



TOBRUK HOUSE NEWS

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION



THE RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION
NEUROSCIENCE FELLOWSHIP FUND

RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION INC.

ABN 23 136 193 517

44 VICTORIA AVENUE, ALBERT PARK, VIC 3206

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GENERAL MEETINGS START AT 10.30AM

THE DATES & EVENTS LISTED BELOW ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. CALL FOR MORE UP TO DATE INFORMATION.

| Month / Date | Event Description |
|--------------|--|
| March 24 | Open Day at Tobruk House 10am-3pm |
| April 7 | Tobruk Sunday 2pm |
| April 9 | The Shrine HMAS Vampire service 11am |
| April 14 | The Shrine 2/4 th AGH service 2pm |
| April 25 | ANZAC day at Tobruk House 8am-3pm |
| May 26 | Open Day at Tobruk House 10am-3pm |
| May 31 | General Meeting 10.30am |
| June 30 | Open Day at Tobruk House 10am-3pm |
| July 28 | Open Day at Tobruk House 10am-3pm |
| August 25 | Open Day at Tobruk House 10am-3pm |
| August 30 | General Meeting 10.30am |
| September 22 | Open Day at Tobruk House 10am-3pm |
| October 27 | Open Day at Tobruk House 10am-3pm |

Patron: Bill Gibbins

Committee of Management:

Vice President – Paul Dipnall

Secretary – Lachlan Gaylard

Committee Chair – Stuart Tolliday

Other Committee Members –

Bruce Bingham, Marlene Bingham,
Tony Codd, Glenda Garde, Tony Smith
Karolina Sevcikova, Gayle Sherwell

TOBRUK HOUSE NEWS

NEXT ISSUE: JUNE 2024

DEADLINE: MAY 6

We welcome contributions from our community
but cannot guarantee publication.
Email is preferred with documents in Word and
pictures in jpeg format but not essential.
Articles or letters with no contact details
will not be published.

Editor Stuart Tolliday

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VALE

THEY SHALL GROW NOT OLD, AS WE THAT ARE LEFT GROW OLD;
AGE SHALL NOT WEARY THEM, NOR THE YEARS CONDEMN.
AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN AND IN THE MORNING,
WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.
LEST WE FORGET

The President and ROTA Inc. members wish to extend our condolences and deepest sympathy to the families and friends of our departed comrades.

BUSSELL Dianne 02/11/2023
FOSTER (Elizabeth) Maria 5/1/2024

RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION INC.

Vice President's Message – April 2024

Dear Members & Friends,

It's my very great honour and privilege to address all members and friends for the first time as vice president of the Rats Of Tobruk Association.

As a consequence of serving 12 months on the executive committee I was deeply gratified by my fellow members to be voted in to this position.

Since joining the association I have been greatly impressed with the quality of membership we enjoy. The depth of commitment members have demonstrated to me and our association has been most impressive.

The friendship and warmth extended to me has been wonderful. I look forward to building on these friendships in the coming years.

It's been an absolute pleasure developing friendships amongst all members with the clear object of building the association and strengthening its social objectives.

The memory and service to our country The Rats Of Tobruk demonstrated whilst in battle must be kept alive for future generations to understand. We must maintain the history and appreciate the sacrifices endured by these extraordinary men, some of whom gave their lives for Australia. I would like to pay special tribute to our retiring President - Bruce Bingham, who has been the embodiment of solid leadership throughout a challenging period of office.

On behalf of all members we thank you sincerely for the dedication and commitment demonstrated throughout your tenure Bruce. I am sure all members will echo my thoughts.

I look forward to working in a constructive manner with the new team to build on the magnificent work of all those that have gone before. We are fortunate to have some excellent personnel on our committee.

Please feel free at anytime to discuss any issues of concern with me. Our association has some significant challenges ahead of us. I feel very confident we can all rise to the occasion to honour the great work past committee members have achieved.

My best wishes in this new year to you and your families.

Kind regards

Paul F Dipnall

FROM THE ARCHIVES

In this issue we look back only 44 years to the era of the Annual World Reunions which were held in different states each year. These were opportunities for old mates to get together, often with wives, and experience a variety of social and commemorative events.

Special dinners and church services were held and commemorative booklets, song books (a sing-a-long was a much loved part of the annual dinner) and on one occasion – the 1980 reunion held in Melbourne – a recipe book was produced! Anyone who was around in the 60s and seventies would recognise most of the dishes although not many have survived the culinary revolution that has taken place since that time. Note that in both recipes below the fish came from a can.



TUNA COCKTAIL

7 oz can tuna, 1 small lettuce, parsley, lemon slices.

Sauce :- 4 tablespoons mayonnaise, 2 tablespoons thick cream
1 tablespoon tomato ketchup, 1 teaspoon Worcester sauce.
Pinch sugar, salt and popper.

Mix sauce ingredients together. Shred lettuce finely and divide into four glasses. Drain oil from tuna and flake roughly. Toss in the cocktail sauce and divide fish into glasses, pouring over the remainder of sauce. Garnish with parsley and lemon slices.

SALMON AND PINEAPPLE CASSEROLE

Make butter sauce with 2 oz butter, 2 oz plain flour, 2 cups milk, pinch salt and cayenne pepper. Add 1 large tin cooking salmon.

Place one layer of this mixture in oven proof dish, then layer of crushed pineapple, then another of fish mixture. Top with 2 oz cornflakes tossed in melted butter. Moderate oven till brown - about 20 minutes.

