

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 Kippen St Resident

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

This year, our group embarked on a 3 week overseas pilgrimage to the past Australian battlefields, cemeteries and memorials of Gallipoli, France, Belgium and the Thai Burma Railway.

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 Kippen 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.

Kippen Street, South Mackay

Named in honour of:

Pte Robert Kippen

Service No. 458

41st Battalion AIF

Killed in Action in France on 7 January, 1917

Aged 24

Robert was the son of Robert and Christina Kinnon of Coningsby. He was a railway fireman and he enlisted on 18 January, 1916 into the original draft of the 41st Battalion, which was a part of the 3rd Division.

He arrived in France with his unit in December, 1916 and began to man trenches near the town of Armentieres before Christmas. Tragically, Robert was one of the first men to be killed in the battalion, on 7 January, 1917, as he acted as part of a night patrol covering party for a group of wiremen in no man's land.

Detailed Red Cross files on Robert's death all report that he was shot in the head by a stray bullet and that he died instantly.

Sgt Jackson gives the most comprehensive account:

"We were on a wiring party - I was with him. We had wired in one sector and the officer decided to wire in another sector. Kippen was in the covering party. After the wiring was completed, the officer went to the covering party to bring them in. Kippen was missing - he called him, but received no answer. The officer looked round and found Kippen dead. He was killed by a stray bullet."

Recovering his body was not easy, as Pte Ramsay reported, "He was a big lump of a fellow and it took about 3 hours to bring him in from the place at which he fell."

Robert was buried in Cite Bonjean Cemetery, which is situated in the town of Armentieres. This cemetery is still the site of Robert's resting place today.

Cite Bonjean Cemetery in the Northern French town of Armentieres was started in October, 1914 and continued to be used right up until April, 1918.

There are 2604 soldiers buried in the cemetery with 473 of these being Australians.

Robert is buried in Plot 4, Row C, Grave 22.



Robert's Commemoration

On 25 September this year, I was honoured to commemorate Robert at his gravesite in Cite Bonjean Cemetery. It was an emotional moment for me, especially when I began to talk directly to Robert as part of my eulogy:

"Robert, I'm glad I've been given the chance to get to know you, and I am here today, not only to commemorate your life and your sacrifice for the country that I call home, but to say thank you and that I hope you rest in peace."

