



Rat's Tales



Descendants of the Rats of Tobruk Australia Association Inc



THE SIEGE OF TOBRUK REMEMBERED



Rat's Tales Vol 2 Issue 4

Editors: Sue Trewartha
Chris Kelly

Dec 2025



In this edition:

Siege Anniversaries	1
Siege Anniversaries	2
Siege Anniversaries	3
80th Anniversary	4
80th Anniversary	5
85th Anniversary	6
85th Anniversary	7
Anniversary Book	8
Vale	9
DOTROTA	10

Contact:

PO Box 3389

Victoria Point West

Qld 4165 Australia

Email:

dotrota41@gmail.com

As we rush furiously around; starting, finishing and in the process of making projects work; the preparations for the 85th Anniversary of the Siege of Tobruk are well underway... Let's just reflect on the events of other Anniversary Reunions from past years. With thanks to Deb Goodwin for this story and photos.

"With our 85th Anniversary of the Siege of Tobruk World Reunion coming up in April 2026 and in keeping with the theme of Rats of Tobruk World Reunions I am writing a brief history of various reunions held from the 1980s. I was lucky to have been able to obtain booklets from some of those reunions and are using them to write this article. They were kept by Joe Madeley. The original booklets were scanned and are now in the safe keeping of Five Dock RSL Sub Branch.

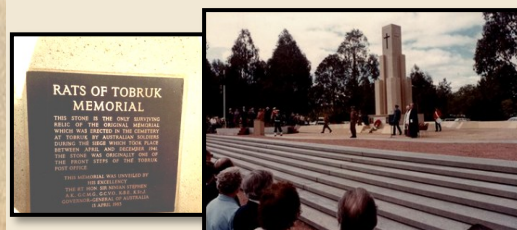
The reunions were called "World Reunions" because, while most attendees were Australian Rats, there were international members, ex-patriot Australians, British and Polish Rats who attended, so they were able to call it a World Reunion. I know of at least one reunion where descendants of the Afrika Korps attended. The first record I have of a world reunion of the Rats of Tobruk was in 1983, hosted by the Central Coast Sub Branch of the Rats of Tobruk, held from 5 - 11 April 1983. The first day of the reunion, 5 April, was the meeting of the 16th Federal Congress opened by Sir Colin Hines. The Federal Congress continued the next day followed by luncheon for Honorary Life Members. Thursday 7 April was spent registering by the attendees, followed by a Civic reception and dinner at the Central Coast Leagues Club, Gosford.

Friday 8 April, tours of Old Sydney Town and the Australian Reptile Park were organised followed by the World Reunion and 42nd Commemoration Dinner at the Central Coast Leagues Club, Gosford. On Saturday 9 April, a cruise of Brisbane Waters, courtesy of the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol was held with unofficial dinners at local Central Coast clubs

Sunday 10 April, Tobruk Sunday, a march through Gosford with The Right Hon Sir Victor Windeyer, KBE, CB, DSO, ED, taking the salute, a service at 11:00am followed by lunch at Central Coast Leagues Club, Gosford.

On Monday 11 April, the final day of the World Reunion, a tour of the Central Coast and BBQ lunch was organised. This World Reunion was attended by Rats travelling from all states of Australia, UK, America and New Zealand. Sadly, there were no photos.

Following the World Reunion functions, most of the attendees continued travelling to Canberra where the Rats of Tobruk Memorial was unveiled on Anzac Parade. The service took place at 11am and Governor-General Sir Ninian Stephen who unveiled the memorial. The Federal President of the Rats of Tobruk Association was Mr R F Bollard who spoke at the ceremony. The design of the memorial was based on the 1941 memorial in Tobruk War Cemetery. The original inscription stone is incorporated in the obelisk. The landscaped walls of the memorial symbolise the perimeter defences.



The next World Reunion was held at Surfers Paradise, Gold Coast, Qld, from 8 - 14 April 1986. The first day of the reunion, Tuesday 8 April was the meeting of 17th Federal Congress opened by Sir Albert Abbott CBE, and continued the next day, Wednesday 9 April, followed by a luncheon for Honorary Life Members at Surfers Paradise RSL. Thursday 10th April, at the Chevron Paradise Hotel Convention Centre, the day was spent registering by the attendees, the evening was a High Tea and hello to friends old and new. Friday 11th April, tours of Surfers Paradise and the Gold Coast by coach and boat, were followed by a Civic Reception and dinner at the Chevron Paradise Hotel Convention Centre. Saturday 9 April, was a day of various activities including going to the races, bowls or golf.



