



Blue Dog Bugle



March 2010
Volume 1, Issue 1

FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICER

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

Welcome to the first edition of the *Blue Dog Bugle*. The aim of the *Blue Dog Bugle* is to keep family, friends and loved ones informed of the work being done by the men and women of the 6 RAR Battle Group (6 RAR BG) as they carry out their mission in Afghanistan. It will also be a source of information regarding social and welfare activities being organised by the Unit Welfare Officer and other support agencies in Australia. I hope you find the newsletter an informative and worthwhile publication, and I encourage you to provide feedback and stories to support future publications.

For those of you wondering why the newsletter is called the *Blue Dog Bugle*, it is named after the 6 RAR Mascot, a Blue Heeler known as CPL Ridgleigh Blue. His nickname is Blue Dog, or Blue for short; and if you visit the Battalion you will see him keeping a 24 hour watch on the comings and goings within the unit. He has been with us for over a decade and is part of our 6 RAR family. We therefore thought it appropriate that his name be used as the title for the newsletter aimed at keeping you informed of what your loved ones are doing as part of the 6 RAR BG.

As I write this article the Battle Group is well and truly on the move and commencing the hand over with 1 RAR BG in Afghanistan. Our first group of soldiers have departed Australia and undergone further training in a staging area in the Middle East prior to deploying into Afghanistan. It has been a long and demanding period of lead up training to get the 6 RAR BG to the start line for our mission and I would like to thank all families, partners and friends for their support, patience and understanding while their loved ones have been absent and extremely busy over the past few months. I hope you all were able to enjoy time together over the Christmas holiday period and had the opportunity to be with your loved ones before they departed Australia.

The hard work and long absences due to out training commitments before deployment will pay dividends as we undertake the demanding tasks required of the 6 RAR BG as Mentoring Task Force 1 (MTF-1). Our role as MTF-1 is to mentor and develop the Afghan National Army, as well as support security and reconstruction efforts in Uruzgan Province. This will be a challenging and at times dangerous mission. But it is a mission that we are well and truly prepared for. The soldiers I see around me are keen, motivated and ready to get on with the job. They know they have been entrusted by our nation with a great responsibility, and can be very proud of the way they have without hesitation accepted the tasks given to them. They are professional, fit, and confident. I am sure their efforts and actions in Afghanistan will continue the fine reputation our military has as a force for good, and will help make Afghanistan a safer and better place. As a soldier, I can not think of more worthwhile and noble responsibility than helping give peace and security to people who know only war, fear and injustice.

Through the *Blue Dog Bugle* I look forward to keeping you informed of the progress and achievements of the 6 RAR BG as we complete our tasks in Afghanistan. I again thank you for the support you have given and continue to give to your loved ones in the 6 RAR BG. Without it we simply would not succeed.

Jason Blain
LTCOL
CO 6 RAR BG (MTF-1)

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BLUE DOG BUGLE



Headquarters Mentoring Task Force 1

A hectic time for the Headquarters as soldiers continue to arrive in country. Induction training is being conducted to ensure members are familiar with the environment and fully conversant with all force protection measures prior to going out on the ground. This ensures all soldiers are as safe as they possibly can be.

Due to the current work rate there has been little time to think about home. That said there are welfare facilities in all locations so you all should have had an "I have arrived safely" phone call. Weather is starting to improve from the chilly minus ten degrees to a balmy 19 degrees during the day. Hope all is well on the home front and we truly appreciate the sacrifices you our partners have to make to allow us to serve. Will ensure there are some photo's in the next edition.

Mentoring Team – Alpha (MT –A)

I'm sure you will be glad to hear that MT-A has arrived safely in Afghanistan, the OC having been here a month already. It's been very busy right from the beginning, having to transition through another country prior to getting here. Unfortunately we lost SGT Carter, the second in command of the Cavalry Troop, with a broken leg. We wish you a rapid recovery, and hope to see you out here soon.

On arrival we received our final bout of training given by members of the previous rotation. They passed on invaluable lessons that they had learnt during their tour before they departed for home. The 2 Platoon boys were first into the area of operations (AO) and got stuck into patrolling and meeting the locals straight away. It was demonstrated to us very quickly how dangerous it was with an improvised explosive device being detonated against one of our patrols. They were lucky that only a minor injury was sustained and that soldier has made a full recovery.

MT-A will continue to work hard to improve the lives of the locals within our sphere of influence by providing them a secure environment to go about their daily business. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those at home for your support and especially for all of the letters and parcels which have started to arrive.



