



# 80<sup>TH</sup>

ANNIVERSARY

ESTABLISHMENT OF  
THE RATS OF TOBRUK  
ASSOCIATION  
VICTORIAN BRANCH

# Tobruk House NEWS

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION



THE RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION  
NEUROSCIENCE FELLOWSHIP FUND



VOLUME 154 OCTOBER 2025

# RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION INC.

ABN 23 136 193 517

44 VICTORIA AVENUE, ALBERT PARK, VIC 3206

[www.ratsoftobrukassociation.org.au](http://www.ratsoftobrukassociation.org.au)

PHONE No 0432 232 502



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

Month / Date	Event Description
October 5	ROTA 80 <sup>th</sup> birthday celebration at Tobruk House (Details page 3)
November 21	General Meeting 10.30am
November 30	Christmas Lunch at Tobruk House 12pm (See page 24)
February 22 2026	Annual General Meeting 10.30am
March 15	Open Day 10am – 3pm
April 12	Tobruk Sunday (Details to follow)
April 25	Anzac Day (Details to follow)
May 24	General Meeting/Open Day 10.30am

**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: DECEMBER 2025

DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 1

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will not be published.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

## DISCLAIMER

The views expressed by contributors are  
not necessarily those of the  
Rats of Tobruk Association Inc.

The material used in this publication is  
checked for accuracy, but no liability can  
be assumed for any losses due to the use  
of any material published herein.

## COPYRIGHT NOTICE

All articles and photographs used in this  
publication are copyright unless otherwise  
stated. They should not be sold or used in  
any other publication without the express  
written permission from the Committee of  
this Association.

CONTACT US: [ratsoftobruk41@gmail.com](mailto: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 – October 2025

Dear Members and Friends,

It is my great pleasure and honour to once again report to our marvellous membership on the recent events and activities of your association.



We recently conducted a magnificent commemorative service at the Shrine of Remembrance marking the passing of the last of the Australian Rats of Tobruk. The service was held in the forecourt and despite being mid-winter, we were blessed with glorious weather, bright sunshine, not a cloud in the sky. It was, without question, a wonderful day an impeccably conducted ceremony where all participants were wholly committed to honouring the memory and service of the Rats of Tobruk and their families. You can read the story on pages 11 & 12 of this issue.

Last week, the Royal Children's Hospital extended to the association, its friends, and relatives a guided tour of their groundbreaking work in combating childhood epilepsy. As always, their hospitality was exemplary. You will find the story on page 15

This year marks the 80th anniversary of our association. We are proud to present a new look for the front cover of the Tobruk House News, in recognition of this special milestone. To celebrate, the hall will be open on October 5<sup>th</sup> for an afternoon tea for all families, friends, and relatives of the Rats of Tobruk. We warmly invite you to join us on this special occasion, to share memories, rekindle friendships, and honour our great veterans. We look forward to welcoming you to Tobruk House. To assist with catering, please RSVP as described below.

Warm regards,

Paul Dipnall  
Vice President



**YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO OUR BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION  
AT TOBRUK HOUSE ON SUNDAY OCTOBER 5 (1.30 for 2pm)**

There will be a special presentation to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Victorian branch of the Rats of Tobruk Association, which will be followed by afternoon tea.

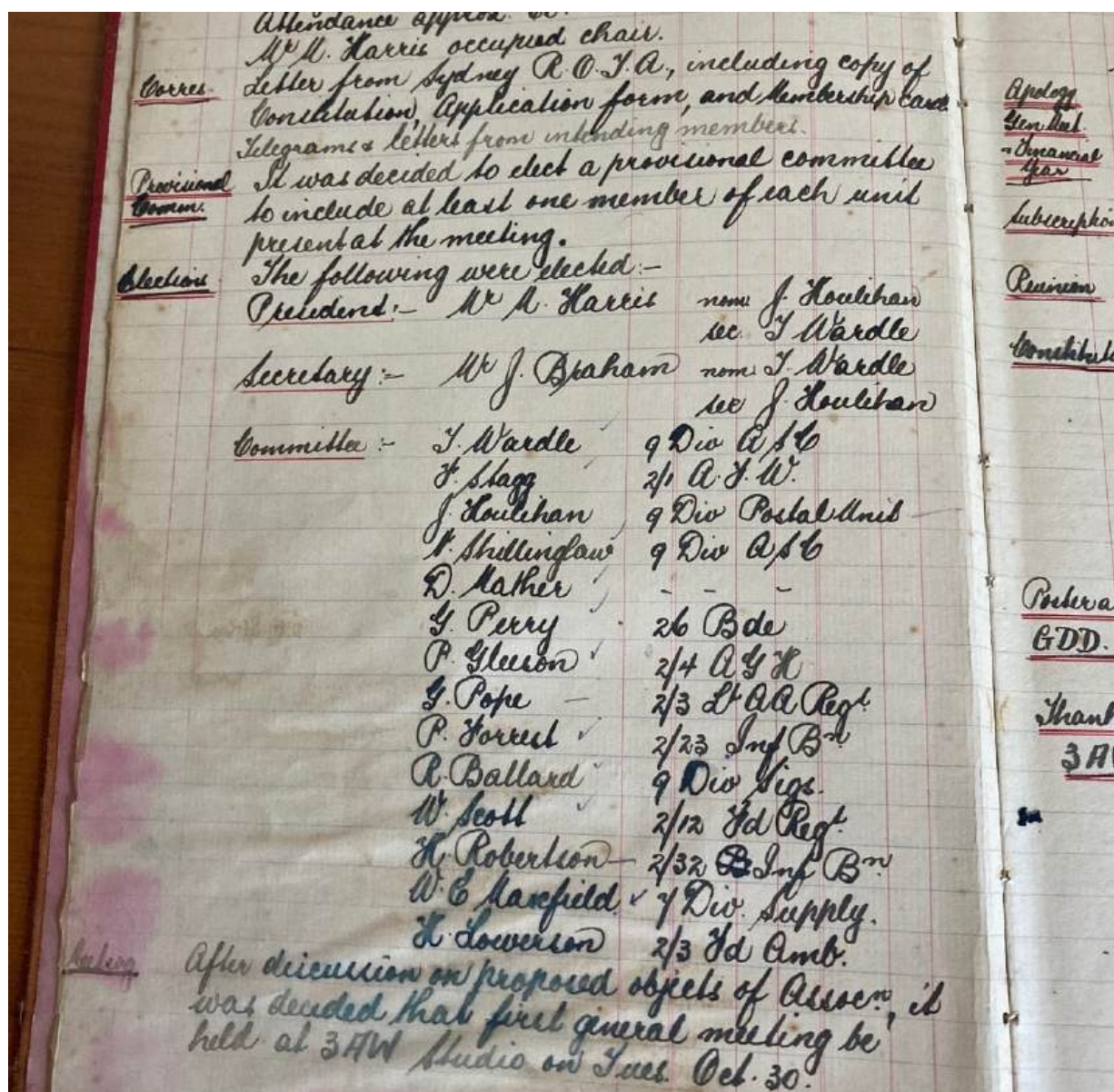
RSVP by email to [ratsoftobruk41@gmail.com](mailto:ratsoftobruk41@gmail.com) or via TryBooking:  
<https://www.trybooking.com/DFLKQ>

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

In this issue our secretary, Lachlan Gaylard, will begin a series which will look at a significant related aspect from each decade since the formation of the association. As we mark the 80th birthday of our association, it is fitting to look back and ask: where did it all begin?

