



August 2010  
Volume 1, Issue 4

#### Inside this Issue

- 1 **Welcome by the Commanding Officer of the MTF**
- 2 **RSM's Say  
HQ MTF-1 – S1 Cell**
- 3 **Mentoring Team – Alpha**
- 4 **Combat Team – Bravo**
- 5 **Mentoring Team - Charlie**
- 8 **Mentoring Team - Delta**
- 8 **Mentoring Team – Echo**
- 10 **Mentoring Team - Foxtrot**
- 11 **Mentoring Team - Golf**
- 12 **Engineer Task Unit**
- 14 **Logistics Support Company**
- 17 **Padre**

# Blue Dog Bugle



## Command Team Insight

Commanding Officer MTF-1 - Lieutenant Colonel Mark Jennings

### Welcome from the Commanding Officer of the 6 RAR BG (MTF-1)

As this is my first submission to the Blue Dog Bugle as Commanding Officer MTF, I would like to first say how humbled and proud I am to be the Commanding Officer of so many fine Australians. As the Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM), Warrant Officer Class One Brett Brown and I have been moving around to meet and work with the MTF team, we have been amazed at the achievements and professionalism of the men and women of MTF 1.

Of course, these men and women are your loved ones who have now been away from home for the better part of 6 months or more. We draw our inner strength and comfort in the knowledge that you are at home awaiting our return in the next few months. Your continued support is a vital part of our morale and wellbeing. I am pleased to report to you that wherever the RSM and I have popped up on our travels, the spirit and commitment of your loved ones to their tasks over here has been inspirational. This spirit and commitment has meant that we have achieved much in our operational tour and I believe that part of that success is drawn from the support that you, our loved ones have given us from home.

Unfortunately, since taking command of the Battle Group in late June, we have taken some more casualties including the tragic death of Private Nathan Bewes. I would ask that you please spare a thought and a prayer for the families of Nathan, Darren Smith and Jacob Moerland. I am also heartened when I visit the hospital here at Tarin Kowt and talk to our wounded soldiers, all of whom agree that the medical care here is first rate. In nearly twenty years of Army life and five operational tours, I have never seen such a robust medical system. You can rest assured that your soldier over here will be well cared for if they are injured or wounded.

As many of you would be painfully aware, many of our soldiers are based in patrol bases that are in some cases, very austere. The phone and internet connections to these places are very fragile and in some cases, are presently being rebuilt. Please be assured that our communications team are doing their level best to remedy this situation in these locations. In the meantime, please keep the mail coming as it is always welcomed by all of us.

In the last couple of months, the MTF Team have expanded our responsibilities for mentoring of the Afghan 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 205 Corps. We presently have a team working in Kabul with a new Kandak (Battalion) and they will return to Oruzgan in the next few weeks. In addition, the men of D Company, reorganised and retitled as Mentoring Team-D, have moved to the Deh Rawood district to assume a new task with the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Kandak. We are also continuing our normal operations in support of the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade in Tarin Kowt, Chora, Dorafshan, Baluchi and Mirabad areas. Every man and woman in the Task Force continues to work hard to achieve our mission until our return home in a few months.

I pass to all of you at home my best regards and personal thanks for your support and endurance as a result of an extended absence of a loved one. You also serve our country.



### **RSMs Say WO1 Brett Brown**



Welcome to the Aug edition of the blue dog bugle, it is with great pride that I take over from WO1 'Tiny' Coleman as the Regimental Sergeant Major of the Battle Group. With ROCL and ROCTFA completed, everyone has had a well deserved break. As we move into the last quarter of the deployment all our soldiers are continuing the great work that they started.

Unfortunately we have had a number of casualties with Sapper Jacob Moerland and Sapper Darren Smith being killed on the 7 June 2010 and then PTE Nathan Bewes killed on the 9 July 2010. On behalf of the Battle Group our deepest condolences go to families and loved ones. All three were extremely dedicated and professional soldiers who are sorely missed. They will always be remembered in our hearts and their spirit will always live on with in the battle group.

I have now had the chance to visit all the Patrol Bases and meet nearly all members of the Battle Group. They are doing extremely well in harsh conditions and morale is good. The dedication and resilience of our soldiers is amazing, even in the worst conditions we still hear the jokes and see the smiles. We are still experiencing the never ending dry heat and dust that is a part of daily life at the moment.

I would like to thank all the organisations for the letters and care packs that have been sent. Most importantly I would like to thank all the partners back in Australia for their continued support and dedication for their loved ones. As a husband and father with two young children I can not even start to imagine how hard it must be for you at home. Without your support we would not be able to operate effectively over here please keep it up for a couple more months.

I look forward to speaking to you all again in the next Blue Dog Bugle.

### **Headquarters Mentoring Task Force 1**

*From the ADJT - CAPT Andy McCarthy*

Welcome to Edition 4 of the Blue Dog Bugle. Now we have all members of the Battle Group back from ROCL/ROCTFA and the ROCL Platoons that were here to facilitate our leave returned home, it is time to get the next edition out to families and friends.

#### **S1 Cell**

*From the Orderly Room CPL – LCPL Kylie Mitchell*

Wow, it's August already!! We are well over the half way mark much to the joy of us all as it means it is closer to being home with our loved ones! The time has flown by, although some days feel longer than others. All pers from the S1 cell have been on ROCL or ROCTFA now and our memory banks are now full of good times had by all.

The Orderly Room staff have been busy this month, no different from any other, but we are finalising all administration for the last few people arriving back from ROCL / ROCTFA. Let the audits begin!! Just as we thought things would start settling down a little, the creation of CTU and CT-B had us all searching for information and starting the admin process all over again.

LCPL Mitchell has decided a life as a postie is definitely not for her, as she struggles with the influx of mail for the BG. She does a great job in ensuring members receive their little package of morale from home.

SGT Birss took a breath or two, thought for a second that finally the movements would cease, and just as he thought life would be pretty comfortable from now on, the RIP plan was dropped in his lap. So off he goes again..... He pretty much has the movers on



speed dial now and after organising the RIP in and all our Leave breaks, we're all joking that maybe a job as a travel agent wouldn't be too big a change from his last year in the Army.

WO2 Baskerville (aka big Chief) arrived back to work after an extended stay on leave, refreshed and relaxed. His first day back was met by about 30 people hungry for answers and his stress levels peaked back to his pre-leave state. But the show must go on!

