

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 Stevenson St Resident

My name is Elly Whittaker 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 Stevenson 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.

Stevenson Street, Mackay

Named in honour of:

Pte John Stevenson

Service No. 291

41st Battalion AIF

Killed in Action in Belgium on 4 July, 1917

Aged 21

John was born in Eton to Alexander and Nora Stevenson and he was working as a labourer in Mirani when he enlisted on 19 October, 1915 at the age of 20. He became an original member of A Company, 41st Battalion and left Australia with the 41st on 18 May, 1916. Whilst on the voyage over, John was docked two days pay for "malingering". After arriving in France in November, John spent two weeks in hospital with a sprained ankle in December.

He rejoined his battalion two days before Christmas and served in the trenches around Armentieres until he was killed in action on 4 June, 1917, only three days before the Battle of Messines began. Of this period, the 41st Battalion History states, "*The artillery began preliminary bombardment for the Battle of Messines, and drew heavy retaliation on us, which played havoc with our trenches and cost us more than twenty casualties a day. This period before the battle is remarkable for the intense artillery barrages we had continuously to endure.*"



John was a victim of this heavy artillery and, like a number of 41st Battalion men killed by shellfire around this time, he was buried in the nearby Strand Military Cemetery near the famous Ploegsteert Wood.

Strand Military Cemetery is a large Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery that is a concentration of many smaller cemeteries established in the area during the war.

John is one of 289 Australians buried in a total of 1151 soldiers. He lies in Plot 3, Row D, Grave 13



John's Commemoration

On 25 September this year, I was honoured to commemorate John at his gravesite in Strand Military Cemetery. Even though I am not related to John, I found it to be a very emotional experience.

