

# Malaysian jungle a new experience for reservists

**EXPERIENCED** Townsville soldier Captain Mike Spruce learned a thing or two from army reservists during a recent stint overseas.

Capt Spruce travelled to Butterworth in Malaysia with 109 army reservists, to undertake three months of intensive training.

The officer, who is the adjutant of 31/42 RQR in Townsville, said he had learned vital lessons during his first posting with a reserve unit in 20-years of soldiering.

"Their backgrounds are different and they have different life experiences, but when they put their uniforms on they become soldiers," Capt Spruce said.

He said while the reservists' skill levels were not as high as regular soldiers, they brought vital knowledge to their role, with one soldier who is an IT technician in his civilian job fixing the internet system as soon as it crashed.

"If anything, the reserves at Butterworth were somewhat keener than their ARA counterparts — it was a whole new adventure, getting to do things they don't do on Tuesday



**Captain Mike Spruce**

night parades or weekends."

The soldiers were put through their paces undertaking a three day jungle survival camp, where they were given nothing but a knife and some water.

"They were given instruction in trap and snare construction, how to source local water, and what can and can't be eaten in the jungle.

"They lost a bit of weight but gained a lot of knowledge — about themselves and about

the importance of working in teams."

"The soldiers didn't spend their whole three months in Malaysia training and some were even able to fly their wives or girlfriends over for the Christmas break.

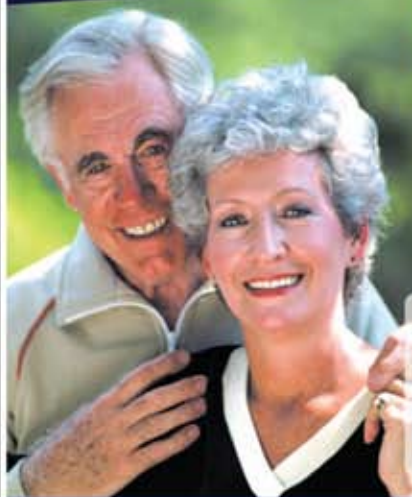
"Penang is a great spot for stand down."

"After all, one of the major drawbacks of an overseas trip like Rifle Company Butterworth is being able to experience the culture of a foreign country."

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