



Foundation News

Army Museum of Western Australia Foundation

September/October 2006

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From The Chairman's Desk

We are currently in a period of intense activity and this is requiring an extra effort from all volunteers. From early October until the middle of November there is enough activity at the Museum to challenge us all. In that brief period we have our school holiday opening, the AGM, a special Victoria Cross display, a Back to the Barracks presentation and the Band concert. At another level we have the sale of the Bren-gun carrier at the Legacy auction, the completion of Building 14 and the relocation of the library and some other sections. It is to the credit of all the active volunteers that we can look forward to all this activity with the confidence that success will be achieved.

Many of these events are mentioned elsewhere in the newsletter but I would like to make particular mention of the concert. Last year broke the ice and we learnt a lot. One measure of our success last year was the response of the Army band. They have increased their support and with Marina Prior as our special guest we

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From the Manager's Desk

The year is progressing very quickly, with the Marina Prior Band Concert fast approaching. Even though the Concert is the highlight of the year, it is not the only event that the museum is running, The Back to the Barracks presentation is being held at Leeuwin Barracks on 01 Nov, and a display of Victoria Crosses is being held at the museum on the weekend 28 and 29 October. All of these events take a lot of planning and support from the active volunteers, and I congratulate the following museum volunteers and their team of assistants in their efforts so far, Tom Goode for the Concert, Col Jim Richardson for the Back to the Barracks and Capt Wayne Gardiner for the VC display.

The museum has had to close the WW1 Trench gallery due to a visitor slipping down the stairs and injuring herself. The Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) Act now has lifted the protection of the commonwealth from the Army, and all Commanders and Managers are to be held liable if they have failed in their duties and responsibilities to OH&S. This has caused us to look very deeply at the way OH&S is managed in the museum, and I have requested the museum OH&S Officer, Caryl Meldrum to implement changes around the museum. Any changes made must be seen as a positive move to make the museum safer for both the public and volunteers.

Finally I would like to thank the Missions Australia "Work For the Dole" volunteers and the Museum Curatorial Staff that have tirelessly worked during the past couple of months, on the reorganisation of buildings within the museum. In a couple of weeks the

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are going to be bigger and better. Ticket sales indicate we will more than double last year's crowd.

I particularly wish to welcome consulting and project engineers firm Sinclair Knight Mertz who has agreed to become a major sponsor. We look forward to a long and happy association. Following a tour by the management group of Hollywood Hospital we received a significant donation. These responses from the corporate sector and the support of our other sponsors are the evidence that the work each and every one of us does is recognisable in the quality of our Museum. Be proud of it.

Tom Goode
Chairman

Army Museum of WA Foundation Board ■

The Victoria Cross

Graham Donley

The Victoria Cross was instituted by Queen Victoria on 29th January 1856, and included actions dating from June 1854 (The Crimean War) to recognise acts of most conspicuous gallantry of the highest order in the presence of the enemy. A guideline was given that the standard required could be taken as a 90% possibility of being killed in performing the deed. This percentage is happily less in actual fact, at some 22% posthumous overall (29% in the case of Australians), but many were seriously, but not fatally, wounded while performing the deed.

The award is open to all ranks of the Naval, Military and Air Forces (male and female) and of the Home Guard, the Merchant Navy and Civilians serving under the orders, direction or supervision of any of the Forces. It remains both the highest award that can be won, and the most democratic in who can win it.

The Victoria Cross for Australia was established as part of the Australian system of Honours and Awards on 15th January 1991, but has not yet been awarded.

Since inception, The Victoria Cross has been awarded 1350 times (1351 if we count that to the Tomb of the United States of America Unknown Warrior in 1921). Three individuals have been twice awarded.

museum will have a more accessible library facility in which volunteers can borrow books more easily and be able to use research facilities.

Capt Henry Fijolek

Museum Manager

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The Victoria Cross – Continued

Initially, the ribbon to the cross was dark blue for the Navy and red for the Army, but this was amended in 1918, so that all Victoria Crosses now have the Crimson ribbon that we know it by.



In the wars where Australians have been awarded the Victoria Cross, the numbers are:

Conflict	Australia	WA
Boer War	6	1
World war 1	66	10
World War 2	20	5
Vietnam	4	NIL
Totals	96	16

Those described as "Western Australians" were decided on the basis of where they enlisted, rather than where they were born. In fact, 9 were born in Western Australia, 5 in other Australian States, 1 in Ireland and 1 in England. One was serving in the Royal Air Force (WWII), the rest were all Army. Four of these awards were posthumous, and of these who paid the supreme sacrifice, 2 were Privates and 2 were Lieutenants.

A look at the rank of the 16 Western Australian recipients at the time of their award confirms that the award is based on the deed, and not on rank: - Private (7), Lance Corporal (1), 2nd Lieutenant (1), Lieutenant (5), Captain (1), and Wing Commander (1). ■

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COMING EVENTS

VICTORIA CROSS DISPLAY

A unique short term exhibition to be displayed in the World War One Gallery (See further details opposite).

Date: Saturday –Sunday 28-29 October 2006 from 10am to 4pm each day.

BACK TO THE BARRACKS EVENING

The next presentation in this public lecture series will be given by **Mr William Haskell**, ex 2/3 Machine Gun Battalion. The topic will be **POWs Taken to Japan in World War 2**.

Date: Wednesday 1 November 2006. All foundation members and guests are welcome.