Rat's Tales



Descendants of the Rats of Tobruk Australia Association Inc



THE SIEGE OF TOBRUK REMEMBERED

Rat's Tales Vol 2 Issue 4

Editors: Sue Trewartha
Chris Kelly

Dec 2025



Wishing everyone a
joyous and peaceful
Christmas.



Contact:

PO Box 3389
Victoria Point West
Qld 4165 Australia

Email:
dotrota41@gmail.com



Back (one name missing, sorry); Bill Maher, WA, George Yates, NSW, Harry Vivers, Qld, Jack Wellington SA, Ken Rumbold, UK, Tom Lavery, Fed Sec. Middle: Fred Varsey, Ron Bollard, Vic, Joe Madeley NSW, Bill McEvoy, SA, Pat Boland, Vic, Carl Routley, Tas. Front: Dave West, NT, Doug Le Fevre, WA, Syd Toovey, Qld, Bill Cousins Qld, Harry Shawyer UK, Arthur Newton, ACT, Peter Yeowald, ACT.

The evening was the World Reunion and 45th Commemoration Dinner at the Chevron Paradise Hotel Convention Centre. The official address was given by Commodore Sir James Ramsay KGMC, KCVO, CBE, SO.

Sunday 10th April, Tobruk Sunday, a march through Surfers Paradise, commencing at the Surfers Paradise Surf Club to Appel Park for the service at 11:00hrs, wreaths were laid by representatives from every state and territory in Australia. This was followed by lunch at the Chevron Paradise Hotel Convention Centre, the guest speaker was General Sir Arthur MacDonald KBE, CB. Monday 14 April - the final day of the World Reunion, a farewell BBQ lunch and bus trip to Canungra Land Warfare Centre, with entertainment by the 1st Military District Band.

A farewell was printed in the souvenir booklet – *"The Chairman, organizing committee, our ladies and members of the Gold Coast Sub-Branch World Reunion Committee, thank our fellow Rats, their ladies, members from overseas and all states of Australia for joining us at this World Reunion and 45th Anniversary of the Siege of Tobruk and for accepting our invitation to "Come and Mix In '86"*

Goodbye, good health and thank you for being with us. Safe travels home."

The 1989 World Reunion was held at Launceston, Tasmania. The first day of the reunion, Wednesday 5th April, was the meeting of the 18th Federal Congress and addressed by Tom Walker, OBE, State President of the RSL, Tasmania.

Thursday 6th April saw the Life Member's Luncheon held at the Albert Hall. The evening was a Civic Reception hosted by the Mayor of Launceston at the Launceston Town Hall. Friday 7th April, was registration day at Albert Hall, where there was a meet and greet. That evening all gathered again at the Albert Hall for a get together meal.

Saturday 8th April, was a day of various activities including going to the races which ran the *Rats of Tobruk Handicap* with a trophy being donated by ROTA, a football match, a cruise on the Tamar River or the hospitality of the Sergeant's Mess at Paterson Barracks.



Front: Tom Lavery, Joe Thompson, Joe Madeley, Syd Toovey, Carl Routley, Bill Cousins, Jack Gormley, Pat Boland. Back: Doug Le Fevre, John O'Beirne, Bill Burlton, Jack Wellington, Tom Gardner, MBE, Harold Hampton, John O'Donnell, Ron Bollard, Horrie Veivers, Peter Yeoward, Ken Gillam. Absent Gordon Hughes.

The evening was the World Reunion and 48th Commemoration Dinner at the Albert Hall. The official address was given by the Tasmanian Governor General Sir Phillip Bennett AC, KBE, DSO, and surprise to attendees, was a recital by the St Andrews Caledonian Pipe Band.

Sunday 10th April, Tobruk Sunday, started with a march through Ulverstone to Tobruk Park, the salute was taken by the Commander of the 6th Military District, the service commenced at 11:00hrs.



