

Guy Barnett MP

Attorney General
Minister for Justice
Minister for Health
Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Liberal Member for Lyons



Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

1 December 2023

Guy Barnett, Minister for Veterans' Affairs

Permanent home for 'Teddy' Sheean VC submarine in Tasmania one step closer

The Rockliff Liberal Government proudly backs our veterans and veterans' community and believes hopes are rising for the gifting of the HMAS Sheean submarine to Tasmania.

Recently Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Guy Barnett, wrote to the Federal Minister for Veterans' Affairs following up correspondence to the previous Federal Government on the request for the submarine be gifted to the Tasmanian people at the conclusion of its service.

"I'm encouraged by the response from the Federal Government and I can confirm the transfer of HMAS Sheean to Tasmania is entirely consistent with the Federal Government's commitment to honouring our veterans and their legacy of service," Minister Barnett said.

"With many Tasmanians serving in the Royal Australian Navy, this gift would make a fitting memorial for all those who have served our country with great distinction."

Garry Ivory, Sheean's nephew, went aboard the HMAS Sheean with Minister Barnett when it visited Tasmania in 2021.

"HMAS Sheean is an impressive vessel of the Royal Australian Navy. It is over 77 metres long, over 13 metres high and when surfaced displaces over 3000 tonnes," Mr Ivory said.

"It would be right and proper for a future decommissioned HMAS Sheean to be permanently housed in Tasmania."

HMAS Sheean was named recognising the valour of Ordinary Seaman Edward 'Teddy' Sheean VC on 1 May 1999 - the only submarine of the class to be named after an enlisted sailor.

"Eighty-one years ago today, Ordinary Seaman Edward 'Teddy' Sheean performed acts of valour which were anything but ordinary," Minister Barnett said.

"Assigned to the Bathurst-Class Corvette HMAS Armidale, on 1 December 1942 it came under sustained attack by 13 Japanese aircraft while evacuating Australian and Dutch Soldiers off the south coast of Portuguese Timor.

"During this attack, Ordinary Seaman Edward 'Teddy' Sheean displayed true acts of valour, mateship and sacrifice as the ship's officers ordered the doomed ship be abandoned.

“‘Teddy’ helped to get a life-raft free before returning to an Oerlikon anti-aircraft gun to re-engage the attacking forces so his shipmates could clear the sinking vessel.

“Wounded and firing until the very end as the ship slipped below the waves, ‘Teddy’ displayed incredible acts of selfless valour to help save his mates and he was recognised with a posthumous Victoria Cross on 1 December 2020, some 78 years later.

“Sheean’s Victoria Cross was the 101st awarded to an Australian, the 15th awarded to a Tasmanian and the first for the Royal Australian Navy.”

Minister Barnett has also encouraged the Royal Australian Navy to continue to honour the memory of Ordinary Seaman Teddy Sheean VC by extending the naming of Royal Australian Navy vessels in the future when this submarine is de-commissioned and maintain the HMAS Sheean motto of ‘Fight On’.