The very first Rats of Tobruk Association was formed in 1944 in New South Wales. In Victoria, the Rats looked to establish their own branch almost immediately after the war's end. A notice appeared in The Herald on 28 September 1945, calling for interested members to gather at ANZAC House in Collins Street at 8 p.m. on 2 October. Eighty years ago, on October 3, the Victorian branch of the newly formed Rats of Tobruk Association was established.

On that night, more than fifty Rats attended. A provisional committee was formed, dates for general meetings were set, and prospective members were asked to make contact with the inaugural secretary, Jack Braham.



We are very fortunate as an association to retain all our original minute books, including the volume that records our formation. The first page lists the names of those 16 provisional committee members.

This first committee worked diligently, laying the foundations of the association we cherish today. One can only wonder whether these men could have imagined that their efforts would endure for eighty years.

Long may we continue, and may their service and dedication live evermore.



## 'MORE THAN FRIENDSHIP..' Story by Glenda Garde

Whenever we speak of the military, we often hear the word 'mateship' bandied around. *'Much of the rest of the world thinks of this practice as friendship, pure and simple. Yet in Australia, mateship evokes more than mere friendship. Most Australian citizens ... associate mateship with wartime service - in particular, the Anzac tradition forged on the shores of faraway Gallipoli during April 1915.'*

Anyone present during the Anzac Days of the past, when Tobruk House was abuzz with the sound of siege veterans enjoying themselves, would have no doubt witnessed and felt this 'mateship' firsthand. Lately, having read quite a few of the interviews with veterans from the Australians at War Archives for our 'In Their Own Words' series in this newsletter, 'mates' were also frequently mentioned.

So back in August, I felt privileged to be invited to Springvale Cemetery for a simple, but very special, occasion; special for two families anyway. Tom Pritchard VX23441, our last Australian Rat of Tobruk, passed away just over 12 months ago and he had advised his family that when the time came he wanted no fuss, but he did want his name added to the many memorial plaques on the Commonwealth War Graves walls in the Garden of Remembrance at Springvale Cemetery.

My father Neil Barrie VX20578 had served with Tom in the 2/5<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance, but having been in different companies had little to do with each other and they had really only rekindled a friendship when they started attending ROTA meetings (eventually joining the committee together) and also attending 2/5<sup>th</sup> reunions. Through ROTA, they quickly became best mates, phoning each other on an almost daily basis and even sharing a betting account! Neil passed away in 2012, but had never had a plaque erected for him at the cemetery, and so this seemed the perfect time to rectify that omission. Being a fairly simple process, the CWG were extremely helpful in ensuring that the plaques would be placed together; the 2 mates would be together again.



The plaques were placed earlier this year, but there was just one more thing remaining to be done, as Tom's son David told me. A number of years ago, ROTA band member Sharon Urquart had given Tom a small vial of sand which had been taken from the figtree area in Tobruk when the band visited Tobruk back in 2009.

It was quite obvious where the sand should go, and I was happy to be present when David and Tom's daughter Jill emptied the vial at the base of the wall.



And in the words of 2/5<sup>th</sup> bugler Bluey Davis, when asked what was the most important thing he learnt from the war, "Mateship. It's a thing that lasts forever."



## JULY'S SPECIAL SUNDAY GENERAL MEETING REPORT

Thank you to all who braved a very wild and wintry day to attend our July meeting of members at Tobruk House. We decided to hold this meeting on a Sunday rather than the usual Friday to enable more people to attend and by all there it was deemed a great success.



*Gayle Sherwell presented the story of her trip to Tobruk*

Secretary Lachlan Gaylard brought us up to date with a number of important ROTA issues, including plans for upcoming events. The meeting highlight was committee member Gayle Sherwell's talk about her visit to Tobruk some years ago. Gayle shared interesting recollections and wonderful photographs from her visit in 2008 and is among the rare few who have seen the Tobruk battlefields firsthand. Parts of the battlefield are still not accessible due to the existence of live mines and ammunition. Gayle's story appears on page 9 of this issue.

We also welcomed a photographer from The Australian newspaper, who was there to photograph four of our members whose fathers were killed in WW2; Bill Saggars, son of VX15787 Alan Saggars, Alastair Davison, son of VX31161 John Leonard Davison, Bob Hare, son of SX8897 Captain Arthur Ivan Hare and Barry Walker, son of Captain John Earnest Walker VX3604. The photograph and story were to form part of an article which appeared on the front page of the August 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of The Australian newspaper. It is reproduced on the following pages.

After the meeting, everyone was invited to stay on for lunch and a chat. If you missed this meeting, of course, there's always next time! We would love to see you.



*From left to right: Barry Walker, Bob Hare, Alistair Davison and Bill Saggars*

## SONS OF RATS CARRY TORCH OF TOBRUK LEGACY

Story from *The Australian* 2/8/2025 by Jamie Walker

It had to happen, of course. When Australia's last Rat of Tobruk died last year, the(se) sons of the soldiers who defended the nation in its darkest hour asked themselves what now? Sadly, they had grown from boys to men and into old age never knowing the dad who didn't come home from WWII.

But they made a point of finding out how their doomed fathers helped defy the ascendant armies of Hitler and Mussolini on a rocky shore in North Africa for 242 epic days in 1941, forging the legend of courage and tenacity that endures to this day. The question was how to keep the memory alive now that the final living link to the Rats had been severed? They agreed to pick up the torch.

So let's meet them, the proud sons of four Australian soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice either at Tobruk, El Alamein or while confronting the rampaging Japanese who would threaten the homeland with invasion.



