

QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

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RATS OF TOBRUK ASSOCIATION, NORTHERN SUB-BRANCH COLLECTION

War Veterans, Northern Tasmania

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INTRODUCTION

The Rats of Tobruk Association, Northern Sub-branch, was established in 1946, following the formation of the Rats of Tobruk Association in Tasmania in July 1945.

Material in the collection dates from 1964. Regular monthly meetings were held by the Northern Sub-branch at the RSL Headquarters, Anzac Hostel/House in Paterson Street, from at least 1972 until 1990, then for some months at the Newstead Hotel before moving to Kings Meadows Hotel, and finally to Anzac House, Wellington Street. An annual Tobruk luncheon and pre Christmas function at the Longford RSL Club were held. The Sub-branch was represented at community activities associated with ex-service personnel, particularly at Cenotaph commemorations and a close association was maintained with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Schools were also visited. For some years the *Rats Review*, published by the Tasmanian Rats of Tobruk Association from 1948, was edited by a member of the Northern Sub-branch. In the late 1990s meetings were held every three months, with members enjoying monthly counter lunches at various hotels during the intervening months.

The Rats of Tobruk Association world convention and reunion was held in Launceston in 1989. That year the Northern Sub-branch established the Tobruk Bursary to be awarded to a boy and girl in their final primary school year who contributed in some worthy way to the general welfare of the school. The initial awards were made at the Charles Street Primary School in 1990.

The Northern Sub-branch first Rats flag was placed in the Warrior Chapel at St Marks on the Hill Church, Launceston, and a new flag, dedicated in 1994, for use at events such as Anzac Day marches, was stored at the Launceston Army Barracks in 2002.

Due to the advancing age of members, it was decided to close the Tasmanian branch of the Association in 1999. However in 2000, Northern Sub-branch members requested and obtained permission from the Federal Council to form a new Rats of Tobruk Association, to be called the Tasmanian State Branch. Because of declining membership, the Tasmanian State Branch of the Rats of Tobruk Association closed on 30 June 2004. The Tobruk bursaries were then to be administered by the Tasmanian Perpetual Trustees.

The collection was donated to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in August 2004.

1. Legal Records

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|-----|---|------|
| 1/1 | Rats of Tobruk Association, Federal Council, constitution and rules | 1965 |
| 1/2 | Rats of Tobruk Association, Tasmanian Branch, constitution, rules & by-laws | 2000 |

2. Minutes of Meetings

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|-----|--|------------|
| 2/1 | Rats of Tobruk Association, Northern Sub-branch, minutes of meetings, 1971-1976, 1978-1984 | 1971-1984 |
| 2/2 | Minutes of meetings | 1985-1989 |
| 2/3 | Minutes of meetings | 1990-1994 |
| 2/4 | Minutes of meetings | 1995-2000 |
| 2/5 | Rats of Tobruk Association, Tasmanian State Branch, minutes of meetings, May 2000, February 2004; audit report 31 December 2003-30 June 2004 | 2000, 2004 |

3. Correspondence

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|-----|---|-----------|
| 3/1 | Rats of Tobruk Association, Northern Sub-branch, correspondence etc, 1983, 1988-1991, 1993-2000 | 1983-2000 |
| 3/2 | Rats of Tobruk Association, Tasmanian State Branch, correspondence | 2000-2004 |

4. Annual Reports

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|-----|--|-----------|
| 4/1 | Rats of Tobruk Association, Northern Sub-branch, annual reports, 1984/85, 1989/90, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1995/96, 1997/98, 1998/99, 1999 | 1984-1999 |
| 4/2 | Rats of Tobruk Association, Tasmanian State Branch, annual reports, 2000/01, 2002, 2004 | 2000-2004 |

5. Financial Records

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|-----|---|-----------|
| 5/1 | Rats of Tobruk Association, Northern Sub-branch, account book (includes names of members) | 1964-1982 |
| 5/2 | Rats of Tobruk Association, Northern Sub-branch/Tasmanian State Branch, record of subscriptions book (includes recipients of Polish | 1969-2003 |

Medal, 1992)

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|-----|---|-----------|
| 5/3 | Rats of Tobruk Association, Northern Sub-branch, account book (includes names of members) | 1982-1985 |
| 5/4 | Account book (includes names of members) | 1985-1988 |
| 5/5 | Account book (includes names of members) | 1988-1995 |

6. Miscellaneous Items

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|------|--|-----------------|
| 6/1 | Rats of Tobruk Association, registrations for 1989 Launceston world convention, 1988; typed copy of address by Sir Phillip Bennett at Albert Hall reunion dinner | 1988-1989 |
| 6/2 | Rats of Tobruk Association, scrapbook of newspaper cuttings re 1989 world convention held in Launceston | 1989 |
| 6/3 | Rats of Tobruk Association, Northern Sub-branch, typed information re Tobruk Scholarship | 1989 |
| 6/4 | Tasmanian Rats of Tobruk Association, <i>Rats Review</i> , Jan/Feb 1991, Jan/Feb 1998, Jan/Feb, March/April, May/June, July/Aug, Sept/Oct, Nov/Dec 1999 | 1991, 1998-1999 |
| 6/5 | Rats of Tobruk Association, minutes etc of federal congress, Melbourne, 1997; Brisbane, 2001; Melbourne, 2003 | 1997-2003 |
| 6/6 | Rats of Tobruk Association, Tasmanian Branch, items re Polish Medal and Polish Ex-servicemen, for consideration at 1999 federal congress | 1999 |
| 6/7 | Rats of Tobruk Association, Northern Sub-branch, typed information re Wladyslaw Frelek; undated photocopy of newspaper article by Freda Frelek concerning Polish soldiers who migrated to Tasmania; list of Launceston Polish Rats of Tobruk, nd | 1999, nd |
| 6/8 | 'Anzac Day, 2000: a tribute to the Rats of Tobruk', typescript of address given at Prospect High School | 2000 |
| 6/9 | Kings Meadows High School, program for Anzac Service | nd |
| 6/10 | 'How the Rats got their name'; 'The story of the cheese'; 'Tobruk', re commemorative plaque and fig trees in Launceston's Royal Park (each a one page typescript) | nd |

- 6/11 'Flags fly in honour of war veterans', newspaper cutting re consecration of flags at St Mark's on the Hill nd
- 6/12 'The Rats of Tobruk Association Launceston', 12 x 7.5 cm colour photograph of emblem nd

OTHER SOURCES

A L Graeme-Evans, *Of storms and rainbows: the story of the men of the 2/12th Battalion A.I.F.*, Hobart, vol.1, 1989, vol.2, 1991