

## Guy Barnett MP

Minister for State Development, Construction and Housing  
Minister for Energy and Renewables  
Minister for Veterans Affairs  
Liberal Member for Lyons



Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

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Guy Barnett, Minister for Energy and Renewables

### Memorial service to mark 80 years since the sinking of the HMAS Armidale

Today's memorial service in Latrobe marks the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the HMAS Armidale - a day which highlighted and reflected the true heroism of members of the Royal Australian Navy.

HMAS Armidale was one of 60 Bathurst-class corvettes constructed during World War II and was launched in early 1942, and it was the only corvette in this class to be lost to enemy action with only 49 survivors.

HMAS Armidale was attacked by 13 Japanese aircraft and sunk off Betano Bay while attempting to evacuate Australian and Dutch soldiers and deliver a relief contingent off the south coast of Portuguese Timor.

Tasmanians lost in this action included Ordinary Seaman Edward 'Teddy' Sheean, Ordinary Seaman Edward Piesse, Acting Able Seaman Maxwell Quigley and Ordinary Seaman Albert Turner - all of the Royal Australian Navy and named on the Tasmanian Seafarers' Memorial at Triabunna.

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.

'Teddy' Sheean's Victoria Cross was the 101<sup>st</sup> awarded to an Australian, the 15<sup>th</sup> awarded to a Tasmanian and the first for the Royal Australian Navy.

As we pay tribute today to the servicemen of the HMAS Armidale, we also remember the sacrifices made by all who fought for the freedoms we enjoy today.

Lest We Forget