Rat's Tales



Descendants of the Rats of Tobruk Australia Association Inc



THE SIEGE OF TOBRUK REMEMBERED

Rat's Tales Vol 2 Issue 4

Editors: Sue Trewartha
Chris Kelly

Dec 2025



Wishing everyone a
joyous and peaceful
Christmas.



Contact:

PO Box 3389

Victoria Point West

Qld 4165 Australia

Email:

dotrota41@gmail.com



Colonel Brian McAuley made an address, wreaths were laid, followed by a barbecue lunch at Shropshire Park provided by the local Lions Club. Monday 10th April, where everyone gathered at Albert Hall for their final farewells and tables and chairs were set up in City Park to cater for a smorgasbord lunch. After lunch, everyone returned to the Albert Hall for farewell speeches, and a representative from each state spoke.

The 1991 World Reunion was held in Sydney, NSW, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Siege, but the only information I could find about this reunion was obtained from newspaper articles. The first day of the reunion, Tuesday 9th April, was the meeting of the 19th Federal Congress and a Civic reception. Wednesday 10th April was the opening of a display of Tobruk memorabilia at the Westpac Bank building in Martin Place. Thursday 11th April during the day, a tour of Garden Island Naval Dockyard and that evening a Welcome dinner hosted by the Lord Mayor Jeremy Bingham, at The Round House, Revesby. Friday 12th April, unknown. Saturday



13th April. There was a race run at Randwick Racecourse called the *Tobruk Handicap*, won by a horse called Stargazer, trained by Gai Waterhouse, see photo left.

The evening was the World Reunion and 50th Commemoration Dinner at The Round House, Revesby. The Rats received a telegram from the Queen, which was read out at the dinner.

Sunday 14th April, Tobruk Sunday, a march, Oxford Street to Hyde Park, where a service was held at the

Anzac War Memorial, attended by the Governor, Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair. The Rats of Tobruk Memorial Pipes and Drums escorted the march and played at the service.



Front; Ken Gillam, Ron Bollard, Stan Cox, Mick Benson, Mack McLaren, Bill Cousins, Bill Mitchell. Back; Eric Bennenworth, Gordon Hughes, Bill Burlton, Trevor Macfarlane, Joe Madeley, Bill McEvoy, Jack Wellington, Marian Jackiewicz, Ken Baker.

The Rats and wives attended an anniversary lunch at Victoria Barracks with officials Admiral Sinclair, ROTA, NSW, Patron Maj Gen (ret), J R Broadbent and Land Commander Major General Murray Blake.

Many of the attendees continued travelling to Canberra where a time capsule was laid by Joe Madeley, Federal President, at the Rats of Tobruk Memorial in Canberra on 17 Apr 1991. 19th Congress meeting photo below.



Above; ROTA branches, Oxford Street, Sydney, led by Federal President, Joe Madeley.

Below; Tobruk Sunday service at Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park and the Tobruk Memorial Pipes and Drums at the Hyde Park Anzac War Memorial.



It was decided by the Federal Congress that the 50th Anniversary World Reunion would be the Rats last official world reunion as they were all "getting on".

But they must have changed their minds because there was a 60th Anniversary World Reunion held in Brisbane in April 2001, sadly I have no further details of the reunion but there is a photo of various ROTA office bearers. They produced a book which was an overview of the Siege of Tobruk and very informative, there were only 2000 printed and all were individually numbered. *Hope to see you at the 85th!!*

We Will Remember Them, Lest We Forget.



Rat's Tales



Descendants of the Rats of Tobruk Australia Association Inc



80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIEGE OF TOBRUK



Rat's Tales Vol 2 Issue 4

Editors: Sue Trewartha
Chris Kelly

Dec 2025



Wishing everyone a
joyous and peaceful
Christmas.



Contact:

PO Box 3389

Victoria Point West

Qld 4165 Australia

Email:

dotrota41@gmail.com



80th Anniversary of the Siege of Tobruk.

"The Descendants of the Rats of Tobruk Assoc Australia Inc have commemorated the 80th Anniversary of the Siege of Tobruk at Gaythorne RSL in Mitchelton, Qld. The Anniversary was planned for April 2021, but because of covid, postponed, another planned for Oct 2021, was also postponed. Finally, 200 Association members and VIPs, met on 8th, 9th, 10th April 2022.

