

Bosses give seal of approval to reservists - 'You never hear them complain about what they have to do'

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The Examiner's Mark Baker and Will Swan travelled to Malaysia to observe army reservists training in the jungles of Johor Bahru. In the fifth in a series of articles on Rifle Company Butterworth 83, they talk with an employer flown in to see what the positives of having reservists on-staff can be.

IT WOULD be a tough ask for many bosses to lose a staff member for three months but employing army reservists often means just that.

More than 100 soldiers from all walks of civilian life are involved in RCB 83, a three-month training deployment in South-East Asia.

However, for Commonwealth Bank team leader Kylie Price the benefits of staff member Pte Martin Johnson being away far outweigh the negatives.

"From what I've seen over the last few days, what he's learning out here, the commitment that Martin and the rest of the guys have will be brought back to the workplace," she said.

Mrs Price, who works at the bank's Hobart call centre, was invited by the Army Reserve to be part of to be part of Boss Lift 08.

The exercise allows employers of reservists to see firsthand the crucial training their staff undergo.

Mrs Price said she talked a lot with Pte Johnson, 25, about his role in the Army Reserve.

"I was pretty excited when he told me he was going because I knew it would be a fantastic opportunity for him," she said.

"There's so much pride from these guys. To come out here and do what they do in the conditions they have to go through shows so much commitment.

"You never hear them complain about what they have to do."

A family tradition of military service led Pte Johnson to join the reserves three years ago before he was employed by the bank.

"It's about having pride in my country. I love being Australian and love everything about Australia so it's good to represent that," he said.

"To have the opportunity to work overseas and be part of Australia's frontline in relations with countries like Malaysia and Thailand is something that most people wouldn't get."

However, Pte Johnson said he was looking forward to returning to work in a month's time.

"It's going to certainly be different going back to an office environment but it's going to be nice to have a roof back over my head.

"The bank has been really good in supporting me in this role to go away for such a long period of time.

"Not every workplace is always happy to have reservists but I informed them when I applied and they were happy to take me on."