

# Mackay North State High School Lest We Forget Commemorative Project

Mackay North High's Lest We Forget Project is an on-going 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 7 commemorative tours - in 1999, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010 & 2012. In that time 181 students have travelled to Gallipoli, the Somme and Flanders, Thailand and Singapore and have honoured 669 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



## *Footsteps of Honour*

### 2012

## Commemorative Tour



# *Street Memorial Project*

Dear Thompson St Resident

Our names are Ellie Wilson and Michael Kynaston and we are members of the Mackay North SHS Footsteps of Honour 2012 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 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.

In pairs, we all '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.

We were honoured to have researched and commemorated the soldier after whom Thompson St is named. So as to provide you with a little history of your street, please find over information related to the soldier. We hope you find it interesting.

## Thompson St, Mackay

Named in honour of:  
Captain Robert Thompson  
26th Battalion AIF

Killed in Action in France on 5 August, 1916  
Aged 29

Robert was born in Hampden on 13 August, 1885 to parents Robert and Jessie Thompson. He was the Principal of Nebo State School when, in March, 1915 he applied for a commission in the AIF. In May of the same year he was appointed as a Lt and posted to B Company of the 26th Bn.



He embarked Brisbane with his unit on 24 May & arrived at Gallipoli on 5 September where he served before embarking for France with the 26th Battalion from Egypt in May, 1916. He was promoted to Captain & led B Company into action as part of the 7th Brigade's ill fated attacks against the German OG lines at the Pozieres Windmill.

The 26th attacked the OG lines for the second time on the night of 4 / 5 August & Robert went missing in action during this battle. Pte Benham reported that he saw Thompson lying severely wounded in a dugout at 7 pm on the 4th. There is no other information on his fate & it can be assumed that he died of the wounds &/or was subsequently buried by further shellfire.

An army Court of Enquiry dated 3 Sept., 1917 officially listed Robert as having been killed in action on 5 August, 1916 & that, "*The whereabouts of Grave cannot be ascertained.*"

A fellow officer of the 26th, Lt E. Trundle, wrote a glowing report on Robert's character: "... *he was one of the best loved officers of our Bn and a sterling fellow. He will be greatly missed and mourned for by all officers and men of the 26th Battn.*"

Today Robert is honoured on the Australian National Memorial in France.

The Australian National Memorial stands just outside the famous French village of Villers Bretonneux and it records the names of 10 952 Australians who died in France during World War One who have no known grave.



### Robert's Commemoration

We were honoured to commemorate Robert at a special group service at the Australian National Memorial on 4 October this year during our overseas pilgrimage.



Michael & Ellie delivering Robert's eulogy at the service



Robert's name inscribed on the Australian National Memorial