



SPEECH BY

Chief of the Army – LTGEN David Morrison AO

Reserve Forces Day Parade - Melbourne

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It is a great honour to be invited to address you today. This is my first official address as the Chief of the Australian Army. I trust that that happy coincidence affirms the importance that the Army – and indeed the entire Australian Defence Force - attaches to our Reserve component.

Reserve Forces Day affords an opportunity to look back with pride on the contribution of Reserves to the Defence of Australia since the very inception of the nation. And it provides an opportunity for us to pay tribute to our serving reservists, and their families and others, whose unselfish support underpins their commitment.

Reserve Forces Day is an occasion for pride and celebration. But we must also pause to reflect on the sacrifice of those members of our citizen and Reserve Forces who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in war. In the two great global conflicts of the last century many members of our citizen forces were ultimately mobilised for active service and many died while answering the Nation's call. Their legacy of duty and patriotism animates the contribution of thousands of Reserve soldiers, sailors and airmen and women today. That legacy is in very capable hands.

The reverence that Australians feel for the digger is inextricably linked to the iconic image of the citizen soldier.

While that is unchanged, the world is in constant flux and this has meant that the nature of service in the reserves is changing.

The much vaunted 'peace dividend' predicted in the wake of the Cold War has, sadly, never eventuated. Indeed, the world remains a dangerous place and security challenges have become more diffuse, complex and unpredictable. Australia learnt this first in 1999 during the East Timor crisis and later in the hybrid wars in the wake of 9/11.

The ADF has engaged in uninterrupted operations since 1999.

We could not have sustained this demanding tempo without the contribution

of the Defence Reserves. They have responded magnificently to this new era and its distinctive challenges. The demands of a decade of war fighting, stabilization operations and humanitarian relief has brought out the very best in our Reserve Forces.

Whether through the provision of vital rare skills such as surgeons and lawyers, or the efforts of formed bodies of troops the Reserves have been at the cutting edge of the operational performance of the ADF over the last decade. This of course applies to those operations also undertaken on Australian soil, where much of the ADF's commitment to Disaster Relief has rested on the shoulders of our Reserve men and women. This State, in the wake of the terrible bushfires of 2009, knows that better than most.

Especially gratifying for me, as the Chief of the Army, has been the deployment of units of reservists on operations overseas.

This has made the total force concept a reality. The Reserve is now seamlessly integrated into our force sustainment model. Reservists conduct our operations in the Solomon Islands and have assumed significant responsibility for our operations in Timor Leste. They have earned the trust of their permanent colleagues and the Government of Australia in assuming this burden. The level and scope of their responsibilities is going to increase.

Under Plan **Beersheba** – Army's capstone force development and modernization plan – the Reserve will continue to play a critical part in force generation. Our reserve soldiers are already indispensable and our increasing reliance on their skills and motivation is well founded.

Of course the effectiveness of the Reserve relies on the unstinting support and sacrifice of a range of actors. Firstly, of course, there are the individuals who give their spare time and earning capacity to serve their country. But in this endeavour they draw on a deep well of goodwill and affection from their families. Reserve service places an unusual strain on families without many of the offsetting compensations available to the families of permanent ADF members. I place on record today the gratitude of the Australian Army and the entire ADF.

Finally, no acknowledgement of the role of the Defence Reserves would be complete without speaking of the support of the thousands of employers and businesses across Australia whose goodwill is simply irreplaceable. No business or enterprise is immune to competitive pressure so the release of employees for reserve service always entails sacrifice of some sort. Let me assure you that it is worthwhile and we appreciate it.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you again for the chance to address you today. As I look forward to the challenges that face me as the Chief of Army I am comforted by the enthusiasm that I see in the crowd in front of me today and more broadly in the Reserve community. I face those challenges with a keen awareness of our history, but with a great appetite to ensure that we are ready for the future. Thank you.