

Mentoring TASK FORCE

Lance Corporal Jason Matheson and his section patrol in the Mirabad valley. Pic Sergeant Mick Davis.

By the time this is published, the First Mentoring Task Force (MTF1) will be just about half-way through its deployment to Afghanistan – and, if the first few months are anything to go by, it could be an exciting tour for the Aussies.

SOTG medics depart on a Wolfpack mission. Pic Lieutenant Aaron Oldaker.



They "hit the ground running" in mid February, formally taking command of the mission on a hand-over parade at Tarin Kowt on the 14th.

By that time, however, they had already seen action on the battlefield with one soldier wounded in an IED incident while conducting familiarisation patrols with their predecessor Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force 2.

MTF1 includes five mentoring teams and a combat team delivering valuable training to two kandacks (battalions) of the 4th Brigade of the Afghan National Army (ANA), and conducting a range of operations throughout Tarin Kowt and the Baluchi and Mirabad valleys.

MTF1 troops have been conducting patrols alongside their ANA counterparts with a number of early successes including weapons and explosives-cache finds.

One of the MTF goals is to further equip the 4th Brigade soldiers with skills and experiences with a view to the ANA and ANP (police) eventually conducting their own security operations in Oruzgan.

And, of course, improved security on the ground will foster further development opportunities for the civilian population of Oruzgan.

Not all of MTF1's mentoring is battle related, however, with Australian military engineer mentors going the extra mile to ensure the Afghan Army's engineers in the province are equipped with the technical know-how to counter the insidious threat of improvised explosive devices – IEDs.

An Aussie C17 lands at Tarin Kowt. Pic Sergeant Mick Davis.

