



TOBRUK HOUSE NEWS

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION



THE RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION
NEUROSCIENCE FELLOWSHIP FUND

RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION INC.

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

Month / Date	Event Description
May 30	General Meeting 10.30am
June 8	Open Day at Tobruk House 10am-3pm (volunteers needed)
July 27	General Meeting 10.30am
August 24	Shrine Service commemorating the Rats of Tobruk 11am
August 29	General Meeting 10.30am
September	Royal Children's Hospital afternoon tea. Date to be confirmed
October 5	ROTA 80 th birthday celebration at Tobruk House (details TBA)
November 21	General Meeting 10.30am
November 30	Christmas Lunch at Tobruk House 12pm

Patron: Bill Gibbins

Committee of Management:

Vice President – Paul Dipnall

Secretary – Lachlan Gaylard

Committee Chair – Stuart Tolliday

Other Committee Members –

Gayle Sherwell, Glenda Garde,
Tony Codd, Karolina Sevcikova

TOBRUK HOUSE NEWS

NEXT ISSUE: AUGUST 2025

DEADLINE: JULY 4

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will not be published.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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CONTACT US: ratsoftobruk41@gmail.com



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

RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION INC.

Vice President's Message – June 2025

Dear Members and Friends,

It is once again a great pleasure to report on the activity of your vibrant and committed association. The past few months have, as always, been action-packed with significant and meaningful events in our calendar. One such occasion was Tobruk Sunday, which dawned with perfect weather—free of rain and squally winds. The sun shone brilliantly for what is, without doubt, our association's most important day.



We were fortunate to receive generous support from the City of Port Phillip, which provided the marquee, seating, PA system, and lectern for our event. This marked the first time the council has contributed the marquee, thanks to the efforts of our executive committee in advocating on our behalf. We gratefully acknowledge the City of Port Phillip for their goodwill and continued partnership. It is a relationship we truly value and look forward to developing further. We also wish to thank Albert Park local Jock's Ice cream & Sorbet, and Peter Bouchier Butchers of Distinction. Both made generous and much appreciated donations to our luncheon.

As always, our esteemed guest speaker, Major General Professor Jeffrey Rosenfeld AC OBE Retd., delivered a powerful and moving address on the critical importance of medical care for those serving on the front lines. Drawing on his own frontline experiences, he shared deeply personal insights into the dedication and sacrifice involved in saving the lives of our soldiers. His presentation was not only eloquent, but also profoundly appropriate, as it came from someone who has lived that reality.

Anzac Day was another standout event, exceptionally well attended by our wonderful members. The hall was filled to capacity, and attendees were treated to a superbly catered gathering. I am especially pleased to report that the day resulted in one of the most successful fiscal outcomes in the association's history. A sincere thank you to everyone who contributed to making the event such a success.

A highlight of Anzac Day was a heartfelt presentation made to our association by our close friends from the Army Transport Team. It was with great pride, on your behalf, that I accepted this generous gesture. The representatives of the Army Transport Association expressed their gratitude for the friendship and support shown by our association in offering them a permanent home. We, in turn, assured them that the Rats of Tobruk Association will always be a welcoming place.

I thank each and every member for your ongoing support of the Rats of Tobruk Association. Without your involvement, this association cannot thrive. It is your association, and its legacy rests with each of you. We are all custodians of history, united by a personal commitment to the cherished memory of our beloved veterans.

Finally, keep your eyes on our website for the date in September of our annual visit to the Royal Children's Hospital. It's always an inspiring event. Come along and see the Rat's legacy in action.

Warm regards,

Paul Dipnall
Vice President

FROM THE ARCHIVES

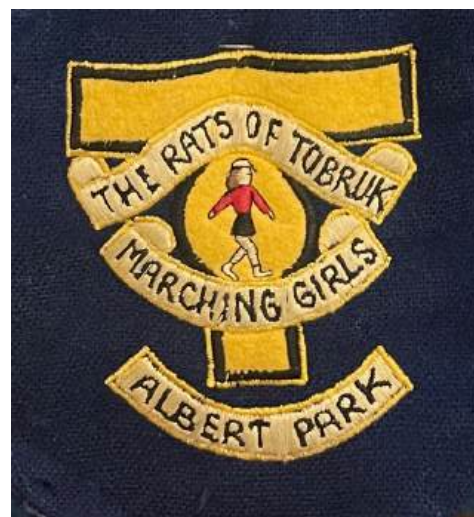
Our stories from the archives in this issue actually come from the archives of two of our ROTA members. The first is Olivia Gleeson who was a Rats of Tobruk Marching Girl between 1968 and 1971.