The Pay Cell are continuously entering and checking and re-checking all our pays, the work never stops for them. Surprisingly their area is still full of smiles; however, anyone who comes into contact with CPL Williamson, leave questioning her sanity a little. It seems 6 months in Afghanistan are taking their toll. If you catch her in a quiet moment, even then you'll notice her head twitching a little, with a red bull induced case of hyperactivity keeping her morale high!

SGT Lyons has been kicking the admin staff's butts lately, doing her very best to keep the stockpiles of pay slips out of the office and in the mbr's hands. With another pay audit just around the corner they are diligently going about their business with enthusiasm.

WO1 Scott is still perplexed by the constant stream of members knocking on her door to get cash out. What do they do with it?? It must be the new posters on the wall!! They don't call it the morale office for nothing! At least they come and leave happy..  
WO1 Scott has also welcomed her first granddaughter, Ava. Ava has joined the Cash Office team and has taken to predicting the next day's USD exchange rate. You will see either her happy or sad face at the end of every day, on the Cash Office door. She's proving to be a very popular asset to the team.

The Sunday Bazaar continues to be a big hit with SGT Lyons and WO1 Scott and they always come back with something! The chief has tried to book a hire truck to take SGT Lyons' possessions back to Aus, but they're not impressed with the pick up address. Something about being in a war zone....

Ben, the resident Cash Office mouse, is still on the loose and raising a family of his own. The little ones have moved into larger premises in the Orderly Room where they have settled in nicely. Just as well we've stocked up on mouse traps. Chief.....set the traps!!

We also welcome WO1 Mick Spring, our new S1, to the team. WO1 Spring is currently kicking up his heels on leave and whilst the cat is away.....

As this month starts to tick by, all our calendars are being marked, our anxiety levels have raised and we are all counting every day closer to coming home. We can't wait.....

### **Mentoring Team – Alpha (MT –A)**

G'day to everyone at home from the lads of Mentoring Team Alpha.

It's been a busy time for MT-A since the last Blue Dog Bugle.

Whilst everyone at home has been shivering through winter, we've been enjoying (???) the Afghan summer. With normal daily temperatures over 50 degrees, it's been an interesting and challenging time for all.

Thankfully, the peak of summer has passed so the days are becoming milder. Of course, we will all look back at them with fond nostalgia if the snows arrive before we leave!

Patrol Base Wali suffered through a bit of a water crisis for a short time, with our bore unable to match demand. But a bit of water discipline (lovingly enforced by Warrant Officers McGinley and Blanchard) saw the aquifer recover and us again able to enjoy the luxury of three showers a week.

The Team has left its mark on Patrol Base Wali, with The Taipan now adorning the mess wall. Remember those kids, who given a texta would immediately start drawing on the walls? This is what happens when they grow up! Yes, you read that right, this was all done with a marker pen. Just shows what single-minded stubbornness can achieve.

We've had a bit of a restructure since the last Bugle, so we are now stretched a bit thinner with the departure of the Dutch. The impending arrival of their American replacements is being eagerly awaited by the soldiers, who assure me that it has nothing to do with the possibility of a U.S. PX store being established!





Other changes include the departure of the OC, Major Jason Groat to the dizzying heights of Operations Officer in Tarin Kowt and the arrival (again) of his replacement, Major Peter Ketton. In a long-overdue and well-deserved change, Private David Deitz is now Lance Corporal Deitz.

Patrol Base Atiq is proving popular, with its population growing rapidly thanks to the restructure.

The last of the lads are back from ROCL and ROCFTA, and everyone is so very happy to be back here after spending way-too-short a period with their loved ones. Well, maybe not that happy...

Our Afghan National Army brethren are gradually improving in skills under the tutelage of our OMLTs. With further practice, the OMLT members shall have the patience of saints by the time they make it home!

Certain members of the Team are personally keeping the mail-order protein supplement industry solvent, so some of you can expect to welcome home a little bit more man than you sent away. Now if we can just teach them to pick up their empty water bottles from the gym....

So, whilst still basking in their fifteen minutes of fame courtesy of the ABC and Four Corners, the Team is continuing to work hard and maintain the standard that we've come to expect (and the other Teams try so hard to catch up with!).

The countdown to our return is drawing close, but be assured, the lads – your lads – are still keeping their minds on the game and making sure they come home safely.

Until then, wish us well and keep the mail coming!

### **Combat Team Bravo (CT-B) The Phantom's**



Welcome to the first report from the newly raised Combat Team 'Bravo' (CT-B). CT-B is still in its infancy, and is a motley crew of some of the best soldiers and officer's the Mentoring Task Force was able to provide. The CT is made up of predominantly Cavalry, but there is a strong contingent of both Infantry and Engineer's within our team along with specialist Signaller's, our Clerk and Quarter-master Sergeant. Our role is more traditional than the Mentoring Team's in that we provide the protection and combat power to ensure that the outlying patrol bases are sustained with supplies and their personnel are protected

when they move to and from the Multi-national Base in Tarin Kowt. CT-B is lucky to have a lot of personnel from a broad range of experiences who have worked and travelled all over the Province. They have a mix of experience from dismounted patrolling in the green zone to motorised operations working from their ASLAVs and Bushmaster vehicles. A couple of us even have the more horrific experiences of working in MTF-1's Headquarters.

The combined experience of CT-B is extremely diverse and is of great benefit to the style of operations we have been asked to provide. Unfortunately we barely had a chance to catch our breath before the high tempo of operations in Uruzgan Province



caught up with us. We have had to hit the ground running and it is a credit to the professionalism and training of the men that they have been able to stay on top of the myriad of tasks asked of them.

For those who are unaware, CT-B's mascot is The Phantom, which dates back to B Coy, 6 RAR Vietnam days. At first we considered using a more universal symbol, considering that we are such a mixed lot from different units, but in the end the 'man in the purple pants' proposed by 2 Platoon was hard to knock back. Just like 'the ghost who walks' we are already starting to leave our mark on Afghanistan and everything we do here. We see a lot of ourselves in this mascot, especially in the way we provide aid to those less fortunate (less a bunch of friendly pygmy's following us around, as The Phantom might have done in his day). We liken our modern means of transport, the ASLAVs and Bushmaster's, to that of the Phantom's white steed Hero who always gets him to where he needs to go (just with a little more armour and something bigger than his twin .45 pistols by his side). As for his wolf Devil, there's no doubt that Devil represents our infantrymen with their strong link to Blue Dog, the 6 RAR mascot. We are still looking for what our Engineer brothers may be represented as but don't expect any photos of them patrolling the dasht wearing purple lycra with their underpants on the outside just yet. At least wait until they get home and have put a couple of beers under their belts.

