



26 July 2019

Guy Barnett, Liberal Member for Lyons

Teddy Sheean decision pending

The campaign to see Ordinary Seaman Edward 'Teddy' Sheean's extraordinary bravery recognised continues.

Teddy is one of Tasmania's best known wartime servicemen, renowned as the 18 year old hero who went down with his ship on 1 December 1942 protecting his shipmates from enemy attack.

Today I had the honour of meeting with Mr Ray Leonard, the last surviving shipmate from the HMAS Armidale to discuss the submission currently being considered by the Australian Government's Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal.

Mr Ray Leonard was present during the sinking of the HMAS Armidale, and submitted a statement to the Appeals Tribunal supporting the case for Teddy's recognition.

After presenting the case to the Tribunal for Teddy's bravery to be better recognised, I understand that the report and recommendation is expected to be released in coming months.

It has been a long and hard campaign and now after more than 15 years I am more hopeful than ever of gaining appropriate recognition for Teddy Sheean.

Background - excerpt from Mr Ray Leonard statement:

"... I immediately commenced to swim away from the ship and as I did so I heard, in addition to the enemy's fire, a different sound which I recognized as coming from an Armidale Oerlikon gun. I swam some distance as fast as I could and when I stopped and looked back all I could see were the stern and propeller of our ship as it sank.

For the next ten minutes or so we were machine gunned by enemy fighters. When these planes departed I swam towards the focal point of our motor boat and there I met up with my shipmate Ordinary Seaman Russell Caro who told me and other within hearing, that as Armidale was sinking he saw Ordinary Seaman Edward (Teddy) Sheean firing the after-deck Oerlikon at attacking planes, and saw Sheean, still at his gun, go down with the ship. Some other crew members said that they had witnessed the same events. Subsequently, during the days when we were adrift on the raft and in the whaler Caro expressed to me his admiration for Sheean's heroic behaviour."