There's Barry Walker, 84. He was two when his father, Jack, was fatally wounded in New Guinea in November 1943. Like so many others who lived through the siege of Tobruk, there was no respite, just mission near-impossible in the jungles to Australia's near north to halt the Japanese onslaught. Captain Walker, 27, left behind a widow who never remarried. Their baby boy became a lonely only child.

Bob Hare, 87, qualified as a medical doctor and anaesthetist, inspired by the war service of his father, Ivan. Captain Hare, 34, was killed on November 1, 1942, during the battle of El Alamein that smashed Rommel's Afrika Korps, the steely spearhead of the Axis desert army.

An admired schoolteacher from Adelaide, he could have sat it out in the relatively safe adjutant's job at battalion HQ, but instead traded places with future Victorian premier Dick Hamer to lead his company into action.

Alastair Davison, 85, discovered that his father, Len, survived shrapnel wounds at Tobruk before his luck ran out. Acting Sergeant Davison was hit again on September 15, 1941, this time shot in the head, and died a few days later at a military hospital in Egypt, aged 37. He had pretended to be younger to enlist.

Bill Saggars, 88, got to know the last Rat standing, Tom Pritchard, prior to the old boy's death in August last year, aged 102. Pritchard, you see, had served with Mr Saggars dad Allan, in the 2/5<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance. He was present when Lance Corporal Saggars, 31, died after his unarmoured Humber car struck an enemy landmine on May 3, 1941, barely a week after he landed in Tobruk. Years later Pritchard would tell Mr Saggars "I will never forget it."

This year's commemoration of the siege of Tobruk at a wreath laying ceremony at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance on August 24 will be the first conducted in the absence of a living Rat, a poignant reminder of the fade out of the WWII generation. The average age of those hardy few who remain is 99.

Dr Hare said one of the regrets of his life was that he never had the opportunity to know his father. What a man Ivan Hare was. Like his students at St Peter's College in Adelaide, soldiers of the 2/43<sup>rd</sup> Battalion looked up to Captain Hare, a calm and reassuring presence under fire.

In a letter to his wife, Connie, dated July 6 1941 – four months prior to his death – he wrote of his yearning to return to the home they had made with little Bobbie and his sister Joy. "We have seen a lot, and had our share of enemy action and I feel now that I'll be with you again when this war is over, and like you, I'm praying for that day," Captain Hare wrote. "But wars cannot be won without lives and it's possible that I might be called on." He was posthumously awarded the Military Cross for valour.

For all his accomplishments Dr Hare is still in awe of his long-dead father. "He really set an impossible example to follow." He said this week after attending the annual general meeting of the Rats of Tobruk Association at its Melbourne headquarters.

"I had to admit to myself years ago that I would never be anywhere near the person he was. He has been an inspiration to me in so many ways. Mainly, the fact that he was killed at a very young age, only 34, as were so many of these men ... (it) made me realise how fortunate I've been in life.

Mr Davison, a retired university lecturer, said he grew up in regional Victoria reading his dad's letters from Tobruk. A gifted leader, Len had been recommended for a field commission at the time he was killed.

Keeping alive the memory of the Rats would be more challenging now that the last of these great Australians was gone, Mr Davison told The Australian. "We won't have anyone who was there to say first hand what it was really like at Tobruk and all those other battles these men fought in, and that makes a difference." Mr Davison said. "It's a different ballgame, in a sense, when there are no veterans left."

Mr Walker, an electrician who went on to run his own manufacturing business in Melbourne's inner west, said he hoped as a boy that the army had got it wrong and his father, Jack, would one day turn up. "It was such a sad loss because my mum never remarried or had any boyfriends as far as I'm aware. I've heard it said that an only child is a lonely child and I was quite lonely growing up," he remembered.

Not long before his death in 2017, Jack Calder – the last of the Rats in NSW's Riverina district – approached Mr Walker with fellow Tobruk veteran Austin Jeffers, asking him to take charge of the banner they marched with on Anzac Day. "Will you look after this for us?" Calder said quietly. Mr Walker, deeply moved, felt he was being passed the torch the closeknit Rats had carried for the mates who didn't make it back from the war and for those who struggled afterwards in civilian life.

"I'm glad I have it," he said. "This year, when we went back to Tobruk House after the march you really noticed the difference. There was a different vibe to the place because we knew the original Rats were no more."

Dr Hare said "I think it's rather important that the next generation is involved in keeping the story alive, if you like, because it is very important that we as a country have an understanding of what these men did at Tobruk and through the Second World War." He was pleased that his daughter, Melissa, had Ivan's medals and was interested in her grandfather's story.

For his part, Mr Davison said "We must never forget that the war for these men didn't end at Tobruk. Many of those who survived didn't come home for five years. "Quite a few, he added, went on to New Guinea and then to Tarakan, the fortified Island off Borneo assaulted by Australian troops in May 1945, one of the last campaigns of the Pacific War. "Each time they faced an enemy that was worse to deal with," he said. "In New Guinea they had a retreating enemy; in Tarakan they had an entrenched enemy dug into hillsides."

But Mr Saggars, a retired transport planning engineer, wasn't sure he would stay involved in the Rats of Tobruk Association following Pritchard's death, a turning point for him. "I have a son who is quite interested in continuing the relationship," he said "but Tom represented my torch, if that's the right expression, and his passing now means it is history as far as I am concerned. We'll see what happens".



## A VISIT TO THE BATTLEFIELDS OF THE TOBRUK SIEGE Story by Gayle Sherwell

To me, my father, Ken Sherwell, was an intelligent man, a man of integrity, believed in fairness, a quiet family man with a sense of humour, who supported his family.

He was twenty-nine when he enlisted at Caulfield in 1940 and he served with the 2/23. They entered Tobruk between 8-10 April 1941 and were evacuated on 18 October 1941 sailing to Alexandria.

From there they travelled to Palestine and Syria for rest and garrison duties. They were sent to El Alamein, where Dad was wounded in action on 22 July 1942 near Tel el Eisa.

Did I learn this from my father – No he was reticent about his war experiences. Although I knew Dad had fought in the second world war, but I only discovered that my Dad was a Rat when I was about 13 or 14.

It happened this way – one day at school, a friend and I were in library and came across broad sheets describing the Siege of Tobruk. That night in the kitchen before dinner, I told my parents about what I had read and how I was impressed the courage and bravery of the RATs. There was quiet in the kitchen for a moment, then my mother said 'Your father was Rat!'

It remains a strong memory and from that day to this I have had a fascination with Tobruk and for many years wanted to travel there, but travelling to Tobruk was difficult, as it was closed to tourists or difficult to travel there. I took advantage of an opportunity and booked on a tour in 2008.

