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Guy Barnett, Liberal Member for Lyons

New Push for Proper Recognition of Local War Hero Teddy Sheean

The fight to get proper recognition for a Tasmanian war hero has been stepped up with a submission to the British Admiralty.

On 1 December 1942, Ordinary Seaman Edward “Teddy” Sheean selflessly gave his life to defend his shipmates by firing at attacking Japanese planes as his ship, the HMAS Armidale, sank beneath him.

For many years, there has been a campaign, led by Garry Ivory, nephew of Teddy Sheean, to gain appropriate recognition for the young Lower Barrington-born sailor. I have been working with Mr Ivory and his family on this since I was a senator in 2002.

While Teddy Sheean’s courageous act ranks him among those who have received our highest military honour for bravery, the Victoria Cross, he has been denied this recognition for too long.

Now, after gathering a host of letters of support and supportive evidence, Mr Ivory and I have written to the British Admiralty to ask for its reconsideration.

At the time that Teddy died, decisions on bravery awards granted to Australian naval personnel were made by the British Admiralty and we believe it still has the authority to make this award.

In our submission, we have highlighted the case of Leading Seaman Jack Mantle, of the Royal Navy, who was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross after similar actions to Teddy Sheean in July 1940.

Like Teddy, Leading Seaman Mantle was wounded when his ship was attacked by enemy aircraft but stayed at his gun, firing until he died to protect his shipmates.

It is an injustice that Teddy Sheehan was not recognised as Jack Mantle, and many, many others, so deservedly were, but it is one that can be addressed, and we are hopeful that the British Admiralty will do so.

* A copy of the submission can be obtained by contacting my office - Phone: 6777 1020.