

Ben Roberts-Smith denies 60 Minutes report



Victoria Cross recipient and General Manager of Seven Brisbane Ben Roberts-Smith has denied claims levelled in a report on Nine's **60 Minutes**.

60 Minutes claimed Roberts-Smith contributed to the murder of a farmer in Afghanistan, during a 2012 military operation.

But Roberts-Smith strongly denied the claims.

He has previously instigated legal action against former-Fairfax newspapers over allegations it published last year.

The full statement from Ben Roberts-Smith:

I categorically deny the allegations made against me in tonight's 60 Minutes program.

These allegations are already the subject of a defamation action against the Sydney Morning Herald/Age and the journalists Nick McKenzie and Chris Masters.

It is beyond comprehension why a media organisation has chosen to repeat defamatory claims against me before the Federal Court has determined the matter.

I have filed comprehensive evidence in the Federal Court which clearly demonstrates that these allegations are false and should not have been made let alone repeated.

I will not be intimidated by their actions in re-publishing the defamatory allegations and look forward to the Court determining this matter.

Let me be clear: I have never committed any of the acts alleged in the 60 Minutes' broadcast.

I have never contravened any laws of war.

I am proud of my military service and I believe I can demonstrate with the support of numerous witnesses that I have acted honourably at all times in my military service.

I am concerned that tonight's story and the previous publications by the SMH/AGE are an attempt to improperly influence the outcome of the IGADF Inquiry .

I have not been approached by the AFP in relation to any alleged inquiry by it.

It is unprecedented that a media organisation has sought to either influence or prejudice the outcome of an investigation before its conclusion.

None of the witnesses on tonight's broadcast provided any direct evidence of any sort to support their allegations. I have never met nor served with either of the two soldiers named in 60 Minutes' story.

Moreover, the other two unidentified purported serving SASR soldiers, whose claims were delivered by actor voiceover, made assertions that suggest neither man was actually a direct witness to any of the alleged incidents in which Nine falsely slurs me as a war criminal.

I am appalled that the service of my colleagues and my service to my country and my regiment is being traduced in such an irresponsible way.

I have fully cooperated with the Inspector General ADF.

I am also gravely concerned that there appears to have been an attempt to compromise the integrity of the Inspector General's inquiry whereby, on Nine's admission, there has been malicious leaking against me from within the ADF.

It is utterly improper that I am subjected to false claims in the media while I am defending my reputation in both military and civil investigations.

I strongly support the investigation of alleged war crimes.

I do not understand how Nine and the SMH/AGE can justify this story when there is already an ADF inquiry underway that will no doubt test the veracity of these claims.

Nine has recklessly allowed its journalists to slur my reputation by calling me a war criminal and by slurring the SAS I have been so proud to serve. It appears to be prejudging the outcome of an inquiry.

Not only are these allegations false, they are also malicious, and I look forward to defending my reputation in court.