YOUR NEW COMMITTEE FOR 2024

Following the Annual General Meeting we are pleased to announce the 2024 committee members and, where relevant, their relationship to the Rats of Tobruk. There is still a very strong direct connection to the original members and a total commitment by all of the committee to promoting the legacy of the Rats of Tobruk.



Paul Dipnall
Vice President



Lachlan Gaylard
Secretary



Stuart Tolliday
Committee
Chair



VX25453
William (Bill) Tolliday,
2/32 Battalion.



**Karolina
Sevcikova**



VX44418
Donald George Wells,
2/4 AGH



Tony Codd



841126 (British Army)
Albert Leslie Codd,
Royal Corp Signals



**Bruce
Bingham**



QX2116
Benjamin Bingham
2/13 Fd. Coy.



**Marlene
Bingham**



QX2116
Benjamin Bingham
2/13 Fd. Coy.



Gayle Sherwell



VX46637 John
Kenneth Sherwell
2/23 Bn



Tony Smith



NX16749
Robert Ernest Smith,
2/4 Fd Coy



Glenda Garde



VX20578
Neil Crosland Barrie,
2/5 Field Ambulance.

REPORTS FROM THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2024 AGM was held on Friday 23rd February at Tobruk House. Following are the reports from the meeting.

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is with pleasure that I present the Presidents Report for the Rats of Tobruk Association AGM, February, 2024. This year has been a very active one for the association for the members and your committee.

The financial position of the association is very sound. We have transferred our investment accounts to the Bendigo Bank ensuring that we have a greater return of our monies. The details can be found in the financial report.

During the year we held several commemorative services. The first was Tobruk Sunday, held in April. Despite the inclement weather, over 150 guests and members turned out to hear an inspiring address by Commander Terry Makings, AM. RAN on the role of the navies during the siege. I want to thank all the presenters and especially our Memorial Rats of Tobruk Pipes and Drums for their contribution.

In August, we conducted the Polish Service at the Shrine of Remembrance. Finally, we commemorated Remembrance Day at Tobruk Park (opposite Tobruk House). We anticipated a short service involving the members who were attending an Open Day. Because of the involvement of the Rats of Tobruk Memorial Pipes and Drums, nearly a hundred locals appeared to join in the service. At the conclusion of the service, we unveiled a metal plaque dedicating our Tobruk fig tree that was planted by the Governor General during our 80th Anniversary Service. Many of the locals who had participated at the service, joined us at Tobruk House for morning tea; new friendships were made and the display was greatly appreciated. The committee members present provided guided tours for several interested visitors.

Members of the committee and ROTMP&D attended a Dining-In night at the Tobruk Barracks Sergeants Mess at the Puckapunyal Military Base. Unfortunately, this was the first year that we did not have the attendance of a veteran Rat. Again, the pipe band was the highlight of the evening. We are continuing our close liaison with the Army School of Transport at Puckapunyal as they will be participating in this year's Tobruk Sunday Service.

During the year, the head gardener at the Port Philip Council pruned our Tobruk fig tree and Marlene has propagated 11 fig trees for distribution to our members. One has already been promised to the Mansfield Shire Botanical Garden for inclusion alongside a World War One Lone Pine tree.

Throughout the year, we conducted open days at Tobruk House on a monthly basis. Many locals were not aware of the significance of Tobruk House so we conducted letter box drops in the vicinity, resulting in hundreds of the locals visiting during the open days.

We have endeavoured to maximize the use of Tobruk House during the year. We have contacted many kindred organisations to use our facilities. This has been most successful, as many organisations and individuals have taken up our offer and used the hall. We will continue to promote our hall in the future.

During November, we had the annual visit from the Warrandyte Primary School. Marlène organized a very successful visit involving members of the Pipes and Drums, the veteran vehicles group, and uniforms and history from those years. Funding and awards were forwarded to the Morwell Central Primary School and the Warrandyte Primary School as we have done over past years.

This year (2023) the ROTA Neuroscience Fellowship was awarded to Doctor Beth Cole. You can read more about the fellowship in the following report. We note that Sue Hunt OAM, the CEO of the RCH Foundation is resigning from her position. Thank you Sue for your contribution and advice over your long tenure. I am pleased to say that Sue is however remaining a member of the Rats. It would be remiss of me not to thank Stuart Tolliday for his contribution in representing the Rats and their endowment at the RCH Foundation.

We had a most enjoyable Christmas breakup luncheon. Tommy Pritchard had recorded the Ode and this was played at the commencement of the luncheon. Thank you to the many members who provided the salads and desserts and the preparation of the hall.

As I am not seeking re-election as president, I want to thank the committee and other members of the association for their support and their untiring efforts in promoting the aims of our association. It has been an honour and privilege to be your president over the past two years, but age has caught up with me, and living in Mansfield, I am unable to continue. Finally, I want to thank our secretary Lachlan Gaylard for his outstanding work and assistance to me over the past two years.

Thank you

Bruce Bingham

THE FINANCIAL REPORT

Dear Members,

In December 2023 Treasurer Graeme Clifford resigned and I assumed the role of Acting-Treasurer. I extend on behalf of the committee our thanks for Graeme's work in the role since 2022.

We have had a successful year of events seeing the hall used more often by ROTA members and other military associations. The association launched a fundraising brochure which saw enormous generosity from our membership. Again, on behalf of the committee, we are extremely grateful for the support our members have given the association in 2023.

| | Patriotic Building Fund | Rota Inc. | Consolidated |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Receipts operational | \$2,247.10 | \$68,051.72 | \$70,298.82 |
| Expenditure | \$7,286.89 | \$22,799.36 | \$30,086.25 |
| Surplus (Deficit) | (\$5,040) | \$45,252 | \$40,213 |
| Cash Reserves | \$42,307.39 | \$140,839.68 | \$188,147.07 |

In December, the committee decided to appoint an auditor to review the accounts. Although we are not required by the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profit Commission (ACNC) to do so, we felt that it was good practice given we are now a registered charity and taking donations.*

As you will see from the annual statement, we delivered a very nice surplus for 2023, However due to consolidated cash deposits from several of our events throughout the year it was very difficult to determine the exact breakup for the annual statement.