This story cannot be written without mentioning the amazing dedication of Betty Murphy, descendant of Joseph Oakley, QX4796, 2/13th Fd RAE, her daughter Sarah Maas, and son Travis Murphy and the work they have done behind the scenes. Without them, this event would not have taken place. Our group of helpers, researchers and Rats descendants determined to keep the names of our Rats of Tobruk alive. Much preparation took



Volunteer researchers: L to r; Denise Dobinson, Sue Trewartha, Professor Graeme Nimmo, RFD, VIPS, Her Excellency, Governor of Queensland, The Hon Dr Jeanette Young, PSM, Ray Windlow, Martin Forsyth, Craig Proctor, Deb Goodwin.

Members from around Australia met on Friday 8 April at Gaythorne RSL Sub Branch, for a "Meet and Greet" session. People only known to each other on Facebook could now meet face to face.

At the dinner, guests found each table personally set. A menu including a 1941 Tobruk themed variation, sat at each placement, along with a box in the style of Ration Care Boxes sent to troops in WWII put together by Kaye Ross and the Tasmanian ladies.



On top of each Box was a hand crafted red poppy for each descendant, along with a "painted Rat Rock" some personalised for the particular person attending. They also received a DOTROTA bag and some goodies.

Saturday morning 20 helpers set up 8000 handmade red poppies in Sid Loder Park, opposite Gaythorne RSL. A map of Australia was formed around a large shady tree from handmade poppies made by members; hand stitched, crochet, or knitted, placed in garden beds around the Remembrance Wall where wreaths were laid at the Sunday service. Amazing work by Lucylu Simmons, who created life sized soldiers made of chicken wire, stood in front of panels of handmade poppies and used at the Dinner and at Sunday's Service.

Along with Her Excellency, Governor of Qld, The Hon Dr Jeanette Young, PSM, and her husband Professor Graeme Nimmo, RFD, VIPS included Airforce Group Captain Iain Carty CSN; Lt Col Craig Mann, Gallipoli Barracks; Captain Nick Woodley, RAN HMAS



National President of DOTROTA, Roger Murphy and The Hon Dr Jeanette Young, PSM.

RSL and Rev Howard Smith, who is DOTROTA Chaplain.



Moreton; Jan Tkaczyk, National President of Polish Ex Servicemen Australia; Kay Danes, OAM; Rupert McCall OAM; Ken Cullen, Gaythorne



Rat's Tales



Descendants of the Rats of Tobruk Australia Association Inc



80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIEGE OF TOBRUK

Rat's Tales Vol 2 Issue 4

Editors: Sue Trewartha
Chris Kelly

Dec 2025



Wishing everyone a
joyous and peaceful
Christmas.



Contact:

PO Box 3389

Victoria Point West

Qld 4165 Australia

Email:

dotrota41@gmail.com

National President and Vice President of DOTROTA, Roger Murphy and Sarah Maas and Ray Windlow, senior researcher, spoke of the work done by DOTROTA and what they hope to achieve, and recognised the work done by the small band of volunteer researchers. Greeting everyone at the entrance was a curtain of hand cut, hand strung "dog tags" of over 14000 names of men who served at Tobruk. These were hand strung into alphabetical rows of 60 and over 200 of these hung from racks so attendees could look for and find their Rat. This amazing work was carried out over two years by Sarah Maas, co-founder of the Descendants Association, with help from Lynda Monaghan and others. After they had been allocated tables, people had a photo taken in front of a "Descendants" banner.



On Sunday, it was a very moving scene at the Service. Descendants of our Rats marched in with twenty Unit Flags showing Units that served at the Siege of Tobruk, to the music of *Can You Hear The Australian Heroes Marching* by Peter Barnes. Next morning the "Voices of Birralelee" choir, welcomed DOTROTA members and the general public to Sid Loder Park, opposite Gaythorne RSL. Once again cameras clicked endlessly, photographing the planted poppies and standing and kneeling soldier statues and all the wreaths on display, creating a sentimental setting for the Service. There are four No Surrender roses in the garden behind the memorial wall.



Descendants took numerous photos of the wreaths laid for their units. A poignant display of Unit Flags completed the scene.

The Catafalque Party was mounted near the dais and after a *Prayer of Remembrance* by



Rev Howard Smith, he blessed the Tobruk Fig Tree.