With the operational tempo remaining high, the CT-B soldiers haven't had much time to settle in their new accommodation and have found ourselves spread throughout the province conducting many different tasks. Most of the men are looking forward to catching up over a brew as they return from their wide spread tasks at least to spend a bit of time making themselves feel at home in their new accommodation. From preparing their gear for the next mission to building shelves for a bit of home comfort in their tents, the soldiers manage to occupy their time in trying to make the most their surroundings in which they currently call home for the time being.

The men have represented themselves and the CT extremely well on a number of difficult and challenging occasions and there will be a mix of exciting and funny stories that should find their way back to all of you by the end of the trip. Even though these busy times never seem to end, CT-B will continue to maintain its edge and stay ready to tackle any situation that comes its way. There are only a few short months to go, and the talk of when the next group will arrive is already moving through the camp. Know that we are all excited at seeing our families and friends again soon and the thought of spending some well earned time relaxing with family and friends is foremost in our minds.

We look forward to hearing the daily occurrences and messages of love and support from all of you and even if many of us don't admit it over the phone or in an email, receiving a few niceties or even a surprise letter out of the blue can make the difference between a very low day and a great day. We can only generate so much morale at this end before the jokes start repeating on themselves, so please keep your mail and email coming!

Thankyou to all of you at home who continue to send us your support. Know that we here at CT-B are thinking of you, and watch this space – more from CT-B jungle drums soon!

Prepared by Sergeant Daniel Carr (2 Platoon Cavalry Patrol Commander) and Major Andrew Judd (OC CT-B).

### **Mentoring Team Charlie HQ** (Mentoring the Afghan National Army HQ Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Kandak)

It has been a busy few months for the motley crew known as the MT-C 'S-Club' and we have all worked hard to provide support to all of our patrol bases and sub-callsigns across a large area of operations. Following the ROCL/ROCFTA period, the transition from TFU to CTU and the odd IED, the composition of the S-Club has changed significantly over this period. So who are the wonderful ladies and gents who are affectionately known as the MT-C 'S-Club'?

OC – MAJ 'Fabio'  
XO – XO-R  
CSM – Pedron the Punter  
S1 – The Cougar (now CTU) (MNB-TK)  
S2 – 'Spin Abdullah' (briefly CAPT Do-no-hoe/CAPT D-Train!)  
S3 – 'Tiger Woods' lovechild'  
S4 – 'Go for Black!' (MNB-TK)  
S5 – 'Pistol Pete' (Now MTF HQ), and briefly Duff-man and Sandy  
S6 – 'Benny' and/or 'Tits'  
Engr LO – 'Chalky Bones' (WIA), now 'L-Bone!



There have been a number of key events that marked turning points in the deployment thus far. Notably the departure of the Dutch PMT/PRT and the C Coy AASLT BG left a temporary vacuum at FOB Mirawais. That was quickly filled by Manoeuvre Support Platoon who occupied the former Dutch side of the compound. They were soon followed by the US PMT and PRT, from whose recent arrival the dust is still settling.

From an operational perspective we have been kept busy with a number of major events that have included significant TICs and an increasing number of cache finds and IEDs. The Company has performed strongly in all of these events and everyone conducted themselves admirably, despite a number of setbacks on the personal front. Of note, we are all remembering the loss of PTE Bewes and his valued contribution to MT-C and MTF.

With the end of the deployment in sight, no-one has lost focus of the busy time between now and then which will no doubt keep the CP abuzz.



The 'original' Mentoring Team Charlie HQ team farewelling their Dutch AASLT BG counterparts in May 2010

**Team 1 – Patrol Base Qudus**  
(Mentoring the Afghan National Army 1<sup>st</sup> Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Kandak)

At the time of writing, Team 1 MT-C has begun the 5<sup>th</sup> month of operations from Patrol Base Qudus. The team has faced a number of challenges, with the heat, dust and flies all contributing to a unique experience in Afghanistan.



The boys from Team 1 have maintained an excellent level of morale and the patrol base has benefited from the Afghanistan version of 'Backyard Blitz' with several renovations taking place and even our beloved Polaris receiving a new camouflage job.



The area surrounding the patrol base continues to develop with a local school nearing completion and the local bazaar opening after being funded by Australians from the last rotation and completed under our guidance. This has brought a much needed boost to the local economy and they now enjoy 3 general stores (all selling the same things!) and a motorcycle repair shop. It appears the most excited people were the ANA who know have their own shops at the bottom of the patrol base.

The soldiers in the team are doing a fantastic job and a recent period of leave has seen us operating with fewer and fewer men. Despite this, they have managed to continue to carry



out all that has been required of them with an upbeat attitude that constantly amazes.

Recently, a much loved character, CAPT Rob Pruis or the “Robbinator” left Qudus after a 4 month stay as part of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). Rob was one of the most humorous characters you could ever wish to come across and he was farewelled with a photo and video presentation to mark his time with us.



Qudus recently hosted a two day Medical Civilian Assistance Program (MEDCAP) which saw over 100 local nationals treated, with the highlight being over 30 women attending. This was significant as we have had very few dealings with Afghan women during the deployment to date for obvious cultural reasons. A female nursing officer was on hand to tend to a range of ailments and most important gain a better understanding of the life of a largely unseen part of the Afghan society. This was a very positive experience and allowed for positive interact with all members of the community, from the very young to the very old.

**An elderly Afghani woman being treated by the Australian Nursing Officer CAPT Natalie Evans at the MEDCAP**

The team is continually amazed and is very grateful for the support received from back in Australia. It is very heartening to receive a care parcel sent by a complete stranger who has taken the time to think of us over here and send over items to assist. This has been treasured by the team and we have a long list of thankyou's to write!

On a sadder note, we recently farewelled a friend and comrade, PTE Nathan Bewes. Our thoughts are with his partner and his family as they battle through this terrible time. Rest assured his efforts are not in vain and the groundswell of support from those back home in Australia has been a much needed lift. Lest We Forget.

