

CASE STUDIES

Exclusive Behind the Scenes Stories from Collections WA



PRINCESS ROYAL FORTRESS MILITARY MUSEUM

An Interview with David Theodore

Why did the Princess Royal Fortress Military Museum decide to join Collections WA?

Being a relatively new museum we are yet to develop our online presence. So when Collections WA came up we jumped at it. As with most museums, we are unable to display all of our collection in the limited gallery spaces. Plus, with some objects being extremely fragile, it is the safest way to showcase our history whilst protecting the objects for future generations.

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What has been some of the unexpected benefits of joining Collections WA?

Whilst the museum was in the process of developing new displays on the history of the fortress, we came across a photograph held by the Army Museum of Western Australia. This photograph was unknown to the museum and help correct a similar photograph in our collection which had been dated 10 years earlier. The image is now in our new displays for all visitors to the site. (see [here](#))

Other previously unknown photographs of the fortress have also been discovered on Collections WA and we're in the process of creating stories for Collections WA site.

Can you tell us about your experience with the rare and precious "Loney Letter" from World War One and the public interest from media that has been generated by having the item online?

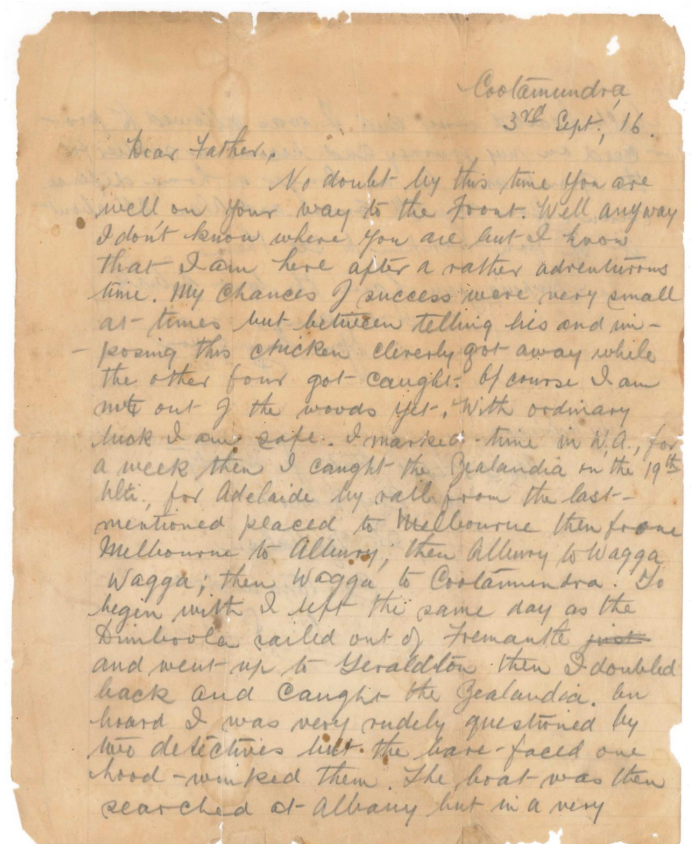
The "Loney Letter" came to the museum in 2018. It describes how Peter Loney (jnr) deserted from the Princess Royal Fortress Garrison here in Albany to enlist in the Australian Imperial Forces for service in the Great War. His journey to elude the law took him through three Australian states by sea and over land, and even back to Albany.

After the [ABC story online](#) a family member contacted the museum to ask how he could view it through Collections WA. After sending him through to the site, the family was thrilled to be able to read the letter in full and has since supplied the museum with further information.

Cover Image: Installation View of the Princess Royal Fortress Museum. Supplied by the organisation

David Theodore in front of photograph of the Princess Royal Fortress. Supplied by the organisation

"OTHER PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE FORTRESS HAVE ALSO BEEN DISCOVERED ON COLLECTIONS WA..".



Cootamundra
3rd Sept, 16.

Dear Father,

No doubt by this time you are well on your way to the front. Well anyway I don't know where you are but I know that I am here after a rather adventurous time. My chances of success were very small at times but between telling his and misposing the chicken cleverly got away while the other four got caught. Of course I am not out of the woods yet. With ordinary luck I am safe. I marked time in h.d. for a week then I caught the Gealandia on the 19th h.d. for Adelaide by rail from the last-mentioned place to Melbourne then from Melbourne to Albany; then Albany to Wagga Wagga; then Wagga to Cootamundra. To begin with I left the same day as the Dumbolla sailed out of Fremantle port and went up to Geraldton then I doubled back and caught the Gealandia. I heard I was very rudely questioned by two detectives but the bare-faced one hood-winked them. The boat was then searched at Albany but in a very

Loney Letter, dated 3rd September 1916, Princess Royal Fortress Collection, See Collections WA record [here](#)

What is your favourite item on Collections WA?

My favourite objects is a collection – the Batelier paintings and sketches held by the Albany Historical Society. This expansive art collection present us with an account of the importance of Albany's Princess Royal Harbour for trading vessels, passenger ships and naval fleets, plus historic scene in Albany. But their beauty lies in the detail and atmospheric representation of live in the early 1900's, with an emphasis on ships at sea and those moored in the calm waters of Albany's harbour.

Claude James Batelier,
SS Waratah (Steamship), 1909, Albany
Historical Society Inc. paper,
See Collections WA record [here](#)



Glass Toothpick Holder, American Fleet
Week, 1908, Albany Historical Society Inc.
See Collections WA record [here](#)

Is there anything else you would like to tell people about Collections WA?

We have recently assisted a family using Collections WA, helping them find the object which was sent down to Albany in the early 1990's. They did not know which museum or collection it went to, but by searching through Collections WA we were able to find the object, a commemorative glass toothpick holder from 1908, held at the Albany Historical Society. We were then able to direct the family to view the object which was on display at Patrick Taylor's Cottage. The donor, 89 year old Mrs Estelle Clayton and her family was thankful of knowing that the object still resides in Albany and that it is on display. Estelle was given the item by her mother and the Phill etched on the glass was her great uncle who left for World War I so it has a lot of significance for the family.



Collections WA

AMaGA
Western Australia



WESTERN
AUSTRALIAN
MUSEUM



Government of Western Australia

Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development