

Transcript

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 Compere: **MARIE-LOUISE THEILE & BILL MCDONALD** Summary ID: **B00025674230**

Item: **A BATTALION OF BRISBANE ARMY RESERVISTS IS ON TOUR IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS. IT IS THE FIRST TIME SINCE WWII A RESERVE UNIT HAS TAKEN THE LEAD IN OVERSEAS OPERATIONS. THE SOLOMON ISLANDS PRIME MINISTER HAS CALLED THE AUSTRALIAN VISITS PROPAGANDA.**

INTERVIEWEES: ROB MCINTYRE, ARMY RESERVIST

JOE CRICHTON, ARMY RESERVIST

Demographics:	Male 16+	Female 16+	All people	ABs	GBs
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MARIE-LOUISE THEILE: We return now to our story on the Army Reservists. Well, they're often called weekend warriors, but a battalion of Brisbane Army Reservists is currently on duty in the Solomon Islands. It's the first time since World War Two a reserve unit has taken a lead role in overseas operations.

REPORTER: It's hotter than at home, and much wetter, too.

ROB MCINTYRE: I'm sure Peter Beattie and all the farmers back home would like to have even half the rain fall we get over here.

REPORTER: But then the task these Queenslanders are doing in the Solomons is a world away from their usual day jobs. The Sunshine Coast's Rob McIntyre usually installs garage doors. Here he find himself on



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patrol, maintaining security in the troubled island nation, when they come across a suspicious person on a bridge.

ROB MCINTYRE: They want to question him, it could be a person of interest.

REPORTER: After searching the man the all clear is given. Things remain tense around Honiara. This week Foreign Affairs issued fresh travel warnings, with fears Australians could be targeted.

But the troops find most locals welcoming.

ROB MCINTYRE: Most of them are very friendly, very friendly towards us. The kids are very, very happy, very receptive.

REPORTER: There's about a hundred Queensland reservists on a three month tour of duty. They include carpenters, bank managers, even a fashion designer. As part of their mission they visit outlying villages to explain their role.

JOE CRICHTON: We're here to provide security for the people of the Solomon Islands. That's you people here.

REPORTER: But, in a sign of the deteriorating relationship between Australia and the Solomons Prime Minister, Mannasseh Sogavare has called these visits propaganda, a claim Army officials reject.



JOE CRICHTON: Unfortunately, a lot of them remember the tensions and the period of ethnic violence. And one thing that's really struck us is that the average person is really happy to see us here.

REPORTER: The battalions will return to Brisbane later this month.

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