**Team 2 – Forward Operating Base Mirwais**  
(Mentoring the Afghan National Army 4<sup>th</sup> Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Kandak)

As a new soldier to the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment this deployment is my first. Getting onto the MTF-1 trip was pretty exciting, especially being in Mentoring Team – Charlie with the more experienced soldiers from the Battalion. Before deploying I tried not to have too many expectations, instead I came here with a clear head, ready to take in everything and learn. After spending almost 6 months training and mentoring the ANA I have come to realise that they are not so different from me when I first joined the Army. I am privileged to be here helping the ANA to improve themselves and Afghanistan.

*- Iggy*

Well, I am the Ranga of the team and my favourite part of the trip so far would definitely have to be winter! An Afghan summer is no place for a red-head with temperatures regularly reaching 45<sup>o</sup>C in the shade! One of the jobs I have been given when we aren't conducting patrols is looking after the base gym and running the ANA through the odd PT session. I quite enjoy this and it also gives me time to practise my 'PT Rest Position', and 'On the ground, Down' for when I decide to corps transfer to PTI's, hopefully after a much needed break from this deployment. Having done nearly 10 years in the army and 5 deployments, this OMLT trip is by far the most rewarding and enjoyable tour. I put this down to having a tight-knit group of mates who all get along and are very professional.

*-Davo*

When I first began my deployment to Afghanistan, I figured it would be best if I tried to learn as much of the local language as I could. I did my best to pick up as much as possible, but soon found that the two words I would be using most frequently were '*Qalam nalaram*': simply, 'I don't have a pen'. At first, patrolling through villages with small children coming up to you was pretty eye-opening. Somehow, the novelty of this quickly faded to be replaced with an irritating predictability. It becomes challenging to continue to conduct one's self according to COIN principles when all the children you meet want nothing more than to yell 'Pen, pen pen pen pen pen pen!' at every passing Australian patrol they see. In the end, you just end up employing tactics simply to remain sane.



I found myself approaching children when on patrol and, before any of them had a chance to speak, blurting out in broken Pashto: 'Do you have a pen?? I don't have one! Can I have your pen? Give me a pen!!!', and amusing myself with the bewildered expressions on their faces.

While on ROCTFA, I travelled to Germany to see some friends, one of whom introduced me to his son, now 7 years old. He looked up at me and, with wide eyes, said simply 'hello'. I was overcome with an unusually strong urge to scream: 'NO I DON'T HAVE A #% @^\$% PEN!' but, somehow, managed to suppress it.

-Waino

Sadly, on 9 July 2010 MTF-1 lost its third member, and MT-C lost a good mate, and a great soldier. Bewesy was a no-nonsense type of bloke with a great sense of humour, a tell-it-like-it-is attitude and an amazing work ethic. He will be sorely missed by all members of the Company, especially Team 3. Although we are hurting, Bewesy would still want us to crack on and finish the job, and that is what everyone is focusing on.

They shall grow not old,  
As we that are left grow old.  
Age shall not weary them,  
Nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun,  
And in the morning  
We will remember them.

LEST WE FORGET

## ~~COMBAT~~ MENTOR TEAM DELTA IN AFGHANISTAN



### The story so far...Continued

Well July saw the Coy take on a new roll as mentors, New name see above and move from Tarin Kowt to FOB Hadrian in Deh Rawood, this is to the west of Tarin Kowt . The move was conducted in a phased approach as most of the Combat correction Mentor Team were jetting around the world on their ROCL and ROCTFA breaks, a well deserved break for the hard working members of the Coy. CHQ and 42 were the first to move leaving TK in mid July and starting patrolling and mentoring soon after. The remainder of the Coy deploying in early August so that only three people remain in TK to cover of the myriad of tasks that keep the MT in a happy place mentally ie, the delivery of mail.

At present the Coy has settled in well to the tasks of providing mentors to the Afghan National Army ANA and security to the people on the Deh Rawood region of Uruzgan. The men of Delta Coy are gaining good experiences and a good understanding of the local area and its population, on the whole has been well received in this part of the Uruzghan region.

Thank you from everyone here for being our 'rear guard'. Know that we are thinking of you, and watch this space - more from ~~Combat~~ Mentor Team Delta soon!!

### MT Echo

We've broken the back of the tour and are now on the run home. Almost all of MT-E has had a break from the dust and the dust and the heat and the dust (except for CAPT Dave Cowan, who will return for the birth of his and Michelle's first child at the end of Aug). Some have stories of treasured times with their wives and children and others have sordid tales of travels through Europe (mainly Amsterdam). However, everyone certainly appreciated the short break that now enables us to focus on the goal of completing the mission.

Since last we wrote there has been quite a lot of activity going on around our area, let's have a little recap. Firstly, the next instalment of OP Tor Ghar (convoy to Kandahar) that the ANA decided at the last minute wasn't required, so we legged it ourselves to pick up some Aus equipment that had been brought into Afghanistan. Thinking it would be a fairly easy run down to Kandahar with a smaller convoy was our first incorrect assumption, as we got stuck in another dust storm (have I mentioned the dust before) and the 177 km trip took us 19 hours, we all have a new found patience for a travelling now. Then there was the new headquarters forming with the Dutch leaving and the Americans taking over. With the reshuffling of people into the new HQ, the belt needed to be tightened, needless to say that MT-E was destined to take a hit, we lost CAPT James Hodge to CT-B as Coy



2IC, CAPT Darren Brilliant to HQ as a watch keeper, CAPT Dave Cowan and CPL Lance Newell to the training



team in Kabul (only on loan) and CAPT Christian Sandner to MT-C as JTAC (also only on loan). Talk about taking a hit..!!! The rest of the HQ, CAPT Matt Fahey and CAPT Rob Arnold, are now certainly enjoying the challenge of “stepping up” with a variety of extra chores.

Meanwhile, the job goes on for the lads out at PB Wali, where LT Fabian Harrison is doing an absolute cracking job mentoring the ANA Engineers to conduct search for the dismounted patrols. He’s supported currently by CPL Cameron Butler and the Recon mentors, CPL Matt Uppman and SGT Luke Gliddon, yes that’s right Gliddo finally got a Gernsey out in the patrol base doing Infantry stuff..!! The reports from MT-A at PB Wali are that Harry, Butts and Gliddo all wish to Corps transfer to Infantry after being out there... makes sense.

