

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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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 Marryatt St Resident

My name is David Chetcuti 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 Marryatt 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.

Marryatt Street, South Mackay

Named in honour of:

Private Halford Marryatt

Service No. 6118

25th Battalion AIF

Killed in Action in Belgium on 20 September, 1917

Aged 26

Halford was born in Mackay in March, 1891 and was the son of Edward and Lydia Marryatt. He grew up in Mackay and worked as a cooper (barrel maker) and a draper's assistant. He enlisted on 8 July, 1916 and was allotted to the 17th Reinforcements to the 25th Battalion, which embarked Brisbane on 27 October, 1916 and arrived in England on 9 January, 1917.

After training in England, Halford joined his unit in Belgium on 2 May. He spent time in hospital in July with trench fever and rejoined the battalion in August, only to be killed in action on 20 September, 1917 during the 25th Battalion's attack at the Menin Road, which was a part of the Third Battle of Ypres.

He was killed after the 25th had secured its objectives and was digging in. Numerous eyewitness accounts of his death are available, with Sgt/Major O. O'Connor stating, "I saw him killed at Westhoek. He was caught by shell fragments which got him about the head and body, death being instantaneous ... I buried him at place of casualty and I marked the grave with a cross bearing his number, name and unit." Pte Millet also described how a German shell landed in the trench and killed Halford instantly. He described Halford as, "a country man and a very cheerful man." Other accounts indicate that Halford was buried in the field, however this battlefield grave was lost, most likely due to the fact that the area remained under constant bombardment for many weeks after the battle.

Halford's mother was devastated by his death, however she was very grateful for the information that the Red Cross was able to obtain about his death. She sent a letter of thanks to the Red Cross which reads, in part: "The news of his death came as a hard blow, but if there be any compensation it is in the knowledge that he had no time to suffer As Private Marryatt's mother, I cannot yet realize that I shall not see my boy again, it is a bitter blow to me, but I thank God that he did not fail in his duty."

Halford has no known grave and he is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial in the town of Ieper in Belgium.

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.



Halford's Commemoration

I was honoured to commemorate Halford 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 Halford reads:

Halford Marryatt's body was never recovered. His name is inscribed upon this wall before us. Although we are not standing before his grave, his name is a strong reminder of the sacrifice that this noble young man made for his country. I would now like to recite a verse of a poem titled 'In Your Honour':

With a hand upon my heart, I feel the pride and respect; my reverence is revealed

In the tears that now stream down my upturned face As our flag waves above you, in her glory and grace.

Freedom was the gift that you unselfishly gave Pain and death was the price that you ultimately paid.

Every day, I give my utmost admiration To those who had fought to defend our nation.