I welcome any questions or comments.

Lachlan Gaylard
Acting Treasurer

*Please note that while we are a registered charity, we do not have tax deductibility status.

ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL REPORT

Kathryn Sell, Philanthropy Lead at the RCH Foundation, addressed the meeting and she spoke about the significant and very positive changes to the ROTA endowment.

This commitment from the RCH Foundation ensures that the Rats of Tobruk Neurology Fellowship is sufficiently robust to continue to fund the fellowship from earnings on the investment, while growing the capital in preparation to meet future inevitable cost increases. Further details are in the following fund report. The full report is available [HERE](#).

Associate Professor Mark McKay, Director of Neurology, RCH gave a fascinating talk about the challenges for neurology patients and the type of work that the RCH Fellowship enables. Later in the year there will be another opportunity to see more of this work through a visit to the Rats of Tobruk Cockatoo ward.

Following Mark's talk, immediate past president Bruce Bingham presented the 2024 Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellow Dr Jamie Leong with the special medallion. Jamie spoke of her passion for her work and in particular for researching more about epilepsy in children.

This year sees a significant change in the finances of the Rats of Tobruk Neurology Fellowship endowment in several ways. The committee has decided that due to the significance of the fellowship to our organisation, a portion of every membership fee will be donated to the RCH foundation to help to grow the capital funds in anticipation of the increasing cost of the fellowship.

The Royal Children's Hospital Foundation has also made a very generous injection of funds to the ROTA endowment to ensure it's ability to continue to fund our very important fellowship. Following is an extract from the 2024 Financial Fund Report which was presented at the AGM by Kathryn Sell:

ROTA's support is instrumental in ensuring our exceptional medical professionals in the Neurology Department have the resources necessary to provide unparalleled care to children in need. We are happy to report that 100% of the inaugural \$1.5M gift made in 2010 is retained by the RCH Foundation as a perpetual endowment. The funds held in the endowment are invested and managed so that interest can be directed both to funding appointment of the Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellow each year, and reinvested to maintain the endowment's value.



Dr Jamie Leong with immediate past president Bruce Bingham proudly displays her ROTA Fellowship medallion.



You can read and download the full report from the ROTA website. Here is the link – [RCH ROTA fund Report/](#)

I am pleased to inform you that for FY2024 The Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellowship Fund will receive a total interest rate of 9.56% for the year to 30 June 2024 (3% Capital / 6.56% Operating). This impact will be instrumental to the Fellowship and for this we are most grateful.

To ensure this Endowment can fully support the Fellowship, and continues to do so, the RCH Foundation has approved an injection of capital funds to take the opening balance of the Endowment to \$2,396,732 for 1 July 2023. This will then provide Capital account interest of \$70,117, plus Operating account interest of \$157,924, which will fully fund the fellowship for this year.

Although the rate of return this year has been exceptional, moving forward, year on year the operating interest will change based on the total returns of the RCH Foundation Investment Corpus. Likewise the cost and priorities of the Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellowship will also change over time and so the need for ROTA's active ongoing support continues.

The Fund will continue to be protected and applied exclusively for the RCH Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellowship, a unique program of research and care. While ROTA's recent generous contribution and careful planning with the hospital have secured the Fellowship over the near term, the long-term future of the Fellowship may be strengthened through bequest commitments.

The RCH and RCH Foundation are deeply grateful for ROTA members' generosity as this service makes a vital difference for so many neurology patients and families around Australia, and befittingly honours the Rats' values and intent to positively impact the future.

THE IMPACT OF GIVING

Every year the Royal Children's Hospital Foundation produces a report on the impact of philanthropy on the operations of the hospital. The most recent report, for the 2022/2023 year, features the story of the Rats of Tobruk Fellowship.



If you would like to read the full document you will find it via this link [The Impact of Giving 2023](#)

While the story is well known to our members it is wonderful when it reaches a wider audience, and the philanthropic community is a very diverse group, ranging from individuals and families who have been personally affected by

the special care offered by the RCH to large corporate groups.



In the last year the RCH saw 90,260 Emergency Department presentations! There were 14,963 surgeries and 50,345 inpatient admissions. It's a very busy place.

The Rats of Tobruk Neurology Fellowship is now recognised internationally and continues to attract the best and brightest young doctors in that field. The Fellow for 2024 is Dr Jamie Leong. Dr Leong was presented with the 2024 Fellowship medallion at ROTA's 2024 Annual General Meeting by immediate past president Bruce Bingham.

Hi everyone! My name is Jamie and I am one of the new Neurology Fellows at RCH and the recipient of the Rats of Tobruk Fellowship 2024. I trained in Christchurch New Zealand, and Adelaide prior to coming to RCH. I have a strong interest in Epilepsy, and in particular the ketogenic diet. I am excited about this year, and grateful for this opportunity!

LIFE MEMBERSHIP



As has become a tradition at the AGM, a special member was again elected to honorary life membership status. This year the honour was awarded to our longest serving committee member, Karolina Sevikova.

She fondly remembers first coming to Tobruk House as a little girl with her dad 'Doc' (Donald) Wells.

