

Kalgoorlie Miner (Western Australia)

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GENERAL

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FIVE part-time soldiers from Kalgoorlie-Boulder are part of the largest **deployment** of **Australian Army** reservists since World War II.

Cpl Rodney Kalem, Lance-Cpl Rhett Cumming, Pte Dean Collins, Pte Matt Morgan and Pte Jay Clinch are currently deployed to the **Solomon Islands** as part of **Operation Anode**.

The four-month **deployment** of more than 100 soldiers and officers from the Royal WA Regiments famous 11th/28th Battalion and 16th Battalion reinforces the **Australian Defence** Forces contribution to the **Solomon Islands** Regional Assistance **Mission**.

Cpl Kalem is the only member of the local contingent who has served overseas in the past. He spent six months in East **Timor** seven years ago.

"They are finally putting the reserves to good use," Cpl Kalem told the Kalgoorlie Miner in November.

"Its the biggest **deployment** from WA since World War II.

"By utilising us its not just a boys club.

"When an opportunity like this comes along youve got to make the most of it."

Pte Clinch is the youngest of the group at age 19.

All five men are infantry soldiers, although Lance-Cpl Cumming is a specialist trained in combat first-aid.

Pte Dean Collins is among the groups most experienced for this **mission** after spending 11 years in the Royal **Australian Navy**.

The men would be "beaten into shape" and "ready to deploy" after a month in Townsville, Cpl Kalem said before leaving the Goldfields.

He said they were more than willing to give up Christmas Day, New Years Eve and Australia Day while they were overseas.

Asked whether he was concerned by the danger, Cpl Kalem replied:

"We wouldnt be there unless there was at least a minimal threat.

"We expect the worst and our training gets us in the mood for it, but if nothing happens at least we are prepared for it."

The army reserves, or militia as they were once known, have a proud Goldfields history dating back 100 years.

From performing ceremonial duties on Anzac Day to competing in the Balzano Barrow Race, the reserves form an integral part of the community.

Kalgoorlie-Boulders unit, 11 Platoon Delta Company, 16th Battalion, RWAR, parades every Tuesday night and one weekend a month.

Name of group: Army Reserves.

Who can join: Anyone, aged 17 and over can join by calling Defence Force Recruiting on 13 19 01.

When and where: 11 Platoon, Delta Company, 16 Battalion, Royal Western Australian Regiment, parades every Tuesday night at the Cheetham Street barracks and one weekend a month.

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GRAPHIC: Matt Morgan; Rhett Cumming; Rodney Kalem

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