

“MILITARILY naïve.” This was how Paediatric Nursing Director at Adelaide’s Women and Children’s Hospital, Mrs Ann Lindschau, described her knowledge base before heading off to Malaysia for a first-hand look at the infantry training taking place there.

Although one her work colleagues is Registered Nurse Paul Wirth, an Army Reservist, Mrs Lindschau was not really aware of the training reservists undertook while away.

“Before I went on the Bosslift program, I had very little idea about the roles of Reservists in the military,” said Mrs Lindschau.

That said, however, Mrs Lindschau was aware that employers of reservists with medical skills can receive up to \$5600 a week from the government for every week their Reservists are required for military service (once they meet a qualifying period).

Bosslift Malaysia 2006 is an initiative of the Directorate of Reserve Support (DRS), an organisation devoted to establishing flexible partnerships between Reservists and their civilian employers.

As a guest of DRS, Mrs Lindschau joined 18 employers from around Australia for an informative demonstration of Reservists in action in the Malaysian jungle.

The busy four-day program allowed the employers to share experiences and meals with the soldiers – whether that entailed a barbecue and quiet drink or an improvised feast from the forest. The employers learned that soldiers on patrol in the jungle could keep fit with the resources the land provides.

“Paul has been on deployments to Iraq and East Timor but I wasn’t sure how the Reserves worked with the permanent forces so Bosslift was an opportunity to learn and compare notes with other employers,” said Mrs Lindschau.

After chowing down on “rat packs” (combat ration packs) in the jungle with the Reservist troops of Rifle Company Butterworth, watching a platoon ambush, listening to lectures and getting some range practice on a Steyr rifle, Mrs Lindschau now has a much better idea about the discipline, dedication and training that goes into making a finely honed professional soldier capable of fighting as an equal beside full-time counterparts.

“I was completely blown away by the standard of the Reservist troops and the training they were undergoing,” said Mrs Lindschau.

“I am in awe of what they achieve in such difficult conditions.

“The army training the Reservists received gives them skills that are directly applicable in their civilian jobs – confidence combined with insight, leadership and communication, quick decision-making, team work and commitment.

“This trip was a once in a lifetime experience that I’ll never forget. I learned so much and am very proud of the Reservists.”

For more details about Bosslift and the many programs run by Defence Reserves visit www.defence.gov.au/reserves or call the toll free information hotline on 1800 803 485.