Karolina had had a deep involvement with the Rats of Tobruk Association for many decades, originally assisting with the women's auxiliary as a welcome younger addition to the wives and widow of our Tobruk Rats.

Most people who have visited the hall on one of our big days such as Tobruk Sunday will have tasted Karolina's special ANZAC biscuits which she makes in great quantities every year. Her other speciality is deserts and those with a sweet tooth will have enjoyed her cakes and puddings.

Karolina's father, 'Doc' Wells, served in the 2/4th Australian General Hospital during the siege and thereafter, and this award of life membership is an

acknowledgement of Karolina's hard work and dedication to her father's legacy.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members:

John Sherry Janet McLennan Philip Smith Anne Smith
Diana Schumacher Kathryn Sell Jamie Leong Ally Pekin
David Blackhall Roger Johnson Frank McGrane

Your membership helps to ensure the legacy of the Rats of Tobruk



SPECIAL VISITOR

Tobruk House was recently honoured with another visit from a long term admirer and friend of the Rats of Tobruk.



In late February, the Association had the honour of hosting Dame Quentin Bryce for afternoon tea at Tobruk House.

Dame Quentin has been a longstanding supporter of the Rats of Tobruk Association since her time as Governor General of Australia between 2008 and 2014.

Committee members Lachlan Gaylard and Paul Dipnall, alongside Lambis Englezos AM, his wife Suzanne, and veteran Bob McDowell, spent several hours discussing the importance of remembrance and their individual connections with our veterans.

Dame Quentin remembered fondly her previous visits to Tobruk House and her close association with past president and Rat of Tobruk Bob Semple in particular. She noted how splendid the hall was looking and was very pleased

to hear of the association's goals for the future.

A QUICK HISTORY RECAP

While many members have been able to visit Tobruk House and learn all about the Siege of Tobruk, it isn't always possible or practical. How many times have we mentioned (often in passing) "my dad/uncle was a Rat" only to draw blank or puzzled looks? How do you answer that?



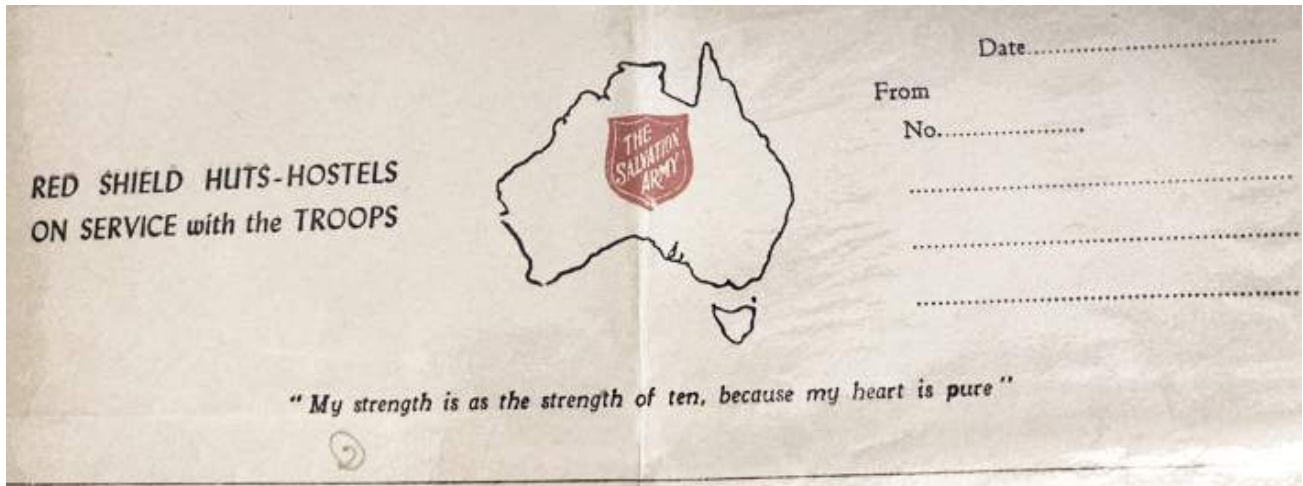
In 2011 the Australian War Memorial presented a major exhibition giving the full story of Tobruk and they produced a short four minute video to promote it.

While the exhibition is long gone, the video remains available

on the AWM website and on Youtube. It tells the story vividly and is an easy way to explain who the Rats were. Here is a [link](#) to it. (You can also find it by looking up 'Rats of Tobruk AWM' on Youtube.) It's a great way to deal with those puzzled looks!

THE 'SALLY' ARMY... A DIFFERENT KIND OF ARMY (story by Glenda Garde)

Anyone fortunate enough to have in their possession wartime letters written by their fathers or grandfathers etc may have noticed that they were often written on paper bearing this letterhead.



We have probably all heard of the Salvation Army, but what exactly did they do in WW2 and Tobruk in particular?

When a portion of the 2nd A.I.F. left Australia for the Middle East in 1940, two Red Shield Representatives accompanied the force. Before long, with the assistance of other officers and corporals appointed as hut orderlies, twenty seven of the thirty-two training areas in Palestine were serviced by the Salvation Army.

Motor mobile canteens, complete with 30-gallon water tanks and a ten-gallon tea infuser or thermos urn, were essential parts of the equipment. Moving rapidly from place to place, the officers conducted church parades, held singsongs, organised concerts, and radio programs and had countless personal conversations with the troops.



A group of Salvation Army and AIF personnel outside the Sally Army hut.