Pride of place in this park was the Tobruk fig tree in a large planter box, a cutting from the original "Fig Tree" at the Regimental Aid Post near Tobruk.

Sarah Maas spoke of the Fig Tree, saying the one there was a "descendant of a descendant". The Tobruk Fig Tree was gifted to the people of Brisbane from the Descendants of the Rats of Tobruk Australia and the family of the late Rat of Tobruk Veteran, Walter Gordon Wallace, one of Queensland's last known Rats of Tobruk who he died on 20 July 2020 at the age of 98 years. The tree was grown in the back yard of Gordon and Trish Wallace at Keperra, Brisbane, and relocated to Sid Loder Park, Mitchelton. A cutting from the tree in Tobruk had been brought back to Australia and planted at Rocky Creek on the Atherton Tablelands, North Queensland, as a living memorial to the many who served at Tobruk. It was from this tree in Rocky Creek that Gordon was able to procure a cutting which flourished under his care and held pride of place in his back yard until the home was sold and the tree removed to Sid Loder Park. A large group gathered for a light luncheon, with much mingling, everyone excited and sentimental about not only the beautiful Service but the events taken place over the whole three days. We all learnt something new about the Rats of Tobruk, made new friends and left with a feeling of "this is our family".

AND HERE WE ARE, NOW WORKING TOWARDS THE 85TH ANNIVERSARY. Hope to see you there.



Rat's Tales



Descendants of the Rats of Tobruk Australia Association Inc



85TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIEGE OF TOBRUK



**85TH
ANNIVERSARY
OF THE SIEGE OF
TOBRUK
10 TO 12 APRIL
2026.**

**MEMBERS CAN
REGISTER NOW!**

Email:

dotrota41@gmail.com

**TICKETS ARE ALREADY
SELLING FAST!**



Special Event Invitation for Early Bird Registration.

We warmly invite all descendants of the Rats of Tobruk to join us for the 85th Anniversary Reunion weekend, which will be held in Sydney from 10 April 2026 to 12 April 2026. This event presents a unique opportunity to connect with fellow descendants, share historical stories, view treasured memorabilia, and honour the legacy of those who served during the Siege of Tobruk.

Over three days, attendees will enjoy a range of activities, including talks from guest speakers, engaging displays, and many opportunities to meet and share experiences with other families. We encourage everyone to bring their stories and be part of a welcoming community committed to remembering and celebrating the Rats of Tobruk.

Registration Information.

Registration and payment for the Reunion, scheduled from 10th to 12th April 2026, includes attendance at all official events. This covers the Saturday night dinner and a light lunch after the commemorative service on Sunday. Each participant will also receive a special Rats Goodies Bag. Please note that drinks are not included and will be at your own expense.

Event Overview.

The 85th Anniversary Reunion is hosted by the Descendants of the Rats of Tobruk Australia Association Inc, at the Five Dock RSL Sub-Branch, 66 Great North Road, Five Dock, NSW, 2046. This special occasion brings together descendants, families, friends and supporters from across Australia and the world. The weekend offers an opportunity to reconnect, share stories and memorabilia, and pay tribute to those who bravely served.

The Commemorative Service on Sunday morning, at Five Dock War Memorial, Cnr Park Rd and First Ave, Five Dock, NSW, 2046. The main entry is First Ave.

We are privileged to have Renowned Violinist Rachael Bostock again playing the last post and Reveille. Those who attended the 80th Anniversary reunion would remember her and the moving sounds of the violin.

How to Register.

To attend the 85th Anniversary of the Siege of Tobruk Reunion, contact DOTROTA.

dotrota41@gmail.com

About the Venue Information.

Five Dock RSL Bus pick up and drop, within 5km of club radius.

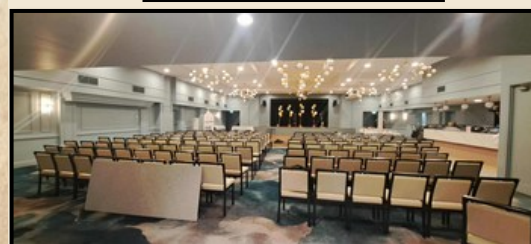
Car Parking across the road.

Accommodation.

