanics will conduct recovery operations in support of this on vehicles which have been disabled through enemy action. This activity will be the first of its kind conducted by a modern day Combat Service Support Battalion.

And in parallels back to Nui Dat, 106 Field Workshop soldiers continue to be employed as a core element of the Brigade Maintenance Area's perimeter, and are expected to actively patrol throughout the tactical area of operations to deny the enemy the ability to influence the critical logistics functions of the Combat Service Support Battalion.

Just like the legacy on which it was built, the Craftsmen of the 106 Field Workshop also continue to solve the unsolvable problems and get the job done, always. This has included the development of a communications system for the new Land 121 Medium and Heavy Vehicle Fleet that significantly enhances the Command, Control and survivability of all logistics staff on the battlefield. This solution is years ahead of the engineers who are working on the same issues, and underpins the modern crafties penchant for common sense and getting the job done using common sense, ingenuity and technical skill. It also involved acquiring a substantial quantity of spare parts from across the Brigade.

And finally, I am proud to say that the men and women of 106 Field Workshop continue to maintain camaraderie that is unparalleled in any other unit of the Brigade. The sense of mateship, pride in our Corps, and in the work that they do, is fundamental to their identity. You will be proud to note that a RAEME flag has always been snuck into a unit photo by the workshop, despite the cries of our trucky Regimental Sergeant Major. Also, it wouldn't be the workshop without a practical joke or two against their Platoon Commanders, OC, the RSM, or even the CO.

So what is in store for our workshop going forward.

Well, this year we have already deployed Craftsmen to the Middle East Area of Operations to apply their trade in support of the Taji Task Group in Iraq. In addition to this, I will ask a further 200 soldiers from across the Battalion to deploy to Afghanistan and Iraq in support of their country to apply their respective trades. This will be a significant test for all, but particularly for those who will deploy for the first time. With that said, I am absolutely confident that they will deliver results in support of their mission, and continue to reinforce the strong legacy created by each and every one of you who served before them. It is this legacy which I continue to reinforce to each and every one of them before they are put in harm's way.

And in that vein, I am pleased to say that 106 Field Workshop remains proud of their motto: "Fixing your Stuff Ups Since 1968", and certainly remains the "Punch Behind the Task Force Fist".

Ladies and Gentlemen, it has been an honour to address you tonight. I hope that your connection with the current members remains strong into the future and welcome you to visit the unit any time, particularly for RAEME and 106 Field Workshop Company Birthdays later this year.

Thank you.
LTCOL Steve Cleggett
Commanding Officer
7th Combat Service Support Battalion
Proud RAEME Officer

2018 Reunion Dinner Speech by OC 106 Fd Wksp Coy 7 CSSB
MAJ. Troy Hollis
27/4/18

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen.

I thank the President of the 106 association for his invitation tonight. I am deeply fortunate and honoured to be appointed as Officer Commanding 106 Field Workshop. A large part of this is that I am charged with custody of the legacy that all past members of 106 Field Workshop have established. Today's soldiers are doing your legacy proud. They are committed and intelligent with just the right amount of cheek. I would define the current environment within which 106 serves using two words: **exciting change**

Exciting, because of the change bringing challenges of:

- new fleets of equipment,
- a Brigade wide replacement to the General Service, medium, and heavy cargo fleet,
- new communication suites,
- the recent arrival of Tanks in Brisbane,
- new and improved small arms, and
- new soldier combat ensemble for improved survivability and manoeuvrability on the battlefield.

There are also changes to our facilities.

In the recent past 106 has been operating without a workshop, using the repair forward methodology and a series of borrowed vehicle bays to ensure 7 bde can fight when it needs to. At the end of this year 106 is scheduled to receive a brand new workshop facility that will do all past, current and future members proud. It will be the home that 106, as the best sub-unit in the Army, deserves.

For the members of 106 Field Workshop it is an exciting time to serve. Rest assured they are building on the legacy you have established and continue to live up to the motto of "Fixing your stuff ups since 1968".

MAJ Troy Hollis
Officer Commanding
106 Fd Wksp 7 CSSB

2018 Reunion Dinner Speech by OC 106 Fd Wksp SVN
MAJ. Claude Palmer
27/4/18

“We few, we happy few, we band of Brothers” (Shakespeare, Henry V)

Honoured Guests, Ladies, Gentlemen, 106 Old Boys & Brothers.

In the dark days of 1940/42, all British Commonwealth Armies were experiencing equipment availability problems, so they all raised a Corps dedicated to maintenance, repair and battlefield recovery.

In Australia, on 1 Dec 1942, the (then) Australian Electrical & Mechanical Engineers were raised. Similarly, in 1968, our Task Force in Vietnam, having grown to a Brigade Group of 3 Battalions with tanks, armoured carriers, artillery, engineers and signals, but limited second line technical support, was also experiencing vehicle and weapon availability difficulties. So, in Nov 1968, 106 Fd Wksp RAEME was raised at Nui Dat, under command 1 ATF - the first unit to be so raised since World War 2!

106 not only went on to provide the expected EME support to 1 ATF, but 106 Detachments supported two Battle Group deployments (just as today, 106 supports our Afghanistan commitment), numerous forward (battlefield) repair tasks - one of which was chosen for the Corps Painting, provided recovery for US & ARVN, up armoured our personnel carriers against enemy IED & mines, rectified their turret defects, manufactured helicopter-portable ammunition pallets & command posts, multiple firing devices for SAS defence mines, unavailable weapon parts, and soft ground mortar base plates, scrounged short supply radios and machine guns from the US, rebuilt those and issued to needy units, rebuilt the artillery's 105 mm Howitzers, promptly investigated and rectified such defects as machine gun stoppages and provided patrols, one of which defeated an enemy patrol.

Field Marshall Montgomery said of his EME: “They keep the punch in the Army's fist”. 106 earned its motto: **'The punch behind the Task Force fist'**.

Please be upstanding and join me in a toast to 106 Fd Wksp RAEME.

Cheers, Claude

Letter from Patron
His Excellency General The Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd)



His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd)
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

106 Field Workshop Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Association

On this ANZAC week it is appropriate that we remember the significant contribution made by those who have service with 106 Field Workshop.

From its formation in South Vietnam, the Workshop always displayed a 'can do' attitude providing support and repairs of the highest order and rapidly, to those on the front line.

It is testament to the camaraderie developed under such enormous pressure that 50 years on, so many are here to remember and pay tribute to the work of those members who served our nation.

The decision to wind up the Association could not have been an easy one—time may move on, but the contribution of 106 Field Workshop will always be valued and remembered.

And of course the motto 'Fixing your Stuff Ups since 1968' will live on as a wry, but enduring legacy!