



InterCultural Consulting Group

Media Release (for immediate release)

“Unique WW1 Schools Program launched”

Aussie Schools and communities are to be linked with a French school on the Somme that is home to the Lost Diggers of Vignacourt

In the lead up to Anzac Day 2016, a very unique school's program will be launched on the 9th March in the Bundaberg region of Qld.

Three schools , **Bargara State School, Childers State School and St Joseph's School Childers** will be officially linked with Vignacourt **Primary School in Picardy France** commemorating Australian Diggers who served and died on the Western Front in battles during the Great War and remembered during the centenary years

The French town of Vignacourt is well known for the 4000 plus photographic glass plates found in a barn in 2010 that have become known as the Lost Diggers of Vignacourt.

Enterprising locals Louis and Antoinette Thuillier took amazing photos of Australian and other soldiers as they passed to and from the front during 1916-1918. The village was to become a home away from home and develop many special relationships between the French citizens and Australian soldiers.

Brisbane teachers and historians **Michael and Donna Fiechtner** have made it their passion to ensure that the story will not be forgotten.

“The Vignacourt story is unique and about real men and the villagers they met and it's about real places. It is a story that gives another side of the Great War. It hasn't really been told and we are going to tell it through a range of interesting educational projects.” Mrs Fiechtner said.

The Bundaberg region has a direct link to Vignacourt through the story of William and Thomas See who they identified as Lost Diggers and who spent time in Vignacourt. This great story will be made into a feature film which is presently in pre development and will be filmed in Childers and surrounds..

The local students and communities will begin the important links with Vignacourt through a range of interesting Educational and Cultural projects. The schools and community will have **Partner School status** established over the coming months.

“These projects are a wonderful way to make real the events of 100 years ago “ Mr Fiechtner said. “We have amazing ongoing support from the local Council, Schools and Community both here and in France. We want this project to really gather momentum as it develops.”

On Wednesday **Bargara State School** will be introduced to Vignacourt and the 400 plus Australian Diggers that lie at rest in the local cemetery. Each coming year ,the year 6 students will research a soldier and the entire school will decorate memorial crosses arranged by local councillor Greg Barnes. These crosses will be part of the annual Bargara ANZAC ceremony and then transported to Vignacourt for the local children to place at the foot of the soldiers grave. The School's Year 6 students will carry on a tradition originally begun at the end of the Great War when the local Vignacout Mayor promised to never forget the Australian soldiers sacrifice. A link being maintained for future generations now.. Other classes at the school will also make poppies to be sent to Vignacourt in time for the local Anzac Day Ceremony.

Childers State School will be introduced to Vignacourt on Thursday the 10th March and take part in making special postcards featuring them dressed as Aussie soldiers having their photo taken just like 100 years ago as well as local scenes of Childers.. These Postcards with greetings from Childers will then be sent to Vignacourt. The Vignacourt School will send postcards back to the aussie kids again creating an ongoing link.

Finally **St Joseph's Primary School** will welcome “Private Billy Court”. A World War 1 commemorative bear dressed complete in uniform. Private Billy will spend time at the school and students will undertake a diary of activities and photos to share with the Vignacourt students. Billy will be arrive in Vignacourt for Anzac Day 2016 and take part in local events. He will then spend time at the local school and be returned to Bargara and Childers State School , rotating around the 3 schools and hopefully others sharing his Cultural and Historical stories with students linked through history to the Great war.

Michael and Donna will leave for France on the 3rd April leading a group of Australians to the Western Front and will be in Vignacourt for Anzac Day commemorations and to launch the project there.

For Further details please contact.....

Michael and Donna Fiechtner 0417710120

interccg@bigpond.com

www.interculturalconsultinggroup.com

www.memoriesofvignacourt.com

www.photosintheatticproject.com



Private Billy Court to travel to Vignacourt

Memorial Crosses bound for Vignacourt



The See brothers from Childers in original Vignacourt postcards.