This article wouldn’t be complete without a mention of the team that has finally been able to make some noise to get noticed. Yes, the Artillery lads have “Awoken the Guns of Uruzgan”. The proofing of the 122mm D30 Soviet Guns was a sight to behold, the ANA gun teams were slick in the handling drills and had grins on their faces like a 10 year old in a lolly shop. A very rewarding achievement for CAPT Christian Sandner and his team of WO2 Dave Nutini, WO2 Dave Kristan and BDR Brad Marshall. Now there’s talk of getting the guns out to a patrol base to support the coalition fires teams. Well done fellas.

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Not to be outdone, the rest of the Recon lads, LT Ed Harris, WO2 Jas Moriarty, SGT Paul Clark and CPL Henry Bamford, immediately devised a way to become the centre of attention (without walking over the top of people Jase), so they’ve deployed north to PB Marshal with a patrol of the ANA recon to provide some specialist reconnaissance skills to MT-C operations. Once word gets out that a team like this out looking for you, the insurgents might even surrender..!!

The engineer team, with CAPT Adam Kavanagh at the helm, are gearing up to assist with a new patrol house building project at Musazai (not too far from PB Wali). This will be a great opportunity for the ANA to put their hand to construction, as they have been quite heavily focused on search for the first half of the tour.



As you can see we've had plenty to keep us busy, with the teams going in lots of different directions. Of course this doesn't stop us thinking of you all back at home, and we all miss you terribly. Not too long now until we are preparing ourselves and our gear to endure the massive 15 hour flight back to Brissy.

And finally our congratulations go out to the boss, MAJ Dave Ryan, and Kristy his wife on the arrival of their lovely daughter Georgia Evie Ryan, born while the boss was back home on ROCL. Mum and baby are both well and looking forward to Dad being back full time to change a few nappies. Our congratulations also go out to WO2 Jas Moriarty and Sharna his wife on their new addition to the family, in the way of a Harley Davidson Night Train..!! The CSM, WO2 Brad Doyle, is already planning a "Wild Hogs" tour with Jas and a few other lads, after spending some time with their lovely wives first, of course.

### CSS OMLT (MT - Foxtrot)

Hi again and a big hello to family and friends of Mentoring Team Foxtrot. Thank you for all the support you continue to give the team.

June/July saw many events including the changing of the guard with our Slovak companions and more changes within the team. There was also activity planning for a phantom Operation TOR GHAR, some funny post leave blues, a dose of gastro, and early retirement of the infamous Lieutenant Morgan (AKA Blind Ben). Our main effort for the month, preparing and conducting a deployment Training Activity for the 5<sup>th</sup> Kandak, also occurred with success.

During June we farewelled Captain Stanislav, Captain Sergei, Staff Sergeant Adrian, Staff Sergeant Tomas, Staff Sergeant Vladimir, and welcomed our new members Captain Peter, Captain Nazo, Master Sergeant Mike, Sergeant First Class Lubo, and Sergeant John (AKA the Bear) all from the Slovak Armed Forces.

Mentor Team Foxtrot started July well with the anticipated return of Captain's "Welchy" Welch and Steve Howells, only to see them leave for the greener pastures of a new Headquarters. Upon hearing of this Captain Denis Weston decided to jump ship and graze in those same pastures.



Unfortunately at the end of the month we also waved goodbye with misty eyes to Lieutenant Ben Morgan who has gone home for three months of courses at Canungra. Well done Ben, last in, first on ROCL and first home, a very good effort. Jokes aside we wish you good luck on your course. This has now left Sergeant Carpenter to fend for himself with heavy shoulders as the lone Transport Mentor.

The Officer Commanding, Major Clapton has also inherited an additional role. His duties now include being our boss (a full time job keeping one eye to the team's interest), keeping his other eye on local contracts and now also mentoring the Afghan Brigade Logistics' Officer.

Team Foxtrot is now at nine Aussies.

Whilst many of us were battling Post leave blues and others laughing it up as they were embarking on their leave, it was time again to commence planning for the next TOR GHAR. With some uncertainty if the operation would occur or not this time, we pushed on with the planning only for it to be cancelled a few days out from commencement. Lieutenant Morgan returned with less hair after wearing the brunt of the work and disappointed he had missed out on a last run.

The medical team suffered a small setback with Sergeant Dale Street leaving our walls for a different view for three weeks in the Chora District. It should be noted "the Slovak Bear" was heard to remark on several occasions "I miss him" until he was distracted and turned into a koala by a visiting Aussie mentor from another region. Dale has rejoined the team with stories of his own adventures and other big bears out at the Patrol Base.



With those returning from leave it appears some may have returned with a nasty case of tourism Gastro which pushed some to edge on days. Each member was affected differently, with Sergeant Mark Lowndes taking out the quick version of 24 hrs, and



Warrant Officer Class 2 Steve Doehnert in full swing for 10 days running out the room at lightning speed many times, well almost always except for once when his "flatmate" locked him accidentally in his room and once when inadvertently locked in the work shed. Captain Cracknell too didn't miss out but had to give a lesson to the senior ANA Kandak members, sweating in fear of some undesirable action part the way through the training.

Finally this month we conducted preparation for the deployment activity. After some planning and training analysis the ANA light went green. We had some interesting scenes play out. First up some lessons for the senior Afghan Kandak players from LT Morgan who decided to leave with all guns blazing and pulled out every Dari word he had learnt in his six months to go out with a bang in his final hoorah before heading off home. The deployment activity occurred at the start of August and went off far better than expected, even with the occasional challenge and bumpy ride along the way for some of the mentors. This at times involved interesting meetings with one particular mentee. The first meeting started off well with a great acceptance of the plan in the form of a big wet hairy Afghan kiss, followed the next day by an excited and at times animated discussion and finishing on the third day with a cup of chai and back slaps all round.

The team is working hard to establish the 5<sup>th</sup> Kandak as a good partner and everyone is focussing on handing over to our successors a good product. Thoughts of home are never far away and we continue to count down the days till we will be with you again.



Team Fox



### **Bde Mentoring Team (MT Golf)**

The 4<sup>th</sup> ANA Bde Mentoring Team (MT Golf) has had a turbulent couple of months with the boys departing on leave and some new additions being assigned to the team and just a quickly re-assigned! The period has highlighted the flexibility in the team with MAJ Manoel helping out with logistics, MAJ Hahn with operations and WO1 Lucas at the hospital as the stress was too much for him.

