



# TOBRUK HOUSE NEWS

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION



THE RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION  
NEUROSCIENCE FELLOWSHIP FUND

# RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION INC.

44 VICTORIA AVENUE, ALBERT PARK, VIC 3206

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

PHONE No 0432 232 502

GENERAL MEETINGS NORMALLY START AT 10.30AM

(NO MEETINGS JANUARY, MAY, JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER AND NOVEMBER)

\*THE DATES & EVENTS LISTED BELOW ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. FOR MORE UP TO DATE INFORMATION  
CALL 0432 232 502

Month / Date	Event Description
February 25 2022	Annual General Meeting
March 25 2022	General Meeting*
April 3 2022	Tobruk Sunday*
April 25	Anzac Day*
June 24 2022	General Meeting*

Patron: Bill Gibbins

Committee of Management:

President – Graham Gibson

Vice President – Mike Kiernan

Secretary – Glenda Garde

Treasurer - Mike Kiernan

Other Committee Members –

Christine Mulvaney, Bob Horton,  
Graeme Clifford, Tony Smith,  
Heather Macfarlane, Ian Marr,  
Karolina Sevcikova, Stuart Tolliday,  
Lachlan Gaylard, Bruce Bingham  
Tony Codd – Hall Keeper

TOBRUK HOUSE NEWS

Deadlines

Editorial and Advertising

NEXT ISSUE: APRIL 2022

DEADLINE: MARCH 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will not be published.

Main writers: Glenda Garde, Graham Gibson,  
Mike Kiernan, Lachlan Gaylard

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## VALE

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

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

**ROSE, Frederick John (Fred), WX5311, 2<sup>nd</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 21 November 2021, 102 yrs**  
**CAMPBELL, John Selby, VX38276, 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, 30 November 2021, 100 yrs**  
**Le-MERTON, Albert Leslie (Bert), NX17371, 2<sup>nd</sup> / 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 6 December 2021, 103 yrs**  
**DARLEY, Joseph Disher (Joe), VX48803, 2<sup>nd</sup> / 23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 22 December 2021, 99**  
**BURCHALL, Margaret, Honorary Life Member, 22 December 2021, 81**

## RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION INC.

### President's Report – February 2022

To all our members and friends of ROTA Inc.,

We are looking forward to getting back to some sort of new normal as the covid restrictions are eased.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2021 on the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the last Australians to leave Tobruk at the end of the Siege we were given the honour of participating in the Last Post Service at the Shrine of Remembrance. It was a moving ceremony where Helen Robinson (daughter of a ROT), Paul Gibson (grandson of a ROT), Sgt Braedan Heverin (former Recruit Trainer- Rats of Tobruk Platoon, Kapooka) and I all laid wreaths at the base of the eternal flame on the WW2 forecourt, remembering the 779 servicemen who paid the ultimate sacrifice at Tobruk. We also paid tribute to the 14000 Australians who served at the Siege of Tobruk. (See page 12).

Our annual Christmas breakup was a wonderful success with 72 members and two veterans (Tom Pritchard & Hautrie Crick) in attendance. A big thankyou to all the Committee and members who stepped in to prepare Tobruk House for the day and a very special thank-you to Carolina for leading the catering team. Members of the ROTMP&D Band played a series of musical numbers to the delight of those attending.

At our September Committee meeting it was voted to bring the date of the Annual General meeting forward one month to the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2022. (This will enable the new incoming committee some additional time to prepare for Tobruk Sunday and Anzac Day). The current Executive of ROTA have prepared a number of handover documents detailing the roles and expectations of each position. These have been made available to each prospective applicant to ensure a smooth transition from the existing Executive.

I would like to extend a sincere thankyou to Mike Kiernan, Glenda Garde, Christine Mulvany & Bob Horton who are stepping down from their positions on the committee, for the untiring efforts that they have all put into maintaining the spirit and health of the Rats of Tobruk Association. I would also like to thank Tony Codd for his diligence during his role as Hall Keeper.

The support that they have provided to the veterans and their family members has been immeasurable as they have extended a helping hand and friendly ear on so many occasions.

Thank you to all our members and friends for your continued support We wish all our members in poor health a speedy recovery and please stay safe and well.

Graham Gibson, President

*Editor's Note: our President Graham Gibson is also stepping down and we thank him for his enormous contribution over many years whilst in several roles on the ROTA committee.*

# NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION INC.

Reg No: A0054511Y

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Time: 10.30am

**Venue: Tobruk House, 44 Victoria Avenue, Albert Park, VIC**

At this meeting, members will have the opportunity to:

- Find out about ROTA's operations and Finances for 2021
- Ask questions about the above
- Speak about any areas of concern

At this meeting, members will be asked to vote to:

- Accept the minutes of the last AGM
- Accept the annual report
- Accept the annual financial statements
- Confirm the appointment of the new executive and general committee members

There are no special resolutions to be proposed at the AGM.

## RATS OF TOBRUK BOWLING MEMORABILIA

Following our "Calling for Information" story about the Rats of Tobruk Bowling teams, committee member and keen collector of WW2 memorabilia Tony Codd produced these pieces. Thanks Tony!



## LOOKING FOR INFORMATION

Hello from England,

I have been researching my grandfather's war and particularly his time during the siege of Tobruk. My grandfather was gunner Denis Pike #862611 serving with the 150th South Notts Hussars which was part of the 107th Field Artillery. The South Notts was a territorial army reserve regiment, originally hussars and then converted to field artillery in the 1920's.



My grandfather was 37 at the outbreak of the war so once he got to Africa worked in RHQ and performed a number of functions including organising concert parties for the troops in Tobruk. He was also attached to a fairly eminent Padre called Haydn Parry and worked with him in the front lines as a driver for him to assist the wounded and perform last rites etc.

One bit I'm really not sure about is how he seems to have apparently assisted with the Tobruk Truth newspaper in some capacity, maybe liaison or something to do with the troop entertainment he laid on? We know the names of only two of his fellow bandsman entertainers and they are 'Diff' Hall and Ernie Robertson.

I have attached a photograph for your interest which I was very pleased to get from the Australian War Memorial and standing 6th from left holding a bugle is my grandfather and he played at the opening ceremony of the memorial. What I am trying to establish is if any movie footage of the event is held anywhere to your knowledge and would be most grateful if you are able to offer any help in this area, any further photographs would also be appreciated.

Yours hopefully,  
Malcolm Lane-Ley

*If you can assist in any way, please contact ROTA and we will forward your information.*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

020896

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

Our intrepid researcher Glenda Garde discovered this story from a Facebook post by Kathryn Bellis (nee Robb). We are very grateful to both of them for this wonderful look back to 1956.



*Hi Glenda, I've finally got around to sending you information and photos of the Rats of Tobruk Ball 1956.*

*I was 17 at the time. Mum (Davina Robb) was on the Ladies Auxiliary and some of the ladies' children were making their debut and asked if I would like to join them which I did.*

*The group photo I am sitting on the floor left of the photo. I was learning dressmaking at the time and made my dress with help from my teacher.*

*My dad **WILLIAM ROBB - VX28536**, was in the 9th Div. 2/24th Battalion. He was an "old" Rat, joining up at 39. I was born in 1939 having a brother and sister 12 and 14 years older than myself. Mum didn't think they would take him because of his age but of course they did.*

*He died when I was 12 after enduring many hospitalisations at the Heidelberg Repat.*





OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION (VIC. BRANCH)

Patron: LIEUT.-GEN. SIR LESLIE MORSEHEAD, K.C.B., K.B.E., C.M.G., D.S.O., E.D.

