

## Media Release

7 May 2014

*Three part documentary series*

# Australia's Secret Heroes

**A powerful first-hand account of the Z Special Unit**

**Sunday 15 June 2014 at 8.30pm**



***Australia's Secret Heroes*** tells the extraordinary story of Z Special unit, a remarkable group of men who were plucked from the Australian military in World War II, trained in explosives, camouflage, silent killing and how to resist torture and then sent on incredibly perilous undercover operations in Asia.

At the time of the White Australia policy, the unit actively recruited soldiers of Asian heritage, so they could blend in and help train native guerrilla resistance movements.

For years, the Z Special operatives were sworn to secrecy. But now the veterans, some speaking publicly for the first time, relive their incredible wartime exploits.

In a unique "living history" approach, *Australia's Secret Heroes* takes six descendants of the Z Special operatives and places them on training missions to give them a taste of what their forefathers went through.



Over the course of the series, the modern-day “recruits” undergo various training exercises, witness water-boarding, torture techniques and hear first-hand about some of the most ingenious and dangerous covert operations ever undertaken in international war history.

In a gripping and emotional journey, a Z Special veteran tells his own harrowing story of how under torture he gave up information leading to the capture of one of the descendant’s forefathers. The series also details accounts of what happened in the men’s last days before being executed and illustrates the use of bespoke equipment used by Z Special, including the specially recreated Sleeping Beauty which was a James Bond like one man motorised submersible canoe.



Perhaps one of the most terrifying tales of the series is revealed when descendants travel to Borneo to hear first-hand accounts about the involvement of one of their forefathers in head hunting.

In a landmark series for SBS, *Australia’s Secret Heroes* features an impressive reflection from the veterans and the modern-day recruits, with the veteran’s own opinions on war and its effect on them, and the recruit’s sentiments on their insightful experiences during the series that provided them with a stronger attachment to their relatives.

Review screeners, media kit information and images are available online at The SBS Media Centre – register at [www.sbs.com.au/mediacentre](http://www.sbs.com.au/mediacentre)

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