* Quality Inn Sunshine Haberfield, 169-173 Parramatta Rd, Haberfield. (from \$161 approx)

* Garden Lodge Sydney, 17 Parramatta Rd Haberfield. (from \$154 approx)

* Crown Plaza Burwood, 60 Burwood Rd. Burwood. (from \$212 approx).



Financial members can register early for this event. Make sure you don't miss out!



Rat's Tales



Descendants of the Rats of Tobruk Australia Association Inc

85TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIEGE OF TOBRUK

SO WHAT IS HAPPENING AT THE REUNION?

Programme of Events

Friday, 10 April 2026

Meet and Greet session

6.00pm AUDITORIUM

Meet and Greet session and 85th Commemorative Book Launch at Five Dock RSL.

Drinks and Dinner at own expense.

Saturday, 11 April 2026

Get together

1.00pm to 3.00pm

Five Dock RSL Sports Bar

(Drinks and Lunch at own expense)

Special presentation by Researcher, Ray Windlow, focusing on Descendants of the Rats of Tobruk Association research activities, and the work they do, with updates on projects including Digital Museum and Grave Mapping initiatives.

Remembrance Dinner

6.00pm AUDITORIUM

Sneak preview of 85th Project.

Special presentation by Researcher Ray Windlow focusing on association research activities.

Opportunity to mingle, reconnect, share stories and memorabilia.
(Drinks at own expense.)

Sunday, 12th April 2026

Commemorative Service at Five Dock War Memorial

11.00am Five Dock War Memorial
Crn Park and First Avenue, Sydney.

Dedication of the relocated NSW Rats of Tobruk Memorial

Planting of a Tobruk Fig Tree

Unveiling of the 85th Anniversary Project

Renowned violinist Rachael Bostock

Farewell Sunday after Service

Following the service, a light lunch will be provided at Five Dock RSL.

AUDITORIUM

(Drinks at own expense)



Christmas 1942.

Left: "Lt Col W J Wain who poured out the beer and handed the biggest one to CO, Lt-Col William Crellin, VX14029, 2/43rd."

Below; 2/43rd Christmas 1942, unknown men.



WHAT'S ON?





Rat's Tales



Descendants of the Rats of Tobruk Australia Association Inc

85TH ANNIVERSARY BOOK by Sue Trewartha

As the committee started planning and thinking about the 85th Anniversary of the Siege of Tobruk, we talked about the handbook/souvenir programme that was done for the 80th Anniversary Reunion.

It was A5 size about 40 pages and contained information, with written permission, used at the 60th Anniversary Reunion about the history of the Siege of Tobruk. *...but none of us are qualified to write about that.*

Included as well were stories and photos of the 18 Rats of Tobruk still living at the time. Even between the writing of that publication and the time the Reunion could actually go ahead due to covid, some Rats had passed. Now sadly we have no Rats of Tobruk still living. *What could we do to honour our Rats at this Reunion.*

Perhaps we could ask the Rats of Tobruk descendants on our Association Facebook page, to write a short story about their Rat and we could put them together in a small A5 booklet, to be included in the programme with other interesting bits and pieces. Perhaps we would get 40, or perhaps even 50 people to take part.

So, in March 2025, posts were put on the Face Book page to gauge what interest there would be in this project.

Before long, and with people wanting further information about how big the story could be, what sort of information were we looking for and could they add photos to the stories, we had to rethink just what we could handle to achieve this end, *a book of memories...*

So it was decided that the book would be upgraded to A4 size, and that each story would be one page to each soldier's story. The stories would be generally in alphabetical order. And isn't it interesting that the first story in and completed is the surname Yeomans, was the last in the book and still is. A poignant story that will gladden the hearts of those who read it and be sure to show just what work goes on in the background over many years.

We asked for the story to be written in the descendants words, and to fit the page, we asked for around 850ish words in a Word document. That many words allowed four to six small photos to fit.

More words meant less photos. We were happy to have stories about his life before and after, including war service, or just about his war service. What ever the Descendant wanted to share.

We needed to edit parts and various unnecessary words to make the story fit on the page and columns but mostly we wanted wording will go in as is, the descendants words.

We offered help to those who were having trouble putting something together, as some didn't have access to service records and knew very little about their Rat's service. Because of the work involved we needed stories by the cut off date of 31 July 2025. In April, with the layout planned, I added the 15 stories already received.