Mentoring Team Charlie (MT-C)

Mentoring Team Charlie (MT-C) MTF-1 has completed its transition into the Patrol Bases (PBs) which are positioned throughout the Uruzgan province. MT-C will conduct mentoring and partnering operations with the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) over the next eight plus months. MT-C has completed its Transfer of Authority (TOA) with OMLT-C from 1 RAR (MRTF-2) and is thankful to our brethren for a thorough and complete handover.

MT-C sees the rebirth of the Charlie Company, 6 RAR of old, to assist in Australia's commitment to partner the ANA, to protect the people of Afghanistan. After establishing themselves within the Patrol Bases', the teams have been busy acquainting themselves to their new surroundings and their new comrades within the ANA that they will live with.

The first few weeks have been a steep learning curve as the Operational Tempo within the province has not allowed the Teams to have any rest. The pre-deployment preparation that was conducted by the Company in Australia has assisted the Teams greatly, as from the first patrol the Teams were confident and enthusiastic.

Combat Team Delta (CT-D)

Combat Team Delta (CT-D) has seen its first elements arriving in FOB Ripley and has completed the majority of the induction requirements and some of the Mod 1 and 2 packages. Although not complete on the ground, the Combat Team has begun to establish itself in TK, and have fought hard to find common accommodation and office space to house the blokes. We have finally established an area at 250 man camp, with adjoining office space near by. There are still some obstacles which remain in order for the CT to become operationally ready. Vehicles and equipment need to be obtained, which has been a somewhat frustrating process, as we were the last elements in location. The adaptability and flexibility of all members of the CT, however, will no doubt overcome these issues and it will not be long before CT - D is out in the weeds, and establishing our presence on the ground.

Bde Mentoring Team (MT Golf)

The seven lads from MT Golf have all arrived safely and have quickly established a rapport with their Afghan counterparts. The working conditions within the camp are Spartan, but all the boys have found the soldiers to be very open and hospitable. The boys have many stories of countless glasses of 'Chai' (tea) being drunk, with very little talk of work, and much laughter.

As there is so much to absorb in this job, especially with the interaction between the Dutch and ANA activities and a unique Afghan work schedule, the boys are taking a month before making any assumptions or trying to change things. Once we have a handle on the situation, MT G will formulate a plan to assist our ANA counterparts in achieving their goals. All the team are well and safe.

Engineer Task Unit (ETU)

To the family and friends of engineers deployed, just a short SAPPER SITREP. The boys have been very busy, all have undertaken induction training and have now started to work in the field. Members of 3 CER (Townsville) have been excellent in providing additional advice and guidance to all of our members. This will certainly help in our endeavour to succeed as 3 CER did; we wish 3 CER members all the best for the rest of the year and for a job well done.

The weather here has been very cold, and for one day we had snow, some of the boys this was the first time they had seen snow. I must say the weather has started to improve and will soon be extremely hot.

The members of ETU hope the wives and girlfriends had a great Valentines Day, and that everyone at home is well. In our next addition we will include some photos of members working or clowning around. We will have more to report on, for now we are just settling in and finding our feet. We wish everyone at home the very best.

I have attached two sites run by the 2 CER family members.

Kidsincams@live.com is a new program that will try and get a strong male influence to provide some guidance. Family members are looking for Rugby or Soccer stars that will provide advice and play sports with the children for the morning or afternoon.



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The second site is Face-book group, Kids-in-cams, request to become a member. This is another great site to keep in contact and find out what has been happening. Bye for now.

Logistics Support Company (LSC)

With the first people in Logistics Support Company (LSC) departing Australia over a month ago now, and the last still to arrive in Tarrin Kowt (TK), we have definitely spread out the deployment of the Company. But the gradual transition has been great for the Battle Group and we have now taken over from the last team and eagerly await the arrival of our last few. While LSC is based in TK, the guys and girls of the company have hit the ground running and have been out on tasks providing vital support to the forward troops. After the bitter cold of the last month (that even included a day of snow), the weather is starting to heat up now, and you can bet that we'll soon be wishing for the cold to return as we brace ourself for a long, hot and dusty Afghan summer. To our families and friends at home, we miss you dearly, and look forward to keeping in touch as best we can while we're over here.

The Joint Effects Group (JEG)

The Joint Effects Group (JEG) departed Brisbane in mid January as part of the first push into Afghanistan. It consisted of gunners and mortar men from local Brisbane units. After a short stop over to adjust to weather, battle the jet lag and conduct some confirmatory training it was back on the plane to arrive in Tarin Kowt.