Sadly, the Mentoring Team was all but disbanded due to the reconfiguring of MTF 1 to accommodate the new CTU Headquarters. Most of the lads have picked up additional responsibilities which they have accepted as a necessary part of the changing nature of the operation. The new changes have certainly made the days go quick and most of lads get a fleeting glimpse of each other as they run around the camp.

The Brigade HQ of the ANA continues to progress well and General Hamid put on a banquet for the senior leadership in Tarin Kowt that was attended by the lads from MT G. As with all local food there was a fair amount of trepidation as we have all suffered from the dreaded 'intestinal jihad' that affects one and all at some stage. Thankfully there was no problem with the food and we all had a great night.

All the lads are starting to count down the days and are putting together a comprehensive hand over for the new team. The team is confident that the Brigade HQ is in much better shape now than in January and look forward to introducing their ANA counterparts to the new Australian team.



## **Engineer Task Unit (ETU)**

### **Force Engineer Construction Team (FECT) Events 20 July - 4 August 2010**

The FECT arrived back into Tarin Kowt from ROCTFA/ROCL and on arrival work began to filter down to us at a steady rate. Captain Patchett had a solid list of jobs for us to begin working on. We kicked off with moving shipping containers and HESCO stacks around, giving some of the rougher looking areas a general tidy up. Another task assigned to us was to prepare a new storage area out the back of base. We graded the site and did some landscaping work to make it suitable.

Following the preparation of the stores site we had a few quieter days at the troop, but this was to be short-lived. Bozo wrote up a huge list of tasks for us to complete before we were to step off for another job. The jobs involved strapping and moving more HESCO, timber and gabion baskets out to the stores site. This was not a pleasant job as the gear was spread all over the yard and in no condition to be lifted with forklifts.

After a number of 12 hour days we had managed to put a fair dent in the list. We split into two teams with one lot strapping timber into more user friendly packs, while the other blokes were carting the timber out to the site. The work was beginning to wear a little thin and we acted as the TK garbage disposal for a few days as well.

We are looking forward to our next job which will come around soon. We will be able to write about next time – it is a decent sized construction project and we are busily preparing for it as speak.

### **Trade Training School**

Once again the Trade Training School has been looked upon with the eye of jealousy, some complaining that we had a pool when in fact it is an above ground water storage tank.

Well, all our leave has finished and our team went to places like Rome, Pompeii, Florence, Venice, Tuscany, Paris, Bateman's Bay and Albany Creek (guess were the married guys went). LJ got engaged on Saint Angelo beach in Italy and Zac got engaged on a gondola in Venice. Congrats guys.

In our sleeping area we have discovered a little possum, about 8pm every night the possum crawls down the ladder scurries across the floor, raids the fridge then back up the ladder it goes and eats himself silly. The possum is named Zac. The possum also made Afghans first half pipe to teach the locals how to skate.

T-shirt World is still in full swing selling to anyone anytime anywhere; we hope people believe us when we tell them it's not CAPT Patchett's sweat shop.

Every Saturday is poker night and I would like to thank the Americans for lining the pockets of the poor Aussies with the score being 4-1 us (all in the name of charity of course).

During the past couple of weeks, Corro, our fearless leader, has developed a nasty rash on his chin. It's worse after morning orders - we have our own thoughts but I guess you will have to ask him.

In wrapping this article up, we at the Trade School would like to thank the families as we could not do this without you and thanks for letting us buy boats, cars and motorbikes.

Cheers from the Trade School.

### **News from Engineer Task Unit, Mentoring Task Force 1, Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan**

It has been an eventful tour to date for the Engineer Task Unit (ETU) of Mentoring Task Force 1 deployed to Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan. The past couple of months have seen us experience tragedy, with a number of members within MTF-1 and SOTG being killed in action, and some others being wounded.

There has also been a great deal of change. We have been working with the Netherlands Armed Forces as part of Task Force Uruzgan, but as they now are returning home the new "Combined Team Uruzgan" construct led by the US is taking shape within Tarin Kowt. This sees Dutch forces concentrating on extracting themselves from the province over the next 6 months and the US inserting force elements into Uruzgan concurrently.





ETU's primary focus continues to be providing the MTF-1 with assured mobility and survivability by employment of Combat Engineers, Explosive Detection Dogs and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Teams and the provision of advice from officers, warrant officers and NCOs.

The Works Team continue to manage projects in support of developing civilian infrastructure within the province working closely with AUSAID representatives and the Provincial Reconstruction Team (both US and Dutch) who have been deployed. The Trade Training School continues to run trade courses out of the base. Our Construction Team has supported all deployed patrol bases with construction and maintenance support.

I would like to highlight that we are a tri-service unit with EOD Technicians from both the Navy (Clearance Dive Teams) and Air Force, and personnel from both the Reserve and external units to 2 CER such as 1 CER, 3 CER, 17 Construction Squadron, 19 CE Works and 3 Field Squadron making up our ranks.

As at the time of writing, we are still finding lots of caches and have recovered many IEDs. We have spent approximately \$3m on patrol base infrastructure and have about 30 projects in the Works Team in hand with a budget of approximately \$7.5m.



Unfortunately, as a Battlegroup, we have sustained several fatalities and injuries. Two of these have been engineers. SPR Moerland (Combat Engineer) and SPR Smith (Explosive Detection Dog Handler), were killed as a result of an IED strike in June 10. SPR Smith's EDD, Herbie, was also killed during this strike. Unfortunately, we have also had to return some members back to Australia due to injuries – physical and/or psychological. These have been across all ranks and trades. I would assess that the experiences of our sappers will resonate throughout the corps for years to come, and that some of these memories may affect some sappers also in a variety of ways both positive and negative.