Prior to leaving I contacted Reg Lawrence, Secretary of ROTA at that time, who invited me to the Hall. During our chat, we found out we were both booked on the same tour!! All members of the tour group had connections with the RATs. The war historian who led the tour was extremely knowledgeable. He organised services at the cemeteries and areas of interest. He also assisted members of the group with information about where their relatives had fought, was injured or died.



*John Kenneth Sherwell 2/23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion*



*The famous 'Keep Going' sign on the road to Tobruk then and now (2008)*

We flew from Tripoli to Benghazi, then we followed the route taken in 1941 to Tobruk.

En route to Tobruk we passed the famous Abbots Lager beer ad (Keep Going), which, although very faded, can still be seen on the wall of what we were advised had been an Italian hospital. We spent two nights in the town of Tobruk and a day and half around the Tobruk battlefield.

Our introduction to the battlefield was very interesting. As I got out of the back seat of the vehicle, near Hill 209, the front seat passenger drew our attention to the partially buried object between the front and rear passenger doors. I am not sure to this day whether the object posed a danger to us, but we were moved away, the vehicles were also moved and the area marked.

Then the battlefield! Very rocky ground covered by a little sand. I remember one of the few times my father talked about his experiences was that when they went on night patrol, they wore socks as the ground was so hard their boots made too much noise.

It was surprising to me that there are so many remnants of the war still in battlefield.



*The anti-tank trenches were still clearly visible.*



*The battlefield was strewn with barbed wire and other war debris.*

The tank trenches are still recognisable, although some have collapsed. We walked freely around Hill 209. We were surprised to find the battle fields still littered with barbed wire, remnants of ammunition, cans, soles from shoes etc.

I think seeing these objects increased what was a very emotional experience. Soldiers had fought in the area where we were walking, used these objects in 1941, eaten the contents of the cans and worn the shoe. The ammunition we handled we presumed was safe!

One of the tour group was named after an uncle who died at Tobruk. The war historian, through his research identified the area where his uncle had died. One of the guides obtained permission to take to him as close to the area where his uncle was killed. No one else was allowed to go – for two reasons – it would have been a private moment, but it was also a dangerous area, one of the no go areas. There were still many no-go areas of the Tobruk battlefield.

As we walked in the trenches we found carved names on the trench. In one trench “Warrnambool” had been carved into the wall. Warrnambool is approximately 90 kms from where I was born.

When I was walking in the trenches I tried to imagine what how I would have felt when the tanks came rolling over. The noise of one tank would have been frightening enough but I found it

would be inconceivable to try to image how horrific the noise would have been with approximately 100 tanks rolling into the battlefield!!!



The fig tree is still there and as you can see from the photo here, it is quite large and looks to be flourishing, certainly on one side. You can still see caves below, but we were not allowed to enter the caves. Near the fig tree, there is a map of Australia made from stones. I was surprised to see it as I do not remember any photos from 1941 showing the map of Australia near the fig tree.

We visited the Australia War Memorial in Tobruk where we held a service, laid a wreath, remembering the brave men who took part in the siege.

After visiting the battle grounds, we visited the Tobruk Commonwealth War cemetery.



Two of the family members who are employed to look after the cemetery were also our guides during our time in Tobruk. They were very friendly and hospitable, inviting us into their home.



*The German memorial is built in the shape of a fort and lists the name of all their soldiers lost here.*



*Similarly the Italian memorial lists the name of all their soldiers who never left Tobruk.*

We then visited the German War memorial which has a wall which has the names of their soldiers. We also visited the Italian War memorial which also has a wall listing the names of their soldiers.

The area towards Tobruk town and the harbour looks quite desolate. Tobruk in 1941 had an estimated population of 5000, but had a population estimated to be about 120,000 in 2011. In 2008 it was a busy port city. The city we visited seemed to be thriving and the port appeared to be still a major trading port.



*Tobruk in 2008 was a thriving modern port town of over 100,000 people.*

It is interesting, but I did not feel as comfortable in Tobruk as I have on the other cities of Libya. Libyan people are very friendly and are the only people I have met who say "Welcome to my country", when we meet.

If you have never been to a battlefield, it may surprise you as to how emotionally these visits are. The emotions are very mixed and often bring tears.

It was extremely hard to imagine and almost unbelievable that anyone could spend 242 days in battle fields of Tobruk.

I am sorry that I did not visit while my parents were alive. However, having visited Tobruk, my respect and admiration for my father and the Rats increased immensely. They were very, very brave men and I am proud to be the daughter of a Rat

## THE RATS OF TOBRUK MEMORIAL SHRINE SERVICE



On August 24, the sun shone down on the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance as the special Commemoration of Relief in Tobruk service was held on the WW2 forecourt. Two marquees provided seating and sun protection for the large group of attendees.

The service began with a welcome by Lieutenant Colonel David Blackwell OAM RFD (Retd) on behalf of the Shrine Trustees, followed by a procession of banners, led by the Rats of Tobruk Memorial Pipes and Drums.

Vice President of the Rats of Tobruk Association, Paul Dipnall added his welcome and introduced Senator Raff Ciccone who read a message from The Hon. Anthony Albanese, Prime Minister of Australia.

Major General Jason Blain DSC AM CSC, representing Lieutenant General Simon Stuart AO DSC Chief of Army, spoke about the exceptional performance of the Australian troops, whose tenacity was even respected by the enemy. Of particular note in his address was his reflection on the



*Stuart Tolliday, Chair of the Rats of Tobruk Association and Ryan Brown, CEO of the Royal Children's Hospital Foundation laid the first of more than 20 wreaths in front of the Eternal Flame.*



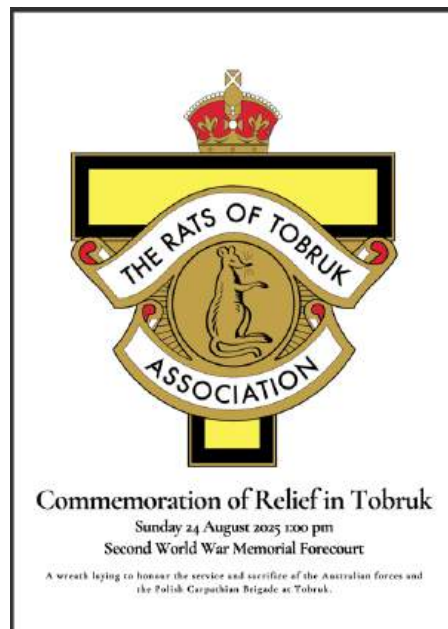
humanity that can emerge even in war, recalling in a story how the wounds of an enemy soldier were treated by a compassionate Australian medic.


