



12 August 2020

Guy Barnett, Minister for Veterans' Affairs

Victoria Cross for Teddy Sheean approved by Queen Elizabeth II

The announcement today that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has approved the Australian Government's recommendation to award a posthumous Victoria Cross for Australia to Ordinary Seaman Edward 'Teddy' Sheean caps off an amazing week and decades of advocacy to recognise Teddy's bravery and sacrifice for his mates.

Teddy's Victoria Cross is now officially the 101st Victoria Cross awarded to an Australian since 1900 and the 15th VC awarded to a Tasmanian. It is also the first Victoria Cross for the Royal Australian Navy.

On behalf of Teddy's nephew Garry Ivory and the wider Sheean family, we would like to thank Her Majesty the Queen, Governor General David Hurley and the Prime Minister Scott Morrison for expediting this announcement following the positive review by the Expert Panel led by Brendan Nelson.

We are also humbled and grateful to the thousands of proud Australians right around the country who have supported and encouraged us to continue this long campaign for justice for Teddy.

On a personal note, it has been an honour and a pleasure to work with Garry Ivory and the Sheean family these past 17 years. I believe Teddy Sheean is a real hero and demonstrated courage, mateship and sacrifice. This is a special day I will remember for the rest of my life.

The Sheean family has already indicated that Teddy's Victoria Cross will be donated to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra so that it can be shared by all Australians, and a tour of Tasmania for the medal is also planned in the future.

Teddy's Victoria Cross is extremely significant as the first Victoria Cross for the Royal Australian Navy and the ultimate acknowledgement of the sacrifice of many men on the HMAS Armidale, the thousands of people who have served in the RAN and the Tasmanian veteran community.

Today we proudly shared this amazing news with Melbourne-based Dr Ray Leonard, the only remaining survivor of the Armidale who witnessed Teddy's actions in 1942. Ray has been an

inspirational supporter of this campaign and it was a privilege to share this decision by the Queen with him.

It is also fitting that the Queen's announcement comes in a week where we are commemorating the 75th anniversary of Victory in the Pacific Day and end of the Second World War.

Teddy Sheean joined the Navy when he was 17 and he was just 18 when he died on board HMAS Armidale on December 1, 1942. He refused the chance to board a lifeboat while his ship was sinking, returned to his Oerlikon gun, shot down at least one fighter plane, damaged others and went down with the ship while defending his shipmates from enemy attack.

We also know from fresh evidence recently discovered in Japanese war archives that attacking pilots recorded that they were avoiding anti-aircraft fire from the Armidale as it was sinking.

Teddy Sheean's rank was the lowest, an Ordinary Seaman, but on that day in the Timor Sea he displayed extraordinary valour and sacrifice in one of the greatest examples of Australian mateship and selfless sacrifice.

The motto of the HMAS Armidale was "Fight On". Whilst years in the making, the fight has been absolutely worth it to achieve this ultimate recognition and honour for Teddy Sheean VC and the entire crew of the HMAS Armidale.

Lest We Forget