Cost: \$15 (includes supper)

Time: 7:00 pm

Venue: Conference Room, Bldg 7, Leeuwin Barracks, Riverside Road, East Fremantle.

Bookings: Ring 9335 2077 ■

MUSEUM BAND CONCERT

This year's concert is to be held on **Saturday 18th November at 7:30 pm** and will feature **Marina Prior in concert with the Australian Army Band Perth**. The show will again be compered by David Hawkes.



Tickets available through BOCS (9484 1133 or 1800 193 300 (outside metro area).

www.bocsticketing.com.au

VIP Gold: \$90 Sold Out!

Reserved Seating - \$59
Adults (\$53 Concession)

Unreserved Seating -
\$32.20 Adults (\$27.80 Concession)

Booking fees apply

Foundation members can purchase unreserved seating through the Museum for the special concession price of \$25. ■

Museum Sponsors

The Army Museum of Western Australia Foundation has received financial support from the following:



Victoria Cross Display

This year marks the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Victoria Cross. An article providing general historic background and other details relating to the award appears on page 2 of this edition.

For the first time in Australia the Army Museum of Western Australia will present a unique short-term exhibition in the World War One Gallery to acknowledge this anniversary. This will be a rare and never to be repeated opportunity for the general public to view this presentation comprising of four Victoria Crosses from the museum's own collection alongside three others provided to the museum on loan from other sources. The display will consist of the VC's and related medals of:

From the Army Museum collection:

- Lt (later Colonel) William St Lucien Chase, 28th Native Infantry, Indian Army (Afghanistan 1880)
- Private Martin O'Meara, 16th Battalion, AIF (WW1, Western Front, Pozieres 1916)
- Private Percy Gratwick 2/48th Battalion, AIF (Killed in Action, WW2, El Alamein 1942)
- Private Tom Starcevich 2/43rd Battalion, AIF (WW2, Borneo 1945)

From other collections:

- Lt (Later Lt-Col) Frederick William Bell, Western Australian Mounted Infantry (South African War 1901. The first VC to a West Australian) - on loan from the Western Australian Museum
 - Lt Cliff Sadlier, 51st Battalion, AIF (WW1, Western Front, Villers-Bretonneux 1918) - On loan from St Georges Cathedral, Perth
 - Private (later Sergeant) Arnold Loosemore, 8th Battalion, The Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment, British Army (WW1, Western Front, Langemarck 1917) - On loan from a private source
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From the Curator's Desk

Everything continues to go well in the curatorial branch of the museum with much constructive work being achieved since the last newsletter. Many suitable objects have also been added to the museum's collection during this time and we have been swamped with inquiries and research requests from the public.

The vehicle crew has made excellent progress on the Centurion Tank and we have news from the School of Military Engineering (SME) that a number of tank road wheels and the tank turret bins will be arriving soon so that restoration of the "Cent" can be completed.

Serious restoration has also been made on the rare 1916 GS wagon, so this too is progressing well. Welcome back to Dave Leaman after some serious surgery – we wish you well.

Helen Birch has completed the project to identify and record all objects on display in the galleries. This has been a long and painstaking task however absolutely essential for our museum records and database.

Caryl Meldrum (Keeper of the Kit Collection and our OH & S Officer) completed the Army History Unit (AHU) sponsored museum course held at the Australian War Memorial. He found it to be a very rewarding experience and I know he will use his new-found knowledge to the full benefit of the AMWA.. Congratulations to both Caryl and Kerry on the newest addition to their family, a boy, born just prior to the AWM course – well timed Caryl and Kerry!

The Deputy Curator, Dave Legg, has been kept very busy particularly in de-accessioning all the firearms sent to AHU from the AMWA. Thanks to all involved in facilitating the sending of the firearms in my absence. Dave has been the curatorial leader in the Building 14 relocation project. When this project is completed, we will see the library relocated to the beautifully restored Building 14 to be shared with Jim Hanson and the Equipment Collection. The Map Collection will also relocate to that building. This allows the Archives and Photographic Section to move into those rooms in the Artillery Shed previously occupied by the Library and Maps.

The 150th Anniversary of the Victoria Cross Exhibition to be held over the weekend 28th and 29th of October is well in hand with some fine-tuning to be done on insurance and associated matters. More detailed information regarding this unique display is contained elsewhere in the newsletter.

Museum volunteer (and catering officer), Joe McKenna, is installing our Vietnam photographic display at the annual Bruce Rock Veteran's Reunion to be held from the 30th of October to the 5th of November. This is a very successful event with some 4,000 people attending; so it becomes another tangible avenue for the AMWA to support our veterans and at the same time promote our fine museum. Thanks Joe.

Hearty congratulations to one of our longest serving museum volunteers, Peter Shaw, on the publication of "The Kilted Battalion – A History of 16th Infantry Battalion (The Cameron Highlanders of Western Australia)". Peter together with John Treloar have done a marvelous job in writing a great history on a fine battalion. Be quick to purchase a copy as they only did a print run of 500.

To finish my notes I should mention that both Joan and I had a wonderful five week holiday overseas (Turkey, Egypt and the UK) and the highlights for me were in having the opportunity to visit Gallipoli and El Alamein. Naturally, as a RAAC officer, I also took time to see the Bovington Tank Museum - fantastic!

Continue your support and good work everyone.

Capt. Wayne Gardiner, Curator

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MG Carrier on display in Artillery Shed