Everyone arrived safely, quickly found their feet and commenced a handover with our out going counterparts. There was an early opportunity to fire the mortars which proved to be a success for both observers and mortars. Mortars now have bragging rights to the first rounds fired down range as part of MTF 1. To date all JEG personnel have settled in, and despite some cold weather including a blanket of snow on a particular day spirits remain high with the focus beginning of our mission. Wish you all the best at home and we will stay in touch.

6 RAR Association

Membership of the association is open to all who have served in or with 6 RAR at any time and we welcome new members. Click the image on the left border to print an application form or e-mail [Arthur Willemse](mailto:Arthur.Willemse) to join the Association. Subscribe to 'Stand To', our quarterly newsletter- stay informed about reunions, read your mates letters, in '6 Battalion Lines'- send your own story or photograph. 'Stand To' needs you. It's your call - subscribe now, (only \$25.00 to June 2010) or [tell us why you are not subscribing](#)





BELOW IS A BRIEF EXPLANATION AS TO WHY INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR SPOUSE CAN NOT BE GIVEN OUT UNLESS HE HAS GIVEN WRITTEN APPROVAL EXPLANATION OF THE WEB FORM 'AD214- PERMISSION TO INQUIRE'

BACKGROUND

1. In order for any personal information about an ADF member to be disclosed to a third party (including, but not restricted to, a spouse, partner or family member) the member must have authorised the **release of information** to that specific party.
2. This authorisation is granted by the member completing and submitting an 'AD214- Permission to Inquire' Web Form.
3. Disclosure of information is **time restricted**. The member must nominate a time period for which authorisation to inquire is granted.
4. The member must **specify the information** that can be disclosed to the enquirer. This may be information that relates to the members' salary; employment; leave; or other details including, but not restricted to, address.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

5. Personal information may be required by a third party to support applications for loans or rental accommodation; or to make an enquiry to ensure the member is getting paid the correct salary and entitlements.

SUBMITTING THE FORM

6. The 'AD214-Permission to Inquire' can only be **completed by the serving member**.
7. If the member is in **Special Forces**, or employed by **DSD** or **DIGO**, the form **MUST** be submitted to the relevant administrative area.
8. All other members must fax the completed form to the Defence Service Centre, or pass it to the Customer Service Centre for forwarding.
9. Once complete and signed, this form will constitute your **consent of disclosure** in accordance with (IPP) 11.1 (b) contained in Section 14 of the *Privacy Act (1988)*.

Unit Welfare Officer

Hi everyone, my name is Captain Graham Palmer and I am the 6 RAR/MTF-1 Unit Welfare Officer. I am married with two children and I have been in the Army for 39Years! The Army and 6 RAR place significant emphasis on the professional provision of administrative and welfare assistance to both military personnel and their families, we are here to help. I provide assistance to all MTF members regardless of deployment status. My directive is to foster the fellowship of the families and friends supporting our deployed personnel and to ensure the appropriate level of support, communication and advice is provided as required in order to lessen any impacts associated with deployments.





The level of support and communication will be totally in accordance with your desires. There will be no imposition or intrusion upon you. Defence has numerous specialist agencies with which to offer direct support or appropriate referral as required. My role is to directly assist you in any circumstance and ensure the provision of co-ordinated, timely and personal support. My contact telephone numbers are shown on the last page of this Newsletter. I am able to be contacted for any welfare related incident 24 hrs/day, 7 days/week.

Emails are sent out in bulk ie close to 700 pers if I don't respond personally please forgive me as it would take to long. If you have a question, ring me.



