

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 Rae St Resident

My name is Mark Gordon 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 Rae 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.

Rae Street, South Mackay

Named in honour of:

Pte John Rae

Service No. 6085

9th Battalion AIF

Died of Illness in France on 17 February, 1917

Aged 21

John was the son of Thomas and Margaret Rae of Byron St, Mackay. He was a blacksmith by trade and he had served in the Mackay cadets and CMF before the war.

He enlisted with his brother, Robert (service no. 6084) on 28 February, 1916 and was allotted to the 19th Reinforcements to the 9th Battalion (as was Robert). He embarked Australia with this draft on 8 August and arrived in England on 18 October.

John spent some time in hospital with the mumps before joining his battalion in France on 26 January, 1917. Two weeks later he was admitted to hospital with pneumonia. His condition deteriorated and he died in the 45th Casualty Clearing Station on 17 February, 1917.

He was buried in Dernancourt Communal Cemetery Extension (cemetery photo below).

Robert and another serving brother, Allan, both survived the war.



John's Commemoration

I was honoured to commemorate John at his gravesite at Dernancourt Communal Cemetery Extension on 30 September this year during our overseas pilgrimage. Part of the eulogy I delivered for John reads:

"When John died he was only a mere 21 years old. His life had barely begun before it was tragically cut short. Never again to return to Mackay, or even Australia, to see his beloved parents and brothers once more, never to live the life that should have been. All this was taken away from him, not by shell, shrapnel or German attack, but the horror and misery of war itself.

John, while you may have been ill of body I believe your spirit was as strong as ever. That you were just as brave, courageous and determined as any soldier and that you were prepared to defend your country. While you will never return to Australia you have not been forgotten. You are remembered; not just by the name of a street, or a statistic, but as a life once lived."