In the first push through Libya, four 'mobiles' accompanied the troops having their first experience in battle. These units were set in the desert, by the roadside, in gullies, in buildings and tents, in rain, sunshine, moonlight and blackout. Hot coffee was provided for wounded, guards, doctors, hospital staff, ambulance drivers, prisoners and sent to the front lines. The men worked under varying conditions.

"In pitch darkness, amid frontline troops, with bullets, shells whizzing around in heat ranging from 107 to 114 degrees, and in freezing cold, with billions of blowflies around, and sand at times untrackable (all vehicles were fitted with oversize tyres) – so long as there were soldiers to be served, the Red Shield Units operated".

....and the men, of course, must have been very grateful.



Kilo 89 Camp. Inside The Salvation Army Hut with black-out precautions.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

002223



During the strenuous days of Tobruk the Sally Army did wonderful work. This a picture of the Red Shield hut in the town. Note the 'billiards, indoor games and writing materials' written on the sign.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

020170



Salvation Army and AIF personnel loading Comforts Fund items onto a truck for distribution to the troops.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

007478



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P02727.006

'His Master's Voice' gramophone and a collection of records used in Tobruk by 'Mac' McIlveen during the siege. The gramophone was used to entertain thousands of allied troops, as well as German and Italian prisoners of war.

Salvation Army Minister and unofficial Padre, Major Arthur William 'Mac' McIlveen. Major McIlveen's hand rests on a portable record player and vinyl records are on display on a table in front of the prominent and well used Salvation Army sign depicting a kangaroo that reads 'Hop In, You're Welcome'.

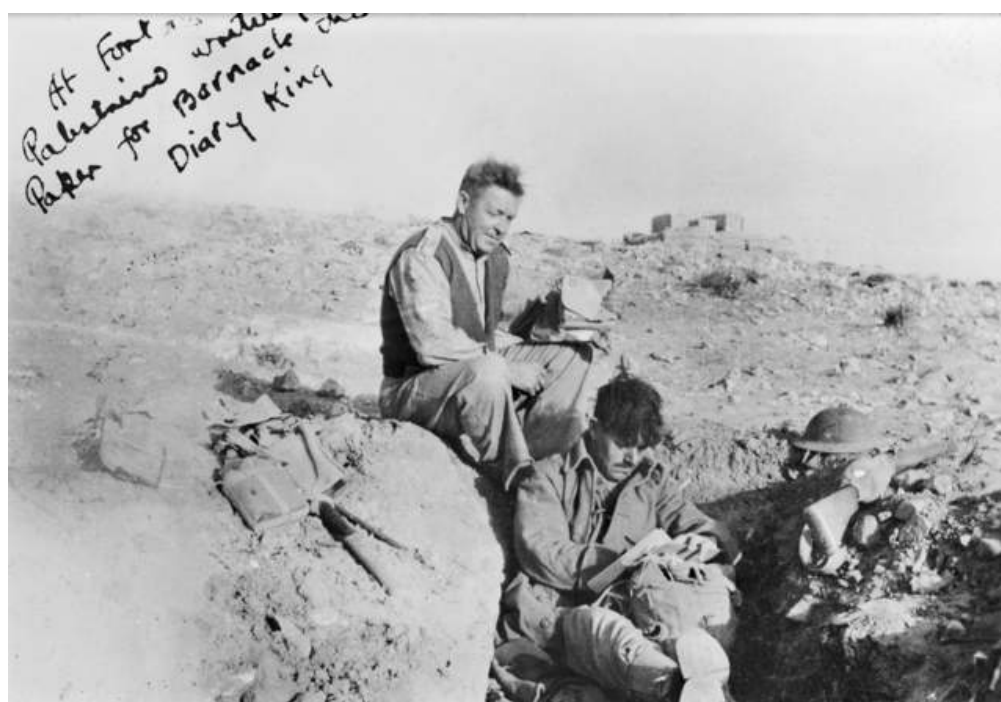
McIlveen trained as a Salvation Army officer in Melbourne and tried to enlist as a Padre during the First World War but the Salvation Army refused to send him as his superiors considered him 'too reckless'.

During the Second World War, aged 54, he served as a Salvation Army Representative and an unofficial Padre attached to the 2/9th Battalion. At Tobruk, he was known for his fearlessness, taking news and any comforts he could find out to soldiers in the field.

Salvation Army Minister, Red Shield War Representative and unofficial Padre, Major Arthur William 'Mac' McIlveen (left) writing letters with an unidentified soldier, probably of the 2/9th Battalion.

Major McIlveen sits on the side of a dugout while the unidentified soldier sits inside, his helmet and rifle lay at his side. Fort Pilastrino can be seen in the far distance.

The Salvation Army aimed to provide comforts to those who needed them most — and those who needed them most were those on the front lines.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P02727.015

The Salvation Army believes that...
'Where there's a need, there's The Salvation Army.'

A NEW SERIES IN THE THN

Beginning in this issue we will present a new series of stories we are calling "What About", focusing on different groups that collectively became known as the Rats of Tobruk, and those who supported them. The intention is to describe the tasks and experiences of the men in the various units that made the defense of Tobruk possible for such an extended period. Our first story looks at the role of the infantry through the eyes of one of its members.

WHAT ABOUT THE INFANTRY? *(story by Stuart Tolliday)*

The infantry played an important role in the defense of Tobruk during the siege. In Chester Wilmot's definitive book *Tobruk 1941* he states:

"By their speed and stamina, the infantry clinched the advantages won by the guns, tanks and carriers. ...they could maintain a pace that bewildered the enemy."

Major General Morshead was quoted as saying:

"From the first day I determined that no-man's-land would be *our* land."

