



Government House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

1 December 2020

It is notified for general information that Her Majesty The Queen has approved the award of the Victoria Cross for Australia to:

The late Ordinary Seaman Edward 'Teddy' SHEEAN

For the most conspicuous gallantry and a pre-eminent act of valour in the presence of the enemy during a Japanese aerial attack on HMAS *Armidale* in the Timor Sea on 1 December 1942.

The Mention in Despatches awarded for the same action in June 1943 is hereby cancelled.

By His Excellency's Command

Paul Singer MVO

Official Secretary to the Governor-General

VICTORIA CROSS FOR AUSTRALIA (VC)

Royal Australian Navy

The late Ordinary Seaman Edward 'Teddy' SHEEAN

For the most conspicuous gallantry and a pre-eminent act of valour in the presence of the enemy during a Japanese aerial attack on HMAS *Armidale* in the Timor Sea on 1 December 1942.

On 1 December 1942, during operations in the Timor Sea, HMAS *Armidale* came under aerial bombardment and torpedo attack from Japanese aircraft. Shortly after the commencement of the attack, *Armidale* was hit by a torpedo and began listing to port. One minute later the ship was hit by a second torpedo which broke the vessel's back, causing the Captain to order abandon ship.

Ordinary Seaman Sheean, one of the youngest and most junior ranked members of *Armidale's* Ship's Company, made his way to the stowage position of the motor-boat and assisted in its launch. As the enemy continued to fire upon the ship and his shipmates who were already in the water, Ordinary Seaman Sheean decided to forgo his opportunity for survival by not abandoning ship and returning to his Action Station to man the aft Oerlikon gun, where he was the loader, not the gunner. Despite being wounded, he strapped himself into the gun and commenced firing at the enemy, damaging at least two enemy aircraft.

Ordinary Seaman Sheean's actions disrupted and distracted the enemy from strafing and killing his defenceless shipmates in the water. He sacrificed his life trying to save his shipmates and, despite his wounds, he continued firing the gun until the ship sank and took him to his death. His pre-eminent act of valour and most conspicuous gallantry saved Australian lives. His heroism became the standard to which the men and women of the Australian Defence Force aspire.