

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 Milne Lane Resident

My name is Alison Beanland 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 Milne Lane 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.

Milne Lane, Mackay

Named in honour of:
Private James Spence Milne
Service No. 683
9th Battalion AIF
Killed in Action 25 April, 1915
Aged 19

James, known as Jim, was the son of John and Annie Milne and has the sad distinction of being one of the first Mackay men to be killed in WW1.

He was working as a labourer when he enlisted on 29 August, 1914 - again, one of the first in Mackay to enlist. He was only 18 when he enlisted, so he would have needed written permission from his parents. He was allotted to D Company of the 9th Battalion and he sailed to Egypt with his unit as part of the first Australian contingent.



Jim landed at Anzac Cove on the morning of 25 April and he was never seen again. His company landed at the southern end of the cove, at Hell Spit (or Queensland Point) and he would most likely have moved to the southern edge of the 400 Plateau at Lone Pine amongst the scattered groups of his and other battalions. The most likely scenario for Jim is that he was killed on 400 Plateau and that his body lay in the area recaptured by the Turks. This was a common fate for many of the 600 Australians killed on that day.



Jim's name on the Lone Pine Memorial

Today, Jim, who was only 19 when he died, is commemorated on the Lone Pine Memorial, which is situated in an area close by where he was most likely to have been killed.

The Lone Pine Memorial dominates the area known during the Gallipoli Campaign as 400 Plateau and is built over the trenches fought for during the Battle of Lone Pine, which took place in early August, 1915. It is the main memorial at Anzac and it overlooks the Lone Pine Cemetery.

The memorial commemorates 3268 Australians and 456 New Zealanders who died in the campaign and have no known grave and the 960 Australians and 252 New Zealanders who died and were buried at sea.



Jim's Commemoration

Jim was the subject of my major History assignment this year and I have undertaken a great deal of research into his life and his possible fate. I was honoured to commemorate Jim at a special group service at the Lone Pine Memorial on 21 September this year during our overseas pilgrimage. A number of Australian tourist buses had arrived and a crowd of people had gathered to listen to our service. It was an emotional time for me, especially when I began to talk to Jim in my eulogy:

“Jim, you are not just a name on the wall at Lone Pine. Nor are you just a name of a street in Mackay. You are much more than that. You are a man who showed bravery and courage and who never gave up. While your final resting place will never be known, your story has touched my heart and I will never forget you and what you did. Sleep well my friend, wherever you are.”

