



# Reservists rumble in the jungle

**DEBRA SOLOMON**

BATTLING mozzies, stifling heat and hunger is not most people's dream of something to do in their spare time.

But deep in the jungle, Army Reservists are doing just that.

Cremorne's Gary Candish, a Department of Defence dispute resolution negotiator, has just returned from time in the Malaysian jungle, where he observed more than 100 deployed Australian Army Reserve soldiers living on their survival skills.

He was there to assess how the soldiers negotiated their required three months away from their workplaces.

During the three months, Re-

servists must spend three days surviving in the jungle.

"What I saw was an experience money can't buy – it was a complete eye-opener," Mr Candish said.

"I had very little to do with deployed Army Reservists until this trip, but seeing them in the jungle showed me they are hard core – I had thought they just spent their time having fun," he said. Trapping and preparing animals for food, finding edible plants, building a jungle shelter and applying emergency medical treatment were just some of the skills the reservists had to use during their time "at large" in the

jungle. "They were living in unforgiving conditions and their experiences certainly developed their self-discipline, their patience and how to look after each other," Mr Candish said. They also learned teamwork and leadership skills, which Mr Candish said were transferable to the workplace. "Now I appreciate what they do, and if the chips are down I'd like to have them beside me," Mr Candish said.

Of the 100,000 people in Australian uniform, about 45,000 are Reservists.

They are often involved in security at major events, and disaster relief operations.



**Above: Cremorne's Gary Candish trying on night goggles. Left: Malaysian trainers showing the Australian Army Reservists how to build and set an animal trap for food in the jungle.**