

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 Burston St Resident

Our names are Emma Wesche and Tony McGiffin 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 Burston 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.

Burston St, North Mackay

Named in honour of:

Leading Aircraftman Herbert Burston

No. 25171 1st Squadron RAAF

Died as a POW on 12 September, 1944

Aged 25

Herbert was born on 21 May, 1919 to Herbert & Elizabeth Burston of Habana. He enlisted into the RAAF on 28 Feb., 1941 and was appointed as a Leading Aircraftman, which meant that he was a mechanic working on the aircraft.

He was posted to 1 Squadron RAAF, which was the first squadron to see action against the Japanese. It was based in Malaya at Kota Bharu when the Japanese invaded Malaya on 8 December 1941 and was forced to re-locate to Sumarta in Indonesia.

After further Japanese gains, the squadron moved to Java, where 160 of its personnel, including Herbert, were forced to surrender when the Japanese invaded Java.

These men endured the same hardships as all other POWs of the Japanese. Herbert survived for over two years before succumbing to illness on 12 Sept., 1944. He was buried at his camp but his grave was subsequently lost.

Today, Herbert has no known grave and he is honoured on the Singapore Memorial in Kranji Cemetery.

Kranji Cemetery

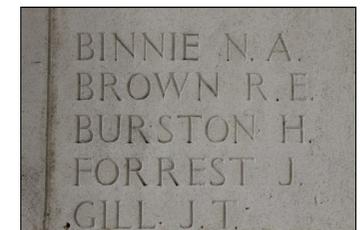
Kranji Cemetery is the only CWGC cemetery in Singapore & contains 4522 burials, almost all from WW2.

The Singapore Memorial is in the cemetery grounds and records the names of 24000 WW2 casualties who have no known grave - including Herbert's.



Herbert's Commemoration

We were honoured to commemorated Herbert at a special group service at the Singapore Memorial at Kranji Cemetery on 9 October this year during our overseas pilgrimage.



Herbert's name inscribed on the Singapore Memorial



Emma and Tony at William's name