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DECEMBER, 1956

## R.O.T.A.'s ANNUAL BALL, 1956

**A VERY charming set of 17 debutantes in strictly individual white frocks were presented in a colourful setting at St. Kilda Town Hall on Friday, 2nd November, the occasion being the Rats of Tobruk Association Annual Ball.**

They were making their curtsies to Air Marshall Sir George and Lady Jones, both of whom were

impressed by the old-world charm and simplicity of the presentings.

The debutantes and respective

partners were:

ANNE WHALEBONE  
JUDY WILMOTT  
ELAINE POWELL  
JESSIE SMITH  
KATHRYN ROBB  
LORRAINE PRIDHAM  
BARBARA McCORMACK  
JOAN ELLIOT  
JANEEN LEES  
MARGARET MANNING  
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DENNIS WOOTTEN  
BRIAN ROBERTSON  
BARRY ROY  
BRUCE CHUBB  
GEORGE NANTES  
JOHN PARRY  
GRAEME WAALK  
LES RICE  
GEOFFREY MAHLOOK  
ERIC BOULTER

The Rats' State President, Mr. Stan Miles, and Mrs. Miles, assisted by the State Secretary, Gordon Bramley, and Mrs. Bramley, welcomed nearly 1,500 guests, among whom were the Deputy Commissioner of Repatriation, Mr. A. L. Gould, and Mrs. Gould; Brigadier and Mrs. Bernard Evans, Mr. and Mrs. John McKeddie, and Mr. Jack Braham (R.O.T.A. Federal President) with Mrs. Braham.

All the "old-timers" were present among them Eric Maxfield; Arch. Murray, Charlie Boulter, Roy Campbell, Ron Porter, Les Lane, Doug. Leeder, Ron Sandman, and a host of others, some new, some old members. The atmosphere was that of a vast reunion rather than a cabaret ball, despite the gay multi-coloured balloons, the gaiety of the younger fraternity and the efforts of a lighting chalk artist to distract the attention. Maybe it is because here, at the Ball, there are so many old veterans meeting up with other veterans of yesteryear. Nevertheless,

(Continued to Page 4)

### ANNUAL BALL, 1956

(Continued from Page 1)

the Ball was a huge success. Proceeds of the Ball go to the Distress Fund. This year it should again exceed £500, a tribute to the painstaking work in preparations by the untiring Social Secretary—"Spud" Hall. "Spud" deserves special praise, together with the dancing instructor, for the really lovely performance given by the debutante set. Their initial dance, a Mazurka, I believe, was a gem, and was heartily applauded.

There was also a sprinkling of Sub-branch members present this year, a very pleasing feature. They are always welcome at any of our functions, but especially to the Annual Ball.

"Dutchy" Turner's orchestra again turned on a polished performance. We feel sure that all present thoroughly enjoyed the three-ringed barn dance, which must have lasted about half an hour, and only terminated because the orchestra players were in a lather of perspiration.

Bond's Catering Service lived up to their reputation of "quality and quantity, or nothing". They may use this as a slogan if they wish. They earned it. It's not easy to serve and satisfy over 1,500 guests, part of the time while the dance is on.

Congratulations, too, to the drink waiter at the official table, a familiar face for several years. His deferent and unobtrusive manner could not have been excelled by the great Jeeves himself. Your health, sir!

To sum up. A typical Rats' Ball, perhaps sobered a little compared with other years, influenced maybe by the deep-splashing headlines of Middle East and European events, but overflowing as ever with goodwill, comradeship, and complete enjoyment. We members are deeply appreciative of all those who year after year attend our Balls outside of the Association, making them such a good financial success. We sincerely hope they all enjoy themselves.

girl being presented in ahead. Good luck to you.

An embarrassed waitress a loaded tray with a cra floor. She received ample from members at the table attending. Good to see that is a strongpoint of R.O.T. bers.

Air Marshall Sir Geor asked by the drink waiter of drinks, shook a positiv of the negative. Then, as thought, he said: "Well, I have exactly what my wif ing." Lady Jones was lemonade. There's a mor somewhere for some of members.

We won't mention names was the usual happy by wanderer, weaving in and the dancers, urging the leader on, offering his s an entertainer (?), and ge duling in the vague bu business of enjoying hin vacant sort of way. Bless miss him if he didn't tu

—BERT

# ROTA CHRISTMAS PARTY 2021

Despite the challenges of the year and with the committee having to make last minute decisions and arrangements, I think that the 70 members who attended the Christmas party back in early December would agree that it was a wonderful occasion. It was great to see the hall full of people once again and to hear the lively chatter of people catching up with their ROTA friends who they hadn't seen in quite some time.

This year we catered for the party ourselves and a festive array of delicious food was on offer, including individual Christmas puddings, thanks to our chief cook, Karol Sevcikova. Many thanks to those who helped out with the cooking and cleaning up, especially Anne Marr and Sue Forbes.



Monique Ryan, the head of the neurology department at the Royal Children's Hospital, spoke about the difficult time of Covid and the impacts it has had on the hospital. She said that despite the difficulties the clinicians are still providing the best care possible for kids. She announced the new ROTA Fellow for 2022, Dr Sameer Dal, who will be the first ROTA Fellow focussed on Epilepsy.



It wouldn't be a ROTA function without a sing-a-long of the Tobruk song led by John Turner, and a stirring performance by pipers from the Rats of Tobruk Memorial Pipes and Drums, which was much appreciated.

This was followed by the traditional raffle. (People were unlucky NOT to take home a prize!)

The icing on the Christmas cake, so to speak, was the presence of 2 of our veterans, Tom Pritchard and Hautrie Crick who also enjoyed a catch up.

Many thanks to all who helped out on the day and, if you missed out in 2021, there's always next year's to look forward to.

## THE NEW ZEALAND RAILWAYMEN AND THE RATS OF TOBRUK - PART 2

*(Part 1 of this story by Graham Gibson appeared in the December issue (Vol 132) of the Tobruk House News)*

During 1940 and early 1941 many ships of the Italian coastal fleet were sunk in Tobruk Harbour by the British Fleet as they sought to destroy Italy's naval presence in the Mediterranean. The harbour was soon littered with sunken ships making it very hazardous, if not impossible, for large ships to enter the port. When the Germans launched their effective counterattack, the clutter of sunken ships increased in the harbour as the *Luftwaffe* sank valuable supply ships trying to provide supplies to the garrison. Soon the harbour sprouted mast and funnels jutting out of the water in such numbers that it was dubbed 'Spaghetti Harbour'. When the seconded railwaymen arrived in Tobruk there was only a few scattered wrecks, semi submerged in the inner harbour. By the time they finally departed, 52 ships littered the waterways.



*The bombed out remains of the Chakla sitting on the bottom in Tobruk harbor*

This and the shallowness of the port gradually prevented large ships from entering it so that all supplies had to be laboriously barged from ship to shore. About 75 railway men volunteered to support the defenders, the 9<sup>th</sup> Australian Division, by assisting the British 1018 Docks Operating Company in providing labour, tugboat crews and serving as longshoremen, their primary role being to supervise the various labour gangs.

