

# Army Museum of Western Australia

## 'THE MAGAZINE'



Artillery Barracks  
Burt Street, Fremantle, WA 6160  
Open 11 am - 4 pm  
Wednesday - Sunday

Phone: (08) 9430 2535  
Fax: (08) 9430 2519

Email: [info@armymuseumwa.com.au](mailto:info@armymuseumwa.com.au)  
Web: [www.armymuseumwa.com.au](http://www.armymuseumwa.com.au)

Summer 2013-2014



## NEW WORLD WAR 1 GALLERY OPENS

*"A milestone of achievement" says army history chief*

The chief of the Australian Army History Unit, Roger Lee (pictured right), says the Army Museum of WA's new World War 1 Gallery has set the bar "impossibly high" for all museums in the Australian military museum network to meet.

Speaking at the official opening of the gallery by the minister for Planning, Culture and the Arts, John Day, Mr Lee said there had been a growing determination to see the First World War as simply a massive tragedy.

"Some commentators seem to be suggesting we should simply draw a curtain around that conflict and try to forget this crowning example of man's brutality to man," he said.

"I have a markedly different view. In my opinion, focussing on all the tragedy, all the deaths, the permanently scarred, even the alleged revengeful attitude of the victors at Versailles and all the other instances of behaviour that would be unacceptable in modern society, does a great disservice to those who paid the ultimate price of war.

"To denigrate the war because of the terrible casualties is, to my mind, to denigrate their sacrifice itself.

"They didn't go to war for the fun of it. The dead didn't die in bloody struggles for nothing.

"They went to war to protect a set of values and a way of life that they valued and that we are now able to enjoy a hundred years later."

Mr Lee said if the soldiers hadn't been



prepared to make the sacrifice, arguably the German militarism then in sway in Germany would have become the dominant political and social system in Europe, with direct consequences for Australia as a recent British colony.

"While the notion of a just war is unpopular with many, I believe there are values in our society that are worth fighting for.

"Because the causes of World War 2 were fairly clearly a case of us opposed to the excesses and evils of the Nazis and their friends, and therefore a 'justifiable war', the absence of

(Continued Page 5)



# World War 1 Centenary will mean increased demand for museum tours

By Richard Bennett, Chairman, AMWA Foundation

The museum is approaching the end of a prolonged period of renewal and we anticipate all the gallery development work will be completed by the end of April next year.

When the work is finished, it will mean all the exhibit galleries will have been rebuilt and new displays have been installed, except for the Trench Gallery.

It is a tribute to all concerned - gallery staff and the Curatorial Section - that this work has been done so quickly, while the museum has remained open to the public.

While all this work has been in progress, we made great advances in documenting and understanding what we have in our collection and have made some significant finds along the way.

During a recent visit, Dr Brendon Nelson, Chairman of the Australian War Memorial, said he sees our museum as an extension of the AWM in WA and he pledged to see how the AWM can help us to enhance our visitors' experience.

This is high praise indeed and the board congratulates all the volunteers without whose work the museum could not operate.

The Education Section has, in the past year, greatly raised the profile of the museum in schools and has brought an ever-increasing number of students to the museum.

This is enabling our younger generation to better understand the history and sacrifice of our former soldiers.

The centenary of World War 1 will increase the demand for school visits and we look forward to seeing many more young people in the coming

years.

Your board has been working hard to finalise the gallery development and we can assure all members that the program is on track and on budget. Subject to the resources being available, we expect to complete the whole project by the end of April next year.

In the future, the next important projects will be the Commemorative Wall and housing the vehicles and artillery pieces now exposed in the car park under some sort of cover to protect them from the weather.

Your board thanks every one of our volunteers and supporters for your dedication and work in the past year and we wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Richard Bennett  
Chairman

Army Museum of WA Foundation

## Authenticity the key to success of student production company's film about war



Authenticity was paramount when a group of students from Swan Christian College decided to produce a unique film that examines the human side of young soldiers going to war.

Produced by Prince-Wright Productions, led by Jordon Prince-Wright, and shot on location in Whiteman Park, "Not Their Boots" is a story about the dedication of those who enlist in wartime to serve their home country.

Set in the nineteen forties, the film follows one Australian soldier and sparks the comparison between him and other soldiers, even enemy soldiers, during the War.

"Before even constructing any ideas, to make this film stand out from the rest, my main goal for the production was that everything had to be done from scratch," Jordon said.

"From composing, writing and recording our own music with talented musicians and vocalists, to having talented teams such as the costume department/team who could sew, paint and create extraordinary authentic looking costumes.