Before netball and hockey became popular sports for girls and young women in Australia, there was another national obsession — marching.

Dressed up in white boots, short skirts, sashes and formal hats, marching girls were in high demand at agricultural shows, city parades, and to perform for visiting dignitaries.

In the 1960s there were an estimated 50,000 Australian girls involved in the activity, which was brought to the country from New Zealand as early as the 1930s.

Author Bob Byrne, who has written about the marching girls in his book 'Australia Remember When', says the sport was "a big deal". Marching was one of the few sports offered to girls at the time and had its origins in the World War II-era when the military was visible in all aspects of society. It was a challenging type of sport because you had to learn the discipline, learn the precision of the march.



Each weekend, teams would compete against each other, honing their timing, perfecting uniforms, and mastering steps in the hope of beating previous results. Olivia said that it was a deadly serious competition!

A regular attendee at ROTA events, Olivia arrived at Tobruk House on Anzac Day with a very special parcel to share with us. It was her collection of all the badges she had earned during her marching girl career. While the pieces of blue felt that the badges are pinned to have seen better days, the badges themselves are, as you can see, still bright and no doubt each has a special story to tell.



Olivia Gleeson on Anzac Day at Tobruk House and her special collection of Marching Girl medals.



FROM THE ARCHIVES CONT.

Our second archives story also came to our attention on Anzac Day.

From time to time, our committee members hear fascinating and eclectic stories about the Rats of Tobruk, their units, or memorable events that have taken place at Tobruk House. Over the years, the House has hosted 21st birthdays, committee meetings, reunions, planning sessions by architects, and even, most recently, a funeral. So, it came as no surprise to learn that Tobruk House has also been the venue for not one, but two family weddings.



Arthur 'Len' Ormsby, daughter Vicki Middleton (nee Ormsby) and Nancy Ormsby.



Vicki and Geoff Middleton at Tobruk House on their wedding day.



Nancy and Len Ormsby at Tobruk House on their wedding day..

On Anzac Day, ROTA member Vicki Middleton shared her wedding album with us, capturing beautiful moments of her and husband Geoff celebrating their marriage at Tobruk House. But Vicki's story had a remarkable continuation—she revealed that her parents, Past President Arthur 'Len' Ormsby OAM and Women's Auxiliary champion Nancy Ormsby, had also celebrated their wedding at the very same venue.

Len, a proud veteran of the 2/24th Battalion, and Nancy, who served with the Women's Land Army, both made significant contributions to our Association. Although Len and Nancy sadly passed away in 1999 and 2019 respectively, their connection to Tobruk House and the association endures.

Not only were Vicki and Geoff among those attending this year's Anzac Day lunch, but their son Hayden also took part—playing with the Rats of Tobruk Memorial Pipes and Drums, continuing the family's proud legacy of service and support.

TOBRUK SUNDAY 2025

The weather gods were certainly shining on this year's Tobruk Sunday service. After the last few years of wind and rain, we were instead treated to brilliant sunshine, but the 100 or so people who attended were comfortably seated under a marquee generously provided by Port Phillip Council. The council also supplied the PA system.



The Rats of Tobruk Memorial Pipes and Drums marched on to the parade area announcing the beginning of the service.



Major Bruce Bingham (Retd.) was Master of Ceremonies



Guest speaker MajGen Prof J Rosenfield (Retd.).



Special guests and members of the public appreciated the shade provided by the marquee



CPL David Robinson from the Australian Army Band played the Last Post



The Flag Party



Ms Myfanwy Coghill sang the National Anthem

Vice President Paul Dipnall gave the welcoming address before handing over to previous president Major Bruce Bingham (Retd.) as our MC. Padre Don Kaus again provided the prayers.

Our guest speaker this year was internationally recognised neurosurgeon, Major General Professor Jeffrey Rosenfeld AC, OBE (Retd.) who spoke of the contribution of the medical corps during the siege of Tobruk. Having served on eight operations in Rwanda, East Timor, Bougainville, Solomon Islands and Iraq, Professor Rosenfeld was well qualified to speak of the hardships endured by men in the casualty clearing stations, the regimental aid posts, the field ambulances and, of course, the 2/4th Australian General Hospital in Tobruk. He pointed out that the hospital was bombed a number of times during the siege.