The railwaymen were divided into two groups. One section manned the tugs that towed the flat-topped lighters while the other section unloaded them on to waiting motor transport. Although Tobruk possessed a large and reasonably sheltered harbour it was only serviced by five small wharves, which were completely devoid of any lifting apparatus. Ship's winches were employed to discharge their loads onto the lighters. After a lengthy delay, a small mobile crane was made available, but it only had a lifting capacity of 10 hundredweight and was used exclusively for lifting 250 and 500lb bombs, until there were no aircraft to use them. The work was exhausting and dirty. Sandstorms and aerial attacks were all part of the daily routine for the railwaymen in Tobruk.

Some railwaymen went on to actually skippering coastal vessels despite their lack of navigation and seafaring skills. One such man was Dunedin-born Joseph Messines Simmonds who became known as 'Tug-boat Joe' (a term he did not appreciate). Simmonds operated a tugboat between Sollum, a tiny Egyptian coastal town close to the Libyan border, to besieged Tobruk.

Notwithstanding the enemy attacks on British Hospital ships, the men who operated the tugs and barges along the African coast never lost their compassion for the wounded, even enemy POWs. In late January 1940, while en route from Tobruk, the *Sollum*, ferrying 800 Italian POWs back to Egypt, was strafed by enemy aircraft off the coast at Sidi Barrani.

Watching in horror from the escarpment overlooking the beach were railwaymen who saw the terrified Italians rushing for the lifeboats.

The boats were soon grossly overloaded and spilled their occupants into the sea, most of whom drowned. The ship's skipper, seeing the carnage, tried to beach his vessel but ran aground on a submerged reef. With a high sea running and being a sitting target for the aircraft, the situation was desperate.

One valiant Italian POW swam through the rough surf with a line attached to his body, collapsing on the ledge above the waves. A sergeant quickly dragged the man ashore, assisted by an Egyptian foreman. Once the line was secured, the railwaymen, in waist deep water, proceeded in relays to pull the POWs to safety. Some of the Italians were washed away in the rough sea and many injured on the rocky shoreline. The seriously wounded were pulled ashore on Carley floats and passed up the steep cliff by a chain of men precariously clinging to whatever footholds they could find. After all the POWs were off the vessel, the crew abandoned ship. Doubtless many Italians owe their lives to the selfless attitude of these former foes.

The railwaymen not only faced the danger of aerial attacks but also had to contend with mines laid along the main coastal routes. During an operation at Sollum, where Italian prisoners were being ferried out to the *Farida*, a mine exploded beneath the Kiwi-crewed vessel. Four crewmen were killed, as were many of the POWs. Two other who lost their lives on the barges were M.J. Crosby and A. G. Figgins, both blown up when their barges struck a mine between Tobruk and Sollum.

Aerial defence at Tobruk was initially provided by three Hurricanes and one Blenheim bomber. Once besieged, Tobruk had no air cover whatsoever. In 40 days, Tobruk experienced 370 air raids-excluding all false alarms. In real terms, Tobruk was the recipient of more aerial bombardment than Malta. Although the *Luftwaffe* pounded Tobruk relentlessly in an attempt to dislodge the determined 'rats' and there were constant ground assaults from Rommel's troops, the tenacity of the indomitable ANZACs proved Lord Haw Haw wrong. Tobruk did not fall. When the railwaymen left Tobruk, some were assigned to Syria, others to Persia to build additional railway tracks and tunnels. Another group serviced El Alamein with trains for the duration of the 2 major battles over El Alamein.

As the British forces pushed the Germans inexorably westward, the running of trains became uneventfully normal-even air attacks ceased to be a threat. The railwaymen were able to take advantage of having a reliable system by running 374 trains during December 1942, pulling approximately 14 762 wagons and 140 coaches (for troop transport). Over 65 00 tons were sent to Tobruk alone, with many thousands of tons at various other railheads.

The Allied advance also opened up ports such as Tobruk and Benghazi. Supplies could now be shipped directly to these ports from Britain or the United States rather than being unloaded at Suez. The desert railway extension terminated at Belhamed and as the fighting moved deeper into Libya, coastal shipping gradually superseded the need for the railway.

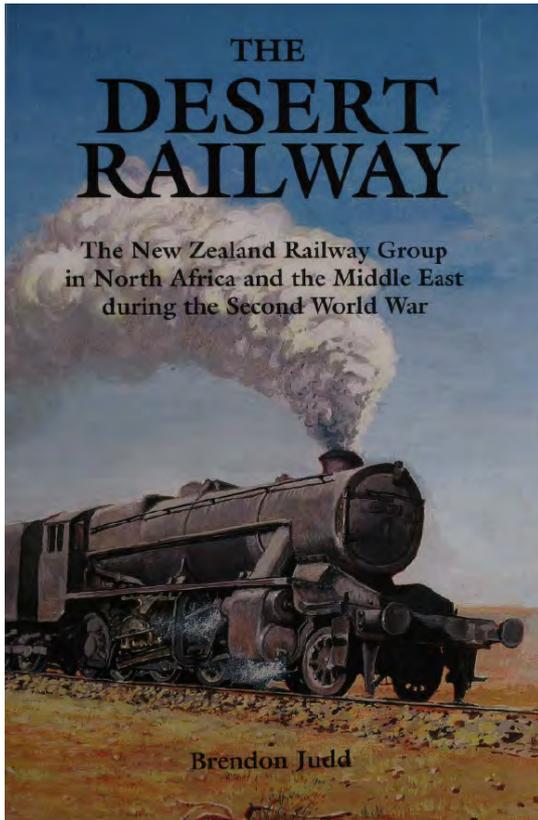
The pressure finally came off the desert railway with the occupation of the port of Tripoli in Libya on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1943. The New Zealanders of the 16<sup>th</sup> ROC were relieved by the 115<sup>th</sup> (Indian) Railway Operating Company and returned to Maadi Camp. However, men from the 17<sup>th</sup> ROC and Headquarters, Railway Operating Group remained for the duration of the desert winter, finally relinquishing their train-running their train-running duties to 193<sup>rd</sup> ROC, Royal Engineers, on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1943.

The New Zealanders' connection with the Western Desert Railway Extension, which they had constructed, maintained and operated, came to an end. They knew that their main objective had been achieved. They had kept the fighting soldiers well supplied during the hard-fought battles for places that had previously just been difficult-to-pronounce Arab names on maps. Eventually, all the railway companies which had been spread over a wide area were reunited at Maadi Camp.

From here the Railway Operating Companies were brought home, then disbanded to help cope with the workload created by the influx of United States troops who were stationed in New Zealand to fight the Japanese in the Pacific.

Congratulations to you all on a job very well done and a very special thank-you for your dedication and service. To those who paid the ultimate sacrifice LEST WE FORGET

## WRITING THE NEW ZEALAND RAILWAY GROUP HISTORY



Over 80 years have elapsed since the Railway Group was formed at the request of the British Government at the commencement of the Second World War. Little has been written of the contribution made by the volunteer railwaymen, so a group of ex-railway servicemen formed a committee with the intention of gathering memoirs and information that was to become the basis of this book.

As a committee dedicated to having the Railway Group remembered in New Zealand's war history, we searched for a writer who had some knowledge of the Railway Group's existence. We eventually found someone suitable for the task.