OPERATION HOMEFRONT ~ Absence from Home Support Activities

Operation Homefront recognises the strengths that exist in Defence families and is DCO Brisbane’s commitment to the Defence community to encourage and facilitate self- reliance and community capacity for support. DCO-B offers the following activities, in conjunction with units, to welcome and support Defence families in Brisbane and surrounding areas.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MARCH</u></p> <p>Tues 16th – 10 am– 12 pm Wed 17th - 7 pm – 9 pm</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Absence From Home Support Activities – Gallipoli Family Centre (Old Officers’ Mess)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photography – By Julie de Paola from ‘Photography by Julie’ ~ plus Free Photo shoot valued at \$387 for all attendees. • Yoga – Relax and enjoy more balance in your life! For the Kiddies • Bazil & Grumble – ‘Puppets Galore & Craft Shops.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>APRIL</u></p> <p>Sun 18th – 10 am – 2 pm Tues 20th – 10 am – 12 pm</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Defence Kids Activities!</p> <p>Kids Sports - Come for a fun filled morning full of games and interactive activities followed by a BBQ lunch!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Venue: Sunday – Gallipoli Barracks Tuesday - TBA</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MAY</u></p> <p>Tues 18th - 10 am – 12 pm Wed 19th – 7 pm – 9 pm</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Self-Care Indulgence! Gallipoli Family Centre (Old Officers’ Mess)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Kids in the Park’ Brisbane City Council fun activities for all ages! • Self Indulgence Spectacular – Spoil yourself with an evening of meditation and relaxation therapies!
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>JUNE</u></p> <p>Tues 15th – 10 am – 12 pm Wed 16th - 7 pm – 9 pm</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Resilience ~ Our Greatest Glory! Gallipoli Family Centre (Old Officers’ Mess)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest Speaker – Rebecca Rutherford ~ Envisage Coaching Australia – “Building Resilience - Just another brick in the Wall”! - Plus 3 Free coaching sessions valued at \$427 for all attendees. • Kids Entertainment – Live Performances for all ages!

Please contact **DCO-B** on **3354 0500** for further details about these events and upcoming activities!

Upcoming Events.

Planned family day 18 Apr 2010 at the Gallipoli Barracks Family Centre, RSVP to me via email Please!!!! By 31Mar 10

Battalion Birthday at the Memorial Walk Gallipoli Barracks on Sunday the 6th June 2010. Cost will be \$10.00 p.p. for serving 6 RAR & MFT-1 members and their families. RSVP to Capt Graham Palmer 07 33326935 or email graham.palmer1@defence.gov.au.

The Gallipoli Barracks Family Centre is open as a drop-in everyday. May to be used for family social events, just book and get approval through the 6 RAR Welfare Officer on 0438464164.

We would like to arrange a night where we can get together to discuss the type of activities that you would like to see conducted. Please email me at graham.palmer1@defence.gov.au if you would like to attend such an evening or if you have a skill or talent which we can use to teach or give a talk on for the families.

Easter egg hunt 31 Mar 10, IF INTERESTED PLEASE call Kathryn on 0448263747

Also those interested on a pamper morning on Friday 7th May at the Welfare Centre, let me know and I will pass to Penny, if there are enough interested it will happen.

Organisations giving support to Members Deployed and Families at home

Gaythorne RSL, Greenbank RSL, Sunnybank RSL, Kedron- Wavell RSL, Young Diggers Association and Defence Community Organisation.

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Below is a small poem written by a 12 Yr Old for her Dad serving in Afghanistan as a member of MTF-1

I Like

**"The Saviour of the World'
He stands up tall with his gun and greens
Family rushing through his mind
No sleep, bad food but still in a mood
To work as little time flies
My dad, I'm so proud to see you in the crowd
who saves our country and town.**

By Phoebe Green Age 12

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Please understand this newsletter is for all of the MTF-1, as the majority of families are centred around Brisbane, the newsletter advertises activities in Brisbane. If you require assistance in your local area or require closer support contact your local DCO office, however I will assist all families regardless of where you are, if at all possible.



Helpful Contact Details

<http://www.defence.gov.au/dpe/>
<http://www.armyholidays.com.au/>
<http://www.defcom.com.au/>
<http://www.defcredit.com.au/>
<http://www.adcu.com.au/>
http://www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dpsa/amf_rtf.htm
<http://www.defence.gov.au/equity/>
<http://www.arffa.org.au/>
<http://www.army.gov.au/>
<http://www.dva.gov.au/>
<http://www.defence.gov.au/dco/>
<http://www.dha.gov.au/>
<http://www.comsuper.gov.au/>
<http://www.defence.gov.au/dpe/pac/>
[http://www.defence.gov.au/army/Fairgo.h
tm](http://www.defence.gov.au/army/Fairgo.htm)
<http://www.defence.gov.au/>

Commanding Officer 6 RAR

Lieutenant Colonel Mark Jennings

Regimental Sergeant Major 6 RAR

Warrant Officer Class One Brett Brown

Unit Welfare Officer 6 RAR

Capt Graham Palmer
07 3332 6935
0438 464164
Graham.palmer1@defence.gov.au

National Welfare Co-ordination Centre

Freecall 24 hour Hotline 1800 801026
nwcc.australia@defence.gov.au

Defence Community Organisation Brisbane

71 Osborne Road
Mitchelton 4053
(Behind the Old Dick Smith Electronics)
07 3354 0500
1800 801026 (After Hours – through
NWCC – 24 hours)

Defence Housing Authority Brisbane

07 3355 8844
1800 249711(24 hours)