



10 August 2020

Guy Barnett, Minister for Veterans' Affairs

Victoria Cross vindication for Teddy Sheean's sacrifice

Today's recommendation by the Prime Minister to award Ordinary Seaman Edward 'Teddy' Sheean a posthumous Victoria Cross is deserving recognition of Teddy's courage, mateship, and sacrifice.

It has been my privilege to work with Teddy's nephew, Garry Ivory, for the past 17 years to advocate on behalf of Teddy and his family for Australia's highest award.

Today's announcement is worthy recognition of an extraordinary Tasmanian.

It is fair to say we are overwhelmed by this decision which is the first Victoria Cross for the Royal Australian Navy and acknowledgement of the sacrifice of many men on the HMAS Armidale, the wider Navy community and the Tasmanian veteran community.

We always believed the evidence was overwhelming and it has been an honour working with Garry and the Sheean family these past 17 years to ensure Teddy's bravery and sacrifice is recognised appropriately.

We also particularly acknowledge the only remaining survivor of the Armidale, Ray Leonard, who witnessed Teddy's actions in 1942 and has been an inspiration and great supporter.

When awarded, Teddy's Victoria Cross will be the 101st VC awarded to an Australian since 1900 – 15 of these VC's have now been awarded to Tasmanians which is a staggering record given we only represent 2 per cent of the national population.

We thank the Prime Minister Scott Morrison, the Minister for Defence Personnel Darren Chester, the Expert Panel chaired by Brendan Nelson, the independent Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal chaired by Mark Sullivan and all of their staff for their dedication in reviewing Teddy's case.

Teddy Sheean was just 18 when he died on board HMAS Armidale on 1 December 1942. He refused the chance to board a lifeboat while his ship was sinking, returned to his Oerlikon gun,

shot down at least one enemy aircraft and went down with the ship while defending his shipmates from enemy attack.

The motto of the HMAS Armidale was ``Fight On'' and all of those involved in this campaign can now rest, satisfied that on behalf of Teddy and his crew mates we did Fight On relentlessly, sometimes when the odds seemed against us.

Teddy's extraordinary bravery and sacrifice to protect his mates should be a time to reflect, and also celebrate, for all Australians - especially at a time when we need inspiration.

Lest We Forget.