

## Medals of a Rat of Tobruk

### Official Awarded Medals

*Around the edge of these Service Medals is inscribed the Service Number and Names of the recipient.*

### **1939-1945 Star**

The 1939-45 Star is awarded for service between 3 September 1939 and 2 September 1945 for:

- a period of six months (180 days) operational service for RAN and Army personnel and RAAF non-air crew personnel
- a period of two months operational service for air crew personnel
- a period of six months service at sea for Merchant Navy provided at least one voyage was made through one of the specified areas of active operations

The 1939-45 Star is awarded to Australian Civilian Personnel who served afloat with the United States Army Small Ships Section between 8 December 1941 and 2 September 1945. Eligibility is the same as that for Merchant Navy personnel. See



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## Africa Star

The Africa Star was granted for operational service in North Africa from the date of the entry of Italy into the war on 10 June 1940, up to the date of the cessation of operations against the enemy in North Africa on 12 May 1943.

The Africa Star may also be awarded for operational service as a member of the Australian Defence Force during the Syrian Campaign in the period from 8 June 1941 to 11 July 1941.

The Africa Star is awarded for a minimum of one days operational service in North Africa, west of the Suez Canal between 10 June 1940 and 12 May 1943 and in Syria between 8 June 1941 and 11 July 1941.

## Clasps

Three clasps were issued for the Africa Star:

- 8 th Army ( for El Alamein )
- 1 st Army
- North Africa 1942-43

Only one clasp is worn and when the ribbon is worn alone a ribbon emblem, '8', '1' or silver rosette as appropriate is worn to denote the award of a clasp.



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## **Pacific Star**

The Pacific Star is awarded for entry into operational service in the Pacific Theatre of Operations between 8 December 1941 and 2 September 1945.

Navy and Merchant Navy personnel are eligible if the 1939-45 Star is earned by six months service or if they entered the Pacific Theatre between 2 March 1945 and 2 September 1945.

The Pacific Star is awarded to Australian Civilian Personnel who served afloat with the United States Army Small Ships Section. Eligibility is the same as that for Merchant Navy personnel.



## Defence Medal

The Defence Medal is awarded for six months service in a prescribed non-operational area subject to enemy air attack or closely threatened, in Australia and overseas, or for 12 months service in non-prescribed non-operational areas.

Within Australia the area is the Northern Territory, north of 14 degrees 30 minutes south, and the Torres Strait Islands between 3 September 1939 and 2 September 1945.

Overseas service includes the Middle East, east of the Suez Canal (less the period of the Syrian Campaign) or Malaya prior to the Japanese invasion on 8 December 1941.

The ribbon is orange with green outer stripes, each green stripe having a black pin-stripe running down the centre. The green represents the Islands of the United Kingdom, the orange represents enemy attacks, and the black represents the black outs.



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## War Medal 1939-1945

The War Medal 1939-45 was awarded for 28 days full-time service in the Armed Forces between 3 September 1939 and 2 September 1945. Operational and non-operational service may be counted, providing that it was of 28 days or more duration.

In the Merchant Navy there is a requirement that the 28 days should have been served at sea.

A member qualifies for the award where service was brought to an end by death, wounds or other disabilities due to service or by cessation of hostilities on 2 September 1945.

The War Medal 1939-45 is awarded to Australian Civilian Personnel who served afloat with the United States Army Small Ships Section between 8 December 1941 and 2 September 1945. Eligibility is the same as that for Merchant Navy personnel.



## Australia Service Medal 1939-1945

The Australia Service Medal 1939-1945 was instituted in 1949 to recognise the service of members of the Australian Armed Forces and the Australian Mercantile Marine during World War II.

The medal was originally awarded to those who served at home or overseas for at least 18 month full-time service, or three years part-time service, between 3 September 1939 and 2 September 1945. Members of the Australian Mercantile Marine must have served the qualifying time at sea.

In 1996 the qualifying time was reduced to 30 days full-time or 90 days part-time service. To be eligible for the medal a serviceman or woman must have been honourably discharged from the Australian Armed Forces.



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## Returned from Active Service Badge

The purpose of the Returned from Active Service Badge (RASB) is to recognise Australian Defence Force members who have returned from active or warlike service during military campaigns in operational areas.

The RASB is not issued posthumously.

Some badges were issued with production numbers on the reverse. These are not recorded by the Directorate of Honours and Awards and current stocks do not have numbers.



