

# Miles Historical Village Museum



## WHAT WAR MEANT TO MILES



BOER  
WAR

FIRST  
WORLD  
WAR



SECOND  
WORLD  
WAR

KOREAN  
WAR



VIETNAM  
WAR

The character of our nation rests on the service and sacrifice of Australia's men and women in times of conflict. Their courage and determination in the face of hardship continues to warrant our gratitude, respect and thoughtful reflection.

This story of war is not limited to the battlefields of Europe, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific. It is also intimately tied to the experiences of those Queensland men and women involved in, or affected by the war effort in Miles and the surrounding districts.

*What War Meant to Miles* explores how war impacted the people and communities of the Miles Districts through the personal belongings, letters, photographs, artefacts and experiences of Queenslanders who served Australia both at home and on the frontlines.

QGC

THE MILES  
HISTORICAL VILLAGE  
MUSEUM

This project is proudly supported by the  
Queensland Government.

ANZAC  
Centenary  
QUEENSLAND  
2014-2019



# Today's Presentation

- Brief history of Miles Historical Village Museum
- War Museum Collection Background;
- Why undertake the project?;
- About the project;
- Funding disappointments to success;
- Engaging and working with consultants;
- Cataloguing and digitising a large collection from scratch;
- Storage and preservation;
- Presentation and display;
- Lessons learned along the way;
- Challenges faced; and
- The importance and value of volunteers!
- The launch





# History of Miles Historical Village Museum

- Not for profit organisation owned and operated by the Miles and District Historical Society Inc;
- Opened in 1971 (some 47 years ago);
- 36 buildings with over 40,000 objects in the collection;
- Scale and extent of collections have been identified as significant, a number of individual items, collections and buildings have local significance, and with some also having national significance in terms of cultural and social heritage.



# War Museum Collection Background

- The original War Museum building and collections were opened in 1982;
- A great deal of the hard work had already been undertaken by way of gathering and developing the collection over the years;
- In 2010, the War Museum collection was independently classified as being of “national historical significance”;
- As with many other communities- Men and women from Miles and district have served in conflicts from the Boer War to Vietnam and beyond. In 1914, Miles was a thriving farming district which supplied more than its share of men to the war effort. The district also recorded a higher than average number of Military Medal recipients, many of whom are well documented in the collection;
- This project was ultimately about sharing ‘What War Meant to Miles’ .... But at the same time a sense of what War has meant to other small rural communities like ours!





# Why Undertake the Project

- Displays were jam packed, higgledy piggledy and tired;
- Minimal/ little interpretation;
- Many original images on display
- Our visitors were not engaging with the space well;
- Building allows us to consider a more modern approach to interpretation, unlike the 1900's period street scape component of museum where we can not change too much or risk impacts to authenticity!
- Funding was becoming available!
- Desire to know exactly what we had!





# About the Project

## The What War Meant to Miles – Heroes, Hardships and Heartfelt Stories Project

Involved an undertaking to fully catalogue, digitise, interpret and re-present the War Museum collection at Miles Historical Village Museum

....Simple?



# Funding – Failure to Success

- Identified project potential in early 2014 with the Anniversary of WW1
- The museum engaged a young local girl (Freya) doing Museum studies during Uni breaks to begin cataloguing the objects – Paid
- Project Plan developed with potential themes
- 2014: Lodged 1<sup>st</sup> funding application through ANZAC 100 – Round 3 (**unsuccessful**) – Meant to be!
- Would have been only able to treat our WW1 collection
- 2016: ANZAC 100 guidelines changed. **WINNING!!!**
- The vision for the project grew- could now treat entire collection!
- Lodged with ANZAC 100 – Round 4 2016 (**successful**)
- Also lodged with QGC (Qld Gas Company) (**successful**)
- Vision for our \$120,000.00 refurbishment project a reality!
- **Now the HARD WORK begins!**





# Engaging and Working with Consultants

- Our relationship and connection with Timeline Heritage goes back to 2009 when the Society first met with Steve Chaddock as part our 1<sup>st</sup> time participation in the Museum and Galleries Standards Review Program;
- We have worked with Timeline on many projects over the years;
- Natural fit to engage again;
- Understands vision of our facility and challenges with environment
- Steve also engaged additional assistance with this project. Jess Heidrich was the supporting Cultural Heritage Consultant





# Cataloguing and digitising a large collection from scratch

- Daunting! Overwhelming! Crazy! Daunting!
- Development of a spreadsheet; (eventually cloud based)
- Development of scanning and photographing procedures;
- Purchase of a great little flatbed scanner;
- Merging of 2014 spreadsheet (did not have everything);
- Purchase boxes and mylar for storage
- Develop storage system

As we went through each case objects and images were:

- ❖ Numbered
- ❖ Scanned or Photographed
- ❖ Measured
- ❖ All info captured
- OBJECTS/ IMAGES ON MASS!!!!