Bill Tolliday, (my father) was a member of the 2/32nd infantry battalion. In June 1940, Bill and his best mate Em Cartledge signed up together, and as Em couldn't drive at that time, they couldn't join the Engineers, so they found themselves in the Infantry. Friends had said Bill wouldn't be accepted because he was too skinny. The doctors examined him and said that he couldn't be an artillery man as he would get a hernia from carrying the 25-pound [11 kg] shells, but they were happy for him to be in the infantry carrying a 100-pound pack [45 kg] on his back for miles! (In fact, for many weeks once they were in Egypt training, they did 20-mile desert marches with those packs every second or third day or night.)



Sgt Bill Tolliday VX25453

Bill told many stories of his time in Tobruk that illustrate the work they did there.

"We used to go out after dark, and you'd be out there every second or third night on some sort of patrol, a fighting patrol or reconnaissance or a listening patrol. Sometimes you'd strike the enemy and sometimes you wouldn't."

"We would get out as close as we could to their wire and listen at their posts and see if we could estimate how many men were there and if there was much activity. For the fighting patrols well we'd go out and see if we could contact any of them trying to do patrols in the no-man's-land too, and of course if we did well they were attacked, as long as there wasn't a great herd of them, but for the reconnaissance we would get through between their lines and get behind their lines and see what activities were on the crossroads or any roads that were passing near there."

"You see it was not like the warfare in France, in that it was not continuous trenches. It was posts; you would have a post with perhaps a platoon of men in it and they had the same, perhaps a couple of platoons, and that would be well and truly surrounded by barbed wire and mines and anti-tank mines with a few anti-personnel mines and a few booby traps tossed in as well. But between those posts there was probably nothing but a few anti-tank mines. You could quite often get through between their posts and go behind their lines and have a look at what was going on."

"So you were kept busy that way, and if you were not on patrol you had to take your turn at guard duty at home in your own post. If you would be taking sentry duty, you might have two hours on and four off and then two hours on and four off again. And you had stand to half an hour before dusk and half an hour after dusk and the same at dawn. You'd have every man standing to half an hour before dawn till half an hour after dawn."

"Our next job was to go into the Salient which was just in front of that S7 post where we had very little attempt at protection at all. They were up on the slope ahead of us and they were looking down on us, so we could not move anywhere in the daylight. You had to stay down in your slit trenches all day."

You couldn't show anything at all, and you couldn't give any indication of where your defences were, otherwise they would mortar the place continuously and just blow it up. So we went in. We were only about 120 or 130 yards away from them and the only time we could move was at night-time.

"They would bring us food at night and two men would go back and get the rations for the platoon and bring it back and we seem to have a sort of neutrality then and they never seemed to fire on us when we were having that meal. We would gather around and have the meal and then someone would take the dixies back and then we'd probably go out and patrol around and try and get up near their lines as much as we could and see what was going on there.

"Sometimes we'd meet them and that would cause a bit of a stir. You had to try and find out whether they were intending to attack us or not. I'm not sure if it was three or four weeks we spent there. It might have been four weeks but during that time we never changed our clothes. We never took our boots off unless we had a spare pair of socks. That was all we had to change into.

"The slit trenches we had were just deep enough to sit down in. In some of them you had a bit of galvanised iron over the top with sand scattered over that to hide it or a bit of saltbush around. In the morning before dawn, you would have to go around each trench and make sure there is nothing to indicate just where that hole was, and then you would sit there all day till the next night came on.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

020779

A small patrol from the 2/13th Infantry Battalion waiting in a tank ditch for a favourable opportunity to go further into "NO MAN'S LAND" near Tobruk.

"Mostly after this it was a case of harassing the Germans. Morshead didn't want to go out and take any more positions, because had we taken another position it might have been half a mile out, and that would have left us with a point out there we would have to protect all the way out and back, and we didn't need to do it so long as we could keep them from taking the Harbour. That was all that was necessary, but he insisted that we patrol every night and harass them in some way or other.

"So we would be out on the patrol every night, listening or annoying them in some way, or getting through behind their lines, or if they came out at all, well we'd fight

them, but his idea was to hold the post that we had. Hold the perimeter and keep them afraid to come and try and attack us, which we did. Anytime we'd get out near their post, once they knew we were there, they'd light up the sky with flares, and it would be almost like daylight, so you only had to keep quiet until they quietened down. You could fire a few bursts if you wanted to, to annoy them, just to make sure they were too frightened to come anywhere near us, and that's the way it went, just patrolling until we left Tobruk."

Chester Wilmot explains in *Tobruk 1941*:

"Individually these raids were not of great military importance, but their combined result was to give the Tobruk garrison a remarkable freedom of movement, in addition to forcing the enemy on to the defensive.... More significant than casualties, however, was the damage done to the enemy's morale. Early in the siege the enemy gave up counter-patrolling and stayed behind his defenses."

When the 9th Division was eventually withdrawn from Tobruk, the below strength 70th British Division was unable to keep up the relentless patrolling, which took the pressure off Rommel and allowed him to take control of no-man's-land and then attack Tobruk with force.

TYPICAL AUSSIE HUMOUR (story by Glenda Garde)

Just recently, I was alerted to the fact that my father, Neil Barrie, had written to The Sporting Globe back in 1942 following his time in Tobruk, and his story had been published in the 9th May 1942 issue.

I was able to track down the article thanks to Trove (what a great source of information) and I discovered a gem of a story that I was unaware of.

I'm sure most readers will be familiar with the story of the pamphlet which was dropped on the diggers by the Germans during the siege imploring them to surrender, (which was featured on page 5 of the previous issue of the Tobruk House News).

