



RAEME

CRAFTSMAN

The Corps of Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

75th Anniversary

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106 Fd Wksp Coy

MAJ Julian Fleming

2017 commenced with the introduction of a new workshop structure and new maintenance philosophy designed to best respond to changes to the Brigade maintenance concept implemented under CSS CONOPS. Concurrently, 106 Fd Wksp Coy prepared for the acceptance of the new MAN 40M and HX77 vehicles into the 7th Combat Brigade. This required a very deliberate effort to qualify maintainers and operators on mass to ensure that 7 CSSB was best positioned to support this exciting new fleet of heavy and medium vehicles. While it is difficult to imagine when a better time would have been, pursuing these priorities was made all the more challenging with the demolition of much of the workshop infrastructure to make way for the new facility that is currently being built.

Quite auspiciously, WO1 Dave Poulsen commenced his tenure as ASM 106 Fd Wksp Coy this year. His blend of varied experience and his innovative approach has been a welcome addition to the team and made a significant impact to date. There was little time to ease into the year though, as it was only a short time until the Battalion embarked on the first field exercise of the year, Ex ECHIDNA CRAWL. While ECHIDNA CRAWL was structured around foundation warfighting, of note it was the first time that the new 40M and HX77 vehicles would be rolled out as the primary vehicle type.

Mother Nature was to ensure that lessons would be learnt the hard way, with the prelude weather system of Tropical Cyclone Debbie saturating the Wide Bay Training Area on arrival. The conditions ensured that the 106 Fd Wksp Coy Recovery Mechanics were working around the clock, but most importantly the true capability of the vehicles was put to the test, with impressive results to say the least. Both the 40M and HX77 proved to be highly capable on and off road, though the radically increased weight of each type will continue to influence how the fleet is employed in the field and in determining what the future field workshop will look like in a tactical setting.



Following Ex ECHIDNA CRAWL, the 106 Fd Wksp Coy focus reverted to ensuring that the remainder of the RESET period was invested in maximising individual trade training opportunities in preparation for the myriad of new equipment being introduced across the Brigade, including M113 AS4 and the M1A1 Abrams tank. This period also afforded the opportunity to collaborate with the PLAN CENTAUR team through a series of Lean Maintenance initiatives and reviews. From a command perspective, it was imperative that the end-to-end maintenance system was efficient and effective if the Brigade units were to be supported to best affect during this vulnerable period while the physical capacity of the workshop remained significantly reduced and while we navigated through the cultural challenges that

presented under CSS CONOPS. Owing full credit to all involved, 106 Fd Wksp Coy exceeded expectations with maintenance output and equipment availability rates remained consistently high across the Brigade.

TALISMAN SABRE '17 was soon to arrive, and while the 7th Combat Brigade was committed largely in an exercise support role, 106 Fd Wksp Coy deployed a highly capable Forward Repair Group to support a diverse dependency of both 'white' and 'red' forces. LT Ben Kluckhohn and WO2 Terry Lemmon led the push to Shoal Water Bay and the contingent proved on every occasion that there was rarely a technical issue that could not be resolved or a task that could not be complete regardless of the complexity, the time of day or otherwise. At every juncture, the ingenuity and the resilience of the RAEME soldier was on display, motivated only by the innate desire to keep the Brigade fighting and in the knowledge that a tri-colour flag would be proudly flying somewhere across every echelon.

The conclusion of TALISMAN SABRE marked the transition from RESET to READY for the 7th Combat Brigade, prompting 106 Fd Wksp Coy to re-posture to generate two deployable Forward Repair Groups in support of the Ready Battle Group and the remainder of the deployed Brigade. These organisations were to be tested throughout October in what was the Brigade's major training activity of the year, Ex DIAMOND RUN. Ex DIAMOND RUN, while challenged again by extremes in weather, was an excellent hit-out and provided a valuable opportunity for the online FRG to integrate with the 8/9 RAR Ready Battle Group.



