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Guy Barnett, Minister for Veterans' Affairs

Farewell Dr Victor 'Ray' Leonard

The passing of Dr Victor 'Ray' Leonard, the last remaining survivor of HMAS Amidale, is a moment for reflection and commemoration.

Ray was shipmates with Ordinary Seaman Edward 'Teddy' Sheean, who was last year awarded the Victoria Cross for Australia for his extraordinary bravery on 1 December 1942.

Ray was a key part of the years-long campaign to see Teddy's bravery given the recognition it so richly deserved.

His eyewitness accounts of Teddy Sheean's actions as the Amidale sank following enemy attack were gripping and, ultimately, compelling. He presented and provided submissions to multiple inquiries, culminating with the Expert Panel, chaired by the Hon Brendan Nelson AO, in June last year.

Ray lived to see Teddy's bravery recognised with our nation's highest honour—for which we are deeply thankful.

Ray was generous with his time, unceasingly courteous despite ill health in later years and humble regarding his own extraordinary achievements. It was an honour to have known him and a privilege to have had his support throughout the journey.

Ray was married to Beryl, the great love of his life, and they celebrated their 77th wedding anniversary just earlier this month. Our condolences to Beryl and the wider family at this time.

With Ray's departure, the story of HMAS Amidale and Teddy's bravery passes from living memory.

We will never forget his bravery and that of his shipmates.