Brendon Judd completed his MA thesis at Massey University in 1998, where he researched and evaluated the contribution made by the New Zealand Railway Group in the years 1940-1943. Before undertaking university study, Brendon was employed as a locomotive engineer with the New Zealand Railways Corporation, and therefore knew something of what it meant to be a railwayman. Having completed his academic studies, Brendon once again returned to the locomotive footplate, and now lives in New Plymouth.

Brendon was provided with vast quantities of information given by remaining ex-railwaymen and their families. Duly supplied, he set about collating the mass of information into some semblance of order and produced a book that records the exploits of the separate companies that comprised the Railway Group.

We thank Brendon for undertaking this difficult task as so much of the information was based on fading memories, which after so many years, can often be difficult to substantiate.

Norm Leaf (Chairman, The Desert Railway Committee, 2002)

**Rats of Tobruk 1941  
Lapel Badge**

*This new lapel badge has been based on the well-known historic medal, designed, and produced at Tobruk by siege veterans.*

**\$15**  
(Including postage)

*To purchase, please see the Merchandise Order Form in this issue of the Tobruk House News, for details.*

25mm diameter  
3D, Cast Metal  
Butterfly / Clutch fitting on back

Stick Pin fitting also available  
(Limited stock)

## LAST POST CEREMONY AT THE SHRINE DEC. 12, 2021

Working with the Shrine of Remembrance, ROTA President Graham Gibson, organised for the end of the Siege of Tobruk 80 years ago to be commemorated at a Last Post service at the Shrine on Sunday December 12.

On what was a beautiful summer's evening, it was most fitting to see the ROTA flag flying on the flagpole in the forecourt, and after an introduction by a Shrine governor and the recital of the Ode by Graham, wreaths were laid by ROTA representatives as part of the short ceremony.



We are hoping that this will become an annual event on the ROTA calendar and the small gathering of members who attended all agreed that it was a very moving experience, well worth attending.

(Please note that a 15-minute service takes place almost every Sunday at 4:45pm and includes bugle calls and piper, Shrine Guard in historic uniform, a wreath-laying, recital of the Ode, and lowering of the flags.)

Thanks for your efforts in organising the service, Graham.



Photos:

Left top – the ROTA flag proudly flying on the forecourt of the Shrine

Above – Sgt Braedan Heverin, Helen Robinson, Paul Gibson and ROTA president Graham Gibson representing our association.

Left – standing in remembrance at the eternal flame.

## SIEGE OF TOBRUK REMEMBERED IN HOBART *(Story by Reg Watson)*

Two wreath laying ceremonies occurred in Tasmania on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November to remember the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Siege of Tobruk. The first at the Hobart Cenotaph and the second at the Polish Memorial, New Town.



Committee members (from left) Richard Dobze, Tony Hope, Reg Watson and George T at the Polish Memorial, New Town during the wreath laying ceremony.

To herald the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a committee was formed to organise activities on November 27<sup>th</sup> which in 1941 was the last day of a major battle, after which successful evacuation of the remaining troops occurred.

Tasmanian historian and author Reg Watson, whose father was at Tobruk, said that the Australian and Polish troops created an everlasting bond during the siege.

*"Many Polish veterans came to Tasmania after the war and like their Australian counterparts have now passed on.*

*"Nonetheless, the descendants of the veterans, both Australian and Polish, continue to recognise the great achievement which was – Tobruk," he said.*

With the wreath laying ceremonies over, a formal dinner in the evening was held at the Lenah Valley RSL, which was well attended by descendants from around the State, besides friends of the veterans and Consulates from Poland, the United Kingdom, Poland and the Czech Republic, as the latter also had troops at Tobruk.



Gracie Ryan read a poem especially written for the occasion. Gracie is a great grand daughter of a veteran of Tobruk.



The dinner tables at the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Siege of Tobruk dinner at Lenah Valley RSL.

Messages were read from Tobruk House Melbourne, and from the Governor-General.

*"It was an amazing period in our nation's military history," said Reg. "Our challenge on the day was to keep the memory alive by informing the grandchildren and now great grandchildren of the sacrifice of their fore fathers".*

## VALE – ALBERT (BERT) LESLIE LE-MERTON (Provided by Lachlan Gaylard)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

AWM2017.520.1.1727

Albert Leslie Le-Merton (Bert) was born on the 18<sup>th</sup> of November 1918 in Wagga Wagga district hospital, the first child to Leslie and Emma. Bert's family briefly moved to Melbourne with his sister Gwendoline Charlotte before moving back to Sydney where the family was completed with the birth of William Thomas in 1922.

Bert initially attended school at Blackfriars public school before shifting to Glebe Junior Tech. Bert left school at 16 to look for work. He found employment at Stromberg-Carlson where he put together radios. Bert then moved to a button factory. Bert described this time as an 'ordinary life of a young bloke in those days' Bert enjoyed a passion bicycle riding and socialising with friends.

In January of 1940, Bert aged 21 was called up for service and was placed with the 35<sup>th</sup> battalion CMF for three months training, after which Bert was sent back home with his .303 rifle and equipment. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of May Bert volunteered for service in the AIF. After some months of initial training Bert was assigned to the 2/13<sup>th</sup> Battalion and shifted to Randwick.

Initially placed in the light anti-aircraft platoon, Bert was then shifted to the mortar platoon and on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 1940 Bert and the battalion disembarked Sydney on the Queen Mary. By November they had arrived in Egypt and took a troop train to Palestine. In early April, the 2/13<sup>th</sup> was sent to Cyrenaica where they became the first Australian unit to fight the Germans in WW2.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of April, the battalion was in Tobruk where it remained for the entirety of the siege. They were evacuated in December 1941, the battalion arrived in Palestine before heading to Syria, but Bert was to stay in Palestine to undertake a mortar course at the AIF Middle East infantry school. At his completion of the course on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Jan 1942 Bert was described as "a good worker who has gained a full knowledge, a very fine effort for a private". After this course Bert found himself promoted to Acting Corporal.

The 2/13<sup>th</sup> was hurried from Syria to the first and second battles of El-Alamein, which resulted in heavy casualties. The second battle ended on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 1942 which also was the day the Bert was again promoted to Lance Sergeant.

In early January 1943 Bert sustained injuries to his face and hands after an accident on the Mortar range and was evacuated to the 6<sup>th</sup> AGH (Australian general hospital) to receive treatment. Later in the month he was evacuated with the rest on the 2/13<sup>th</sup> back to Australia arriving on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February 1943, they were given leave before reforming on the Atherton Tablelands in Queensland; in August the battalion embarked for Milne Bay

On 4 September, the battalion departed Milne Bay on landing craft and landed on Red Beach Lae, it carried out subsequent jungle operations until Lae fell 12 days later. The battalion also landed at Scarlet Beach near Finschhafen on 22 September.

The 2/13<sup>th</sup> returned to Australia in March 1944, disembarking in Brisbane. After leave, it reformed at Ravenshoe and did not return to action until the final months of the war, Bert was promoted to Sergeant on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August.

Bert and the 2/13<sup>th</sup> landed at Brunei in June 1945 before making another landing in the Miri-Lutung area ten days later. The battalion captured the airfield and oil tanks and moved inland. It then went to Lobang, where it remained until the end of the war.

Following Japan's surrender, the 2/13<sup>th</sup>'s ranks thinned, as men were discharged or transferred. Bert remained with the battalion and moved to Luban in November from where he sailed to Brisbane before being discharged on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 1945. In Sydney the same day Bert joined the RSL at the showgrounds and ordered three brand new suits.