Thanks to our flag bearers Tony Codd, Peter Waters, Maurice Bennet and Andrew Balcerak, and to Helen Robinson and Gayle Sherwell who recited the Tobruk Requiem and poem 'This was Tobruk' respectively. As has become a tradition, Myfanwy Coghill once again sang the national anthem so beautifully.

No service is complete without a contribution from the Rats of Tobruk Memorial Pipes and Drums Band, who certainly act as a draw card for the people of Albert Park whenever they 'strike up' to announce the beginning of the commemoration. The band also gave a wonderful performance back in the hall, where people were invited to a delicious afternoon tea after the service. It is really gratifying to see so many people gathered together enjoying themselves.



Nina Taylor MP, Major Rebeca Polonski, Professor Jeffrey Rosenfeld Cr Bryan Mears & ROTA secretary Lachlan Gaylard



Major Rebeca Polonski, Professor Jeffrey Rosenfeld and Councilor Bryan Mears cutting the special cake

It is also testament to the importance of the achievement of the Rats that an increasing number of members and attendees at these events are not just those whose fathers, uncles and grandfathers who stood together and did not surrender in that desert 84 years ago, but include people from all backgrounds who want to contribute to keeping the legacy alive.

Obviously, events such as Tobruk Sunday involve a great deal of work behind the scenes. Many thanks must therefore go to all who make these special days possible, including Bruce and Marlene Bingham, not just for organising the service, but also for their years of helping at our many recent events, which has often involved them driving to and from their home in Mansfield. As previously mentioned, they have now retired from the committee.

Finally, to those who braved the heat, thank you so much for attending, and if you missed this one, please consider attending next year's Tobruk Sunday, which will be the 85th anniversary of the siege. And why not invite someone along? They won't be disappointed.

ANZAC DAY AT TOBRUK HOUSE

This year, Tobruk House once again opened its doors for the Anzac Day luncheon, an event preceded by members of the association and the Port Phillip community gathering to watch the broadcast of the Melbourne Anzac Day march on our big screen. Many members first took part in the Melbourne march, and we had 7 unit banners carried by our members.



Descendants of members of the 2/5 Field Ambulance proudly carried their banner at the Melbourne march.

The luncheon provided a meaningful opportunity for members to come together, reflect, and share memories — both of their own military service and of their 'Rat'.

Over 100 people joined us for the luncheon, which was expertly prepared by our dedicated volunteers and committee members. The day was enriched as usual by a stirring performance from members of the Rats of Tobruk Memorial Pipes and Drums.



The Rats of Tobruk Memorial Pipes and Drums always draw a crowd, and Anzac Day 2025 was no exception, attracting many passers by to join us for their performance.

Among the guests were ROTA members Bob Hare, son of Captain Arthur Hare MC, and Barry Walker, son of Captain John Walker — both officers who were tragically killed during the war. Both regular attendees at Tobruk House events, it is wonderful to see them together on that special day, ensuring that their fathers' stories continue to be remembered and shared.



Bob Hare, son of Captain Arthur Hare MC, and Barry Walker, son of Captain John Walker.

The presentation of a statuette titled 'Mateship' symbolised the enduring bond between our Association and other ex-service organisations — a testament to the golden thread of service that unites us. The statuette will join the special items on display in Tobruk House.



ROTA Vice President Paul Dipnal receives the 'Mateship' statuette from WO1 Grant Reeves of the Royal Australian Corps of Transport Association.

ANZAC DAY IN MANSFIELD



Bruce Bingham laid a wreath on behalf of the Rats of Tobruk Association at the Mansfield service.