Many would also possibly know of the white flag on the building in the town which is mentioned, but I certainly didn't know about this 'alternative' pamphlet described in the article reproduced here.

(My father was rarely without a copy of The Sporting Globe in his hands on a Saturday afternoon. I suspect he wasn't alone in this!)

Tobruk "Paper Bombing"

PTE. NEIL BARRIE, of Brunswick, back from the M. E., writes to say how the boys looked forward to their Globes, and first went through the Sportsmen All column. "I still have the issue in which the first Sportsmen All was printed, and am proud to have my own name there," he wrote.

Barrie included a copy of The Palestine Daily Telegraph, telling how the Germans "paper bombed" him and others at Tobruk, telling them escape was impossible, warning that their dive bombers were waiting to sink transports, and urging the Aussies to put up the white flag and surrender.

The Aussies put up a huge white flag on the highest building in the town. It's plain inscription was, "Come and get it!"

A delightful touch in one 'pamphlet' was "Come and give yourselves up. German beer is the best in the world, and we have millions of gallons here! Our prison camp is the most luxurious in the world, with two-up schools every night, coursing every Wednesday, trots on Monday afternoons and gee-gees every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. It's all yours if you please: please let us take Tobruk."

It must in truth be told that this pamphlet was not dropped by the Germans. But it was suggested in the Tobruk Digger paper as the type of thing the Germans should use.



TOBRUK SUNDAY 2024



COMMEMORATING THE 83RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMMENCEMENT
OF THE SIEGE OF TOBRUK

SUNDAY APRIL 7TH 2024

COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE WILL BE HELD AT 2PM IN MOUBRAY ST
(AROUND THE CORNER FROM TOBRUK HOUSE).

GUEST SPEAKER BRIGADIER DOUG PERRY OAM RFD ED (RETD)

FOLLOWED BY LIGHT REFRESHMENTS IN THE HALL.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THIS SPECIAL OCCASION.

This years' service will feature guest speaker Brigadier Doug Perry OAM RFD ED (Retd) who will talk on the artillery's contribution to the siege of Tobruk.

Brigadier Perry was conscripted into National Service in April 1956 and was subsequently commissioned in 1962. His military service was principally with the artillery in which he served in various regiments. He was appointed to the honorary position of Colonel Commandant RAA (Southern Region) in 2001 and remained until his retirement in 2008.

Brigadier Perry was awarded the medal of the Order of Australia for service to the community of the Mornington Peninsula and continues his support of the Royal Regiment of Artillery as a member of the RAA National History Committee.

ANZAC DAY 2024

**TOBRUK HOUSE
44 VICTORIA AVENUE
WILL BE OPEN ON ANZAC DAY
FROM 8AM TO 3PM
PLEASE REGISTER YOUR INTEREST
VIA LACHLAN GAYLARD
0432 232 502**

THE RATS OF TOBRUK NEUROSCIENCE FELLOWSHIP

Each year in Australia, over 250,000 people are diagnosed with epilepsy. Yet, for around half of those, including around 35 per cent of children, the cause of the epilepsy is unknown. Thanks to the Rats of Tobruk Neuroscience Fellowship, supported by the Rats of Tobruk Association, teams across the RCH are hoping to change that.



This fellowship was established by the Rats themselves to be their legacy and has provided opportunities for twelve young doctors to advance their studies and knowledge of child epilepsy since it began in 2010.

These doctors are now contributing to the efforts to discover the cause and find treatments for child epilepsy in hospitals around Australia and the world.

To learn more about how you can contribute to this most worthy cause by adding a gift in your will, or most importantly, to let the Foundation know of your intention, please contact

Kathryn Sell, Planned Giving, RCH Foundation
(03 9345 6389 or email: kathryn.sell@rch.org.au)



ROTA MERCHANDISE

See Order Form on page 23 for postage costs and other details.



LADIES SUMMER POPPY SCARF
Light Blue, Dark Blue, White,
Grey, Black

\$15



SIEGE OF TOBRUK 'ROLL-UP'
STUBBIE COOLER

\$10



SIEGE OF TOBRUK BAR MAT

\$40



ROTA 'BASEBALL' CAP
One size fits all

\$20



ROTA POLO SHIRT
Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL
XXXL, XXXXL, XXXXXL

\$50



ROTA RUGBY TOP
Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL
XXXL, XXXXL, XXXXXL

\$60



ROTA BADGE CAR
WINDOW STICKER
7cm x 8.5cm approx
Sticks to inside of window

\$10



TWO-UP SET
Includes kip and two 1941 pennies

\$17

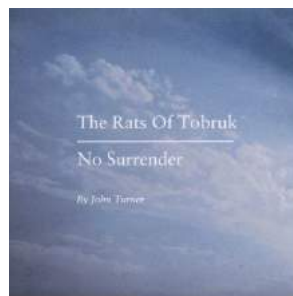


ROTA FACEMASK
Small or large
Special offer **\$7**



80TH ANNIVERSARY SIEGE
MEDAL
(Limited Stock remaining)

\$50



'RATS OF TOBRUK' CD
INCLUDES 'NO SURRENDER'
Written and sung by
John Turner

\$15



RATS OF TOBRUK 1941
LAPEL BADGE

\$15



RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION INC - 2024 SUBSCRIPTION PAYMENT FORM

Please forward this form together with payment of \$30 to:
The Secretary of ROTA, Tobruk House, 44 Victoria Ave, Albert Park, Vic, 3206.

Contact Email: ratsoftobruk41@gmail.com

Contact Phone No: 0432 232 502

Membership No: _____

Name: _____
Title Given Name (s) Surname

Contact Details (Only complete if details have changed):

Address: _____ Suburb / State Post Code

Email: _____ @ _____ Contact Phone No: _____
Please Print Clearly

The 2023 Annual Membership Subscription is \$30 and is due and payable on 1 January 2024.

