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## **Australia's Army Reserve**

In response to reader requests for more information on Australia's Army Reserve post the Solomon Islands and East Timor deployments, Major General Steve Smith, commencing on page 21, explains that, under Plan Beersheba, the Army from 2015 will have a multi-role combat brigade on standby for deployment, or deployed, constantly. It will consist of three battle groups, two Regular Army and one Army Reserve. The Reserve multi-role battle group was evaluated in a major exercise last year and, while the standard it displayed exceeded the all-corps standard, it did not reach the Regular infantry battalion standard. It was concluded that the allocation of rear area security tasks to the Reserve battle group was 'about right'.

While this is probably an accurate assessment, if the Reserve battle group were to be deployed on the condition that its role be restricted to rear area security, it would mean that the combat brigade would have only two manoeuvre units – a significant constraint on its tactical employment. Further, there could be no guarantee that, once deployed, the enemy would not draw the Reserve battle group into major combat. Accordingly, I consider that the Reserve battle group should strive to achieve the infantry battalion standard prior to deployment, and, while rear area security might remain its preferred role, it should be prepared for any role that the tactical situation demanded.

**David Leece<sup>3</sup>**

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<sup>3</sup>David Leece, Editor of *United Service*, is President of the Institute. These are his personal views.