

# 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 Sneyd St Resident

My name is Kirstie Sauer 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 Sneyd 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.

## Sneyd Street, South Mackay

Named in honour of:

Pte Rex Sneyd

Service No. 5202

49th Battalion AIF

Killed in Action in France on 14 June, 1918

Aged 20

Rex was from Finch Hatton and was the son of Robert and Jessie Sneyd. On his attestation form he stated his occupation as a labourer, although Robert wrote on his Roll of Honour circular that he was locomotive fireman.

He enlisted on 11 January, 1916 and it would seem that he may have put his age up, as he stated on enlistment that he was 20 years and 6 months. His post war Roll of Honour circular indicates he was 20 years and 8 months when he died (over two years after he enlisted).

He arrived in France on 14 June, 1916 and was taken on strength into the newly formed 49th Battalion on 20 August, in time to fight in the battalion's action at Mouquet Farm in early September. Rex served with the battalion throughout the rest of 1916 and through the many major battles of 1917, including Bullecourt, Messines and Passchendaele.



His luck finally ran out on 14 June, 1918 during what was, ironically, a relatively quiet period in which the 49th held front line trenches east of Villers Bretonneux. The battalion history notes that between 13 - 16 June, "there was to be no relief from the fairly constant bombardment until the evening of the 16th." Rex was killed by this shellfire and was one of 13 battalion members killed in June.

He was originally buried in Vaux Sur Somme Cemetery but was re-interred into Villers Bretonneux Military Cemetery at the end of the war.



Villers Bretonneux Military Cemetery is situated just outside the famous village of Villers Bretonneux in France and was established after the war when graves were consolidated there from many smaller cemeteries in the area. Today, there are 2141 burials, of which 779 are Australian.

### Rex's Commemoration

On 30 September this year, I was honoured to commemorate Rex at his gravesite in Villers Bretonneux Cemetery. Even though I am not related to Rex, it was still an emotional moment for me, especially when I began to talk directly to him as part of my eulogy:

*Rex, you have become more than a street in South Mackay through this research. I have become to know and love you, and in saying that I would like you to know that you have become a part of me, and you will be forever in my heart. Rex, I want you to know that I now consider you as a part of my family*