"Even having a technical team who would run more than 40 metres of extension cable around the set,

### IN THIS EDITION

- Vale Jack McRoberts, a museum stalwart. Page 4
- Our Bren Gun Carrier travels to Rottnest Island for 75th anniversary of the island's battery. Page 8
- The symbol of peace settles in for a unique maternal confinement. Page 4
- More pictures of the World War 1 Gallery opening. Page 5

Letters, suggestions and contributions are always welcome. Please email the editor, Graeme Hunt: [graemeh@bigpond.com](mailto:graemeh@bigpond.com)





*Pictured above: Valma Hanson, manager of the museum's uniform and equipment store.*



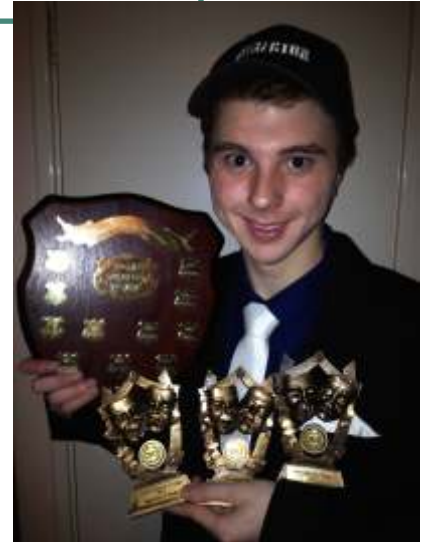
**Not Their Boots** pictures (clockwise from top left): Riley Mercer (script), Michael Nugent (actor and collaborator), Jordon Prince-Wright; the cast and crew; filming at a "German" station; Samuel Tye, in the leading role as an Australian soldier; Jordon and some of his awards.

through train carriages and Australian bush to run everything from lighting to smoke machines to screen monitors. "We all took this challenge seriously, tackling it head-on to create a film which we are truly proud of and can call it, all of it, our own," he said. Jordon said when constructing the film's basic idea, before even putting together a script, he wanted the film to wrestle with the idea of all soldiers being equal and how they all follow orders from men sitting behind desks. "I wanted it to emphasise the importance of this equality and to examine the inherent similarities of all people, prompting ideas of 'oneness' and doing away with the notions of whose side you are on through the film's structure and its characters. "I also wanted to explore the thoughts of family, friends and the soldiers themselves about whether their dedication to serve their country would mean not seeing each other again.

To ensure that this was to be a production which was to stand out, the team decided to start from scratch. Creating contemporary costumes from scratch is hard, but when we bear in mind it was a 1940's WW2 era film, that stepped up the difficulty greatly. Creating authentic looking clothing, from badges, to hats such as the Japanese hat which was all done from raw materials meant a lot of research was put in to ensure the costumes were indeed exact replicas of the production.

This is where the Army Museum's uniform hire department, under the guidance of Valma Hanson, stepped up, providing authentic WW2 uniforms for the production. There were various other challenges, but once filming started, it was by far the most enjoyable aspect of the whole production process.

"Who would think that a group of high school students would be able to film on three 1940's train stations, with 1940's train carriages and a 'real deal' 1940's era German train?" Jordon said. "The film set was a wonderful sight and everyone felt like they were apart of something special." The film was named as one of the top two entries in the Canberra Short Film Festival. To watch the film, follow the link from [www.pwproductions.tk](http://www.pwproductions.tk)



## WHO IS THAT?

He's well-known to all museum volunteers and has had a long association with the Army Museum of WA. But that's just one aspect of his life, as you'll discover on Page 6.



# Museum president had a lifetime involvement with AMWA



Lt. Col. Jack McRoberts (Rtd)  
7 September 1947 - 10 September 2013.

Jack played a significant role at the Army Museum of WA and this was recognised with him being awarded

## **Army Museum of Western Australia Foundation Management**

### ***Museum Manager***

Major Henry Fijolek

### ***Museum Assistant Manager***

Captain Wayne Gardiner

### ***Museum Curator***

Mr Robert Mitchell

## **AMWA Foundation Board Chairman**

Mr Richard Bennett

### ***Deputy Chairman***

Mr Graham McEwan

### ***Treasurer***

Mr Lloyd Halvorson

### ***Directors***

Mr Bruce Hamling

Mr Vittorio Montefusco

Mr Graeme Smith

Mr Dave West

### ***Company Secretary***

Mr Lloyd Halvorson

## **Editor, The Magazine Graeme Hunt**

the Deputy Chief of Army's Commendation. Prior to the formation of the Australian Army History Unit in the late 1990's, there was a senior Army officer appointed by the commander of 5<sup>th</sup> Military District (5MD) as President of the Army Museum of WA (AMWA). From 1977, when the museum started, the Chief Engineer (CE - Lt.Col.) was the appointee. Jack became the first non CE appointed and the last Army president of the AMWA.

