

AMWA-WAGS Project

By Diane Oldman



Part 1

... 'surplus to requirements'. That is a statement of outcome, not of reason. We have no idea why this piece of property is now surplus to requirements ... That decision can just as easily be reconsidered and somebody could say, 'Yes, we can find a use for the Artillery Barracks and it is NOT surplus to requirements'. Mr James Dalton, Board Member, Army Museum of Western Australia Foundation, October 2000.



Robert Mitchell,
Museum Curator

The Army Museum of WA was established in 1977 and was originally located in Bulwer Street, Perth. It was relocated to the Artillery Barracks site in Burt Street, Fremantle in 1995. This entire precinct has been heritage listed with several of the buildings having historical significance. In the late 1990's I recall reading in the press that the Commonwealth Government was considering the sale of the Museum site to Notre Dame University. I had never been to the Museum and made haste to visit before it disappeared. Although more impressive than I had imagined back then, in the last 20 years since, it has gone from strength to strength with major additions and refurbishments to the galleries. However, story-boards and artefacts are one thing—the hidden treasure of its archives is yet another. Read on ...

Part 2

I attended a meeting at WAGS in October 2015 to express an interest in supporting a military special interest group. In February 2016 its inaugural meeting was held with a healthy 20 participants. It is a very well organised group which provides guest speakers on military topics, Show & Tell sessions by members, excursions which have included the WA Army Museum, the Aviation Museum, Rottneet Island's WWII military installations, and next year a visit to Albany's WWI War Memorial precinct. In step with the WAGS convention for special interest groups, the annual general meeting is in May each year at which the committee is elected. Members of WAGS Affiliated Societies such as ours may participate in meetings, excursions and projects but (thankfully!) are prohibited from becoming committee members. In 2018 our committee comprises Angela Heymans, Convenor/Secretary and Gwyn Williams, Treasurer. There is no membership fee but a gold coin donation is appreciated at each meeting to cover afternoon tea expenses. Angela and Gwyn maintain a smooth running SIG and there is always a lot going on with an immaculate record of all of it!

Part 3

The idea of a joint project with the Army Museum of WA originated as a result of an excursion to the Museum in November 2016. Since early last year, boxes of photographs and documents relating to the late 19th and 20th centuries from the Museum's extensive collection were made available for digitisation. In the first instance, WAGS organised a donated light stand to be used by Gwyn Williams and husband Richard to capture images using Richard's digital camera. The WAGS Webmaster, then Chris Loudon, got busy developing websites that could be used for viewing and transcribing the images.

A formal agreement has now been signed between the two organisations. Some of the key principles are that images digitised by WAGS volunteers are made freely available (that is, not published behind a pay wall), and that the Museum will continue to provide the original material to WAGS for digitisation at no cost.

Less than two years later, Gwyn and Richard have uploaded a staggering 2,579 images to the Omeka platform that hosts the website. A number of transcribers have been working with the online material to make it 'searchable' for researchers. BUT another four boxes of items are now being digitised when only 11% of the items already online have been transcribed to date. And this project needs not only volunteers, but also a volunteer coordinator! Take a look at <http://projects.wags.org.au/> to get a general idea.

Transcribing coordinator

Vacant

Role

- Be the contact for transcription volunteer enquiries
- Approve volunteer requests to become transcribers
- Keep a record of volunteers and provide regular reports
- Monitor transcriptions done on the website for accuracy, correct format, etc
- Finalise transcriptions to go onto the public website

Gwyn Williams is the Digitising Coordinator and Angela Heymans is Funding Coordinator, with Susan Salvair assisting in the funding task. Grant monies will be used to purchase cameras, scanners, light stands and other equipment, as well as cover any costs associated with public website design, development, hosting etc.

This photograph (right) can be found in the item named 'Returned Nursing Sisters Sub Branch Scrap Book'. The contents of this item numbers 126—one of the largest in the group.



The contents of 'Nominal Roll Book - Western Australian Army Nurses Vol 1 1930 - 1942' may be of interest to those of you who had a mother, grandmother or aunt

serving as an Army nurse. This nominal roll comprises 97 pages of names.- that could mean nearly 1,000 names and details of World War II 'nightingales'. And Volumes 2 and 3 of these nominal rolls have also been digitised. The largest item (digitised data set) scanned to date comprises 788 images from a box of 'Swan Volunteer Corps Enrolments'.

This is a very worthwhile project—no longer will these key pieces of genealogical data be in a box on a shelf in a dark archive. The data will be 'out there' for all to see and download FREE. I urge anyone who has a bit of time on their hands, any time of the day, to jump onto your home computer—mouse in one hand, cuppa tea, G & T or a wine in the other and start transcribing.





AMWA – WAGS joint project

The Army Museum of Western Australia (AMWA) has an extensive and unpublished collection of historical records that require digitising and transcribing in order to make them available to the public. AMWA has asked the WA Genealogical Society (WAGS) for assistance with this task. AMWA's collection is absolutely invaluable to family historians with WA military ancestors and also provides a unique insight into WA social history from the late 19th century.

The Museum has provided a number of items to WAGS, such as nominal roll books, for digitisation. A selection of these records has been placed on <http://projects.wags.org.au/> (click on 'AMWA' to view). Digitised photos are also available via <http://wagsamwa.wags.org.au/>.

We need volunteers to transcribe the information in the images and to also check transcriptions already done, in order to make the contents more readily available for researchers everywhere. If you can help just go to <http://projects.wags.org.au/> and start transcribing! More images will be posted over time.

A list of items digitised to date

Swan Battalion D Company – Guard House Books
AAMWR Roll
Artillery Attendance Book 1902 – 1904
Artillery Nominal Roll Pre WW1
Artillery Nominal Roll Book 1922 – 1928*
Nurses Nominal Roll Book One 1930 – 1942*
Nurses Nominal Roll Book Two 1930 – 1942
Scrap Book – Returned Sisters Sub Branch
Swan VDC Enrolments Box 1, Bay 17
Summary of issue Nominal Roll Book 37 th AFA

*Images on <http://projects.wags.org.au/>

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