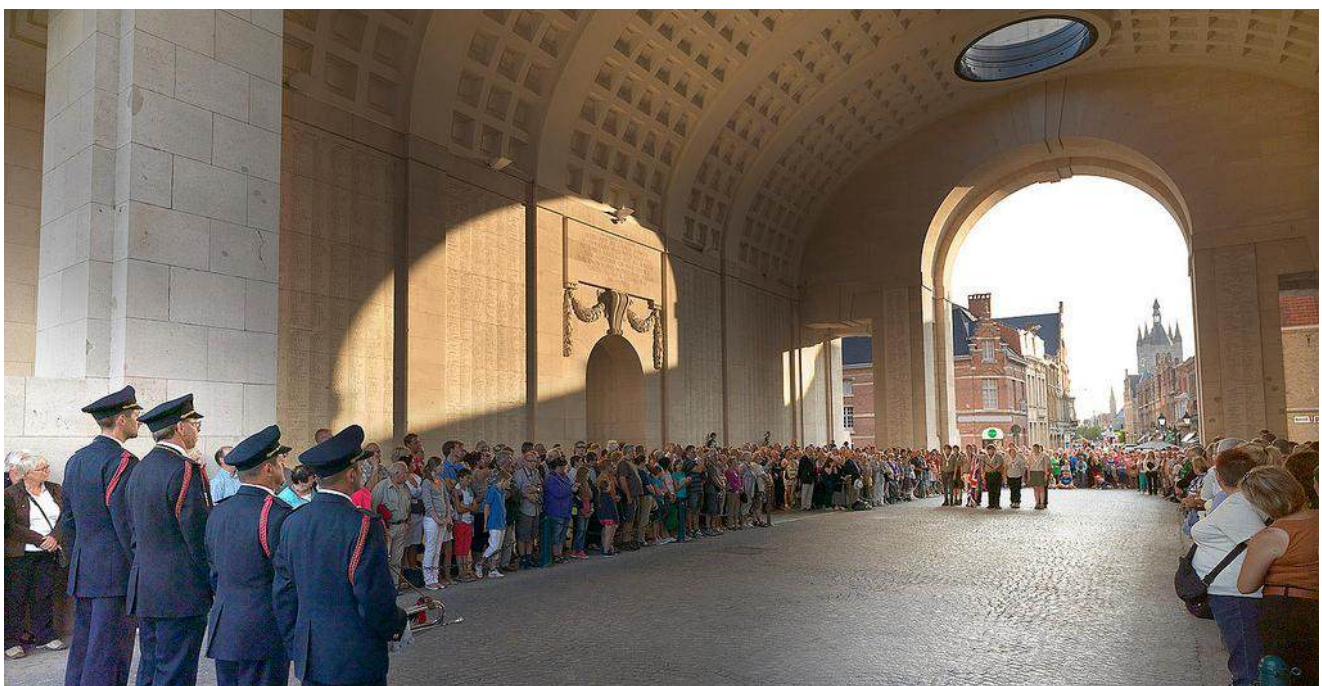


Mansfield's Memorial Gate, modeled on the original Menin Gate in Belgium (see below) was the scene of the Mansfield Anzac Day service.

A march and service were held at Mansfield in Northern Victoria, culminating in a service held in front of Mansfield's Memorial Gate. The Rats of Tobruk Association was represented by past president Bruce Bingham and his wife, past committee member Marlene Bingham. Bruce laid a wreath on behalf of the association.

The Mansfield Memorial Gate is one of Victoria's significant War memorials. It is modelled on the original Menin Gate at Ypres in Belgium, which was destroyed by German bombardment during World War One. The Memorial contains the names of Mansfield's Service men who paid the supreme sacrifice in the two World Wars and Vietnam.

A new Menin Gate was erected in Ypres after World War One and contains the names of the thousands of Australians killed and have no known grave. The Last Post is played every night at 8-00pm and this incredibly moving ceremony (see below) is a must for Australians visiting the battlefields of France and Belgium.



THE HISTORY OF 'THE ODE'

Most commemorations related to the armed forces of the Commonwealth countries include what has become known as 'The Ode'. This incredibly moving statement is actually the fourth stanza from a poem titled 'For The Fallen' written by an Englishman, Laurence Binyon, in September 1914, just after the beginning of the First World War. Many years later Binyon said that the fourth stanza came to him first and he built the poem around it.

The inspiration for the poem came from the losses inflicted on troops of the British Expeditionary Force at the hands of the Imperial German Army at the battle of Mons and the subsequent retreat, as well as the Battle of Le Cateau and the Battle of the Marne. Binyon was too old to enlist and he subsequently worked as an orderly in British field hospitals in France.

The poem was one of the more sober reflections on the terrible cost of war at a time when others were taking a more euphoric and heroic approach. First printed in 'The Times' in 1914, it took on a far greater meaning after the full horrors of war were realised.

On occasion, the third stanza is read as well. The line "Lest we forget", taken from Rudyard Kipling's poem "Recessional" (which incidentally has nothing to do with remembering the fallen in war), is often added as if were part of the ode and repeated in response by those listening, especially in Australia.