He was with the museum at Dillhorn in East Perth and was the Project Manager for the successful relocation of the museum to Artillery Barracks in Fremantle. He ensured that the museum opened officially at the new location in 1995 before finishing his tenure in the late 1990's. Jack remained as an Active Volunteer for a few more years working on-site at Irwin Barracks Karrakatta where the AMWA once had a vehicle restoration/conservation Workshop. He was a member of the

Military Section of the Veteran Car Club of WA having held the position of Chairman and at the time of his death, was their Secretary. He was an enthusiastic and skilled restorer of military vehicles and was often approached by the AMWA for advice. Another area of strong interest for Jack was Perth Legacy where he had an active involvement. Jack's untimely and sudden death was a shock to all who new him and we extend our sincere condolences to his wife Margaret and his family.



There were the obvious references to War and Peace when this dove (above) decided the tracks of the museum's Stuart Tank were the ideal place to start a family. She built her nest and sat on two eggs for several weeks before they hatched and the family left.



# “A milestone of achievement” - from Page 1

such horrors the absence of such horrors perpetrated by the Germans in the First World War had encouraged many to think of it as ‘not a justifiable war’,” Mr Lee said.

“And the reason I raise the matter is not to highlight the differences that exist between the views on the war, but to stress the need for objective analysis and interpretation to help people make up their own minds about the war.

“Myth and prejudice have had far too great an influence on our interpretation of the past and the only protection from it is knowledge and understanding.

“One well-proven way of raising community understanding of the past is to present the facts and the objects that provide the evidence to support those facts together in an objective and analytical manner, to provide the understanding that will overcome myth and misunderstanding.

“This is a key role for historians and museums,” he said.

Mr Lee said the Army Museum was as far away as one could get from the stereotypical museum of popular legend.

“There is a noticeable absence of dusty old objects of dubious historical value sitting in dusty cabinets in random and unplanned arrangements.

“It’s a dynamic place, full of dynamic people and with the level of community support that is the envy of the military history community and the cultural community in this country.”

Mr Lee paid tribute to the museum foundation, the community, the management and the volunteers for their contribution.

He said if they were the engine of the project, Lotterywest had provided the fuel, by financing it. One of the benefits of strong financial support was that the museum was able to engage BKay Design, who designed and built the gallery, to ensure it was of world-class standard.



Pictures - Clockwise from top left: One of the displays in the World War 1 Gallery; Museum Manager Capt. Henry Fijolek and Melissa Parke, the Federal Member for Fremantle; Foundation Deputy Chairman Graham McEwan and the Minister, John Day with the Army Air Corps display; Graham McEwan and the Minister, John Day, surrounded by “troops” from opposing sides of World War 1.





# 40 YEARS A CAVALRYMAN - AND MILITARY HISTORY BUFF

Army Museum assistant Manager Capt. Wayne Gardiner is celebrating his 40th year as a member of the Australian Army. Wayne enlisted in the Citizens Military Force (later the Army Reserve) in late 1973 and following recruit training, was posted to B Squadron, 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse in early 1974.

He was a Corporal when selected for officer training in late 1977, attended 13 Course, Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU) from 1978 and graduated in 1979.

Posted back to A Squadron 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse in 1980, he commanded 3 Troop.

A personal highlight during this time was leading his troop in winning the unit's Hussar's Trophy for two consecutive years as the best tactical troop in the squadron. From 1983 to 1984 he was Troop Leader Squadron Head Quarters and at the end of 1984, he left the unit to pursue business studies.

Rather than resign, the Army offered Wayne a posting to HQ 5MD in 1985 where he served as the Deputy Curator of the Army Museum of WA (AMWA). Wayne had been a volunteer at the AMWA since 1978, so he welcomed this posting. He has remained with the museum ever since, becoming the Curator in

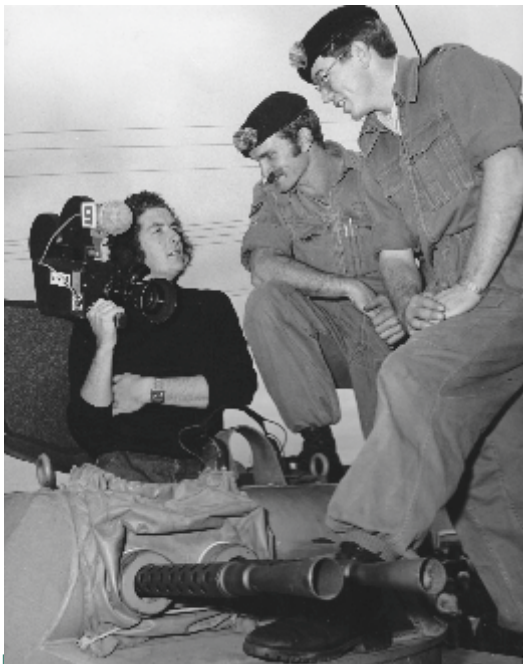
1996 and then Assistant Manager in 2010.

