

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 Hayes Lane Resident

Our names are Chris Albertson and Peter Gordon 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 Hayes Lane 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.

Hayes Lane, Mackay

Named in honour of:
Private William Hayes
Service No. 3790
49th Battalion AIF

Killed in Action in Belgium on 12 October, 1917
Aged 22



William was born in East Brisbane in 1894 to Robert & Elizabeth Hayes. He moved to Mackay with his family where Elizabeth was the Matron of Cromer Hospital. William served for three years in the CMF & was working as a jeweller when he enlisted in the Australian Naval & Military Expeditionary Force in August, 1914. This force was raised to capture German New Guinea, however William's contingent aboard the SS Kanowna did not make it to New Guinea & was forced to return to Townsville when the ship's stokers mutinied.

He was discharged from this force on 18 Sept. & returned to Mackay. He enlisted into the AIF on 9 August, 1915 & joined the 12th Reinforcements to the 9th Bn. This contingent embarked Brisbane on 30 Dec. & William, after arriving in Egypt, was transferred to the newly formed 49th Battalion. He arrived in France with his new unit on 12 June, 1916 & fought continuously with the 49th through all of its campaigns until he was killed in action at Passchendaele on 12 Oct., 1917 as his unit manned trenches near Zonnebeke. The circumstances surrounding William's death are described in the Red Cross files of Sgt A. James, who was killed with William. An eyewitness to the event, CSM M. Waltisbul, stated, "*.. He (James) was killed in the same dug-out as myself & spoke to me a second before his death. My other two mates both were killed by the same shell at 4.15 am. All were killed instantaneously so none of them suffered any pain at all. The other two were Cpl A. Siddle & Pte W Hayes. All three were buried in the field & the position was marked with rifles stuck butt up into the ground.*" These graves were later lost & James, Siddle (from Sarina) & Hayes have no known grave. As such, they are all honoured on the Menin Gate Memorial in Ieper. The fact that William simply disappeared was difficult for Elizabeth to come to terms with, as a letter to the army in 1919 shows, "*I would be very grateful if you could let me know the place he was buried in & also the number of his grave. It is now over twelve months since the news of his death reached me & I have received no communication whatever as to what part of France was buried in.*"

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.



William's Commemoration

We were honoured to commemorate William at a special group service at the Menin Gate Memorial on 30 September this year during our overseas pilgrimage.



William's name inscribed on the Menin Gate Memorial



Chris (left) and Peter at William's name.