As stories were emailed to me, they were set out in the book in three columns and because some people didn't have a lot to share, some pages contain two or three stories per page. All other stories are in alphabetical order.

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to write up their Rats story and share that and photos with us. Yes some stories are scrunched up, with words abbreviated, to make them fit, but we wanted to get in as much as we could. Also please don't criticise the quality of the photos, despite some being not the clearest, sometimes that is all people have and we felt it important to put them in. Thank you to those also who reached out for help with their stories, we understand how hard it is as most men did not talk about their service after the war, and it has been an amazing journey of learning as we found more and more about not only the personal lives of these brave soldiers but a little more about what they went through. Thank you to those researchers outside our team, who dedicated time and energy finding Tobruk soldiers in their community to share with us. A HUGE thank you goes to all my helpers and my sister who has created the back cover for us.

While the book is not quite completed, it will make the deadline for printing and arriving at the Five Docks RSL ready for the launch on 10 April 2026.

Then, what to call the book... *sorry out of room, you will have to wait and see...*



A LITTLE ABOUT THE BOOK





Rat's Tales



Descendants of the Rats of Tobruk Australia Association Inc

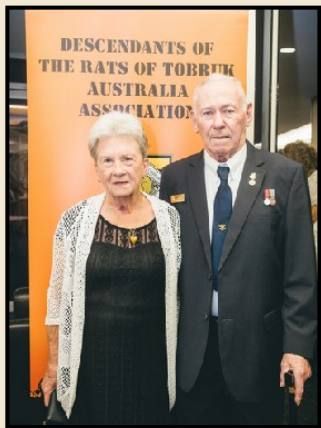
REST IN PEACE

Owen CARLTON and Maurveen CARLTON

In February 2023, DOTROTA were delighted to announce awards of Life Membership of the Association to Owen and Maurveen CARLTON. Owen and his partner in life Maurveen spent many, many years in various veteran and remembrance organisations involved in honouring and researching soldiers who have fought in past conflicts to ensure the future of this country of which they are both very proud citizens.

Owen CARLTON, Ex Service, Nasho of 3/1953 at Wacol, Qld and "A" Company, 51st Battalion, Far North Queensland Regiment was based at Atherton, Nth Qld, till December 1955 and moved to Melbourne after leaving the Army. He became involved with the Rats of Tobruk, Melbourne, not being aware at that time, that he was a nephew of a Rat of Tobruk, Eric Noel "Ringer" CARLTON QX1733.

Around 2009, Owen commenced what is known as the National ROT Database, which has over 21,000 records for Aust, UK and Polish Rats of Tobruk. Working alongside Roger Murphy, he meticulously gathered and compiled the names of men who served. Through their tireless commitment and passion, he established an enduring and invaluable record - one that now forms the foundation of the database used by DOTROTA's volunteer researchers. Owen commenced his Rats of Tobruk Tribute Website to display the Honour Rolls for all Rats of Tobruk.



He became associated with the founders of the "Descendants of the Rats of Tobruk Australia Assoc" (DOTROTA) and as time went on, provided access to the National ROT Database.

"I wish now, that I could have started my ROT Project much earlier in life and had the opportunity to have met and known many more Rats. We will never see the likes of the Rats of Tobruk and the Men of Kokoda, again – the mould has been broken and lost in time," Owen said.

Since 2008, Owen and Roger devoted countless hours to honouring and preserving the memory of the Rats of Tobruk.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

DOTROTA wishes to acknowledge and express our deepest gratitude to Owen Carlton.

Our work today would be far more difficult without his dedication. His work has ensured that the legacy of the Rats of Tobruk will continue to be remembered for many generations to come.

Owen, your work continues.

28 Sept 2025. Rest in Peace.



KEN CLARK was half brother to George Victor CLARK, TX465, 2/3rd Fd Coy. DOTROTA would like to acknowledge all the work Ken has done quietly researching the Rats of Tobruk from Tasmania over many years. He also over recent times, has worked helping Kaye Ross find nurses on hospital ships in and out of Tobruk.

His half brother was a Rat, killed in action before Ken was born. See his story in the upcoming 85th anniversary book.

Below is a photo of the helicopter in Scottsdale RSL Museum, Tasmania, that Ken wired up to play the sound of its motor, running whenever anyone stepped into it. He wanted children to hear it. Also a photo of one of the dioramas he made for the museum. These things done while he was almost blind!

