



**SEA DUTY:** Les Black proudly shows his war medals. He said it was the good sense of humour shown by the Australians which kept the men going during the war.

*Photo: BRAD PETERSEN vic1108c*

## Officers remained on high alert

LES Black cannot believe it has been 60 years since the Victory in the Pacific.

"Sometimes it does when you are pushing the lawn mower, but some things feel like they happened only yesterday," he said.

Mr Black was an Australia Naval officer in World War II and was aboard the Bowen Corvette in Darwin when he got word of peace.

But they were reminded to stay on high alert.

"They said, 'keep a bloody good look out, the Japs don't know the war's finished and we want to go home'," Mr Black said.

The Bowen was then sent to all the Pacific islands to pick up women and children, who were mostly Dutch prisoners of war.

"It was nice to travel with the scuttles open and the lights on," he said.

When Mr Black was first commissioned he was a second-class ordinary seaman at 17 years of age.

"I was the youngest on board when it was first commissioned," he said.

He served in the South-West Pacific area for three years.

Mr Black said he was glad when it was all over.