Throughout the war, Bert had corresponded with his best mate 'Johnno' Dickson's (NX20931) sister Joan, and in February 1946 Bert was invited to finally meet Joan in person. After two days they were engaged, finally marrying in September 1947. Bert and Joan enjoyed 49 years of marriage before Joan's death in 1996.

In civilian life Bert took up a job as a clerk with the Australian Taxation Office in the instalments sections, a position he held until retirement in 1980.

In 2020, 101-year-old Bert saw the devastatingly high rate of suicide within the veteran community. He sought to make a positive difference to the lives of those that have served.

Bert set the goal of walking an accumulative 96 kilometres, the length of the Kokoda track, in a bid to raise funds for life-changing support services through the veteran charity, Soldier On. His fundraising goal was \$10,000. Quickly surpassing his initial targets and seeing his efforts draw more attention, he would eventually walk more than 420 kilometres and raise \$116,121. Bert's actions inspired more than 6,200 people taking a stance on veteran suicide as a part of the 'March on Challenge' – raising over \$1.85 million.

Soldier On CEO, Ivan Slavich, said the organisation is honoured to have Sergeant Bert Le-Merton, an Australian living legend, to support the March On campaign.

Slavich said "Sergeant Bert is an inspiration to us all and is incredibly deserving of this wonderful acknowledgement. Bert is a true living legend. His bravery and sacrifice during World War II is admirable to say the least. His family have followed suit, with his children and grandchildren also defending our nation and communities on the frontline. It is clear that his passion for supporting our current and future generation of veterans and their families is close to his heart."

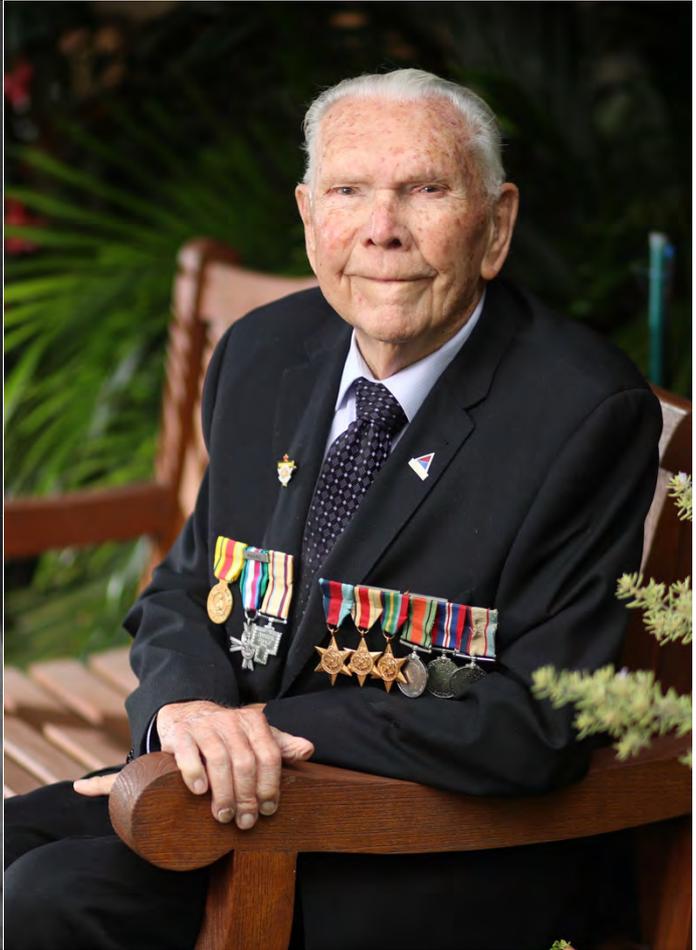
"Thanks to Bert's commitment and tireless efforts throughout the campaign and beyond, March On not only saw great success, but we also saw an enhanced national conversation on the issue of veteran suicide and the challenges that the community faces," Slavich added.

Following this Bert was the New South Wales Nominee for Australian of the Year. Upon notification of the award, Bert said this is an extraordinary acknowledgement for an ordinary bloke.

Bert passed away peacefully, surrounded by family, on the evening of the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2021 aged 103 years old.

He is survived by his two children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren

## VALE – JOHN SELBY CAMPBELL (Provided by Lachlan Gaylard)



First child to John Snr and Edith, John Selby Campbell was Born on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 1921 in Mildura, where the Campbell's were living on a fruit block. The family was completed with the birth of sister Jessie in 1923.

John started school at Mildura state school just before he was five. Whilst in his final year of primary school John developed a serious infection which required him to stay in Melbourne with his grandparents for six months to receive treatment. Between hospital appointments John attended Cheltenham state school.

In 1934 John's parents sold the fruit block and moved back to Melbourne, living with an Aunt. It was a full house, with John for some time sleeping on the couch before establishing a bedroom with a single bed between the kitchen and bathroom, (which remained his bedroom until he joined the army). John began with Bradshaw and Everett's business college studying shorthand, typing and bookkeeping for around 18 months. John was heavily involved in the Charman Methodist church, which provided many social opportunities such as tennis and camps with the senior boys group.

Through family friends, John was told that Griffiths tea was looking for an office boy. John was a successful applicant and started work in Flinders Street; his duties included cleaning the inkwells, loading ledgers into the fireproof room and stamping all the outgoing post. John worked in this position for three years.

Having turned 19 in April 1940 John was keen to join the army. After an in-depth conversation with his parents they agreed under the proviso that John's older cousin Bob would look after him. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of July John and Bob headed to the Melbourne town hall to enlist. They were furnished with their uniforms and sent to Royal Park before ending up at camp Pell. After some training the army called for volunteers to join an Anti-Aircraft regiment; John and Bob volunteered and were sent to Werribee, where 900 men were placed into the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment and split into three batteries. John ending up in the 8<sup>th</sup> battery.

Whilst training on their guns John noticed something was wrong and showed leadership by yelling 'stop firing' This action landed him a promotion to bombardier.

Shortly before embarking to the Middle East John found himself in the Fairfield hospital with the mumps but he recovered in time to set sail on the Mauretania, making stops in Fremantle and Colombo.

After arriving in Palestine, the 8<sup>th</sup> battery was sent to Alexandria before taking a ship to Tobruk, arriving on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February 1941. John was so tired upon his arrival he awoke the next morning to find he had slept on top of a hammer! The battery had no bofors guns, one rifle to every ten men, with no ammunition.

The battery acquired left behind Italian Breda model 35 guns. John's initial gun placement was on the north shore of Tobruk harbour. They experienced their first heavy action on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April when approximately thirty bombs were dropped around them. On one occasion John's gun shot down a German dive bomber nearby. John went to inspect the wreck where he found the pilot who had died. He recalled thinking about this young man, who just like him was somebody's son. This event would be something that played on John's mind as he aged.

John's time in Tobruk could be described as periods of full throttle and nothing for days. After a while John's gun emplacement moved to around 1.5 kilometres away from the infamous Tobruk fig tree; whilst here John witnessed Bob Semples' ten-man gun crew killed when a shell landed directly on a truck carrying the men.

