

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 Pratt St Resident

My name is Elise Lambert 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 Pratt 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.

Pratt Street, South Mackay

Named in honour of:

Pte David Pratt

Service No. 1883

41st Battalion AIF

Died of Wounds in Belgium on 5 October, 1917

Aged 21

David was the son of David Snr and Isabella Pratt and was working as a labourer when he enlisted on 1 April, 1916. He was a member of the 2nd Reinforcements to the 41st Battalion and he joined his new unit in France on 23 March, 1917.

He fought through the Battle of Messines in June only to be mortally wounded on 5 October, 1917 during the Battle of Passchendaele as the 41st Battalion manned the front line trenches captured at Broodseinde Ridge the previous day. The battalion was subjected to very heavy shellfire on this day. David must have been a victim of this shelling as he was admitted to the 3rd Australian Field Ambulance with severe concussion.



He was then transferred to the 3rd Casualty Clearing Station, but his records state that he was, “admitted dead from 3rd AFA.”, indicating that he died in transit between the medical facilities.

David was buried in the nearby Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery. After the war, David’s parents requested to have the ‘Burning Bush’ engraved on his headstone rather than the Cross. This request was denied. They also requested the following epitaph: *Our tears are mingled / With our pride / He died that all may live.*

To my relief, when I visited the grave, I found that this epitaph is on David’s grave.

Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery is the second largest Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery on the Western Front. It contains the graves of 10 786 soldiers, of whom 1131 are Australian. The cemetery was established near numerous hospitals established well behind the front lines.

As such, all burials are known burials.

David is buried in Plot 25, Row C, Grave 17A



David’s Commemoration

On 25 September this year, I was honoured to commemorate David at his gravesite in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery. David is also a relative of mine and delivering my eulogy was very emotional, especially when I spoke directly to him:

“Our tears are mingled – with our pride - he died so that all may live.

I am scared of your courage, your bravery and what you represent. Over a year ago I walked a POW cemetery and read the words printed on graves, but with ever growing maturity and life experience now, you and all your mates mean so much more. I hope your listening Granny because this man is a champion, a larrikin and a fair dinkum Australian Soldier. I love you David Pratt. I will forever be grateful. One day we’ll meet again, face to face.”