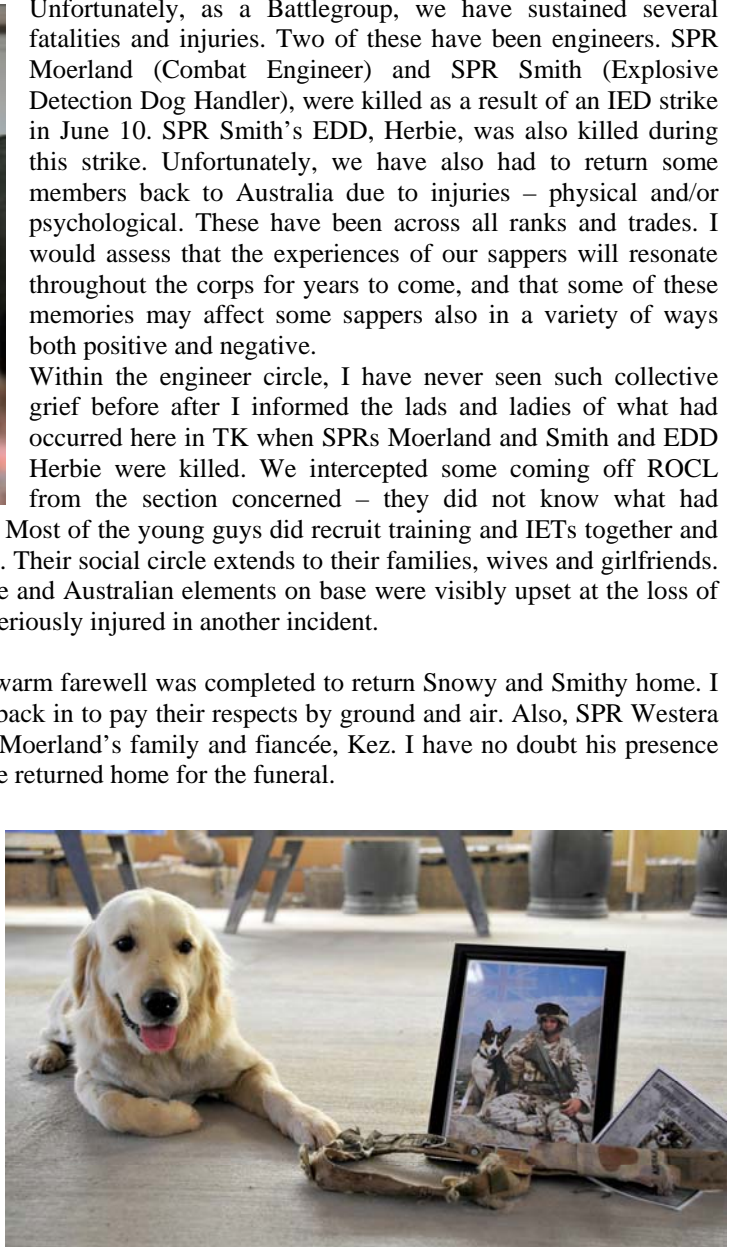
Within the engineer circle, I have never seen such collective grief before after I informed the lads and ladies of what had occurred here in TK when SPRs Moerland and Smith and EDD Herbie were killed. We intercepted some coming off ROCL from the section concerned – they did not know what had occurred because they were in transit. They were all in shock. Most of the young guys did recruit training and IETs together and started out at 7 Field Squadron together so they were very tight. Their social circle extends to their families, wives and girlfriends. Personnel within the wider Battlegroup, Dutch, Coalition Force and Australian elements on base were visibly upset at the loss of the guys. Unfortunately, on the same day, several Dutch were seriously injured in another incident.

I would like to let you know that a professional, heartfelt and warm farewell was completed to return Snowy and Smithy home. I am pleased to report that we were able to get most of the lads back in to pay their respects by ground and air. Also, SPR Westera went back to Australia as an official mourner to support SPR Moerland's family and fiancée, Kez. I have no doubt his presence was of some comfort and we were very grateful that he could be returned home for the funeral.

Herbie the dog was looked after by the handlers separately including a memorial service and his ashes were returned to Mrs Angela and Master Mason Smith, SPR Smith's wife and son.

Thank you all for your kind messages that were passed after recent IED events. The actions at the incident scenes were first rate by the searchers, infantry, medics and CFAs in some very trying circumstances.

We have written to the Moerland and Smith Families. Folks, I would like you to know that Snowy, Smithy and Herbie are very much in our thoughts as are our injured and other deceased members (Bewesy). I would also like to reinforce





to all the families concerned that with the release of the 4 Corners program on the ABC, the wider community is very much aware of Australian servicemen and their efforts within Uruzgan and has a renewed appreciation of the threats your loved ones face. As an observation and of some reassurance to you, it was quite remarkable on ROCL the feedback from all walks of life concerning the lads and ladies over here and the level of respect they are accorded within the community. I think some of our people will find this quite overwhelming when they return home and people learn of their time here.

I would like to acknowledge the wonderful efforts from the welfare team at 6 RAR and the command team at 2 CER back home who have been working hard to look after families and keeping loved ones informed. An important and often understated job that is constantly working in the background - everyone is appreciative of your work.

Right now, we have concluded our leave period and are looking to a positive and safe completion to our tour. We can see the finish line! But there is a way to go and this is a particularly dangerous time. There are a number of outstanding tasks we need to finish and we intend to ensure that all our work is completed safely so everyone comes home in good shape. I am indebted to date by the sterling work of the sappers, section commanders and junior leaders in the field and the effective guidance and steering from particularly strong and experienced warrant officers, Sergeant Major and 2IC within headquarters. We have certainly value added to MTF1 considering our size so far to really show how valuable engineers are in the battlespace and the depth of experience within our ranks has ensured we have achieved some very positive outcomes with what we have.

Best regards to you all.

Carl Miller  
Major  
Officer Commanding  
Engineer Task Unit  
Mentoring Task Force 1

**OC MAJ Chapman**



**Logistics Support Company (LSC)**

***HQ***

Another month has flown by! MAJ Chapman has returned from his well earned break back in Australia to a considerable increase in responsibility which he thoroughly enjoying and taking in his stride. Many intriguing developments and opportunities to formulate solutions have presented themselves to the Company Operations team with SGT Wilson and CAPT Cann staying well and truly on their toes. WO2 Jericevich has tirelessly organised ranges and training to keep the regimental side of the house steaming along and

**2IC/OPSO CAPT Cann**



our Caterer SGT Riley has stepped back into his exhaustive role on completion of his leave without even so much as a sideways glance. All in all Company Headquarters is maintaining the rage through and beyond the impending 'end of deployment madness'!



**CSM WO2 Jericevich**



**BG CATR SGT Riley**



**OPS SGT, SGT Wilson**



## ***TECH SUPPORT PLATOON***

With the return of all the boys from the last period of ROCL/ROCTFA, the workshop is running like a well oiled machine. Still the same response is given when asked how was leave “Yeah great just what I needed, but not long enough.” With the end of our deployment rotation in everyone’s sights, we still remain focused on the tasks required.