The 8<sup>th</sup> battery was evacuated from Tobruk on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September, arriving in Alexandria and then heading to Palestine for six months before leaving for Australia in February 1942. John was housed in Adelaide before being shipped to Perth. On the 31<sup>st</sup> of march John was promoted to Troop Sergeant.

By November John was in Townsville, heading by ship to Port Moresby before arriving in Buna. John recalled it was contrastingly different to Tobruk. John's cousin was medically invalided back to Brisbane from Buna before taking a position in Melbourne. In April 1944 John and the regiment returned to Randwick New South Wales where they prepared to become an Airborne unit. By October John was promoted to Warrant Officer class 2 and was sent to Brisbane.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of July, John became engaged to Valmai Smiddy, two months later the war ended. While in Brisbane John married Valmai on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September. A short honeymoon followed before John was back in Brisbane where he was made aware that he would be discharged and that this process had to take place in Melbourne. John was finally discharged on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November.

John and Valmai rented a home in Highett and in January 1946 started with Norm Sole tailoring. After a while he joined his father in his tailoring business and became John S Campbell and son. John's business grew and grew and by 1972 he was bursting at the seams, so he purchased a new shop and started the formalwear hire company Dress Circle. He finally retired in 1989.

John became reconnected with ROTA after daughter Alison and son in-law Paul attended one of our open days. It was a particularly special time we spent with John in the lead up to the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Tobruk and John's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. John attended Tobruk Sunday for the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary service and also had Her excellency Linda Hurley sing him a pre-emptive Happy birthday.

John passed away after a short period of illness on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November aged 100

"A full life, a Rat of Tobruk, a good friend,  
husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather,  
a tailor turned formal wear entrepreneur, active in community and church.  
A gentleman who enjoyed the respect and admiration of all."

## VALE – JOSEPH (JOE) DISHER DARLEY QPM (Provided by Lachlan Gaylard)



Joseph Disher Darley was born on the 16th January 1922 In Rainbow Victoria. Joe was the youngest of four children to William and Margaret. Raised in Patchewollock (which would lead to the nickname Patchy) Joe attended school in the local district before working on the family wheat property.

In August 1940 Joe followed older brother William (Bill) into the army. Bill had been allotted to the 2/32<sup>nd</sup> Battalion and Joe to the 2/23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion. Joe initially did his training in Albury before moving to Bonegilla.

In November Joe embarked from Port Melbourne for the Middle East, on the transport ship Strathmore, arriving in Egypt in mid-December. By early 1941 Joe was headed to Cyrenica Libya with the rest of the 9<sup>th</sup> Division, and he followed the fall back into Tobruk known as the 'Benghazi Handicap'.

The 2/23<sup>rd</sup> formed part of the garrison around Tobruk, manning a series of machine gun posts in the western side of Tobruk. Between May and July Joe moved to the eastern side of Tobruk. The battalions heaviest fighting occurred while defending the Salient from 20 August to 9 September, and again from 17 September to 3 October; casualties were heavy, with over 200 personnel being killed, wounded or captured.

Joe was evacuated with the rest of the 2/23<sup>rd</sup> battalion on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October by sea. Joe had survived six months in Tobruk. The battalion then headed for Alexandria, then Palestine and then Syria for rest and garrison duties. By July 1942, the battalion was rushed from Syria to the El Alamein area. Orders for the first attack were issued on 7 July.

After the First battle of El Alamein, during a rest, Joe learnt that his older brother Bill had been killed, on a day where the 2/32<sup>nd</sup> battalion had suffered 22 killed in action, 57 wounded and 50 taken prisoner.

Joe was then thrust into the heat of battle from 23 October to 4 November. The heaviest fighting occurred in an area known as the "Saucer". By the end of the October the 2/23<sup>rd</sup> had 29 killed, 172 wounded, and six missing.

The 2/23rd left Alamein on 2 December for Palestine, eventually departing in the third week of January 1943 on the Nieuw Amsterdam, and reaching Sydney at the end of February.

A short period of leave was granted before the battalion was preparing for jungle warfare. This resulted in the issue of new equipment. Training was completed on the Atherton Tablelands in Queensland before the battalion moved to Milne Bay in August 1943. The next month Joe and the battalion took part in the 9<sup>th</sup> Division's amphibious landing at Red Beach. The landing parties received serious air fire from Japanese fighters and bombers. One such attack resulted in a direct hit on the 2/23<sup>rd</sup> HQ landing craft killing battalion commander Lieutenant Colonel Reginald Wall.

2/23rd participated in the subsequent fighting around Lae, Finschhafen, and Sattelberg. Joe returned to Australia in February 1944. After some leave, the battalion reformed on the Atherton Tablelands in June, for what proved to be an extensive training period.

In April Joe was transported to Morotai, which was being used as a staging in area for amphibious landings on Borneo. Landing at Tarakan on 1 May, the two lead battalions were the 2/23rd and 2/48th. There was no opposition on the beaches, but Japanese fire came from hills above. The two battalions pushed inland towards Tarakan, overcoming Japanese resistance as they went. By nightfall they had established a beachhead 2.5 km wide and 2 km deep.

From 6 May to 16 June the mountain ridges behind Tarakan were the scene of bitter traumatic fighting. The Japanese used mines, booby traps, and suicide raids to delay the advance. By late June the battalion began mopping up operations, conducting patrols looking for stragglers. The fighting came to an end in August 1945. Joe was discharged from the army on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November.

Joe married Eileen Mary Radburn, they moved to Thomastown and welcomed their first child Graham (later a Vietnam war veteran) in 1948. Joe joined the police force in 1950, working at City West and North Fitzroy as a constable. During this time, Joe and Eileen welcomed son Robert in 1951 and daughter Lesley in 1952.

Joe was posted to Bendigo in 1955 and promoted to Senior Constable. Between 1957 and 1958 he took charge of Sea Lake police station where he was promoted to Sergeant. He was then shifted to Warrnambool for twelve months, and from there to Hastings as Sergeant in charge and Harbour Master before returning briefly to Russell St HQ in 1961. Joe then spent the next eight years as Sergeant in charge at Ferntree Gully.



Joe was promoted to Inspector in 1970 and posted to Police HQ. During this time he gained the necessary academic qualification to begin officer training. Once completed he was promoted to Superintendent followed by Commander and finally Assistant Commissioner (Traffic Branch).

Joe was awarded the Queen's Police Medal for Devotion to duty, the National Medal, and the Police Long Service Medal for services to the Victorian Police force and the people of Victoria.

He retired in 1985 after 35 years' service.

Joe passed away on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2021 just shy of his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Joe's life can be defined by the words 'unconditional service', Though we will never know the countless horrors Joe saw and the effects they had on him, he pushed the trauma of war to one side and found humility and understanding in its darkness.

Joe is survived by his three children, 8 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

## VALE – FREDRICK (FRED) JOHN ROSE



On Sunday 21 November Frederick John Rose died at the age of 102. Fred was Western Australia's last standing Rat of Tobruk.

"It is the end of a long and legendary association between those brave men and Western Australia," RSLWA chief executive John McCourt said.

"And it is one of the classic stories of Australians finding a positive out of the direst of times. Guys like Fred were stoic right to the end and lived life to the fullest."

Fred Rose was born in Bunbury and was the fourth eldest of William and Bertha's 10 children. There were nine boys and one girl, and they all grew up on a farm called Shenton Vale at Roelands WA. He never married or had children.