FOR THE FALLEN

*With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.*

*Solemn the drums thrill; Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres,
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.*

*They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted;
They fell with their faces to the foe.*

*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.*

*They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;
They sleep beyond England's foam.*

*But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known
As the stars are known to the Night;*

*As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain;
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.*



ANZAC DAY TWO-UP (Story from 'Wikipedia' and photos from member Tom Walsh, son of NX25561 Pte. Patrick Thomas Walsh 2/1 Pioneers.)

There are many traditions associated with Anzac Day and the game of 'Two Up' is certainly one of them, although today it is disappearing, perhaps replaced by the myriad of gambling options available literally anywhere and anytime.

Two-up is a traditional Australian gambling game, involving a designated "spinner" throwing two coins, usually Australian pennies, into the air. Players bet on whether the coins will both fall with heads (obverse) up, both with tails (reverse) up, or one of each (known as "odds"). The exact origins of two-up are obscure, but it seems to have evolved from 'cross and pile', an old English gambling game involving tossing a single coin into the air and wagering on the result.

The game is traditionally played with pennies, because their weight, size, and surface design make them ideal for the game. Weight and size make them stable on the "kip" and easy to spin in the air. Decimal coins are considered to be too small and light and do not 'fly' as well.

The predilection of the convicts for this game was noted as early as 1798 by New South Wales' first judge advocate, as well as the lack of skill involved and the large losses. By the 1850s, the two-coin form was being played on the goldfields of the eastern colonies, and it spread across the country following subsequent gold rushes.

Two-up was played extensively by Australia's soldiers during World War I. Gambling games, to which a blind eye was cast, became a regular part of Anzac Day celebrations for returned soldiers, although two-up was illegal at all other times. As time passed, increasingly elaborate illegal "two-up schools" grew around Australia, to the consternation of authorities but with the backing of corrupt police.

Legal two-up arrived with its introduction as a table game at the new casino in Hobart in 1973, but is now only offered at Crown Perth and Crown Melbourne. Two-up has also been legalised on Anzac Day, when it is played in Returned Servicemen's League (RSL) clubs and hotels.



Readers with a keen eye may note that in the photos above there are actually three coins in the air. This was a popular variation with a bigger 'school' or group of gamblers as at least two coins will always match, this results in a decision on every throw (two heads or two tails, with the third coin being redundant - "sudden death"), and thus a faster game, with more action, as the bets are resolved on every throw.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members:

**Carol McLachlan John Hill Kevin Schultz John O'Hogan Leonie Miller
Gavin Miller Frances Evans Steven Prostamo Craig Stephens
Dorothy Exell David Keller Peter Ralph Abramo Lerado**

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



TOBRUK HOUSE WELCOMES ARMY TRAINEES

A group of 12 trainees visited Tobruk House recently to learn more about the siege and the story of the Rats. They had just finished their Army Basic Training at Kapooka, and were posted to Holding Company, Joint Training Command, before the commencement of their Initial Employment Training. On completion of that training, they will be fully qualified soldiers in trade.

Committee members Tony Codd, Gayle Sherwell and Glenda Garde welcomed them to the hall and morning tea/coffee. ROTA committee chair Stuart Tolliday then gave them a presentation which included some personal stories from his father's experiences, and covered the history of Tobruk before and during the siege, and the aftermath. It included a video that was made in 2016 featuring six of the original Rats and their memories of the experience.

Everyone then sat down for a light lunch and a general chat. The trainees read the story on the panels and poured over the pictures around the wall. They were fascinated by the original slouch hat and army jacket they were shown, and especially commented on the roughness of the woollen material.



Following lunch, Sergeant Braedan Heverin, Platoon Sergeant, Holding Company, Joint Training Command under the watchful eye of Lieutenant Lachlan Junk-Gibson, Platoon Commander, cleared the floor and gave a brief training exercise regarding the formalities required on special occasions, in particular for the reciting of the Ode and during the Last Post. The smart synchronous 'click' of heels as they came to attention demonstrated that they had all been paying attention during their earlier parade ground training.



We look forward to welcoming such groups from the Australian Defence Force in the future.

BUZZA STREET HONOURS SERVICE OF RAT OF TOBRUK VICTOR BUZZA



Buzza Street in Walkervale (QLD) has been badged as part of Council's Streets of Remembrance program and now displays the Rising Sun badge of the Australian Army honouring the service of Private Victor Buzza (service number: QX10574) who fought in World War II.

