







The 'EX' mark idea was brought in in an effort to protect both the ceramic and glass bottle industry and raise more income for the Government. The British Government decided to put an Excise Duty on the liquid containers and bottles in 1812. It required that an excise duty be paid at the rate of two shillings and sixpence (2/6) per hundred weight (cwt) of stoneware bottles until 1817 when it was increased to five shillings (5/-) for the same weight. In 1817 potters had to impress the 'EX' mark. The Government Act covered "all bottles not exceeding two quarts in measure, with a mouth or neck not exceeding three inches in diameter in the narrowest part." The tax did not apply to exported stoneware bottles.

The salt glazed stoneware process was developed in 1672 by John Dwight. However it was about a century later that pottery works began to manufacture the first salt glazed ginger beer bottles, though they did not have an internal glaze at first. The opaque bottles were fired in small kilns, usually seven or eight feet across. The firing process was basically the same for all potteries - the bottles were packed tightly into the kiln and the fires set. When the temperature reached its peak, salt was thrown into the firebox. It would vaporise, giving the vitreous glaze on the exterior of the bottle. Potters and labourers usually worked a twelve hour day.

Right - A British Registration Diamond can be seen on a Lithgow miner's lunch box.



## WAS THIS FIVE POUND BANK OF ENGLAND NOTE THE FULL QUID?



During World War Two the Nazis regime came up with a scheme to make money to finance another side of their war - the idea was for the Germans to flood Britain with forged or counterfeit banknotes, hoping that they could collapse the British economy.

The Allied Military Authorities were on the look out for specially forged English banknotes though little did they know that around nine million forged notes, in varying denominations, would turn up, totalling some 130,000,000 English pounds.

The plan was conceived in 1940 by Alfred Naujacks, however nothing really happened until 1942 when an SS Oberfuehrer Doerner began visiting various

concentration camps throughout Europe. He was looking for inmates with special talents that could further the cause for Germany and the Fuhrer, Adolf Hitler. SS Major Frederick Walter Bernhard Kruger, who was one the staff of Reichfuhrer Heinrich Himmler, right, was to oversee the operation. Kruger actually used one of his middle names for the German codename for the activities - "Operation Bernhard".

Then Doerner offered Jewish inmates a proposition - their lives in exchange for this Nazi plot. He found about 140 men - bankers, printers, engravers, graphic composers and others. Initially the fake notes were to be dropped from German bombers, then it was decided to use them to finance Nazi intelligence operations against the Allies behind their lines, as well as in Britain.

The Nazi captors were fortunate in finding a very skilled career counterfeiter named Soloman 'Solly' Smolianoff who could produce a very acceptable banknote printing plate. In fact they were so good even the Nazi experts were fooled. German banknote paper was brought in but the prisoners found that it was really nothing like the paper that the British used for their banknotes. The ink also had to be specially made to as near as the genuine thing. The printing machinery was set up in the village of Redl Zipf, where the allies finally located and destroyed it. Finally after the notes were approved, they were issued to the Nazi agents in the field. The prisoners often worked long hours with little sleep, although they did get reasonable rations and better accommodation - and they were alive. Some prisoners were even able to get some of their families released out of concentration camps with the help of Kruger. In the end some of the German officials were so happy with the work on "Operation Bernhard" that they presented medals to 18 of the Jewish counterfeiters, although they could only wear their War Merit medals in their barracks and never be seen outside with them.





## WORLD WAR TWO MEDALS WITH UNOFFICIAL TOBRUK MEDAL



This set of World War Two medals was awarded to VX10585 Lance Corporal William Wallace Mackenzie, a wool classer from Victoria and sets like this are keenly sought after by collectors. He was born on 14th April, 1906, at Yarrowonga in Victoria. When he enlisted he was single and listed his sister as his next-of-kin – Miss Margaret MacKenzie, 20 Parrington Road, Balwyn. He was 71 inches tall, with blue eyes, black hair and a medium complexion. He enlisted in

the Australian Imperial Force in South Melbourne on 1st March, 1940, and allotted to the Australian Army Service Corps Ammunition Company. Not long after, he embarked onto a troopship on 5th May, 1940, bound for Gourrock in Scotland, arriving on 19th June. On 27th June he was sent to the 72nd Battalion at Tidworth in Wiltshire in England for training before joining the 2nd/11th Field Ambulance on 6th August as a Group II Nursing Orderly.

On 8th March, 1941, he arrived by ship in the Middle East and went on operations in Palestine and North Africa, including being one of the Rats of Tobruk. He was hospitalised to the 58th British General Hospital on 22nd October. On 2nd March, 1942, he joined the Australian Army Medical Corps Training Depot for further tuition before rejoining his unit on 20th March, 1942. In September, whilst in Palestine, William was again hospitalised quite sick, this time in the 7th Australian General Hospital after which he returned to the base company in Palestine on 29th November, 1942.

Again William fell ill and was admitted to the 6th Australian General Hospital on 9th January, 1943, and embarked at Suez on 24th January and disembarking in Sydney on 27th February, 1943. After several weeks leave he entrained to the 7th Convalescent hospital as staff at Redbank in Queensland on 7th May, 1943. He was promoted to Lance Corporal the following month. In late January 1944 Will was sent to Camp Pell Depot in Melbourne where he was discharged on medical grounds on 31st March, 1944.

The Rats of Tobruk were around 14,000 soldiers of the Australian-led Allied garrison that held the Libyan port of Tobruk against the Afrika Corps, during the Siege of Tobruk in World War Two. The siege started on 11th April, 1941, and they were relieved on 10th December. The Australian and British soldiers were besieged by a German-Italian Army commanded by General Erwin Rommel. The garrison was commanded by an Australian officer, Lieutenant General Leslie Morshead.

He received his set of medals – the 1939/45 Star, Africa Star with 8th Army clasp, Defence medal, War medal, Australian Service medal and the unofficial Tobruk Siege medal. The Tobruk Siege ‘T’ Medal, as it’s called, was dispensed to Australian, British, New Zealand, Polish and Indian troops who saw action during the Siege of Tobruk in North Africa between April and December 1941.



The Rats of Tobruk, which included some 35,000 allies, including the British 8th Army, were besieged from April and August 1941. They were under incessant air attack, particularly from German Stuka dive-bombers, as well as artillery fire and attacks by tanks. Unable to bring supplies in over the desert the British Navy had to unload and depart under the cover of darkness in Tobruk’s deep-water harbour. Finally, the Australians were gradually withdrawn during the three moonless periods between August and October.

German Commander General Erwin Rommel, the so-called ‘Desert Fox’, Hitler’s aspiring commander, had arrived in Libya in North Africa to support the flagging Italian Army. After Tobruk was besieged, the newspapers began telling the story and soon it was making headlines around the world. The American-born British fascist William Joyce, better known as Lord Haw-Haw, took to the radio in Berlin to try to undermine the morale of the entrapped garrison, ridiculing their opponents as the “poor rats of Tobruk”. The soldiers took it as a compliment. Joyce was hanged after the war for treason.

There are several Tobruk unofficial medals, this one, left, being called the Tobruk Siege Medal. Known as the “T” medal it was issued to Australian, British, Indian, New Zealand and Polish troops who were in action during the Siege of Tobruk. The Tobruk