In 2003 he gained the Certificate of Museum Studies (with Distinction) from Edith Cowan University and in 2006 was awarded the Deputy Chief of Army's Commendation. Wayne has had a keen interest in Australian military history since his high school days when he was a volunteer at the RSL War Veteran's Home in Mt Lawley (1971-72). This gave him the opportunity to meet many Boer War and World War One veterans who lived there. In 1971 he joined the Military Historical Society of Australia, a connection he continues, currently

being the President of the WA Branch for the second time. He has held positions in all other offices of the branch and in keeping with his interest in military history, Wayne has visited many battlefields including walking the Kokoda Track. Since 1995 he has been a commentator for ABC TV's coverage of the Perth ANZAC Day Parade and since 1996, has conducted the Perth Legacy

Militaria Auction for fundraising purposes.

Wayne's civilian occupation is as a valuer and auctioneer specialising in antiques and collector's pieces. He started work in this field in 1977 and since then has gained a Certificate in Business (Specialising in Valuations) from the Australian Institute of



Starring role - Tpr Wayne Gardiner (right) and Cpl Len Husking (centre) chat with Channel 9 cameraman Peter Wynne, at a 10 Light Horse shopping centre display in 1976.



Management, qualified as an Approved Commonwealth Government Valuer for the Cultural Gifts Program (Militaria) and is a past President of the Auctioneers and Valuers Association of WA. Wayne married Joan in 1977 and they have three children - Louise, Douglas and Victoria.

# 19th century musket a “valuable acquisition” for Army Museum



**T**he latest addition to the museum’s collection of firearms is an 1848 Land Service Musket, commonly known as a “Brown Bess”. AMWAF chairman Richard Bennett (above) introduced Bess to volunteers, saying it was a valuable acquisition and enhanced the museum’s collection showing the progression of arms. The musket has been converted from a flintlock muzzle-loader to a percussion cap action. It has about a 3/4 inch bore and a range of 25m. It will eventually be on display in the 1914 gallery.



With special thanks to:  
Our supporter



Our Community Partner



And our sponsors



Mr Graham McEwan





# ARMY MUSEUM'S BREN GUN CARRIER ROLLS INTO ROTTNESST FOR COASTAL BATTERY'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

The Army Museum's Bren Gun carrier was called into action to help celebrate the 75th anniversary of the commissioning of the Rottneest Island's coastal defence guns.

In response to increasing global tensions in the 1930s, the Australian government developed a three-year Defence Development Program in 1933, which identified Rottneest Island as being critical to the defence of Fremantle.

Guns on the island could engage hostile ships well before they approached the range that would allow bombardment of Fremantle Port.

In 1934 the Western Australian Premier officially informed the Rottneest Island Board of Control of the Commonwealth's intentions for a defence program on Rottneest Island and in 1936 it bought land at Bickley.

Construction began later that year. The fixtures on Rottneest Island became known as the Rottneest Island Fortress and were made up of the Oliver Hill fort, with two 9.2-inch guns and quarters at Oliver Hill; Bickley Point fort with two 6-inch guns and quarters at Bickley; permanent Army Barracks at Kingstown (containing living accommodation for four warrant officers or sergeants and 72 other ranks, cottages for commanders, officers mess, cottages for married non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and gunners.

There were also Army institutional buildings, a small hospital, dry canteen, workshop, store, railway buildings, and supporting communication and observation structures; a three storey fortress and battery command post building at Signal Ridge; Port War Signal Station at Signal Ridge; observation posts and engine rooms.

The Army also built six searchlight emplacements, magazine shell



stores, powerhouse, directing station and a railway from the jetty to the 9.2 inch guns.

When the Barracks was completed in September 1937 Rottneest Island was declared a permanent station for troops.

In June 1940 the Island was declared a prohibited area and all

recreational activity ended. The declaration was intended to last for three months, but continued for five years until June 1945.

During the war period, administrative fire command staff and a coastal artillery gunnery school occupied Rottneest Island. The guns were manned 24 hours a day. In the mid-1940s, the focus of threat moved to Northern Australia, so the fixed defences at the Rottneest Island Fortress were reduced. The 9.2-inch guns were put on a maintenance basis and only the 6-inch gun at Bickley remained manned. The period of intensive military activity on Rottneest Island ended with the guns never being fired at the enemy.

Pictured above: Museum board member and volunteer Vittorio Montefusco in the Bren Gun Carrier at Rottneest's Kingstown Barracks; left, museum volunteers Cameron Eden and Steve Fleming try on