Wreaths were laid on behalf of the Rats of Tobruk Association, The Royal Children's Hospital Foundation (the chosen legacy of the Rats themselves), Senator Raff Ciccone representing the Prime Minister, Major General Jason Blain representing the Chief of Army, Captain Ben Favelle representing the Chief of Navy, Group Captain David Hood representing the Chief of Air Force. Wreaths were also laid for the consulate of New Zealand and Poland, RSL Victoria, Legacy Victoria, Soldier On and various units including - 2/4th AGH, 2/5th Field Ambulance, 2/24th Battalion, 2/12th Field Regiment, 2/48th Battalion & 2/28th Battalion.





Mark Gimzewski accompanied by Andrew Balcerzak lowers the flag of the Polish Ex-Servicemen's Association in front of the Eternal Flame.



  
 PRIME MINISTER

**MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER**

**SPECIAL SERVICE TO RECOGNISE THE RATS OF TOBRUK**

I send my warmest wishes to everyone gathered at the Shrine of Remembrance to honour the extraordinary Rats of Tobruk.

The Siege of Tobruk will always stand as one of the most remarkable events in our nation's military history, a campaign that showed the world the true strength of the Australian character.

For eight long months, the siege tested the tenacity of the largely Australian garrison that stood against the Axis forces.

They faced tank attacks, artillery barrages and aerial bombings with resilience and resourcefulness, unyielding courage and unerring humour. When the enemy compared them to rats, they famously adopted that attempted insult as a badge of honour.

Even in what must have been the most desperate darkness, theirs was a light that never went out. As they withstood the besieging forces, their valour gave hope to the world at a time when hope was so sorely needed.

In the decades after the war, the Rats held to their special bond, friendships forged under fascist fire. When called to reflect on their heroism, they spoke with the modesty that was such a hallmark of their generation.


Now, with the passing of the last Australian Rat of Tobruk last year, each of us share a solemn duty to carry the torch forward and ensure the light of remembrance shines upon future generations.

Today, as we pay tribute to Australian bravery and sacrifice, we also honour the British, Indian and other Allied troops who fought alongside them – including the Polish Carpathian Brigade, which began relieving some of the Australian forces 84 years ago this month.

We honour the memory of all those who lost their lives in humanity's struggle against tyranny.

And we express our profound gratitude to those who carry forward their legacy, in the service of our nation.

*Lest we forget.*

  
 The Hon Anthony Albanese MP  
 Prime Minister of Australia  
 August 2025

It was wonderful to see so many descendants of the Rats in attendance, many of whom laid wreaths or carried a banner. The Ode was spoken by Bob Hare, son of SX8897 Captain Arthur Ivan Hare, which was followed by the Australian and Polish National Anthems. The Rats of Tobruk Memorial Pipes and Drums performed a medley of tunes after which committee member Gayle Sherwell, daughter of Ken Sherwell 2/23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, read the poem 'This Place They Call Tobruk'.

Our vice president Paul Dipnall gave the closing address.



## AFTERNOON TEA AT THE ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

On September 3 a group of 28 ROTA members and friends attended the Royal Children's Hospital for the annual presentation of the work of the Neurology department, and more specifically the Fellows of the Rats of Tobruk Royal Children's Hospital Fellowship. This year we were privileged to receive a guided tour of the RCH archives.



Ryan Brown, CEO of the RCH Foundation welcomed everyone and referred to the very moving experience of attending the special service at the Shrine the week before. He introduced Associate Professor Mark Mackay who echoed his feelings about the Shrine service and told us about some of the history of the Fellowship. 2025 Fellow Dr Nadia Truong told us about the work she had been doing, including on the groundbreaking gene substitution technology, where the RCH is leading the world.

There were numerous questions about the new gene technology and Mark promised us it would be the lead topic for our next get together at the hospital next year.



As in the past, we were shown some of the applications of technology which is used to assist the scientists and doctors in determining the exact location of the site of the problem in the patient's brain.



This year we visited the Archive room for the first time. Here we saw a wonderful collection of photographs, surgical items, nurses uniforms and numerous other items that charted the history of the RCH from its founding by Dr William John Smith and Dr John Singleton on September 9, 1870 in a six bedroom house, as the Melbourne Free Hospital for Sick Children.

As almost everyone in our group had a personal experience with the hospital, there were many memories stirred by our time spent in this small museum.





## RATS OF TOBRUK NEUROSCIENCE FELLOWSHIP FUND

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. (Almost half of our previous Fellows have continued to work as neurologists at the RCH.)

The 'Rats of Tobruk Association Neuroscience Fellowship Fund' has become a 'virtual' monument to the mighty Rats of Tobruk.

Since the fellowship fund was established by the surviving veterans, an annual Fellowship has been awarded to a young doctor so that he or she can undertake studies associated with paediatric neuroscience. The Fellowship has had an inspirational track record of success and achievement. It is an internationally sought after, prestigious fellowship. The growing number of recipients is contributing to an international network of paediatric neuroscience specialist.

Adding a gift in your Will is another way to help ensure the continuation of the Fellowship.

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)**

## YOUR ROTA SUBSCRIPTION IS DUE FOR PAYMENT ON 1<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY 2026

Affiliate members are reminded that this year's subscription is due for payment on 1st January. The subscription remains at \$30 for 2026.

As in the previous year, \$5 from each subscription will be contributed to our Royal Children's Hospital Rats of Tobruk Neurology Fellowship fund.

**Please note that individual payment requests are not normally sent to members.** The cooperation of members by responding to this notice and paying their subscription as soon as possible would be greatly appreciated.

For payment information please refer to the **2026 Annual Subscription Payment Form** on page 25.

If you pay by over-the-counter bank deposit, please ensure you send details to ratsoftobruk41@gmail.com or post to The Secretary, ROTA, 44 Victoria Ave, Albert Park, 3206.

If you are paying by EFT, ensure you include a unique reference such as your surname and membership number. This is important for correct matching of payments, as bank deposits do not have adequate referencing. Payment can also be made using a credit or debit card.

*Please note that Tobruk Veterans widows are exempt from paying the annual subscription. Life and Honorary members are also exempt.*

## A SPECIAL VISITOR

As you are no doubt aware, people often visit Tobruk House and we always do our best to accommodate requests for such visits, especially if interested people are travelling to Melbourne from regional Victoria or interstate.



A few months ago we were delighted to be contacted by ROTA member Colin Shugg who asked if he could bring along a friend to Tobruk House. His friend was Ian Edmondson and, if the surname sounds familiar, you won't be surprised to learn that Ian is the great-nephew of Jack Edmondson, the first Australian Victoria Cross recipient of the second AIF.