With the major Brigade exercises behind us for 2017, focus was quick to switch to organising the South East Queensland RAEME Birthday celebration. Being the 75th, we were highly motivated to make this RAEME birthday activity a memorable one. Thanks to the outstanding commitment and effort from CPL Steven Gill in leading the planning and coordination of the day, this activity surpassed all expectation and all in attendance will attest to the fact that it was one of the best celebrations of the Corps that they had attended. Although the billy cart race will go down in the annals of history as being one of the most fiercely contested races of its kind, other highlights included a plethora of military and trade displays from across the maintenance community; a bevy of food trucks and mobile bars; and, a carnival-like atmosphere that bled pride and esprit de corps. The day also served as an excellent opportunity to recognise some outstanding personal achievements, most notably SGT Chris Brown who was awarded the Corps Regimental Award and also promoted to his current rank.



In signing off from my appointment as OC 106 Fd Wksp Coy, I will say that it has been an absolute privilege and pleasure. While it almost sounds cliché, it has been the people within the organisation that has made the journey as enjoyable as it has been.

I cannot speak highly enough of the soldiers and officers of 106 Fd Wksp Coy and I will cherish the memories for many years to come. I will also offer the most sincere of farewells to the outgoing CSM,

WO2 Kevin 'Buck' Rogers. As Buck will commence his transition next year, I would like to acknowledge his near 35 years of service to the Corps and wish him all the best for the future.

PS.: ASM 106 Field Workshop provided the following photos. 106 Field Workshop of the 1st Unit to do a PMV pack change using the crane on the new MAN 40M. Whilst the PMV was in the Workshop it got a name change as well! Good work boys!



106 Fd Wksp RAEME

106 Fd Wksp RAEME was established on the 1st November 1968 as a response to improve the battle worthiness and damage recovery of the fighting equipment of the 1st Australian Task Force operating from their forward operational base at Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy Province of South Vietnam (SVN).

The workshop earned a high reputation in the SVN operational theatre between 1968 and 1971. This reputation was founded in the strength, conviction, sacrifice and successful performance of the regular soldiers and national servicemen who manned the unit during those years.

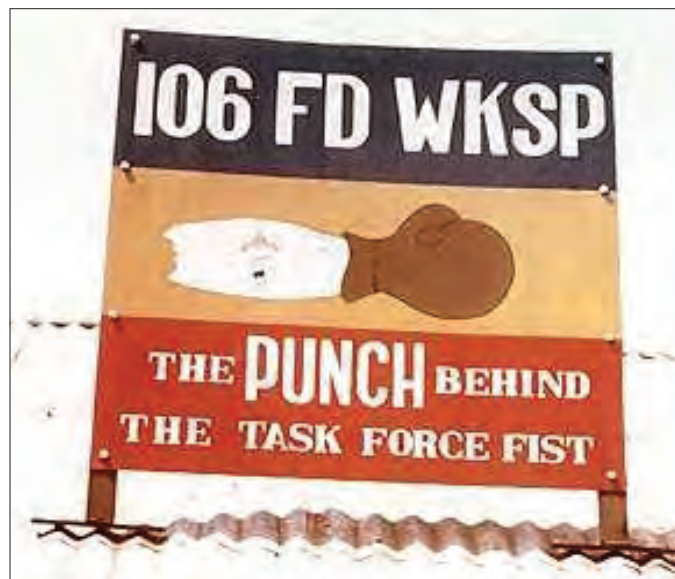
The following points describe the composite elements of the workshop:

- Most of the unit's soldiers were from the Royal Corps of Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (RAEME) - these included tradesmen, recovery mechanics and Corps administrative support staff.
- The RAEME soldiers were supported by soldiers from the Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps (RAAOC) for the supply of repair parts and other trade ancillaries.
- The Royal Australian Army Medical Corps (RAAMC) provided an in-house medical orderly,
- The Australian Army Catering Corps (AACC) provided the cooks to service the workshop's needs in base or in the field, and
- Other miscellaneous Army Corps personnel aided from time to time.

The normal service period for a soldier was for a tour of 12 months.

