

New naval books

World Naval Review 2016 and Honour Denied, reviewed by Ross Gillett

These two impressive naval books have recently been published for the ever-growing library of naval volumes produced by Seaforth Publishing in the United Kingdom and Avonmore Books in South Australia. The first, *World Naval Review 2016*, is the all-important annual edition of current world naval developments. The second book, by renowned Australian naval author Dr Tom Lewis describes the heroes and warriors of the RAN.



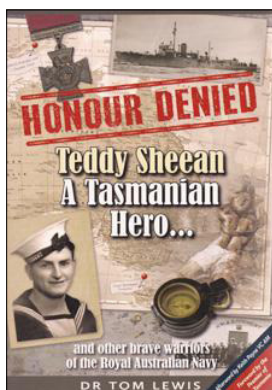
World Naval Review (WNR)

Seaforth's WNR 2016 is the eighth in the series that began back in 2009. For many, this book has taken the place of the much older *Janes Fighting Ships* and at just 30 pounds sterling is a fraction of the cost. WNR 2016 is the result of the efforts of the Editor Conrad Waters, supported by the writing skills of seven of the world's most renowned

naval writers. The result is a 192 page book devoted to an extensive coverage of the World's Fleets, lengthy examinations of four of the most Significant Ships, and a three part Technical Review highlighted by World Naval Aviation and Electronic Warfare at Sea.

The 82 page long World Fleet Reviews section is required reading for all naval enthusiasts, providing the details of the national naval forces operating out of four regions; North and South America, Asia and the Pacific, The Indian Ocean and Africa and Europe and Russia. Also included in this section are two expansive Regional Reviews, in this edition and of particular interest to Australian readers, the Indonesian Navy and the British Royal Navy.

Titled *Lofty Ambitions tempered by Economic Realities*, the Indonesian fleet survey, takes the reader deep into the history, evolution and current strategy of Asia Pacific's fifth largest economy. Many may be somewhat surprised as to the size of the current fleet, but even more amazed at the plans for future ships and an increased level of local construction. One of the more fascinating photographs depicts an elderly Dutch-built Van Speijk (Leander) class frigate launching a very large Russian designed P-800 'Yakhont' surface to surface missile. Almost 50 years old, these frigates have been given a massive increase in offensive power through four of these vertically launched missiles. Two of the silo tubes have been positioned either side of the original helicopter hangar. The chapter *Royal Navy: A Thin Blue Line*, is for the 'fan' of the 'mother' navy, but in this instance the state of the modern day British Fleet in the run-up to last year's Strategic Defence and Security Review. Currently the RN is well into the process of reconstructing a viable naval force, based around its two new Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers and their accompanying escorts and support ships. If the Government refrains from cutting existing and planned force levels, there may indeed be a positive future for their 'senior service'. As stated above, four of the world's new warship classes are exhaustively examined in the 76 page section devoted to Significant Ships. Two of the designs, the Dutch Holland class offshore patrol vessels and the Turkish MILGEM class corvettes are particular interest, with the upcoming decision by the RAN to replace the hard-working Armidale class patrol boats. The Holland and MILGEM class articles provide excellent descriptions as to the type of patrol combatant that could be acquired for the Australian Fleet. Highly recommended.



Honour Denied

Written by Dr Tom Lewis and published by Avonmore Books, this Australian naval book focuses upon Ordinary Seaman Teddy Sheean, a Tasmanian Hero. It asks the very important question; why hasn't one member of the RAN ever been awarded the Victoria Cross, for after all, up to early 2016, 96 Army and four RAAF personnel had received the prestigious award.

According to the author, it was from not a lack of bravery that this unjust situation has arisen, but from substantial unfairness. For example, while his fellow crew members aboard the Bathurst class corvette HMAS Armidale were abandoning their ship, Tasmania's Teddy Sheean returned to his 20mm Oerlikon gun to continue firing at a force of attacking Japanese aircraft.

To be awarded a VC, during the Great War and then Second World War, the RAN, unlike the Army and RAAF, had to apply for their awards through Britain's Royal Navy, with its many additional levels of 'red-tape'. As well as Sheean, two other naval heroes also deserved such an award, CAPT Hec Waller aboard the light cruiser HMAS Perth, lost in the battle of the Sunda Strait on 1 March 1942 and LCDR Robert Rankin aboard the sloop HMAS Yarra just three days later. The tiny Yarra engaged the enemy with her four inch guns, but the convoy she was escorting was quickly overwhelmed. Sometime after 0800 Rankin finally gave the order to abandon ship. A direct hit on the bridge killed him minutes later. Of Yarra's complement of 151 men, only thirteen were rescued.

Keith Payne, VC AM, in his afterword to *Honour Denied*, wrote;

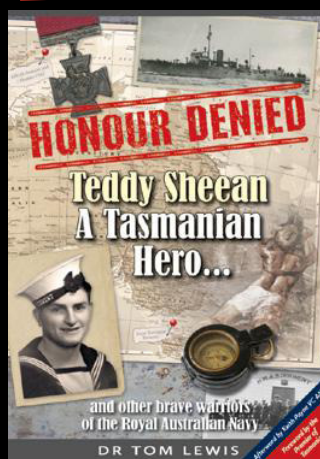
'I feel that there were cases in World War II in the Navy where a Victoria Cross should have been recommended and awarded.... It is never too late for a gallantry award to be recommended and approved, especially since we have our own awards system.'

Author Dr Tom Lewis should be congratulated for pursuing and thus highlighting this important part of RAN history and its associated or should I say, lack of suitable awards. Navy has and continues to be engaged in many important actions with much effort and in many cases, heroism by its crews.

HOT New Book Release

'Honour Denied' was officially launched by the Tasmanian Premier on 31st May, 2016. Award-winning author Dr Tom Lewis, OAM, argues the iconic Teddy Sheean should receive the RAN's first ever Victoria Cross.

HONOUR DENIED



Teddy Sheean - A Tasmanian Hero... and other brave warriors of the Royal Australian Navy.

by Dr Tom Lewis

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