He was an incredibly talented inventor including making a water operated clothes line and garage door operated by his car head lights, both which his family still chuckle about. Ken lived in Scottsdale and was an ambulance driver. A true gentle man and loving husband and father.

He died on Remembrance Day,
11 Nov 2025.

Thank you and Rest in Peace Ken.



Soldiers made by Lucyly Simmons and set among handmade poppies arranged in the Sid Loder Park, opposite Gaythorne RSL, Brisbane, Qld.

A; Sunday Service. Kevin Trewartha and Martin Forsyth.

B; Owen and Maurveen, at the Sunday Service.



Rat's Tales

Descendants of the Rats of Tobruk Australia Association Inc

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.

Disclaimer
The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of DOTROTA. 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.

Promotional Photos:
At the Association's functions, photos may be taken for promotional purposes and publication. By attending any of these functions you give permission for the use of your image in the manner described above.

DOTROTA MEMBERSHIP

We invite and encourage you to join the "Descendants of The Rats of Tobruk Australia Association" (DOTROTA) as a financial member. You will receive an Association metal badge, stickers and certificate of membership as well as discount on merchandise you order from the website.

Cost of membership is \$20 annually. Costs of running the Association are many, membership fees are important if you wish this group to continue with these valuable projects. Easiest way to join is by going to the website and click on **MEMBERSHIP**.

Sadly, with no known Rats of Tobruk alive, it is up to us to come together as one family and keep their memories alive for future generations. *Please support this Association.*

**THINK HOW PROUD YOUR RAT WOULD BE TO SEE YOU ARE A
FINANCIAL MEMBER OF AN ASSOCIATION TO KEEP HIS NAME ALIVE.**



WE ARE ON THE WEB! <https://www.ratsoftobruk.com.au>

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT THIS ASSOCIATION?



Support the work we do!
If you or your company would like make a donation to remember the mighty Rats please contact us or donate here.
Donation Account DOTROTA
Bsb: 124-001
Acct: 22 920 419
We appreciate your support.

PO Box 3389
Victoria Point West
Qld 4165 Australia
Email: dotrota41@gmail.com

Welcome to our eighth newsletter. Anniversary commitments are keeping this one pretty short! As founders of this Association, Sarah and I, along with committee and researchers, would like to extend warmest wishes for a wonderful, memorable Christmas season for everyone. As the year comes to a close, enjoy some special time with friends and loved ones, cherish those moments, find joy in little things this Christmas, and remember to be good to yourself. We wish you health, peace and happiness in the coming year. For those unable to get home or be with family for some reason, our kindest thoughts are with you. *Seasons greetings from DOTROTAs committee and researchers: Roger Murphy, Debra Goodwin, Sarah Maas, Betty Murphy, Carol Smith, Christine Kelly, Craig Proctor, Ray Windlow, Martin Forsyth, Sue Trewartha, Denise Dobinson, Matt McHugh, Kaye Ross, Tas Delegate, Bruce Muller, North Qld Delegate.*

Hope you've been saving up for 85th Anniversary of the Siege of Tobruk. It will be held on 10, 11, 12 April 2026 at Five Dock RSL, Sydney. *We are busy planning and organizing, its going to be a special event and a great place to meet descendants. LOVE to see you there. You need to book early.* Thank you to those who have sent in stories of their Rats to go in the Anniversary book put together by Sue Trewartha.

As we are non profit, we rely on those who are interested, to become financial members to cover Association costs. Its easy to do this on the website! Thank you everyone for your continued support, please contact us if you have something to offer to help in some way. If you are researching information about your Rat and his unit, let us know, we are happy to help out. We encourage you to write up your relative's service records and information for your descendants. So please, can you not only dig around in your cupboards, drawers and those tin boxes, to find and share your precious photos, diaries, memorabilia and letters, but write up and record what you have about your Rat, to ensure our future generations know something of what the Rats of Tobruk endured during their war service.

Imagine how many stories would be preserved if we all did this! Please encourage other descendants you know to join with this group, it is a great way to make sure our Rats are never forgotten.

And psstt... We've heard that Santa Claus is coming to town!

Betty Murphy & Sarah Maas

