

THE BORLACE CLUB

By LT Trish Johansen

Opening

To coincide with the RAEME 50th Birthday celebrations at Enoggera on Friday, 13 November '92, 106 Field Workshop took the opportunity to have its new unit canteen opened. Brigadier J. Kingston, DGEME-A officially declared the club open by unveiling a plaque naming the facility in honour of Craftsman Douglas Borlace.

Vietnam

The original Borlace Club was opened in Nui Dat, South Vietnam in 1969 by Major Claude Palmer, the then OC of 106 Field Workshop. The soldiers' club was named after Craftsman Douglas Borlace, who was the first RAEME soldier killed on active service in Vietnam. He was killed in Phouq Tuy Province on 15 July '68, when the APC he was travelling in ran over a mine.

Bandiana

On return to Australia in 1971 at the end of the Vietnam conflict, 106 Field Workshop returned to Bandiana and was eventually disbanded into the field wing at RAEME Training Centre. Prior to the disbandment, \$900.00 of unit RPA funds were invested in a painting by Michael Shannon. The painting was to be used as an investment to finance the raising of the 106 Field Workshop's RPA sometime in the future.

Coopers Plains

The unit was re-raised at Coopers Plains on the 1st May '81. However the soldier's club former name "The Borlace Club" was not re-instituted until 1987 when approval was given by COMD 6 BDE.

Enoggera

On relocation of the unit to Enoggera in May '91, planning commenced immediately for the construction of a unit canteen.

The new facility was built as a self-help project: designed, funded and constructed by members of 106 Field Workshop. In particular, WO2 George Tranter devoted many hours of hard work and construction skills in managing the development of the facility.

Funding for the project came from the closure of the messes at Coopers Plains, RPA fund raising activities and the sale of the painting for over \$6000. Construction of the facility commenced in June '91. In less than 16 months the unit constructed an excellent facility using the member's own time and resources.

Friday The 13th

A crowd in excess of 300 people attended the official opening on completion of the SEQLD RAEME Birthday celebrations. Three ex-OCs of the unit were also in attendance; COL Hicks-Ha" (who raised the unit in 1968, LT COL C. Palmer (OC from Jan '69 – Jan '70) and LT COL Green (OC from Dec '89 – Jun '91). A considerable number of ex-members of 106 Field Workshop from 1968 to more recent years were also in attendance, as well as friends and families of current unit members; and members of the surrounding RAEME elements in SEQLD.

Several presentations were made to the unit on completion of the opening. These included a framed aerial photograph of 106 Field Workshop at Nui Dat in 1969, presented by Mr Frank Maloney. Also COL Hicks-Hall presented the unit with the 106th copy number of the Corps History.

Future

It seems that almost 24 years after the naming of the original Borlace Club in South Vietnam, that the soldier's club named in honour of Craftsman Douglas Borlace will continue to be associated with 106 Field Workshop for many years to come.



LT COL C. Palmer (ret'd) and MAJ K Alexander. LT COL Palmer opened the first "Borlace Club" in Sth Vietnam in 1969.



"The Borlace Club", 1992.