

*Remember Me*

THE LOST DIGGERS  
OF VIGNACOURT

# Media Release



## ***Lost diggers at State Library of NSW***

29/10/2014

A poignant collection of photographic portraits of 'lost diggers', discovered in a French farmhouse almost 100 years after the First World War, will go on public display at the State Library of NSW from Saturday 1 November.

Presented as part of the State Library's WWI centenary campaign, the free exhibition *Remember Me: the lost diggers of Vignacourt* features 74 hand printed photographic portraits taken of WWI soldiers in Vignacourt, the small French village which became the recreation and recovery point for troops moving to-and-from the battlefields of the Somme.

Thousands of Australian soldiers and other Allied troops passed through Vignacourt, located two hours north of Paris. Many had their photographs taken as souvenirs by Louis and Antoinette Thuillier, the enterprising husband-and-wife team who set up a makeshift studio in their stable yard, just off the main street of the village.

According to Alex Byrne, NSW State Librarian & Chief Executive: "During the First World War NSW was the largest contributor of Australian troops to the Western Front. They fought on the awful battlefields of the Somme, Pozieres and Ypres across northern France.

"The photographic portraits featured in *Remember Me* capture a sense of camaraderie among the Australian soldiers and offer a unique glimpse into their wartime experiences behind the front lines," said Dr Byrne.

"We are pleased to be presenting this Australian War Memorial exhibition as part of our First World War commemoration which aims to tell the personal stories of the Australian men and women in that war through free exhibitions and displays, public events, regional programs and our dedicated website < <http://ww1.sl.nsw.gov.au> >."

According to Dr Brendan Nelson, "The unearthing of the Louis and Antoinette Thuillier Collection of nearly 4,000 glass plates in 2011 is one of the important First World War discoveries ever made. A collection of 800 glass plates of Australian soldiers was generously donated to the Australian War Memorial by Mr Kerry Stokes AC in 2012."

In a special event at the State Library on Saturday 8 November, investigative journalist and author Ross Coulthart (*The lost diggers*) reveals the riveting detective story of the hunt across northern France for a rumored treasure trove of antique glass photographic plates, and their subsequent discovery in an ancient metal chest in a dusty attic in a farmhouse in Vignacourt. **Saturday 8 November 2014, 2pm to 3pm, Metcalfe Auditorium, Macquarie Street building. Cost: \$10, bookings essential [bookings@sl.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bookings@sl.nsw.gov.au)**

*Remember Me: the lost diggers of Vignacourt* is a free exhibition at the State Library of NSW from 1 November 2014 to 18 January 2015. [www.sl.nsw.gov.au](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au)

**For more information, interviews and images, please contact:**  
Vanessa Bond, Media & Communications Branch, State Library of NSW  
(02) 9273 1566, 0411 259 898, [vanessa.bond@sl.nsw.gov.au](mailto:vanessa.bond@sl.nsw.gov.au)



A sergeant of the 2nd Australian  
Division field artillery, late 1918

AWM P10550.090

Courtesy Kerry Stokes Collection,

The Louis and Antoinette Thuillier Collection



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An Australian War Memorial Travelling Exhibition

