

# 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 Taylor St Resident

My name is Alison Beanland 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 Taylor 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.

## Taylor Street, South Mackay

Named in honour of:

Pte Henry Taylor  
Service No. 2514A  
47th Battalion AIF

Killed in Action in Belgium on 19 August, 1917  
Aged 25

Henry was born in Mackay and was the son of Mary Taylor who lived in Brisbane St. He was working as a carter when he enlisted on 20 March, 1916. He was initially allotted to the 52nd Battalion and he embarked Australia on 19 September, 1916, arriving in England on 9 December.

He spent time in the 13th Training Battalion in England and was docked 5 days pay for overstaying his leave in January, 1917. Henry was then transferred to the 47th Battalion and joined his new unit in France on 18 March, 1917.

He survived the hell of the Battle of Bullecourt but he then suffered a gunshot wound to the right hand on 8th June, 1917 during the on-going Battle of Messines. He re-joined his unit on 21 June only to be killed less than 2 months later, on 19 August. Henry was killed on the same day as Mackay man, William Hinton (also a street name project soldier) and indications are that both were killed by the same shell explosion whilst the battalion manned support trenches around Torreken Farm, near Messines.

Pte Batchelor was also killed on that day and his Red Cross files indicate he was killed by a shell explosion which also killed a number of others. This is supported by the files of Pte Hooper, also killed. His files give numerous eye witness accounts stating that six men were killed by the same shell and buried at Derry House. It would seem certain that Henry and William were both killed by this shell (of interest, one eye witness to this shell explosion, who himself was wounded, stated that the group hit were playing cards when the shell landed). The battalion diary of August 20 states, “...despite the fact that no movement is permitted in daylight at this location, a certain amount of haphazard shelling is indulged in by the Hun with the result that we have suffered more casualties in proportion than whilst in the front line.”

Both Henry and William are buried close to each other in Derry House Cemetery, Belgium.



Derry House Cemetery was named after a farm, which had been nicknamed "Derry House" by soldiers of the Royal Irish Rifles.

It was begun among the ruins of the farm in June 1917 by a field ambulance unit and was used as a front line cemetery until December 1917.

The cemetery contains 163 First World War burials.



### Henry's Commemoration

On 25 September this year, I was honoured to commemorate Henry at a his gravesite in Derry House Cemetery. Even though I am not related to Henry, it was still was an emotional moment for me, especially when I began to talk directly to him as part of my eulogy:



*“Henry, maybe you didn’t die in a courageous action, but in my eyes, you were a courageous man. Being only 25 years old you showed tremendous bravery and made the supreme sacrifice, your life. For that, I thank you. I will not forget what you did and how willing you were to fight for your country. While you may not get many visitors, Mackay has not forgotten you. Your hometown remembers. We honour you still, as do I.”*

