

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

Contact: Mr Mike Goodwin
Mackay North SHS – PO Box 8333
Mt Pleasant Qld 4740
Phone: 49 631729
Fax: 49 631600
Email: mickg@mackay.net.au

Website: www.macknortshs.qld.edu.au/ANZAC/index.html
(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 Baxter St Resident

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

Our group has recently returned from 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 Baxter 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.

Baxter Street, South Mackay

Named in honour of:
Private Walter Baxter

Service No. 6225
9th Battalion AIF

Killed in Action in Belgium on 5 November, 1917
Aged 23

And his brother
Trooper John Baxter
Service No. 1084

11th Australian Light Horse

Died of Wounds in Palestine on 1 May, 1918
Aged 28 (John was not commemorated on the tour)

Walter, known as Wally, was the son of William and Mary Ann Baxter who lived on Nebo Rd, Mackay. He was working as a labourer at Homebush when he enlisted on 8 April, 1916 and he embarked Australia on 7 September as part of the 20th Reinforcements to the 9th Battalion.

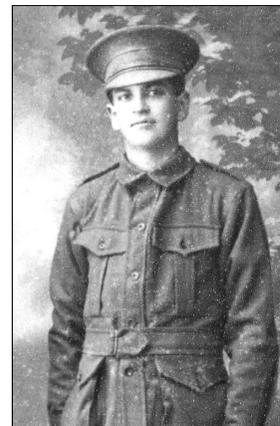
He joined the battalion in France in January, 1917 and fought through the many actions of that year, including the battles of Lagnicourt, Bullecourt and Menin Road. Wally died of wounds received on 5 November, 1917 as he and a party of 9th Battalion men worked at a dump behind the front line at Westhoek Ridge.

A report on his death states, "On 5/11/17 a shell landed in front of the dugout & exploded, a piece of it striking Private Baxter in the neck. His wound was dressed & he died shortly after. He was buried about 30 yards from the dump & a small cross was erected over the grave."

This grave was subsequently lost and Wally's name appears on the Menin Gate Memorial to the missing. His body either still lies where it was buried or he was re-interred as an unknown soldier into a nearby cemetery. Wally's brother, John, who served in the Light Horse, died of wounds in May, 1918 and is commemorated on the Jerusalem Memorial in Israel.

The Menin Gate Memorial is situated in the famous Belgian town of Ieper (Ypres). It records the names of 54 391 Commonwealth soldiers killed in the Ypres Salient during WW1 who have no known grave.

6176 of these names are Australians.



Wally Baxter



Walter's Commemoration

I was honoured to commemorate Walter at a special group service at the Menin Gate Memorial on 26 September this year during our overseas pilgrimage. Part of the eulogy I delivered for Walter reads:

"Today Walter's sacrifice is honoured on the Menin Gate with his other fallen comrades who have no known grave. But closer to home, in Mackay, he is always remembered. Walter is a Mackay man, one of our men. So as long as there are people living in Baxter Street, dedicated young Australians commemorating the past, and as long as I am living, Walter shall never be forgotten. He will always be a part of Mackay, part of all of us."