Victor Christian Buzza was born on 6 June 1912 to John and Pauline Buzza in Dallarnil, in the Bundaberg Region. He was working as a labourer and lived in Bundaberg at the time of his enlistment on 24 June 1940.

Victor served in the 2/15th Australian Infantry Battalion and embarked from Sydney bound for the Middle East, arriving on 31 July 1941. He was recognised as one of the Australian Army's 'Rats of Tobruk', having served with the 9th Australian Division during the famous siege in 1941.

Victor was sadly killed in action at Tel el Eisa, Egypt on 1 September 1942 during the battle of El Alamein and was buried in El Alamein War Cemetery, El Alamein, Marsa Matruh, Egypt.

His grave bears the inscription 'A Keen, Willing Soldier Who Gave His Life For Us'.

Private Victor Buzza is commemorated on the Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour and the Bundaberg Civic Centre Memorial Portico.

Information about Private Buzza's life and service is from the National Archives of Australia, Australian War Memorial, Commonwealth War Graves Commission and Find a Grave.

Bundaberg Regional Council's [Streets of Remembrance](#) program recognises the service of veterans with a connection to the Bundaberg Region by adding the badge of the military force in which they served to the street sign of streets named in their honour.

WHAT ABOUT THE FOOD AND WATER? Story by Glenda Garde (I hope this doesn't put you off your tucker!)

Harold Graham NX12375 2/13th

"The food was cooked back at the company headquarters, or the company cookhouse, which was as near to the lines as possible but outside of the enemy's vision. And when things quietened down at night-time, the little service truck on which it was carried would come up somewhere behind the lines into as safe a position as possible. And the food was in those metal dixies, big pots like that, and there would be a ration party required to carry them from the truck up to the chaps on the front line and distribute them, section by section, and they were broken down individually to the requirements of soldiers.

And then later, they were taken back to the truck and the noise of the truck was usually a signal to the enemy forces to drop a few over, but it was a sort of gentlemen's agreement around the time, because if they dropped some on us, we'd certainly drop some back on them too! So, things usually went fairly quietly during the expected mealtime. But when the mealtime was over, it would usually start up again.

Water was always a problem because we only saw rain once in Tobruk and that was right near the end of the siege. All the water for what was about 35,000 men at its peak, was drawn from wells which were just inside the sea line, and they were filled by seepage by the sea, that's all. And the water pumps pumped it into the tankers and the tankers eventually took it out and distributed it around the company levels, and most of the time, we were confined to one water of bottle of water per day. And on a special occasion, when we were in the blue line, they might be able to drop us a drum of seawater and that would be the time you could have a wash all over with a drum of seawater, although it was salty. But water was always one of the main problems in Tobruk."

Charles Cutler NX14800 2/17th Infantry Btn.

"Water was a major problem for all of us. And it's, I suppose, relevant to note that if it'd been a desperate war, a really desperate war, one side or the other could have poisoned the wells, and that would've been the end of the session, not only for the two competing armies, but for the Arab population too. Because everybody relied on that bit of water so, yeah, it was terribly important. From the individual point of view, from the time we went into the desert until we left, in the main, we were dependent on about, well, a water bottle.

An army water bottle'd be about a litre of water per day, that was it. The routine used to be, to get a bully beef tin, used bully beef tin, which is only a little tin about, you know, three inches square, and half fill that with water. And in that you would first of all clean your teeth, if you happened to have a toothbrush, my mate and I shared a toothbrush, so you cleaned your teeth first. And then you had a shave because we carried shaving brushes to have a shave, still dipping in this little tin of water. And then after that, you used whatever was left over in that little bully beef tin to wash ever parts of your body



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

009493/30

Food supplies are taken up to front-line troops regularly during their ten days' service in the front line. Meals are taken in cramped conditions, but they are always enjoyed. August 1941



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

020613

Everything including water was rationed in Tobruk. VX41582 Corporal Vernon Jack washes a pair of socks in a small biscuit tin.

you thought most important. But that was the water supply. Apart from that of course, we used water out of our water bottle for making the odd cup of tea, although tea quite often was brought up in big dixie's from back line. And that was about it but, you know, water was terribly, terribly scarce.

I had an experience in, when we first went into Tobruk we each had, my ten men and myself, each had our water bottle of about a litre of water each, and that was it. We had no idea where the next water was coming from, we didn't know whether there was any well in Tobruk or whether, up further where we were going. Had no idea. But we had that water bottle, and in addition to that, for the whole section, I had two, two gallon cans, in other words - four gallon cans of water - to carry as the section reserve.