With the yanks moving in, there is an opportunity for new friendships and trade relations to be formed. Hand in hand with the arrival of the new American tradies, we say farewell to our Dutch workshop counterparts.

The last few months have seen a lot of challenges with tasks, coupled with a lack of manning within the workshop during the ROCL period. There have been the continuing SHOJO runs resupplying our fellow brethren, a variety of work that seems to never end, and the ever illusive tasking. However it may come in we get on with the job at hand.

GE as always, are at the forefront of gate manufacture and development, EIR are forever keeping our air cons alive (with the very little parts they have), Vehicle sections are keeping the wheels turning with the always ready support of our RPS lads supplying the parts. And let us never forget our illustrious leaders in EMEOPS always ready to make a brew at the most inconvenient of times. “What are you boys up to?”

Arte et Marte

## ***TRANSPORT SECTION***

This month was an extremely busy one for transport section. We started with the usual monthly non technical inspections on vehicles and trailers. We were barely through the first week when we started preparing for and leaving on our first push out West for three days, on completion of this task the vehicles were re-loaded and we headed South for a week of shopping. Once everyone had returned we then kicked on with back to back resupplies, which consisted of visiting six patrol bases in less than two weeks. As usual we also had numerous tasks in Tarin Kowt / Kamp Holland supporting other call signs in this area.

Overall the guys and gal had a busy and challenging month with very little rest. Despite this everybody in the section is happy to be busy as it makes the time fly and our end date seem closer and closer. All our members have completed their ROCL/ROCTFA and very much enjoyed their time with family and friends or their busy European holidays.

To date we have had three members’ (PTE Moore, SPR Westera and LCPL Magnussen) sent home due to injuries sustained in country, we also welcomed PTE Press from 7 CSSB as a replacement for PTE Moore. I wish those injured members a speedy recovery and hope to catch up with them for a beer or 10 at the local RSL.

CPL B. Wade  
MTF-1

## ***Q STORE***

### **LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL**

With an end date for our deployment now rapidly approaching, and after just over 6 months already gone, we are now all on the home stretch.

As with each month before it, July has been busy for all members, and with a nasty case of “squirty bum” affecting half the Qwees, life hasn’t been all too pleasant. Poor LCPL Gastroboy, who required fresh bed linen, can attest to this.

However, a major change in the Army’s electronic logistics accounting system has also made it quite challenging.

On a dark, dark day in the early hours of 5<sup>th</sup> July, MILIS (Military Integrated Logistics Information System) went online replacing the old Standard Defence Supply System.

For the war fighters out there this may not mean much to you, but for us poutes it’s supposed to be our bread and butter. Currently the bread is mouldy and the butter has a rancid smell about it!

Initially much slower than its predecessor, and completely different in its layout and use, it has been like learning to ride a bike again. So after many headaches and having a crash course in its application, we have all put on our training wheels and are now slowly becoming more familiar with its use.

Meanwhile scientists are conducting a study on the link between Tourette Syndrome and MILIS.



Getting “outside the wire” and away from the confines of the base itself was refreshing and eye opening for a few members of the Q who got the opportunity to get away from the day-to-day grind of the store and see how the other members of the battle group are doing things out at the patrol bases for a day or two.

Thankfully morale is still high, and on a lighter and more entertaining note, Wham Bam Sam had a 3<sup>rd</sup> round win over Oc the Rock in the sporting ring. RQD2 got locked in on the wrong side of his office during an Afghani stink bomb storm. And it has been proven that if someone is away Crawf will open and eat half your Tim tams.

Now that the last of the ROCL and ROCTFA groups have returned from leave, and with the Q Store once again at full strength, we are preparing to deal with the upcoming stock-takes, account handovers and the task of returning all our stores back to Australia as we countdown to going home in October.



Hallelujah

CPL Chad Smith  
MTF-1

### *RAP*

The RAP has been relatively busy over the last few weeks and morale has remained high, I have no idea as to why this is as the ROCL period is now over. We have farewelled our fearless leader Doc Glen “HAWKEYE” Mulhall and have inherited our new Regimental Medical Officer Doc Andrew “WHITDOG” Whitworth. Doc Whitworth has settled in with the team very well and hit the ground running with his first day in country stepping straight into the Resus bay to be team leader of a CAT B injured local national.



We have now finished with the TK flu and this has been replaced by the new TK gastro, our theory is that the Americans bought it in with them and they are slowly infiltrating the Hospital. This is a very positive sign as it means that our tour is coming to an end and our focus is now directed to RTAMS, yay with over 600 to do. The RAP along with the rest of the battle group we will be keen to see 5RAR walk off the back of a Herc our much awaited replacements. All in all our team has had vast experiences both within the RAP and the Hospital yet none of this can suppress the excitement we have for coming home and seeing our loved ones.

Team motto “THAT’S POWERFUL MAN”



***From the Chaplain:***

G'day to all of you back home. We only have a few months to go and it will go very fast. For the past few months, it has been tough for the Battle Group with the loss of three of our mates. My thoughts and prayers are going out to all the families and friends of these great heroes who sacrificed their lives for a better world. The guys are continuing to focus on finishing the job in the midst of all this and I salute them all. They look after and support each other very well over here.

It is great to hear that everyone has had a good break during ROCL/ROCTFA catching up with families and loved ones. Now leave period is over, everyone is focusing on finishing the job well and to coming home. I continue to visit all the Patrol Bases and talk to the guys and they are doing well. Morale is still high and they draw energy from each other as they continue to fulfil tasks given to them day in day out.

The soldiers received so many letters and care packages from people back home supporting them in what they are doing here. They are proud of what they are doing on behalf of Australia. It is good to know that the Australian people are supporting them. There were letters also from little kids from schools all over Australia sent to them.

Please continue to pray for the guys and support them as they try to finish the job and to come home safe. It is not long to go. I wish you all well back there. I know that some of you are full on with work, looking after the children etc. Hopefully the guys share with you good and positive stories. I have lots of funny stories about the troops. There are some sad and negative stories but the important thing is, positive ones outweigh the negative ones.

Until next time, may God bless you all and stay safe.

Remember: **“Those who put their hope and wait upon the Lord will renew their strength .”**

Padre Al Lavaki  
MTF1 Chaplain.