

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 Howard St Resident

My name is Peta Germanotta 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 Howard 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.

Howard Street, South Mackay

Named in honour of:

Pte Walter Howard

Service No. 2445

47th Battalion AIF

Killed in Action in Belgium on 12 October, 1917

Aged 23

Walter was the son of Robert and Jane Howard who lived in Gregory St, Mackay. He was the youngest of the four Howard brothers to enlist and was the only one to be killed. He was working as a shop assistant when joined up on 20 March, 1916 at the age of 21 and he departed Brisbane with the 5th Reinforcements to the 47th Battalion on 19 September, 1916.

He arrived in England on 9 December and was admitted to hospital with Otitis Media, which is an infection of the middle ear. After spending a number of months in various training and depot units in England, Walter joined the 47th Battalion in Belgium on 22 September only to be killed in action on 12 October during the 47th's actions near Zonnebeke as part of the Battle of Passchendaele.



Walter was listed as missing and was later deemed killed by an army court of enquiry held in March, 1918. The exact circumstances surrounding Walter's death are unknown, however the battalion diary notes that its HQ was shelled heavily, with the result that, "*nearly all signallers, runners & scouts (became) casualties, this upsetting all arrangements for communication forward. 24 men killed by this shellfire and valuable lives lost, that will be hard to replace.*" It is possible that Walter was one of these men killed. Although listed as missing, his service records indicate he was buried, "*1000 yards S W of Passhendaele and 1000 yards N E of Zonnebeke.*" Like most battlefield burials in this area, this grave was lost and Walter has no known grave. In a letter from the army asking the family if they had heard any news of Walter's fate, Robert wrote, "*I have heard nothing further ... since I got the news he was missing from the Mayor of the town. I will be pleased to have any information about him hoping to have good news of him soon.*" In a sad postscript, Robert died one month after he wrote this letter, meaning that Jane Howard lost one of her sons and her husband in the space of six months. Today, Walter is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial in Ieper.

The Menin Gate Memorial is situated in the famous Belgian town of Ieper (Ypres).

It records the names of 54 391 Commonwealth soldiers killed in the Ypres Salient during WW1 who have no known grave.

6176 of these names are Australians.



Walter's Commemoration

Walter was the subject of my major History assignment this year and I have undertaken a great deal of research into his life as a soldier. I was honoured to commemorate him at a special group service at the Menin Gate Memorial on 26 September this year during our overseas pilgrimage. It was a very emotional time for me and part of the eulogy I delivered for Walter reads:

"More than a name on a wall, more than a name on a street ... There is no knowledge of what happened to Walter on his last day except that he was buried 1000 yards south west of Passchendaele and 1000 yards north east of Zonnebeke. Walter, although we will never know what happened to you or where you rest today, I believe that because of your deafness you were in the headquarters when it was shelled. I believe that you and your 23 cobbers lie side by side in the graves of Tyne Cot. I believe you're one of the many unknown soldiers who rest in this cemetery. You have captivated and consumed me in many ways I can not explain, and I promise to return to you. Till we meet again dear cobber. ♥"