Bully beef, biscuits, some captured Italian dried onion sort of thing, mixed together and made into a stew with a little bit of water. That was a front infantry man, that was his menu. The only thing we didn't seem to lack was tea..... But no, there were the four basic things - bully beef, biscuits a bit of captured onion and a round, a little round tin, about two inches round of meat, which we all thought was, it was Italian, and we all reckoned it was horse meat, which it probably was. But that was very rare.

Sometimes there was a food dump in Tobruk, and where the food, where the good food that went into that went, we never knew. But on occasions we would be posted into reserve, where we were still under fire all the time of course, but on occasions we poor down-beaten infantrymen used to raid the food dump. Highly, highly organised. And we always had the joke in Tobruk that if you raided the food dump, and I had two or three of my mates that used to do that regularly, you might get a tin of pineapple or maybe a tin of preserved potatoes or something like that, but nothing very glamorous, but it was something different."

Bill Tolliday VX25453 2/32 Infantry Btn.

"Getting back to some of these sandstorms we had there, they would bring you around a meal once a day, and it would be in the covered dixies, but in a sandstorm there, you could barely see 10 feet ahead of you, so you would have to find your way over to where they were serving out the meal, and get your dixie with your stew in one half, and your cup of tea in the other half.

Well, the wisest thing really was to eat it there, but many of us tried to struggle back to where we were camped, where our dugout was, and by the time we got back there, of course, it was full of sand. The tea wasn't so bad in one respect because the water there was distilled seawater. Depending on whether they had time to put it through the still, once, twice or three times, was how it tasted, and they brought it up to the company in 2-gallon petrol cans. Now to protect the petrol cans from the rust and seawater, they used to put paraffin wax in them. When that paraffin wax would get a bit soft it would come out into the tea. Of course you wouldn't see that paraffin wax in the tea, but once it got hard, it would float to the surface, so by the time you got back, the paraffin wax had come up to the top and it would protect the tea from a certain amount of the sand."



Men of the 9th Division Cooking Corps carrying provisions to troops in a forward area. The cookhouse was on the top of the rise.



Two members of the 2/23rd Infantry Battalion eating a hasty lunch in a small rock cave in a forward area of Tobruk.

NADIA TRUONG - OUR 2025 RATS OF TOBRUK NEUROSCIENCE FELLOW



Hello. My name is Nadia, and this year I have the honour of receiving the Rats of Tobruk Paediatric Epilepsy Fellowship.

This is my second year of paediatric neurology training, and even within the last few weeks of epilepsy fellowship I have learnt so much.

I received medical education at Monash University, prior to working and training in paediatrics across Victoria, from Monash, the Northern, Geelong and also RCH.

I began training in neonatology several years ago, however remembered the time spent with the RCH neurology department as their registrar very fondly, and so last year I was lucky enough to be offered a General Neurology fellowship to return to RCH.

I have spent some time as the General Neurology Fellow, and also as the Neuromuscular Fellow, and the opportunity this year to train in the epilepsy fellowship will enable me to be well equipped in becoming a well-rounded paediatric neurologist.

I am interested in neurocritical care, and over the past few weeks have also found a newfound interest in focal epilepsies and epilepsy surgery. I hope to return to RCH in future years, both for training and to provide neurological care for children across Victoria and Australia.

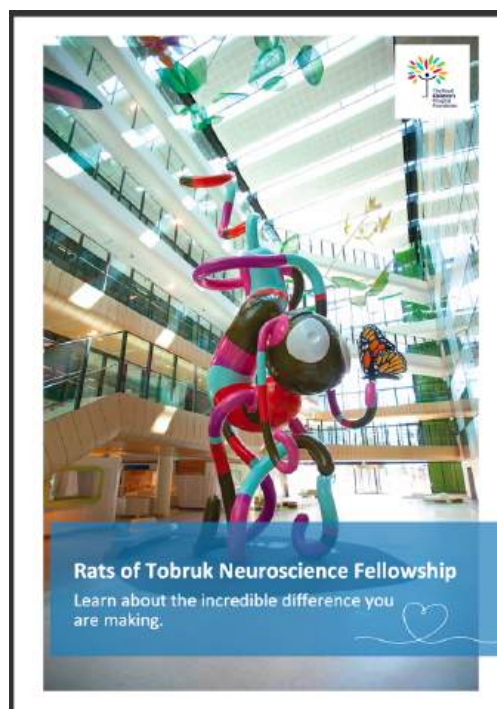
Thank you to all the members, families and friends of Rats of Tobruk Association, for providing me with this opportunity to immerse in epilepsy training, partake in diagnosis and management of complex epilepsies, both medically and surgically.