Please note that if payment is not received by 31 March 2024, your membership will be suspended. It is also pointed out that the Association's rules state that a member is taken to have resigned if the member's subscription is more than twelve months in arrears.

Payment: Payment by electronic funds transfer (EFT) is our preferred method of payment. Payment can also be made by credit card.

EFT Payment: If you are paying by EFT, it is important that you include a unique reference so that the payment can be matched to the members register. A suggested reference is your membership no and surname.

Bank Account Details: Account Name: Rats of Tobruk Association BSB: 633 000 Account No: 197610603

Credit Card Payment: Please provide the following details:

Name on Card: _____ Amount: \$ _____

Card No: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

CVC: | | | | | (3-digit number on the back of Visa / MC, 4 digit on front of AMEX) Expiry Date: __ __ : __ __

If you pay by EFT or credit card, you can scan this form and email it to: ratsoftobruk41@gmail.com

Privacy Clause:

Information requested in this form is necessary for the association to maintain the members register and to keep you informed about the association, its activities, and products. It will not be provided to third parties for direct marketing purposes. As a member you have the right to inspect the members' register.

Promotional Photos:

At the Association's functions, photo's may be taken for promotional purposes and publication in the Tobruk House News. By attending any of these functions you give permission for the use of your image in the manner described above.

Association Rules:

As a member of the Association, you agree to abide by the Association Rules and policies approved by the Committee of Management from time to time. These are available on the Association's website www.ratsoftobrukassociation.org.au

Member's Signature: _____ Date: _____



RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION INC MERCHANDISE ORDER FORM

| Item | Cost per Item | Quantity | Size (Refer page 20) | Postage Yes/No | Postage (Ordinary Mail) | Total | Comments |
|---|---------------|----------|--------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------|---|
| Rats of Tobruk, 1941, Lapel Badge – butterfly /clutch fitting | \$15 | | | | Inc postage | | |
| Rats of Tobruk, 1941, Lapel Badge – stick pin fitting | \$15 | | | | Inc postage | | |
| 80th Anniversary Medal | \$50 | | | | \$6 | | Postage for up to 2 medals to same address. |
| ROTA Rugby Top | \$50 | | | | \$12 | | |
| ROTA Polo Shirt (New look navy blue with yellow stripes) | \$45 | | | | \$12 | | |
| Two-Up Set | \$17 | | | | Inc postage | | |
| ROTA “baseball” style cap | \$20 | | | | \$12 | | |
| ROTA Bar Mat (New design) | \$40 | | | | \$12 | | |
| ROTA ‘roll-up’ Stubbie cooler | \$10 | | | | \$6 | | |
| Badge Car Window Sticker (Sticks to inside of window) | \$10 | | | | Inc postage | | 20% discount for more than one sticker. |
| ROTA Face Mask | \$7 | | | | nil | | \$6 Postage for 2 – 5 masks |
| ‘THE RATS OF TOBRUK’ CD | \$15 | | | | \$4 | | |
| | | | Colour | | | | |
| Ladies Poppy Scarf (light weight) | \$15 | | | | \$6 | | |
| \$12 postage for orders of multiple items to the same address | | | Total amount to be paid: | | | \$ | |

Payment is required before the items are sent. Delivery time can vary depending on stock availability and could be up to 6 weeks. Payment by electronic funds transfer (EFT) is our preferred method of payment. Payment can also be made by card, cheque, or money order.

EFT Payment: If you are paying by EFT, it is important that you include a unique reference so that the payment can be matched to the members register. A suggested reference is the abbreviation ‘MERCH’ followed by your surname.

Bank Account Name: Rats of Tobruk Association BSB: 633 000 Account No: 197610603

Payment can also be made by Credit or Debit Card.

To arrange this please call: **0432 232 502**

Purchaser’s Name: _____ **Contact Phone No:** _____
(Please Print)

Email Address: _____ @ _____

Delivery Address: _____

Suburb: _____ **State:** _____ **Postcode:** _____

Please forward completed form to:

‘Merchandise Officer, ROTA, 44 Victoria Av, Albert Park, Vic, 3206.’

If you pay by EFT or card, you can scan this form and email to: **ratsoftobruk41@gmail.com**

All enquiries to the Merchandise Officer

email: ratsoftobruk41@gmail.com Phone: 0432 232 502

What's on at The Shrine



LAST POST – Every Sunday at 4.45PM



The Last Post Service is another reason to make a family visit to the Shrine on Sunday afternoons. This new moving ceremony features a piper, bugler and Shrine Guard in historic uniform.

TRENCHES TO RUNWAY



This exhibition delves into the profound impact of military clothing design and wartime conditions on popular fashion, tracing these influences from the 1870s to the present day. Discover how wartime led to innovative design solutions and how the fashion industry reinterpreted these styles, giving them new meaning and expression in civilian life.

INK IN THE LINES



This Australian War Memorial touring exhibition focuses on the stories of Australia's military veterans, through stunning photography of their tattoos. Many members and veterans of the Australian Defence Forces have tattoos, and while their reasons for getting tattooed are as varied as the people themselves, self-expression and belonging play a part. They also share a common purpose in getting inked: to remember.

TOYS, TALES & TENACITY



This first-of-its-kind exhibition at the Shrine explores the experiences of children during war. Come for an immersive and thought-provoking journey as we explore the intertwined stories of war, childhood, and the enduring spirit of youth in the face of adversity.