We spent the afternoon with Ian and Colin perusing the memorabilia and displays, particularly the panel in our exhibition which is devoted to his great uncle, and Ian was able to tell us a number of family stories. He was very knowledgeable and pleased that Jack's story has not been forgotten.

Jack Edmondson was born in Wagga Wagga in 1914, New South Wales, later moving to Liverpool where he worked on his parents' farm. After service in the militia, he enlisted in the AIF and was promoted to corporal soon afterwards. He embarked for the Middle East with 2/17th battalion in October 1940 and trained in Palestine.

On April 13, 1941, German infantry had breached the defences at Tobruk, establishing machine-guns, mortars, and field-guns. A seven-man section, including Edmondson, charged the position. Although wounded in the neck and stomach, Edmondson continued to advance under heavy fire, saving the life of his platoon commander, but succumbing to wounds soon after the German attack was defeated.

His citation noted that Edmondson's actions during the operation 'were outstanding for resolution, leadership and conspicuous bravery'.

*'War Office, 1st July, 1941. The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the posthumous award of the VICTORIA CROSS to:—  
No. 15705 Corporal John Hurst Edmondson,  
Australian Military Forces.'*

Corporal John Edmondson is buried in the Tobruk war cemetery. His VC was presented to his mother by the Governor General on 27 September 1941. In 1969, she presented her son's medals and some of his personal belongings to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, where they are still on display today.



If you are yet to visit Tobruk House, why not check out our events on page 2. There are many opportunities to visit and we'd love to show you around! If you can't make one of those dates just give us a call and we'll try to accommodate you with a personal visit.



## WHAT ABOUT THE ENGINEERS? Story by Glenda Garde

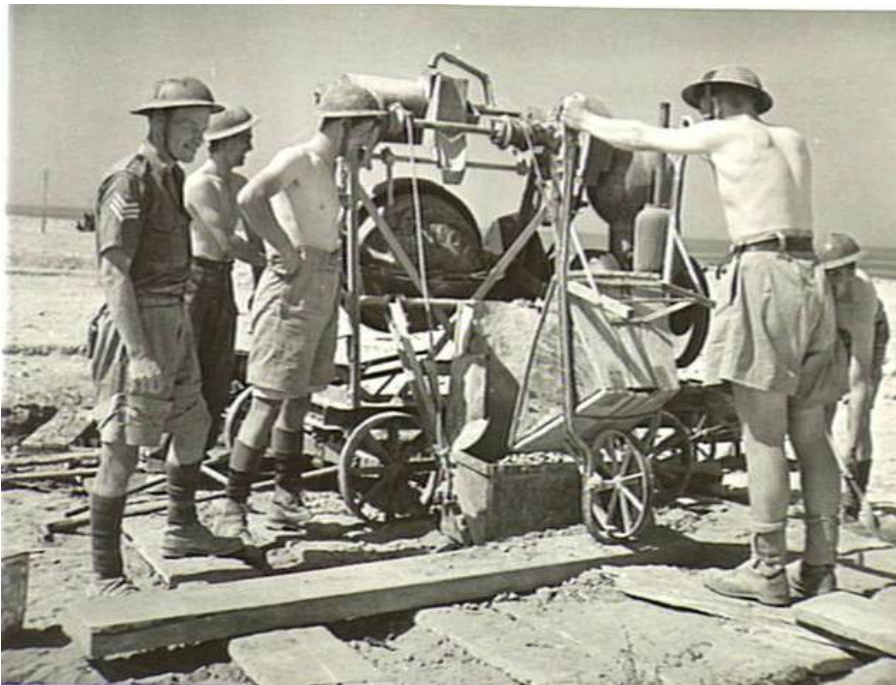
"No one could teach ya, but you seemed to know exactly what you was doin'."

To continue our series in which we hear from the Tobruk men themselves, in this issue we learn about the dangerous work undertaken by the \*sappers.

### **Bill Rudd VX39694 2/7<sup>th</sup> Field Company**

"Basically, the role of the engineer was to repair damage or to create damage. By that I mean you could either build a bridge or put explosives under a bridge and destroy it. To repair vehicles and things like that, to keep the mobility up. You had workshop groups; specialist workshop groups attached to engineers.

You had to either clear minefields or create minefields. You were responsible, often, for water supplies. Keeping pumps going to fill up the water tankers that came in to be filled from a water point, to be taken out to the infantry on the front line. You were a more technical troop, and that's why most engineering troops had a skilled background. Plumbers, bridge builders, mining people, for example, who were pretty clued up with explosives.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

040624

*Sappers of the Royal Australian Engineers preparing defence positions. The picture shows a captured Italian concrete mixer being used in the preparation of a stronghold.*

### **James Tattersall NX26971 2\4 Field Coy Engineers**

"The first time I handled explosives was in Tobruk and we certainly learned how to use 'em pretty quick. ...You see we had more infantry training than engineer training. Everyone, more or less, had to do the same basic work of whatever come up. Like we were layin' minefields and lookin' after the water supply.

We done a fair bit a minelaying in the early part but, afterwards, the biggest part was identifying the minefields with the sandstorms. Like the only

way you had to identify a minefield was by puttin' stones round it to indicate it was there and, if there was too much sand, it'd cover the stones. You used to build 'em about that high and it's quite like they say, a desert, but there's quite a few rocks layin' around you know in the desert, but it was really a thing that you had to learn yourself. No one could teach ya, but you seemed to know exactly what you was doin'. That's the main thing.

Well water mostly came from a distilling plant there, but it wouldn't distil enough water for ya needs and the water come from artesian water and, after ya use it for a certain while, it started to go a bit brackish, but it was very scarce.... You filled your water bottle up once in the mornin'. There was a water point on out in the El Addan Road and there was one down in one of the waddies, it was the big pumpin' station and fortunately they never were able to hit the pumping station with a bomb.

\*If, like myself, you have always wondered where the term 'sapper' comes from in relation to engineers, well here's why.....

