

## AUSTRALIAN ARMY INDIGENOUS ELDER

The Army's inaugural Indigenous Elder, Uncle Roy Mundine, was appointed by CA LtGen David Morrison at a ceremony in Canberra on April 18.

A Bundjalung man, Uncle Roy had a distinguished 36 year Army career, enlisting in 1958.

Before his retirement as WO1 in 1995, Uncle Roy served in Malaya in 1959 with 1RAR and had two tours in South Vietnam with 5RAR in 1966 and 1969.

During his 1969 tour, Uncle Roy was Mentioned in Dispatches for his actions on April 25, 1969, during Operation Surfside where he was the leading section commander with 1 PI, A Coy.

On approaching a suspected enemy area, the then Cpl Mundine deployed his section on the ground and moved forward alone to reconnoitre the enemy position.

He sighted enemy bunkers and was about to signal further instructions when he detonated a mine that severed his lower right leg and caused severe wounds to his back and his other leg.

Members of his section started to move forward to his assistance into what was later shown to be an enemy minefield.

Although in considerable pain, Cpl Mundine ordered his section to stay out of the area and directed them to new firing positions after giving full details of the enemy bunker system.

For more than 40 minutes, he continued to give instructions to his section and refused to allow any members of the platoon to move near him until engineers had cleared a path through the minefield. This was typical of his outstanding leadership.

Uncle Roy was also awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1987 for his service as the Quartermaster of 49RQR.

Among his duties, Uncle Roy will represent serving and ex-serving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island personnel, advise Army's senior leadership, and participate in events of Indigenous significance such as National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.

Speaking at the ceremony, LtGen Morrison said the appointment signified Army's commitment to engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

"The appointment of the inaugural Army Indigenous Elder is an important milestone for Army and acknowledges the proud history of service that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have

provided to the Army and our nation," he said. "Uncle Roy had a distinguished Army career and is a respected and active member of the Indigenous community. He is an influential voice on issues related to Indigenous veterans and young people.

"We are privileged that he has agreed to be the Army's Elder."

Uncle Roy said he was delighted to be the inaugural Elder and was looking forward to working with the Army on its Indigenous activities.

"I think it was a very good idea to appoint an Elder and it is a great honour to have been asked by LtGen Morrison," Uncle Roy said.

"As the Army Elder, I hope to go out and talk to the younger people in Australia and enlighten them about the careers that are available to them in the military.

"Army is an awesome career which is great for young people as it gives them so many opportunities to do and learn new things."

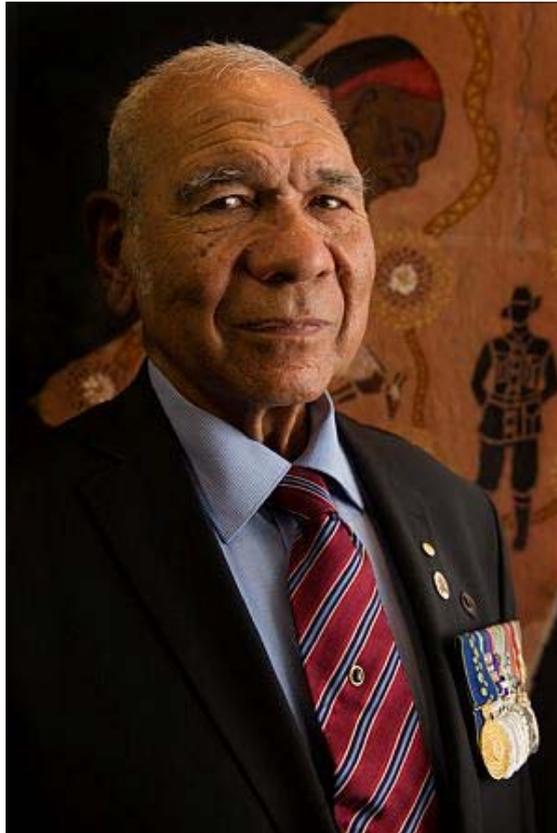
When asked how Army could encourage more Indigenous people to join, Uncle Roy said the key was getting out

and meeting people.

"The big thing you have to be able to do is talk to people and let them see the Army as an attractive option," he said.

"Getting out and talking to people about the Army and the experiences they can have will encourage young Indigenous people to start thinking about joining the services."

Uncle Roy had his first official function in May when he attended the launch of the Army Indigenous Song, 'On Every Anzac Day' at the Australian War Memorial.



Zeke Mundine OAM is surrounded by Generals, including CA LTGEN David Morrison AO, MAJGEN Stuart Smith AO DSC (son of Bernie Smith, KIA March 1969) and RSM-A WO Dave Ashley AM.

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