Remembering the Soldiers of Gloucestershire

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The grant will help fund the revamp of the museum’s current displays and improve their learning and community outreach programmes.

Founded in 1926 the museum – now housed in the Grade II listed Custom House, Victoria Dock, Gloucester - tells the stories of local soldiers who played vital roles in conflicts across the globe, including those in France, Flanders and Italy during the First World War. The museum’s vast collections comprise over 25,000 items made up of paintings, uniforms, medals and weapons giving visitors a unique insight into Gloucestershire’s military history.

Alongside important work to upgrade the current displays and improve the chronology and people’s understanding of the collections, the museum’s learning programme will also be transformed. New learning events and activities will be focussed around, among other themes, the First World War and its centenary in 2014 and personal soldier stories which will be brought to life through interactive multi-media tools. ‘The Memorial Project’ will create a database of names on War Memorials across the country thus establishing a valuable resource in time for the 2014 commemorations.

Themed exhibitions will help shed light on different eras and themes including the less well-known stories of the role of women in various wars and conflicts. The museum will also increase its involvement with local schools, encouraging young people to learn about this important part of their history. New interactive resources and easy-to-use online tools will be made widely available so that teachers and children can access the museum’s vast bank of information, images and data.

Volunteers will also play an active role in delivering the project and will be involved in a variety of activities such as archive research, creating new displays and helping with conservation. They will be offered a range of training from learning special artefact cleaning techniques to software programming skills that will enable them to get hands-on experience with each stage of the project.

Richard Bellamy, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South West, said: "The Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum tells the important stories of local men and women who have been involved in various conflicts over the past 300 years. By vastly improving the displays, exhibitions and learning activities, the museum will be able to bring these moving stories to life for local people and visitors for many years to come. In the run-up to the centenary of the First World War, we at the HLF are proud to be supporting projects like this one that will help to highlight for both young and old the great sacrifices made by the people of Gloucestershire in the first global conflict of the twentieth century."

Lt Col Robert Dixon, Chairman of Trustees at the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum, said: "We are thrilled that we have been allocated this significant grant. It will enable us to expand both the stories the museum can tell and our outreach programme. There will be something for everyone in the themes we develop to expand into the complete military history of Gloucestershire through the ages making it a more family friendly environment. We will also be able to expand the Korean War history into the most comprehensive display in the country. It will prove to be a major tourist attraction for the city."

Richard Graham MP, said: "I'm delighted the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum bid has been granted half a million pounds from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This award will hugely widen the museum's appeal and, with the centenary of

World War 1 drawing closer, it will help attract more visitors to Gloucester as more people search to understand the stories of their families during First World War."

Further information

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