

**SPEECH BY THE THE HONOURABLE TERESA GAMBARO MP THE
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE ON BEHALF
OF THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE NATIONAL LAUNCH OF THE 2006 RESERVE
FORCES DAY**

SYDNEY – SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER 2005

[ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS]

The Honourable Sir Laurence Street – National and New South Wales Chairman of Reserve Forces Day;

Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston – Chief of the Defence Force;

Mr Steven Smith – Consul General of the United States of America;

Mr Tim Holmes – Consul General of the United Kingdom;

His Excellency Trevor Garland – Representing the Solomon Islands High Commissioner;

Rear Admiral Rowan Moffitt, Brigadier Bruce Cook and Group Captain Monty Smith – representing the Chiefs of Navy, Army and Air Force;

Parliamentary colleagues – Federal and State;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Reservists past and present...

[SPEECH]

It gives me great pleasure to represent the Prime Minister here today at this, the National Launch of Reserve Forces Day 2006.

One of the important aspects about the role of Reservists in the ADF is that we often get more than we bargained for – and I mean that in a very positive sense.

For every Reservist in uniform there is often a highly trained and qualified individual who has honed *and maintained* their skills in the civilian environment.

Reserve service is also of great value to the general community and, through Defence service, Reservists develop skills that are valuable in their wider community roles.

It has been a remarkable year for the ADF members who have been involved in a variety of Australia's humanitarian and peace-keeping missions throughout the world.

I am sure that the recipients of this help did not stop for one moment to ponder if the Australian in uniform was a full time military person or a Reservist.

However, what I am certain of is that the help and support received was, and is, second to none.

As part of the annual Defence Reserves Program of activities, Defence celebrates aspects of Reserve service through support to Reserve Forces Day, conducted with such commitment and style by the Reserve Forces Day Council.

The Council has organised Reserve Forces Day parades and activities around the country since 1998 to help celebrate past Reserve service and to recommend, by this celebration, Reserve service to current and future generations.

The 2006 celebration will mark the 90th anniversary of Military Police. Since formation in 1916 they have become a vital part of the Army. It is also the 70th Anniversary of Number 21 City of Melbourne Squadron and Number 22 City of Sydney Squadron.

I would now like to read the Prime Minister's message of support:

"It gives me great pleasure to be able to provide this message for the National Launch of Reserve Forces Day 2006.

Reserve Forces Day enables us to acknowledge the contribution of the Australian Defence Force Reserves to Australia's defence and security interests. Throughout this nation's history, our Reservists have repeatedly demonstrated their commitment, courage and adaptability while providing vital operational support alongside the full-time members of the Australian Defence Force.

Australia's Reserve forces continue to provide invaluable support to Australian Defence Force operations. In the last few years, a large number of Reservists have been deployed overseas and it is fitting that in 2006, Reserve Forces Day will pay special tribute to the overseas service of Reservists. These Reservists undertake difficult tasks in dangerous situations and Australia is grateful for their contribution. I would also like to thank the families and employers of our Reservists whose support is essential for the ongoing success of the Reserve forces.

I am pleased to note that the 2006 Reserve Forces Day activities will also acknowledge the contribution of civilians who have volunteered to serve overseas, in many cases alongside our Australian Defence Force members. They too risk their own safety so they may provide help to those in need. Australia is indebted to these people and I thank them for their commitment.

The members of the Reserve Forces Day Council should be commended for the wonderful work they are doing for Reserve Forces Day. I wish the Australian Defence Force Reserves and the Reserve Forces Day Council every success for their activities in 2006".

John Howard – Prime Minister

We have here today Reserve representatives of all three Services who have served overseas.

To you I would express my thanks and pride, as both an Australian and a member of the regional community, for what you have achieved on behalf of our country.

Thankyou for what you do and the manner in which you do it.

It now gives me great pleasure to officially launch Reserve Forces Day 2006.

Thank you.