After enlisting in the AIF in 1940, aged 21, Fred left from Fremantle for Palestine as a member of the 2/28<sup>th</sup> battalion. Two months after enlisting he was one of the more than 14,000 diggers who withstood Rommel's siege at the Libyan port of Tobruk. Fred returned to Australia in March 1942, and after an accidental injury to his eye he was discharged in 1944.

Five of Fred's brothers served overseas, and Charles was killed in Palestine.

He returned to the family farm where he worked in partnership with three of his brothers Bill, James and Don, dairy farming, and growing potatoes. The partnership split up in the 1970s and Fred retired to Australind and played bowls.

He was a founding member of the Brunswick Bowling Club where he served as captain and president. There is a green named after him. Fred was a keen bowler until the age of 97. He moved to Bethanie Nursing home at Eaton when he was 99.

On turning 100 in 2019 he said he wasn't sure that the milestone deserved so much fun. Ahead of the big day he said he was unsure why everybody was making such a fuss.

"I've still got to get there first," he said. "I'm not quite there yet but I might react to it all once I reach the day. I never thought I would reach 100 and I still don't, I can't visualise when it will all finish."



The "No Surrender" rose, created by Treloar Roses.

On his 101<sup>st</sup> birthday last year he presided over the planting of the "No Surrender" rose, named to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tobruk siege.

Later that year he received a medallion and a certificate to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WW2, signed by the Prime Minister at a special presentation.

"I enjoyed farming, being in the army and lawn bowls all equally," Mr Rose said.

Mr Rose's family said he was well-travelled and had an abundance of captivating stories from over the years.

"He's a man of few words, but Fred is still really sharp," Nephew Clayton Rose said at his 101<sup>st</sup> birthday party. "He has an acute sense of humour."

Mr Rose's family said he was well-travelled and had an abundance of captivating stories from over the years. One family member fondly recounted the time Mr Rose told a story about walking to school barefoot in the cold and stepping in cow pats to have something on his feet, and joked it was one of those tales he was not sure was true.

When he passed on Sunday, 21 November 2021 at the age of 102, Fred was living in Eaton, at Bethany Fields. He had moved there into permanent residential care in 2018.

## VALE - LIFE MEMBER MARGARET BURCHALL (Provided by Graham Gibson)



Margaret Burchall, passed away on Wednesday 22 December 2021.

Margaret was a stalwart of the ROTA ladies who supported ROTA at every event especially following the sale of Tobruk House when the National Servicemen Association of Australia (NSAA) and their wives worked with the Rats of Tobruk during the transition to allow their membership (ROTA) to include the children and friends of the Rats to become members.

Margaret was always willing to assist with making Christmas hampers, making up raffle tickets and making many delicious treats for the tables at many of our events. Margaret also worked with the NSAA wives in supporting their men at many functions. They were a formidable team.

Margaret was the partner of fellow ROTA Life Member and committee member Bob Horton. She and Bob were a familiar sight at the front door of Tobruk House on so many meetings and special occasions. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Bob at this sad time.

## ROTA COMMITTEE MEMBER BRUCE BINGHAM HONOURED BY RSL

*(Story by Pam Zierk-Mahoney)*

A very special award was presented at the Mansfield RSL sub-branch on October 29 2021, with a Life Membership being made to Major (retired) Bruce Bingham.

Brigadier David Westphalen, on behalf of all members present, had the pleasure of presenting Mr Bingham with a certificate and badge denoting his life membership. He explained that the RSL is a volunteer organisation with many putting in their time and efforts to make even the smaller sub-branches successful.

"Mansfield some years ago was on the brink of closure due to small membership until along came Bruce Bingham and his wife Marlene, who joined the local branch and was determined not to let such a valuable sub-branch fold. The RSL has awards to those served the RSL with outstanding service over long periods of time," Brigadier Westphalen said.

"A life membership is not a small thing. It is about such service, and is not an easy process for someone to be granted this award. The process is long, starting with the sub-branch and goes through a long process of being nominated and ends up in Canberra at the national headquarters. In Victoria the process involves the state conference at which all delegates accept the nominations from all the branches, but the members are not there. It is my pleasure tonight on behalf of the state president of the RSL, and the president of our sub-branch, Tom Ingpen, to award this life membership to Bruce Bingham."

Brigadier Westphalen, on calling Mr Bingham to come forward, asked members to look around the room. "Not long ago the membership of this RSL sub-branch was dwindling, but here we are today with a membership of more than 100. Not only was membership boosted, but there have been many successful projects that have improved the club and the town's recognition of the RSL. With grants the building has been improved and the Menin Gates (Memorial Gates in High St) have been repaired, which recognise the service given by local men and women during conflicts, mainly due to Mr Bingham. There have been many other things done at this branch, along with other members who have contributed, that have improved the facilities." Brigadier Westphalen said.

"Bruce Bingham has provided outstanding service to the sub-branch and continued through tough recent times and has helped in keeping this branch alive and well and it is my pleasure to present him with a certificate of life membership."

Brigadier Westphalen then invited Mr Bingham's wife Marlene, who has supported him on this journey, to pin the life membership badge onto his lapel. The badge can be worn at all times, recognising Mr Bingham as a life member. In response to the award Mr Bingham said it was a surprise to receive this life membership, but he has enjoyed every minute of his service.

"Many of the public don't realise that before I came up to Mansfield I was on the state committee to organise the dawn service in Melbourne as a police officer for many years, and when I joined here there were only about 15 members and it looked like folding up, and I said there was no way I would see it fold up. I would like to think that it has also been the long-standing members who have made it successful for me, and without the new members joining the RSL and making it a success as an RSL club, I would not have received this award, so thanks very much for your contribution for making this award to me."



*New RSL Life member Major (retired) Bruce Bingham proudly wearing his new badge on his ROTA rugby top.*

### NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members to ROTA:

Hugh Lavery Tracey Sarney Nicole Phillips Steve Munn

Phil Yarwood Aneirin Harney Sylvia Mc Callum Braedan Heverin

Noel Osborne



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



# ROTA MERCHANDISE

See Order Form on page 27 for postage costs and other details.



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



80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIEGE BAR MAT \$40



80<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY TWO-UP SET  
Includes kip and two 1941 pennies \$17



ROTA 'BASEBALL' CAP \$20



ROTA ROSEWOOD PLAQUE with 'No Surrender' scroll \$95



ROTA BADGE CAR WINDOW STICKER  
Sticks to inside of window \$10



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



STUBBY HOLDER  
Features selected verses from a poem written during the siege. \$9

## YOUR 2022 MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION IS DUE FOR PAYMENT NOW

Affiliate members are reminded that this year's subscription was due for payment on 1st January. The subscription remains at \$30 for 2022.

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 2022 Annual Subscription Payment Form on the page 25.

If you are paying by EFT, ensure you include a unique reference such as your surname and membership number.