## Un-Official Medals

### Triangular Lord Haw Haw Medal

Visitors to the Memorial's exhibition Rats of Tobruk 1941 will have noticed the unofficial Rats of Tobruk medal presented, according to its engraving, by Lord Haw Haw. Around twenty of these medals were made at Tobruk, which illustrates one of the earliest examples of the town's defenders reclaiming the title 'Rat', bestowed on them by the propaganda radio program 'Germany Calling'. Visitors may also notice the brasso caked around the small copper rat on this medal, the result of many years of cleaning. This perhaps gives an idea of the importance of this object in the life of its owner, John Joseph Murray, who commanded 20 Brigade at Tobruk. The care lavished on this object certainly accords with views expressed during Murray's own lifetime about the pride he felt in having participated in this pivotal campaign. But this medal, while illustrating a highly significant period in Murray's service career, does not give a full view of the breadth of his service. For a better appreciation of his distinguished career, we must turn to another set of objects, Murray's medal group, which have recently gone on display in the Memorial's Second World War gallery.

"... with the soldiers hunkered down in trenches and in caves such as these, a Radio Berlin announcer ( Lord Haw Haw ) dismissed the Australians as the "rats of Tobruk", drawing a parallel with rodents burrowing underground. Designed to bolster German propaganda and destroy Australian morale, the name was instead quickly adopted by the Australians as a badge of honour. One of the most famous photos of the siege shows a Bren gun carrier adorned with the words "Rats to you". The Australians also amused themselves by designing an unofficial medal from the metal of a downed German plane with a rat as its centrepiece."

To read the Full Story; go to this Link – Right Click and select Open Hyperlink.

( <https://www.smh.com.au/world/rats-to-you-20070421-gdpy41.html> )

This Medal was created in the Field by the Troops, from Brass Shell Casings and scrap aluminium collected from crashed aircraft.





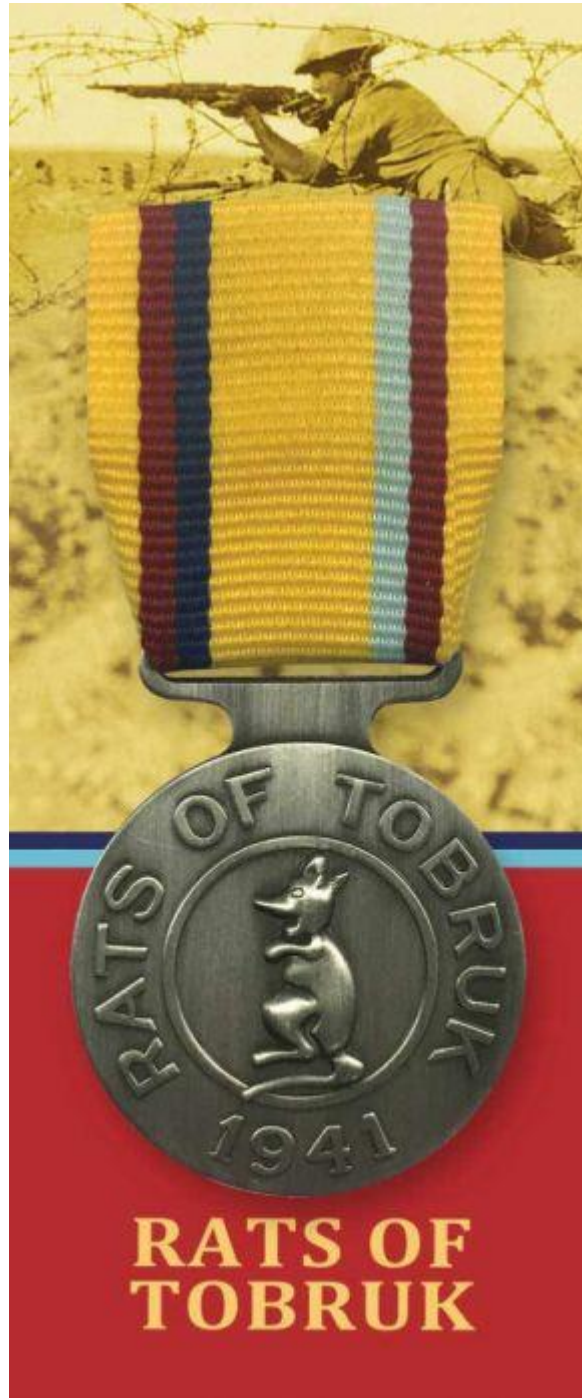
AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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## Rats of Tobruk Medal

It is understood that the Rats of Tobruk Medal was created by Engineers (RAE) in the Field and was provided to Rats of Tobruk Engineers (RAE)



This Medal had the details of the Rat of Tobruk Recipient and a Badge Number on the rear face. To my knowledge, there is no list of the Badge Numbers or Recipients.

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## **“T” Tobruk Siege Medal**

The **“T” Tobruk Siege Medal**, often called the “T” Medal or the Tin Medal, was created in 1977, by the Rats of Tobruk Association (ROTA) and was issued by ROTA Branches to Member Rats of Tobruk.

This is an Unofficial Medal – not an Awarded Medal from the Government.

It was initially intended for wearing on the Left Breast, but in more recent times, has been allowed to be worn on the Left Breast, separate from the Awarded Medals.



This Medal has inscribed on its rear face, the Service Number or Names of the Rats of Tobruk Recipient.

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