



Speech By  
**Robert Skelton**


**MEMBER FOR NICKLIN**

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**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Nambour Museum; Anzac Day**

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (2.50 pm): I acknowledge the contributions of the members for Hinchinbrook and Aspley; I am speaking on the same topic. Today I rise to honour the great work of the Nambour Museum. I offer my thanks to the president, Clive Plater; the vice-president, Cherry Powell; and the treasurer, Brooke McMahon. It was my pleasure to visit the museum last week, on 17 April. It was also very special to be guided by these wonderful volunteers on a tour of the history of our region.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the siege of Tobruk, a battle that was Nazi Germany's first defeat on land in World War II. The Australian 9th Division and Royal Horse Artillery held this town for eight long months. This earned them the name the Rats of Tobruk, so called by German propaganda at the time. They wore this name as a badge of honour, in typical dry Australian humour.

Mr Gordon Wallace, the last president of the Rats of Tobruk Association, Queensland branch and one of Queensland's few surviving veterans of that campaign, died last year on 20 July. Mr Wallace was 17 and lied about his age when he enlisted in the Army. He served with the 2nd/15th Battalion of the 9th Division. He lived to 98 and was tireless until the end in seeking the betterment of his comrades. The exhibition at Nambour Museum is a legacy to his service and that of his comrades. Vale, sir. Unfortunately, he did not live to see the naming of the 2nd/15th Battalion Room as the Gordon Wallace Room. My thoughts will be with Trish and the Wallace family on this Anzac Day.

It has indeed felt like a long time since last Anzac Day. This year we commemorate the 80th anniversary of the siege of Tobruk. We acknowledge 100 years of the RAAF and its proud legacy in the skies around the globe. I note that it is the second oldest air force in the world and at the end of World War II was the fourth largest.

Ordinary Seaman Edward 'Teddy' Sheehan has finally been posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions on the HMAS *Armidale*. The Royal Australian Navy fought a tremendous rear guard against the Japanese in getting Australian civilians and soldiers out of South-East Asia as they advanced unchecked. HMAS *Armidale* was protecting a convoy.

I am thankful to the Sunshine Coast Council and councillors David Law and Winston Johnson for ensuring that the memorials in our district are ready for this Anzac Day. I also recognise the contributions of all the schools and teachers, the many volunteers, the veterans and the community members who go above and beyond in honouring the legacy of those who did not return. On behalf of my grateful electorate, lest we forget.