# Cataloguing and digitising a large collection from scratch

Every object as it was touched: in the Spreadsheet

ID No.

Location

Scan or Digital Image No.

Hyperlink to scan or image

Primary Object Heading

Brief Description

Year

Inscriptions

Materials

Measurements

Maker

Place Made

Donor

Owner

History/ Use

Condition

Old ID No.s

Conflict- Colonial/ Boer/ WWI/  
WWII/ Korea/ Vietnam/

Middle East





# Cataloguing and digitising a large collection from scratch

- Engaging local photographers- volunteers
- Cataloguing and digitisation delivered by volunteers (well over 1000 hours)
- Began in winter 2017..... 18 months on 95% complete
- Well over 4000 objects in the collection



# Storage and Preservation

A re-purposed storage area was under construction as we were cataloguing and digitising. Specifically for the War Museum Collection!

Objects were either:

- ❖ Placed back in cases for redisplay
- ❖ Filed or packed into boxes and into the Storage area once this was ready.
- ❖ Paper documents and images are filed in mylar and stored in filing draws
- ❖ Objects not on display are either in storage boxes on shelves or in our butterfly case



I WON'T LIE!  
AT TIMES WE HAD ABSOLUTE  
KAOS!

FREQUENTLY  
WONDERING IF WE HAD  
BITTEN OFF  
MORE THAN WE COULD  
CHEW!!!





# Presentation and Display

- At the same time the Museum volunteers were cataloguing and digitising
- Timeline Heritage Consultants were undertaking massive and critical components of the project from afar:
  - Selecting relevant objects and images for re-display from the Spreadsheet and existing images
  - Developing the interpretation content around our themes
  - Developing variety of presentation platforms- aural, visual, digital
  - Finessing unforeseen issues and developing solutions in consultation with the museum
  - Providing content for review and editing
  - Designing, planning and production of the interpretation panels and labels
  - Preparing and planning for the install



# Presentation and Display

- In early planning and collection audits, the overall project identified significant local military service heritage items in the existing collection and stories and then designed ways of communicating with different target audiences using new technologies and employing diverse media such as audio and video.
- The letters from Buff Freeman are a great example of this. How life can be breathed back into documents through well-acted narration enabling audio recording and subsequent reproduction within the display space and online.
- But, better than the online version, the visitor experience in the display space involves visual engagement with the authentic, reproduced letters in handwritten script.





# Presentation and Display

## Audio listening stations – user interactive

- Letter Scripts for Audio Treatment D - Spirit of the Times
- Extract from a letter written by Corporal 2426 Thomas Arnold 'Buff' Freeman to his mother back home in Miles, Queensland, 6 September 1917
- *I have met quite a lot from about home now...  
But I have not met the Gundry's yet, or Vick Nash. I think Dick saw them, but they are not in the same division so we are always a long way apart. Leo Nash is a long time in Australia; he is just as well to stay as long as he can.  
Has any of the Walker boys enlisted yet? They are deep thinkers...  
Whatever you do, don't let Will enlist, not if the war goes on for another ten years...*