*A sapper, in the sense first used by the French military, was one who dug trenches to allow besieging forces to advance towards the enemy defensive works and forts over ground that is under the defenders' musket or artillery fire. It comes from the French word sapeur. This digging was referred to as sapping the enemy fortifications.*

Well, practice come by usin' the mines, like locatin' the mines. The first mine detector we used, it was not really adequate to say, like the modern mine detector, but it sufficed... You'd get a ringing in the ear, like kind of a buzz and you locate what is underneath. It comes on metal and, once you detect that, you just take the earth gradually away from it to see what it is, and, once you locate and see what it is, the thing is very simple then. You know whether or not it's got a booby trap on it, and you'd make sure that part of it is deloused before you try to move it. Well, some of them were triggered in different ways. Some of them, you'd trip 'em. Some of them, you'd pull 'em.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

020638

*An Italian tank mine being made useless by SX869 Sapper (later Corporal) Gordon Lindsay Hantken of the 2/3 Field Company, Royal Australian Engineers, 9th Division. Known as MK B II, it was commonly used to trap tanks and motor transport vehicles.*

..Well, you nearly is takin' a risk every time you went looking for mines, but one thing it did teach ya was to be very careful. You couldn't take any risk. Not only for your own sake, but for whoever was with ya.

Most of the mines had been laid by Italians, but when the Germans started to take over, they used the Teller mine and the S mines, but I think you'd find more Italian mines originally laid round Tobruk and they weren't a very big problem. Like you just lifted a flap over, had a look what was inside, and you knew straight away where the detonator was. You just removed it. Once a detonator's removed, the mine's useless.

....Most of the Italian mines we picked up. We brought 'em back to our dump where we had a dump and we more or less renovated our own mines with 'em.

We'd also guide the infantry patrols through a minefield if we were goin' through a minefield. To guide 'em, you used to lay white tape down and they had to keep inside the white tape because you'd pick the minefield, pick the mines up in between that white tape. After they got through, well you'd wait until they come back. They'd just have a reconnaissance patrol, and, like, I don't think they was lookin' for trouble half the time. You had to lift the mines up. There was no actual path through it. It was our own minefield. I think the infantry had a pretty good opinion of us."



## James Holbrook VX41093 2/13th Field Company

"Early in the piece we were out there laying mines and may have read in one of those books that it was the minefield that stopped the Germans getting in there. Any rate, we were all, like the 13th Field Company, we were out there laying these mines there and these Stukas came over and I had a navy-blue sweater on. Not a khaki one like they were issued with over there. This was a navy blue one that I had issued in Melbourne here, and of course with the navy blue sweater it stood out like a neon sign, and I can still hear this Stuka coming down and I could see the little spurts of dirt coming up just in front of my nose. I didn't think a man could dig into rock, but by hell I did that day! Any rate, he finished up, Rommel, he finished up taking a water tower, but, when he pushed on, he ran into all these mines and that's what crippled him. He didn't get into Tobruk.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

040623

*Sappers of the Royal Australian Engineers preparing defence positions. Here they are excavating in rock by means of a jack hammer and compressor.*

Mines were the greatest bugbear because the German mines, they were very clever and then you had to find out how they worked, and then of course being an ordinary sapper we couldn't find out ourselves. They had to be - someone had to bring one in for them to study it. Once we got over that we were all right, but we used to, the infantry would go out on patrols, but their main worry, their main thing, was to get prisoners and of course they'd have to take engineers with them in case they struck some of these anti-personnel mines.

... Once the infantry found a minefield, we'd go around on our hands and knees finding these little prongs. There were three prongs sticking up and you'd stand on it and that would activate the mine underground, which in turn would jump up and then explode, and our job was to find these three prongs, follow, and just underneath the three prongs there was a safety pin there that went off, but to activate it, they took the safety pin out and then in the ground and once you stepped on it that was it. The engineer's job was to go down, find the prongs underneath, put a bit of wire through and that would stop it going down then and made it safe.

.... Like, I went out a few times. My brother went out, he got wounded. Others went out, they weren't so lucky. Some of them, quite a few of them got killed, but we used to live with the infantry for a week at a time. I don't know how those poor coots put up with it because we had a week and then we'd go back down to the beach, but they'd have to stay there all the time. We didn't do too bad really."

## A VERY SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY AT TOBRUK HOUSE ON SUNDAY OCT 26

Have you ever been captivated by the stirring sound of the bagpipes or the powerful beat of the drums? Now's your chance to experience it firsthand and become part of a truly unique Australian story! The Rats of Tobruk Memorial Pipes and Drums is holding a special recruiting day at Tobruk House, and we're inviting everyone, young and perhaps not so young, to come along.



This isn't just an opportunity to learn a musical instrument; it's a chance to connect with a living legacy. Our band was formed in 1960 by the Victorian Branch of The Rats of Tobruk Association as a "living memorial" to commemorate the incredible bravery of the Australian soldiers who endured the 242-day Siege of Tobruk during World War II. When you join us, you're helping to keep their spirit and sacrifice alive through the proud traditions of Scottish pipes and drums.

At our recruiting day, you'll see dynamic demonstrations of the Great Highland Bagpipes and drums. You'll even get the chance to try your hand at a practice chanter (for pipers) or a drum pad (for drummers) – no experience necessary! Our friendly and experienced members will be there to answer all your questions and show you just how rewarding it is to be part of our band. We provide comprehensive tuition, guiding you every step of the way, whether you're a complete beginner or an experienced player looking for a new musical home.

Joining the Rats of Tobruk Memorial Pipes and Drums offers incredible experiences beyond local performances. Our band has a proud history of travelling the world, performing at prestigious events like the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo an impressive seven times! We've also played at the Basel Tattoo in Switzerland, the Kremlin Zoria in Moscow, and even performed with André Rieu. Imagine the thrill of playing on such grand stages, representing Australia and honouring our heritage.

Don't miss this fantastic opportunity to immerse yourself in Scottish culture, learn an amazing skill, and become part of a passionate, welcoming community. Come and see what makes the Rats of Tobruk Memorial Pipes and Drums so special. Everyone is welcome – we'd love to see you there on the 26<sup>th</sup> of October between 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM!



## MORE ABOUT 'A CONCERT IN A CAVE'...

You may recall that in the October edition of last year's THN we featured a story about a concert which took place in a cave during the siege of Tobruk. Whilst researching a different story, we recently came across a mention of this concert by Sir Charles Cutler.

Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Charles Benjamin Cutler KBE, ED entered the Australian Imperial Force on Anzac Day 1940 and served with the 2/17 Australian Infantry Battalion. Blessed with a good bass baritone voice, his rendition of *The Legion of the Lost* was recorded by the ABC in Tobruk and broadcast across Australia. After the war, he entered politics, becoming NSW Country Party leader and Deputy Premier. His interest in singing would continue into his political career, when his portfolio included administration of the Opera House. Charles Cutler's cousin was Sir Arthur Roden Cutler who was a Victoria Cross recipient and a long serving governor of NSW.

