

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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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 Clark St Resident

My name is Taylah McCarthy and I am a member of the Mackay North SHS Anzac 2010 Commemorative Tour Group.

Our group has recently returned from 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 Clark 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.

Clark Street, South Mackay

Named in honour of:

Sgt Alfred Clark

Service No. 774

6th Battalion AIF

Killed in Action in France on 11 November, 1916

Aged 29

Alfred, known as Alf, was the son of Alfred Clark Snr and Jean Arnott and husband of Mary Clark. He was a carpenter by trade and enlisted in Melbourne on 24 August, 1914. He was an original member of the 6th Battalion and he sailed with the first AIF contingent on 19 October, 1914.

He was to prove a very good soldier, a point highlighted by the fact that he was one of a small number of men to serve at Gallipoli for the whole of the campaign. After leaving Gallipoli, Alf spent time in hospital in Egypt with influenza before being promoted to Corporal and then Sergeant soon after. He arrived in France with his battalion in April, 1916 and became the bombing Sergeant for his company. He fought in this capacity during the Battle of Pozieres and was subsequently Mentioned in Dispatches for, *“Consistent good work. Brave, reliable and intelligent soldier”*.

Alf's luck ran out later in the year when he was killed at Flers on 11 November during an ill fated raid on German trenches. He led his section of bombers in support of the attacking force, however he was killed before he reached the German trenches. L/Corp H. Dimmett stated that he was, *“last seen hanging in the German barbed wire severely wounded, but continuing to bomb the enemy, and encouraging his bombers.”* Other witnesses saw his body on the wire for days after the attack and Sgt J. Harvey reported that, *“Sgt Washbourne and Sgt Major Ballina found his dead body in the wire three weeks later. He was identified by his tunic and disc.”* Alf's loss was keenly felt in the battalion, with Lt A. Hyde writing, *“Well Sgt Clark was amongst the missing and we were all sorry to know of our loss as he was a great favourite, being an old original 1st Div. man and was mentioned in dispatches for good work both on Gallipoli and France”*.

Alf's body was recovered from the German wire and today he lies in Bancourt British Cemetery, France.

Bancourt British Cemetery is situated on the outskirts of the French village of Bancourt, near the old Australian battlefields around Flers and Guedecourt in the Somme area. There are 2480 burials of which only 1018 are identified.

Alf lies just to the right of the Cross of Sacrifice in this photo and he is surrounded by many fellow fallen Australians.



Alf's Commemoration

On 1 October this year, I was honoured to commemorate Alf at his gravesite in Bancourt British Cemetery. It was an emotional moment for me, especially when I began to talk directly to Alf as part of my eulogy:

“On behalf of Mackay, myself and your family, I am here to show my upmost appreciation for your ultimate sacrifice. Although you and I have never met, Alf, I feel I now know you.

With the street that is named after you being in my neighbourhood I will remember you every time I pass Clark Street.

I will keep your legacy alive and for as long as I live you will never just be a name on a street sign, but a gallant soldier who fought for our great country.

Sleep well brave soldier, this is only a goodbye, not a farewell.

Rest in Peace.”