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 working with researchers across the world to change that.

This fellowship was established by the Rats themselves to be their legacy and has to date provided opportunities for fifteen 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.

The 2024 Annual Report for the fellowship fund is now available on our website and can be found using [this link](#). It includes updates on the careers two of our previous fellows as well as the financial information.



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 18 for postage costs and other details.



LADIES SUMMER POPPY SCARF
Light Blue, Dark Blue, White,
Grey, Black
\$15



SIEGE OF TOBRUK BAR MAT
\$40



ROTA RUGBY TOP
Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL
XXXL, XXXXL, XXXXXL
\$60



ROTA POLO SHIRT
Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL
XXXL, XXXXL, XXXXXL
\$45



ROTA 'BASEBALL' CAP
One size fits all
\$28



'HEROES OF TOBRUK'
STUBBIE HOLDER
\$10



'HEROES OF TOBRUK'
BALLPOINT PEN
\$5



ROTA BADGE CAR
WINDOW STICKER
7cm x 8.5cm approx
(Sticks to inside of window)
\$10



RATS OF TOBRUK 1941
LAPEL BADGE
\$15



'HEROES OF TOBRUK' MUG
\$15



80TH ANNIVERSARY SIEGE
MEDAL
\$50



RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION INC

MERCHANDISE ORDER FORM

(PRICES VALID MAY 2025 – AUG 2025)

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		
80 th Anniversary Medal	\$50				\$11		Postage for up to 2 medals to same address.
ROTA Rugby Top	\$60				\$15		
ROTA Polo Shirt (navy blue with red stripes)	\$45				\$11		
ROTA “baseball” style cap	\$28				\$11		
ROTA Bar Mat	\$40				\$15		
Heroes of Tobruk stubbie holder	\$10				\$11		Postage for up to 2 units to the same address
Badge Car Window Sticker (Sticks to inside of window)	\$10				Inc postage		20% discount for more than one sticker.
Heroes Of Tobruk Mug	\$15				\$11		
Heroes of Tobruk pen	\$5				\$3		Postage for up to 3 pens to the same address
			Colour				
Ladies Poppy Scarf (light weight)	\$15				\$11		Postage for up to 4 scarves to same address
\$15 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



RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION INC - APPLICATION FOR AFFILIATE MEMBERSHIP



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

Contact: Email ratsoftobruk41@gmail.com Phone No: 0432 232 502

Name: _____
Title _____ Given Name (s) _____ Surname _____

Address: _____
Suburb / State _____ Post Code _____

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

Are you over 18 years of age: **YES or NO**

To be eligible for membership the applicant must be over 18 years

Are you a descendant / relative of a Rat of Tobruk: **YES or NO** If yes please print his details below:

Given Name (s) _____ Surname _____ Service ID _____ Unit _____

My relationship to the veteran is: _____

Have you ever served in the Australian Armed Forces? **YES or NO** If yes please print details below: _____

Payment Details:

Payment of **\$30 Annual Subscription** must accompany the application. (There is no joining fee.)

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 application. A suggested reference is the words 'New Member' followed by your 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 application form is necessary for the association to determine your eligibility for membership, 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.

By joining 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

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Membership Approval: _____

Delegate of the Committee of Management

March 2025

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.

DESIGNING REMEMBRANCE



This nostalgic exhibition delves into the forgotten designs for Victoria's war memorial, commemorating the Shrine's 90th anniversary. Explore the entries of the 1921 War Memorial design competition, each a testament to the social and political tapestry of that time. From grand monuments to humble sanctuaries, you'll discover the different visions that were proposed.

TASTE OF COMBAT



This exhibition honours the vital work of the Catering Corps and unveils the fascinating science and innovation behind military meals. Explore what and how troops have eaten – from the Boer War to Afghanistan. There are personal stories from cooks on submarines to soldiers with field rations, showcasing the skills and adaptability of Defence chefs, whether cooking in combat zones or delivering fine dining for diplomats.

CAMOUFLAGE



See how nature has inspired military disguise—from animal patterns to clever tricks of deception. Explore real camouflage uniforms and follow the evolution of camouflage from the First World War to today and explore its role in Australian military history.