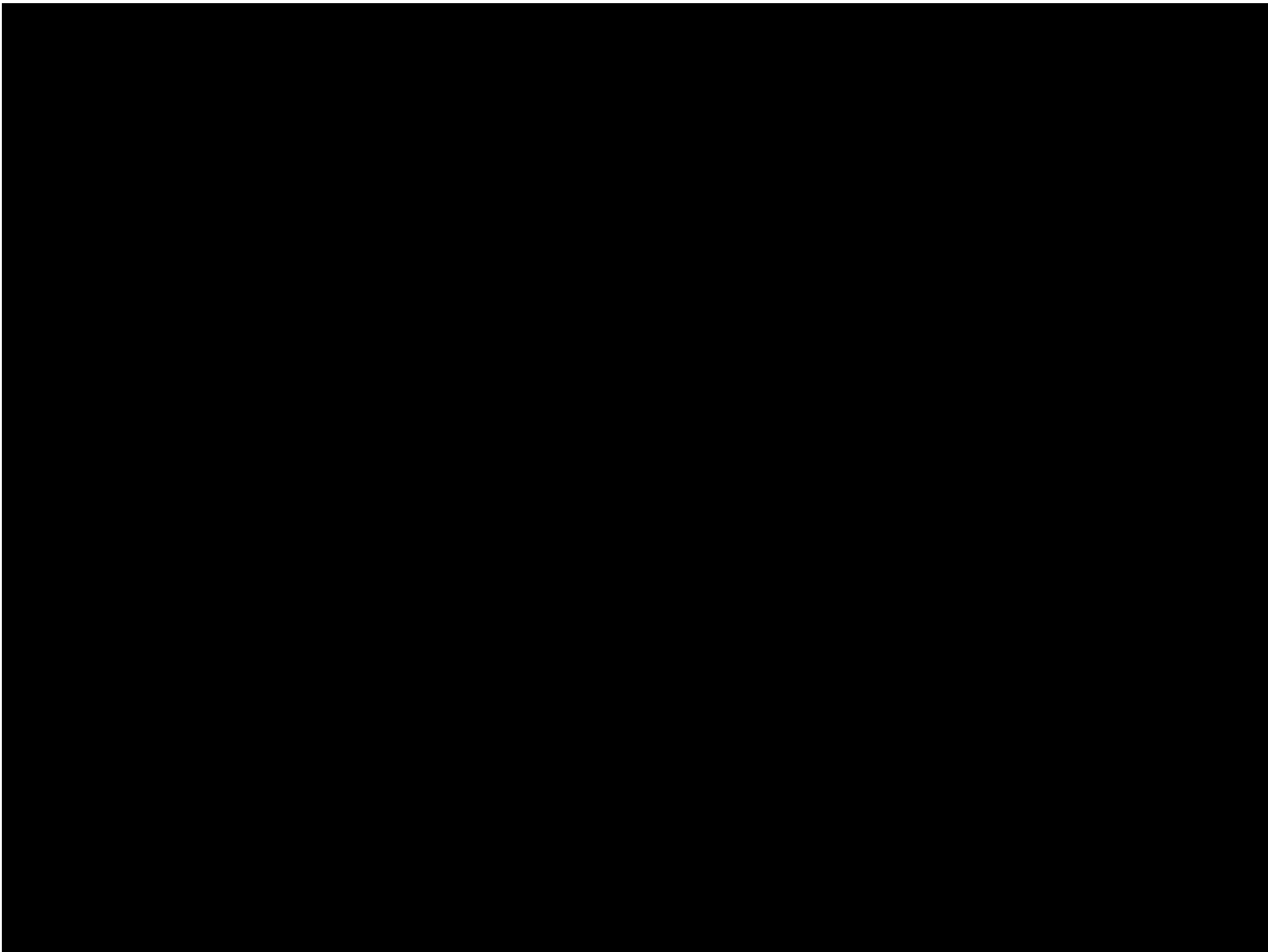
*Narrated by Brett Klease*



# Presentation and Display

- By using video projection, prominent place stories of local men who travelled from Miles to Gallipoli were recast. This is a different sort of memorial that acknowledges individual service and sacrifice. Building directly on research by the MHVM for a 'Ghosts of Gallipoli' exhibition, initially delivered as graphic panels.
- The videos present each man's journey through a narrated delivery which is illustrated with original documents and photographs from the collection alongside material from State and Federal archives.
- Treatment and editing, backing tracks & additional sound effects: experimentation with ideas for backing tracks (marching, military bands, horses hooves clapping, crowd noise, shouting and screaming, live fire) and ultimately settled on not using this technique. It was felt the tone of the stories needed to be 'respectful', matter of fact reportage without hyperbole. The bugle extracts are traditional phrases taken from military proceedings associated with the inspection of sentries, namely the 'first post and the 'last post'. They are designed to set a respectful tone and are employed to frame each of the journeys undertaken. To start, 'rouse' is meant to get attention, to end, the 'last post' signals completion.





# Presentation and Display

- The re-display/ installation fit out occurred over 3 days of the Easter Holidays
- Perhaps one of the most exciting positives to fall out of this was the involvement of Youth working alongside volunteers and consultants
- There were tradies and people flowing in and out everywhere!
- The excitement was building!





## Lessons Learned Along Way

- Vital to have a lead contacts at each end of the chain
- Allow for finessing and tweaking of process and procedures along the way
- WE WERE LEARNING AS WE WENT
- Triple handling of objects seemed a concern; however ended up being vital to check and recheck
- Formalising collection processes and procedures that support ongoing collection management, accessibility and research opportunities has been invaluable

## Challenges Faced

- With Consultants:
  - DISTANCE
  - Minimal site visits
  - Vast amounts of communication on-line; file sharing (Dropbox)
  - Strong relationship prior meant that these challenges were made somewhat easier
- On the home-front:
  - Learning and making processes work for us & the collection
  - Time constraints
  - Juggling elements
  - Fear of CHANGE!
  - Re-education



# Importance of Volunteers

- Volunteers were one of the major contributors to the success of this project
- 39 different volunteers throughout the project. Of these 19 were new!
- 1000+ hours over 18 months
- Involvement of new volunteers to the facility
- Young people assisting and engaging with facility and objects

**Our 'Village People Volunteers' ROCK!!!!**





# The Launch

- ANZAC Day 2018
- Wonderful crowd arrived on dusk
- 2 of our local WWII returned servicemen (Eric and Athol) officially opened the museum
- A truly beautiful and moving occasion!





# Questions?

Gift- Pop in and see us!


We would love to share our facility with you!

*Lest  
we  
forget*

*They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old.  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,  
We will remember them.*

Ode for the Returned and Services League from 'For The Fallen' by Laurence Binyon



  
**MILES**  
HISTORICAL VILLAGE  
MUSEUM