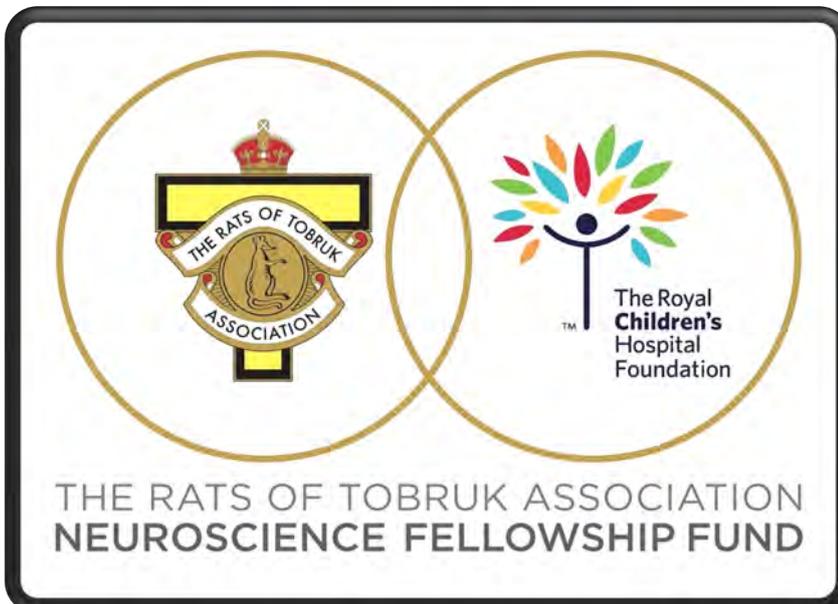
If you pay by over-the-counter bank deposit, please ensure you send details to ratsoftobruk41@gmail.com or post to The Secretary, ROTA, 44 Victoria Ave, Albert Park, 3206.

This is important for correct matching of payments, as bank deposits do not have adequate referencing. Payment can now be made using a credit or debit card.

Please note that Tobruk Veterans and their wives or widows, are exempt from paying the annual subscription. Life and Honorary members are also exempt.



## RATS OF TOBRUK NEUROSCIENCE FELLOWSHIP FUND



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 a 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

Ally Pekin, Planned Giving, RCH Foundation  
(03 9345 6389 or email: [Ally.Pekin@rch.org.au](mailto:Ally.Pekin@rch.org.au))







## RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION INC MERCHANDISE ORDER FORM

Item	Cost per Item	Quantity	Postage Yes/No	Postage	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			\$10		Postage for up to 2 badges to same address.
80 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Two-Up Set	\$17			Inc postage		
ROTA “baseball” style cap	\$20			\$10		
ROTA Bar Mat Runner	\$40			\$10		
Badge Car Window Sticker	\$10			Inc Postage		20% discount for more than one sticker.
ROTA Stubby Holder	\$9			\$6		\$10 postage for up to 6.
ROTA Rosewood Plaque	\$95			\$10		
Ladies Poppy Scarf (light weight) White	\$15			\$6		
Ladies Poppy Scarf (light weight) Dark Blue	\$15			\$6		
Ladies Poppy Scarf (light weight) Black	\$15			\$6		
Ladies Poppy Scarf (light weight) Grey	\$15			\$6		
<b>\$10 postage for orders of multiple items to the same address</b>			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: 013 223 Account No: 2102 51748

Payment can also be made by Credit or Debit Card.

To arrange this please ring our Merchandising Officer, Graeme Clifford: 0418 882 323

Purchaser's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_@\_\_\_\_\_

Delivery Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Please forward completed form to:

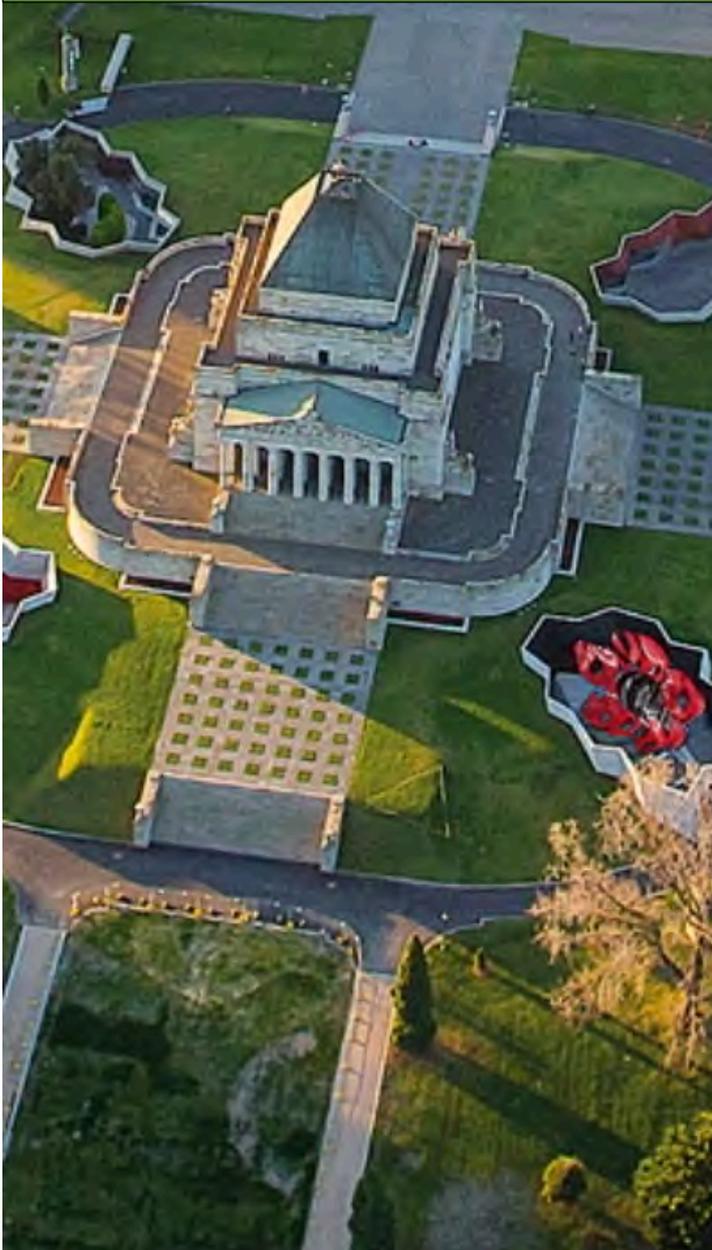
'Merchandise Officer, ROTA, 44 Victoria Av, Albert Park, Vic, 3206.'

If you pay by EFT or card, you can scan this form and email to: [ratsoftobruk41@gmail.com](mailto:ratsoftobruk41@gmail.com)

All enquiries to the Merchandise Officer (Graeme Clifford)

email: [ratsoftobruk41@gmail.com](mailto:ratsoftobruk41@gmail.com) Phone: 0418 882 323

# What's on at The Shrine



## IMAGINING CENTAUR



The tragic story of the Australian Hospital Ship Centaur, sunk on 14 May 1943. A series of charcoal drawings by celebrated artist Dean Bowen to commemorate the 268 innocent souls lost and the 64 brave individuals who survived.

## LUST LOVE LOSS



The complex issues surrounding matters of love and sex profoundly affect people everywhere, every day. Wartime is no exception. Indeed, the disruptive nature of war and the extraordinary situations it brings about magnifies human experience in these areas.

## CHANGED FOREVER Images of Conflict



Stories of migrants who have resettled in Australia from war-torn countries are presented beside those of recent veterans of overseas service in the Australian Defence Force. All have been redefined by the emotional and physical dislocation of war and seek to reconcile this with their new lives. Their personal stories reflect the range and depth of experiences in conflict and post-war. This moving exhibition explores the impacts of global and civil conflict in changing lives and shaping contemporary Australia.

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.