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TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT MEDIA RELEASE

Guy Barnett, Minister for Veterans' Affairs
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Investiture ceremony finally delivers justice for Teddy Sheean

Today's awarding of the Victoria Cross to Ordinary Seaman Edward 'Teddy' Sheean is richly deserved and recognition of his extraordinary courage, mateship and sacrifice.

Ordinary Seaman Teddy Sheean demonstrated enormous courage in the face of the enemy.

He was just 18 when he died on board HMAS Armidale on 1 December 1942. He refused the chance to board a lifeboat and a chance of survival while his ship was sinking, returned to his Oerlikon gun, attracted enemy fire, damaged enemy aircraft and went down with the ship while defending his shipmates from enemy attack.

Today's ceremony at Government House in Canberra is a fitting end to more than three decades of tireless campaigning by Garry Ivory, Teddy's nephew, who was presented with the VC by the Governor-General, on behalf of the Sheean family.

It has been a privilege to work with Garry for the past 17 years in advocating on behalf of Teddy for Australia's highest award. I was thrilled to be at today's investiture with him and the Sheean family.

Today is now marked in history. Teddy's Victoria Cross is the 101st awarded to an Australian, 15th to a Tasmanian and 1st for the Royal Australian Navy. Today was momentous in so many ways and an emotional day for the Sheean family.

A special Last Post ceremony honouring Teddy was also held at the Australian War Memorial and I was honoured to lay a wreath on behalf of the people of Tasmania.

The motto of the HMAS Armidale was "Fight On" and all of those involved in this campaign can now rest, satisfied on behalf of Teddy and his crew mates, including the only remaining survivor of HMAS Armidale, Ray Leonard, who witnessed Teddy's actions in 1942.

We will never forget Teddy's extraordinary bravery and sacrifice or that of his generation, which is an example to all Australians.