

Plans and aims for a group of teens from Vignacourt to visit Australia in 2014

The program includes visits to Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth, where the students will take part in Digger related activities in each city.

In Brisbane the teens will attend the Lost Diggers exhibition in association with the Queensland Museum, and "Memories of Vignacourt" exhibition in association with Alliance Française Brisbane. A fundraising event at Redland Performing Arts Centre will feature a program of presentations and performances. It will showcase the teens of Vignacourt who have employed dramatic tableaux, videos, guided interpretive tours of the Thuillier Collection to engage audiences at ANZAC events.

Meetings with identified lost diggers descendants in Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth, will explore the men's lives pre-war and how their wartime experiences affected the rest of their lives.

Welcome ceremonies in various cities will acknowledge the teen's passion for keeping history alive and engaging with the world. Special visits to the War memorial in Canberra and The Kerry Stokes collection in Perth will also be arranged.

Educational opportunities for information exchange in each state with several one-on-one and group interaction with Australian students and teachers at various schools. The teens will attend the AWM "Remember Me" the Lost Diggers exhibition at the Queensland museum.



What is happening now? What do we need? What can you do ?

This project relies on the generosity of many people and we are presently involved in bringing this project together through:

- Sourcing funds from grants
- Looking for other financial supporters
- Developing collaborative activities and relationships with major stakeholders
- Searching of Digger descendants in each city visited
- Arranging home stays
- Developing education resources to support the Vignacourt teens and Sommeschools to link to Aussie schools
- Investigating Skype links between schools
- Developing a history walk in a Vignacourt for April 2014
- Investigating travel arrangements and needs of the Vignacourt group for July 2014
- Arranging concerts/venues/events as required
- Garnering political support to raise the Project's profile
- Looking for media participation to highlight the project
- The Future

It is proposed to develop and implement

- face-to-face and online activities to be engaged in both here and in France.
- regular representation during Anzac Day and Remembrance Day
- expanded opportunities to bring more students to Australia
- opportunities to work with the schools of Vignacourt to enliven history and engage the young people with their past and their future

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Memories of Vignacourt



Living "Digger" History -From Then to Now

presented in conjunction with

Maison des Australiens
Vignacourt France
&

InterCultural Consulting Group
Australia

Supporting "The Lost Diggers" Exhibition
Queensland Museum
April 5th to July 20th 2014



The Lost Diggers of Vignacourt.

Vignacourt is a small village in France where many Australian soldiers experienced warm hospitality amongst local families and took time to rest or recover on their way to and from the many battlefields of the Somme during World War 1.

It was thrust into the spotlight of global media attention in 2011 when the photographic legacy of Louis and Antoinette Thuillier was found stored in their attic in Vignacourt. The enterprising couple had set up a small photographic business in the stable courtyard of their farmhouse just off the main street in Vignacourt. The results of their labours were almost 4,000 glass-plate negatives depicting British, French, Australian, US, and Indian soldiers, Chinese labour corps, and French civilians.



The Australian War Memorial will exhibit the Lost Diggers collection nationally during the centenary commemorations of World War 1. From 5 April to 20 July it will be in Brisbane where the community can see a selection of the photos, along with battlefield artefacts and items like original soldiers' diaries from the Memorial's own collections. Through this project it is hoped more members of the public will help identify a lost digger!



About ICG and its connection to Vignacourt and the Thuillier Collection and Maison Des Australiens.

Intercultural Consulting Group (ICG) is a registered business working in a philanthropic environment that provides opportunities for groups to experience history and culture through a range of experiences. Michael and Donna Fiechtner are educational and cultural consultants, both trained and highly experienced teachers with over 60 years between them of creating, developing, supplying and implementing educational experiences across a range of cultural and historical settings.

Alison McCallum is an Australian member of the Maison des Australiens, and acts as its Australian representative. She is also a volunteer researcher, editor, and project assistant who has been involved since 8 January 2012 collaborating with Lucile Werkin and the team of teens, helping prepare the bilingual (French-English) interpretive panels for selected portraits for the 2012 ANZAC exhibition which then became a permanent display. She assists in an ongoing role with the English language versions of the two websites, as well as doing subtitles for videos.

What is the Maison Des Australiens Association

The Maison des Australiens Association - Vignacourt ('House of Australians') is a nonprofit organisation which brings together adults and youths involved in the development of the Louis and Antoinette Thuillier photographic collection of Vignacourt through associated activities and events. The association conducts guided tours of the photographic gallery, the village and local military cemetery to explain the history of these photographs, the role of the village and the involvement of Australians on the Western Front during the First World War.

The project

ICG has become a collaborative partner of the Maison des Australiens project and in 2014 will visit Vignacourt. ICG has decided to assist the young people of Vignacourt to realise their dream of being in Brisbane on the 19th and 20th of July 2014 to coincide with the Lost Diggers exhibition being held at the Queensland Museum.

The "**Memories of Vignacourt - Living Digger History**" project aims are:-

- link the young Vignacourt students with of identified Lost Diggers
- assist them to learn more about the realities of the Diggers' lived experiences and about Australia then and now
- reforge links between France and Australia developed so long ago
- Provide a lasting legacy for the future

The legacy of the past will not be forgotten. It will be remembered through the photographic collection and ongoing research related to the Lost Diggers collection; but more importantly it will continue to live through real human interaction today100 years later! Through regular contact, opportunities for cultural exchanges and exceptional educational experiences will be afforded. Through the inspiring project "Memories of Vignacourt- living Digger history from then to now" we will create a living, breathing page in history for young Australians and their French counterparts. Help us REMEMBER, RESEARCH and RETRACE this page in our History and bring it to life for the future generations of French and Australian peoples.