

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 Wentford St Resident

Our names are Brittany McCarthy & Kiarra Spandley 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 Wentford 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.

Wentford St, Mackay

Named in honour of:
Trooper Jack (Mick) Wentford
Service No. 584

2nd Australian Light Horse Regiment AIF
Died of Wounds in Egypt on 20 May, 1915
Aged 25



Jack, known as Mick, was born on 11 April, 1890 in Mackay to parents John & Mary Wentford. At the outbreak of war he was working as a railway fireman & he was one of the first to enlist in the district, on 26 August, 1914. He was allotted to C Squadron of the original 2nd Light Horse Regiment & arrived at Gallipoli with his unit on 12 May.

The 2nd LHR was given the difficult & dangerous task of manning the very precarious foothold at Quinn's Post. It took over the trenches on 13 May & began suffering casualties immediately. Two days later C Squadron attacked the Turkish trenches opposite Quinn's Post in an unsuccessful & costly attack. During this attack, Mick received serious gunshot wounds to his left arm & thigh (of note, Albert Graffunder - Graffunder St, was killed in this action).

He was evacuated from Gallipoli by hospital ship & was admitted to No. 15 General Hospital in Alexandria on 20 May. However, he succumbed to his wounds the next day & was buried in Chatby Cemetery.

Mick's character can be seen in a letter written to his family before he arrived at Gallipoli, which stated, in part, "*Since writing about three days ago, I think there is now a chance of getting a bit of a scrap, which is what we came for. And mother, do not worry, for when it comes to a bit of a scrap, don't be afraid; I will do my duty, & trust God that I will do it well.*"

Pte Tom Mulherin wrote to his family, stating that, "*I was very sorry to lose 'Mick' Wentford & 'Graffy' (Albert Graffunder). These were very fine fellows.*"

Jack's Commemoration

We were honoured to commemorate Jack at a special gravesite service at Gallipoli on 25 September.

The group was unable to visit Mick's grave in Egypt, however we honoured him at Quinn's Post Cemetery, next to his mate, "Graffy" & close to where he suffered his wounds.

We did, though, manage to secure a photo of his headstone in Chatby Cemetery



Jack's grave in Chatby Cemetery, Egypt



Kiarra (left) and Brittany at the grave of Jack's mate and Mackay resident, Albert Graffunder.