In Australian Army historical terms, 106 Fd Wksp was the only Australian unit to be raised in an active theatre since World War II. This historical fact has not changed in the ensuing years.

Over its more recent history within Australia, the unit has had to endure disbandment then reinstatement, as well as substantial organisational and role changes. Regardless, it remains proud of



what it achieved in its short history in SVN. The 106 Association supports that stance.

Post SVN, 106's successor elements located in Australia initially had limited repair and support responsibilities but these were always executed with a lot of heart and sweat to meet past reputational standards.

Today, the high performance traits of 106 developed in its foundation years in SVN have been adopted as the standard guidelines for the workshop now formally established as 106 Fd Wksp - a titled sub-unit of 7 Combat Services Support Battalion (7CSSB) located at Enoggera in Brisbane. 7CSSB supports 7 Bde, a three Infantry Battalion ARA/ARES motorised formation located at Enoggera.

2018 will mark the 50th Anniversary of 106 Field Workshop and this will be celebrated in Brisbane over the period 25 - 28 April. Information on how to get involved is in this magazine or visit the 106 Association's website at www.106fdwksp.com

75th Birthday Parade – RAEME Welcome Address

Wing Commander (Ret'd) Sharon Bown

Friday, 1 December, 2017 – Parade Ground, Australian War Memorial

MAJGEN Burr, Deputy Chief Army, Distinguished guests.

To the men, women and families, past and present, of the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

On behalf of the Director, Dr Brendan Nelson and the Chairman of the Council, Mr Kerry Stokes, Welcome to the AWM on this momentous occasion – the 75th Birthday Parade of the Corps of the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

In conducting my research to deliver speeches such as this, I have the very privileged access to Australia's finest military historians. Men and women who work tirelessly to aid the Memorial in its mission to assist Australians to remember, interpret and understand the Australian experience of war and its enduring impact upon Australian society. Men and women who work to ensure that your record of service is recorded, and preserved in perpetuity.

Despite that incredible privilege, I decided that I would speak with those whose work was dependent upon the skill of RAEME tradesmen. I didn't have to search too hard.

Over a family dinner one evening, I mentioned to my husband – an Army helicopter pilot and veteran of 27 years' service, that I would be delivering the welcome address for the upcoming RAEME 75th Birthday Parade.

I kid you not, but his face lit up as he began to tell me stories of his time as a Chinook pilot and his close work with RAEME. He told me that:

"RAEME is outstanding. If you are looking for Bluebell out in the field, look for the red, yellow and blue tri-colour above the largest taj mahoochie around. Even if the temperature is 40 degrees in the shade, there you'll see a bunch of proud soldiers, who somehow have ice-cold goffas and gumpy. They are some of the Army's

smartest soldiers, who work hard but don't believe in doing it hard if they can help it."

As a former Nursing Officer of the Royal Australian Air Force, I began to think that a soldier with an ability to create such a level of comfort in the field, should have joined the Air Force!

As if reading my mind, he went on to add:

RAEME tradies are the first up in the mornings, to get the vehicles, equipment, or helicopters working ... and they work late into the night to ensure they are serviceable for the next day. RAEME personnel drive trucks, armoured vehicles, crew aircraft, man machine guns and can fix them all when they stop working. If you bog your Bushmaster in a river, they will turn up with a Heavy Recovery Vehicle. If your APC needs a powerpack change, they will turn up in an Armoured Recovery Vehicle with a new one and do a change-out in the field. If your aircraft radio has nothing but hash coming through, they'll chase squiggly amps until it is fixed. Those guys can walk on water."

His final piece of advice was that I must finish my welcome to you today, with the RAEME motto:

'Arte et Marte.' – Latin he tells me for 'Twist to Open'.

So to our friends who are here today – on behalf of the Australian War Memorial – Welcome to the spiritual home of Australia's fighting men and women. Welcome to your home.

To those amongst you who claim a proud association with RAEME let me finish with the true translation of the RAEME motto: With Skill and Fighting.

Thank you and welcome to the Australian War Memorial.

