

Staff Sergeant Ronald (Ron) Leslie Williamson
VX15131, 7 Div: 2/6 General Transport Company
Rat of Tobruk
4th December 1918 – 10th June 2016, 97 years of age.
Past President of ROTA



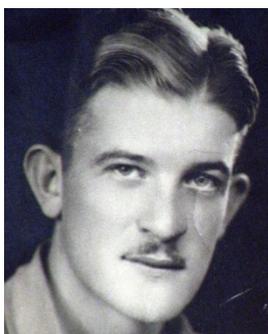
Ron was born in the eastern suburb of Surrey Hills in Melbourne in 1918. As a 3 year old, he moved to Hobart, Tasmania, where his father had purchased a business selling new cars. After 6 years, Ron's father sold the business and returned to Melbourne due to his wife's failing health. When WW2 broke out, Ron was in the militia, 3rd Div ASC Transport. Ron enlisted in May 1940 as a private in the 7th Division, 2/6 General Transport Company. He was promoted to staff sergeant before leaving Australia.



In October 1940, Ron's company sailed on the original Queen Mary to the Middle East. Early in May 1941, the men were assembled in Alexandria and prepared to sail to Greece because Hitler had commenced the invasion of this country. However, plans were changed; they headed for Cairo to pick up 25 pounder artillery guns and tow them up the desert towards Tobruk. Rommel and his Panzer Division had crossed the Mediterranean Sea at Tripoli and were moving towards the Suez Canal. As the 2/6 General Transport Company moved towards Tobruk, they were met by endless convoys of allied troops in retreat calling to them to "Go back, go back! The Germans are coming!". However, the 2/6 General Transport Company had their orders so kept going; they were able to deliver the guns to the Royal Horse Artillery just beyond Tobruk, who used them to destroy the German Tank Panzer Division intent on invading Tobruk; the rest is history.



After being relieved from the Tobruk siege, the 2/6 General Transport Company's next job was to service the troops on the Turkish border from Aleppo, Syria. When Japan declared war, Ron's company were hurriedly deployed back to Australia where they retrained in Far North Queensland before heading to Milne Bay, New Guinea as part of the 18th Brigade. The Japanese were invading Milne Bay and were soon defeated by this famous brigade. This was the Japan's first defeat on land in WW2. Ron and his unit's last role of the war in the Pacific was to participate in the invasion of Borneo at Balikpapan.



After the war and back in civilian life, Ron resumed employment with Brashs Music, a company he had worked for before the war. Brashs was a Melbourne institution which sold pianos, other musical instruments, sheet music and vinyl records. Ron was very successful, and he retired as managing director in 1983.

Ron was an integral member of the Rats of Tobruk Association. He became President in 2011 and remained in this role until his death in June 2016. He became famous for his jokes, which he would tell at the monthly meetings of the association. If there was one word to describe Ron, it would have to be 'gentleman'.

Go to the following link to watch a video of an interview with Ron Williamson:

australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/57-ronald-williamson