



PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA

MESSAGE: RESERVE FORCES DAY 2005

I am delighted to provide this message for Reserve Forces Day 2005.

Since its inception in 1998, Reserve Forces Day has provided a strong focus for the collective recognition and appreciation of the service of our citizen soldiers, sailors, airmen and airwomen, as well as recognising the essential support of family and civilian employers. Such recognition is important as Australia continues to rely heavily on the Reserves for support to all significant military operations. The Reserves continue to contribute strongly to our surge capacity to meet peak periods of activity. They were recently also part of the deployments to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Indonesia following the natural disasters.

It is with great interest that I note that 2005 is the 90th anniversary of the famous 'Coo-ee Marches' and of the raising of the Army's 2nd Division. The 'Coo-ee Marches' did much in galvanising public support for recruitment at the time. Many of those involved in the 'Coo-ee Marches' went on to serve with the 2nd Division and other elements of the Australian Imperial Force in Egypt, Gallipoli and France.

The 'Coo-ee Marches' reflect and embody the strong relationship that has existed over the years in Australia between the community and the Australian Defence Force. I see it as very appropriate that the Reserve Forces Day National Parade in Sydney on 3 July 2005 highlight the 'Coo-ee Marches' and that the 2005 Reserve Forces Day march will lead into the more formal celebrations that 2nd Division will be holding later in 2005, to mark its 90th anniversary.

2005 also marks the 50th anniversary of the raising of No. 1 and No. 2 Commando Companies in 1955, an event that contributed in many ways to the evolution of our current Special Forces. I commend the Reserve Forces Day Council for featuring 1 Commando Regiment and Special Forces in its National Parade.

It is pleasing that similar parades and celebrations will be held in other states and territories in capital cities and in many rural cities and towns. This is important recognition of the valuable contribution made by our many Reservists who are based in country areas.

Again, it is my privilege to join with many Australians to honour the ADF Reserve Forces' rich traditions of service through Reserve Forces Day. I commend Reserve Forces Day to all Australians and I particularly wish the Reserves Forces Day Councils throughout Australia every success in 2005.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'John Howard'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

(John Howard)