

Mackay North State High School Lest We Forget Commemorative Project

Mackay North High's Lest We Forget Project is an ongoing project of commemoration undertaken by Senior History students at the school.

The aim of the project is to commemorate and further publicise the sacrifices made by Australians in war and to make practical and respectful tributes to those Australians who have died for our country.

The project revolves around overseas pilgrimages to the battlefields, cemeteries and memorials where Australians have fought and died. These tours involve the search for individual graves and names and the honouring of these fallen soldiers on behalf of relatives in Australia. Photographs of the graves and names are taken and presented to relatives on each group's return.

The school has so far undertaken 6 commemorative tours - in 1999, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008 & 2010. In that time 148 students have travelled to Gallipoli, the Somme and Flanders, Thailand and Singapore and have honoured 576 men and 33 nurses buried or commemorated in these areas.

"My final thoughts as I watched the silent headstones was that we have to live the life these soldiers gave us we have to live our lives to the fullest, love our friends and family to the utmost. It's the least we can do - live the life that these men never got."



For more information on the Lest We Forget Project

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(or Google - 'Mackay North Lest We Forget')

The Lest We Forget Project



Securing our future by respecting our past

Mackay North State High School



Anzac 2010

Commemorative Tour

Street Memorial Project



Dear Luscombe St Resident

My name is Kira Ryan and I am a member of the Mackay North SHS Anzac 2010 Commemorative Tour Group.

This year, our group undertook a 3 week overseas pilgrimage to the past Australian battlefields, cemeteries and memorials of Gallipoli, France, Belgium and Singapore.

One aspect of our research and commemoration centred around undertaking a local history study of Mackay streets which were named in honour of fallen Mackay soldiers.

Each student 'adopted' a street and the relevant soldier and, in the lead up to the tour, we researched the war service of "our" soldiers and learnt about the circumstances surrounding each man's death.

On the tour, we visited the graves or the memorials where each of these soldiers is buried or commemorated. At each site, we undertook a service which included the delivery of a eulogy, a recital of The Ode and the observance of a minute silence. We then photographed the grave or memorial name to bring this record back to Mackay.

I was honoured to have researched and commemorated the soldier after whom Luscombe St is named. So as to provide you with a little history of your street, please find over information related to the soldier. I hope you find it interesting.

Luscombe Street, Mackay

Named in honour of:

Lance Cpl George Luscombe

Service No. 1266

42nd Battalion AIF

Killed in Action in Belgium on 10 June, 1917

Aged 21

George was born in Mirani in 1896 and was the son of Ellen and the late John Luscombe of Mt Vince. He was working as a labourer in Mirani when he enlisted on 11 February, 1916 and he was allocated as an original member of C Company, 42nd Battalion.

He departed Australia with his unit on 5 June, 1916 and arrived in England on 23 July. He was then attached to the 3rd Divisional Training School before rejoining his unit in France on 11 March, 1917. After an extended period manning front line trenches, the 42nd Battalion was involved in the Battle of Messines, which began on 7 June, 1917.

After the capture of the German front line trenches, the 42nd Battalion was ordered to occupy and consolidate the area. The battalion history writes of this time: *“During this period we repulsed several counter attacks and were subjected to intense bombardments as we dug ourselves in. Our casualties were, in consequence, both numerous and severe.”* George was one of these casualties. He and eleven other battalion members were killed on 10 June by the ongoing shell fire being directed on the trenches they were manning.

A report of George’s death was recorded in the Nth Qld Register on 1 June, 1918. The story of his death was told through a friend who was visiting Mackay. The story, in part, reads, *“... he was present at the time of Lance Corporal Luscombe’s death, and helped to bury him along with 5 others, who were all killed by the same shell.”*

George was buried in Bethleem Farm East Cemetery, a battlefield cemetery which remained intact during the war. He lies there still today.

George is buried in grave A. 14



Bethleem Farm East Cemetery was made by Australian units when the farm was captured by the 3rd Australian Division on 7 June 1917 in the Battle of Messines. The majority of the burials are those of officers and men killed in action on 8 or 10 June, though the cemetery continued to be used until the following September. There are 44 servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in the cemetery. Eight of the burials are unidentified.

Georges’s Commemoration

On 25 September this year, I was honoured to commemorate George at his gravesite in Bethleem Farm East Cemetery. Even though I am not related to John, I found it a very emotional experience. Part of my eulogy reads:

“George, you experienced so many horrors but your bravery shone through. It is too easy to think of war as a distant, far off event, like perhaps it didn’t affect me. Yet you came from Mirani, a town less than an hour from my own. It opened my eyes to the fact that war had an effect on everyone, from all walks of life and places. Your poor mother had already lost her husband and now a son too...what she must have gone through.

So today I would like to thank you George, on behalf of myself and Australia as a whole, for the sacrifices you have made and may you rest in peace. You deserve it.”