Charles Cutler:

"Sometimes our positions were only eighty yards apart, we used to have fun then, sniping at each other, that was good sport. And I had one German with a sense of humour. A friend of mine, Alf Spratt and I were having fun sniping, he was observing and I was doing the shooting. And this German bloke used to put up a shovel and, as though we were on the rifle range, and wave a washout [miss] so, you know, we had a bit of fun. And the other bit of trivia - I used to sing a lot, and I was one of twelve people who, all of whom were front line infantry men. But when we were back in so called, rest camp, we formed little concert party, twelve of us, and I was one of the singers in that group of twelve. And we put on concerts for those troops that were out of the line and could find a safe spot, which happened to be old battalion ammunition dumps. They were actually natural caves which had been dug further out to put ammunition into.

And we entertained troops in there on a number of occasions, and that was recorded by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, and I still have the recording. It was recorded on the tape, long before your sophisticated equipment, on a little old wire machine, transferred later on to the old 78 [recording] discs, which I still have, and transferred later still on to the tapes, which I still have.

And, so these sort of things happened. And getting back to this close spot where we were, we're eighty yards apart, it wasn't Christmas, but it happened to be the only song that both the German and I knew and we sang "Holy Night" in duet. Silly, isn't it? And trying to kill each other all the time, and succeeding in a lot of cases too."

Just in case you missed it last time, here below is the link to the recording again!

*In October 1941, during the siege of Tobruk by German and Italian forces, the ABC Field Unit, led by war correspondent Chester Wilmot, recorded a unique concert held in an ammunition cave. This concert featured 400 Australian soldiers, known as the "Rats of Tobruk." Wilmot, who was pioneering the use of recording equipment in the field, captured the event on lacquer discs, providing a vivid auditory experience of the scene.*

[Concert in a Cave at Tobruk by Chester Wilmot, ABC Field Unit, 1941 | National Film and Sound Archive of Australia](#)



## NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members:

**Adrian Threfal Max Nepean Maureen Nepean Brian Collins  
Harry Pettman Kylie Pettman Ken Crompton  
Carol Cunningham John Cornelius Kerry Cornelius**



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

## RATS WARRINGAH RUGBY CLUB WINS 2025 SHUTE SHIELD Story from Pittwateronlinenews.com

The Warringah Rats have defeated Eastern Suburbs 37 – 24 in the Charter Hall Shute Shield decider at Leichardt Oval on Saturday August 30.

The victory means Warringah Rugby Club has lifted both the Shute Shield and the Sydney Premier Women's Chikarovski Cup in the same year after their Ratettes won their Grand Final on Saturday August 9. It's handstands and cartwheels time at Rat Park!



*The Shute Shield 2025 winning Warringah Rats*



*The Chikarovski Cup 2025 winning Warringah Raettes*



*The Charter Hall Shute Shield*



*The Chikarovski Cup*

Coach Josh Holmes said "We showed Rats spirit and when we got the ball, we talked about it all week, 'let's play Rat footy', and move the ball to space."

Founded in July 1922, the Shute Shield is Sydney's premier grade rugby union competition, played from April to September. The trophy was established in honour of the late Robert Elliott Stewart Shute who passed away on June 5 1922, following a match at Manly Oval. He was playing for Sydney Uni and scored 2 tries. In 1923 Sydney University were the first holders of the shield given in his memory.

Robert had only been back from serving with the AIF in France for two years, enlisting as an 18 year old in April 1917 and seconded to the 32<sup>nd</sup> Field Reinforcements as a Gunner before being transferred into the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion. His parents, Richard and Amelia Stewart Shute both had to give permission for their only son to serve. His delayed return to Sydney in October 1920 meant he may have been tasked with some challenging duties in 1919 France – although his war records show that he did get leave to go to Paris in June 1919.

"The Rats" as we are affectionately known, holds significant value for us. After experiencing many difficult years with many humiliating defeats the players were reminded by Doug Leslie Snr. (a Rat of Tobruk), that to give up in the face of adversity is never an option. The tradition of the Rats of Tobruk, of bonding together and making commitments in the true spirit of mateship should always be remembered and will prevail just in the same way as the Desert Rats of Tobruk prevailed."

From that time on the Club became known as the Green Rats and their long-held friendship with the 'Rats of Tobruk Veterans Association' and their legacy is honoured by a memorial on the hill at the southern end of 'Rat Park'.





# You are invited to the 2025 TOBRUK HOUSE CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Sunday November 30

\$35 Per Person

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL

<https://www.trybooking.com/DFLKO>

RSVP with payment by November 22

Please post this form and payment to the Secretary or pay by credit card or EFT

Payment must be made no later than Friday 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2025

**Payment Details:**

Payment of **\$35 per person**

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 your application. A suggested reference is the words 'XMAS' 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 digits 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](mailto:ratsoftobruk41@gmail.com)

Attendee's name: .....(please print) No. of tickets.....

Contact phone number: ..... Email address: .....

Address: .....Post code: .....

All enquiries to email address; [ratsoftobrukassociation41@gmail.com](mailto:ratsoftobrukassociation41@gmail.com) Phone: 0432 232 502  
Or please forward to: The Secretary, ROTA INC. 44 Victoria Avenue, ALBERT PARK, VIC 3206



## RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION INC - 2026 SUBSCRIPTION

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 2026 Annual Membership Subscription is \$30 and is due and payable on 1 January 2026.

**Please note that if payment is not received by 31 March 2026, 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: 197 610 603

**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](http://www.ratsoftobrukassociation.org.au)

Member's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# ROTA MERCHANDISE

See Order Form on page 26 for postage costs and other details.



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



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



'HEROES OF TOBRUK'  
STUBBIE HOLDER  
**\$10**



RATS OF TOBRUK 1941  
LAPEL BADGE  
**\$15**



SIEGE OF TOBRUK BAR MAT  
**\$40**



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



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



'HEROES OF TOBRUK'  
BALLPOINT PEN  
**\$5**



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



'HEROES OF TOBRUK' MUG  
**\$15**



80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SIEGE  
MEDAL  
**\$50**



# RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION INC

## MERCHANDISE ORDER FORM

(PRICES VALID JUNE 2025 – DEC 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 <sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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



Marking the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, *Eucalypts of Hodogaya* reflects on a remarkable story of post-war reconciliation and remembrance.

This exhibition explores how Australian and Japanese architects, gardeners, and builders overcame cultural divides after the Second World War to collaborate on a site that blends Eastern and Western traditions in a garden of peace.

## 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. Follow the evolution of camouflage from the First World War to today. Uncover the science and artistry behind concealment and deception, and explore its role in Australian military history. 28