



Media Statement

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Esperance student blazing a trail to the Western Front

Esperance school student Hannah Castledine took another step closer to the First World War's historic Western Front recently when she received her official ANZAC Student Tour blazer from Premier Alan Carpenter.

Hannah, a Year 11 student at Esperance Senior High School, is one of 12 students selected to travel with Mr Carpenter to France and Belgium this month as part of the Premier's ANZAC Student Tour 2008.

Mr Carpenter said the students will be walking in the footsteps of the ANZACs, paying tribute to those who served or were killed or injured on the battlefields of the Western Front.

"More than 48,000 young Australians, not much older than the students selected for this tour, lost their lives on the battlefields of France and Belgium," Mr Carpenter said.

"The students chosen to take part in the tour have demonstrated an interest in Australia's role at the Western Front and are all outstanding representatives of young Western Australia.

"Hannah is an active member of her local community. She was a member of her schools national champion Tournament of the Minds team and is a percussionist in local concert and jazz bands."

Hannah has a keen interest in war history and attended the Quiet Lion Tour to the Burma-Thailand Railway with ex-POWs where she was awarded the Weary Dunlop Medal.

"I am excited about attending the 90th anniversary of the liberation of Villers-Bretonneux because Western Australian forces fought and died there, including many soldiers from Esperance, so it will be very special," Hannah said.

"I hope to gain a greater understanding of the conflicts from the tour – just being able to stand in places where our soldiers stood makes that whole part of our history more realistic."

Mr Carpenter said the Dawn Service on April 25 at the French village of Villiers-Bretonneux to mark the 90th anniversary of the town's liberation from German occupation made this year's tour especially significant.

"This tour is part of the State Government's commitment to raising the profile of ANZAC Day in the lives of all Western Australians, remembering the sacrifices of our forebears," he said.

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Photo attached. Hannah is available for interviews.