

Appendix Two

The Port Macquarie War Memorial.



From the *Port Macquarie News* , Saturday, April 2 1921

Unveiling the Memorial

"Owing to heavy showers of rain, it was half-past three o'clock when the ceremony of unveiling the War Memorial took place. Notwithstanding the unpleasant weather conditions there was a great gathering assembled when this tribute to the immortal memory of our district heroes was unveiled. The people felt that any little discomfort experienced was a very trifling sacrifice to make for the men whose name was graven on that stone - men who had suffered sickness and wounds and death that they might live in security and comfort all their lives. This was the unspoken feeling which dominated the crowd, and no discordant note marred the solemn occasion.

The Mayor said they had assembled to fulfil a promise made, when they had a temporary Honour Board, that on a future date they would erect a permanent memorial to the boys who had fought for them. This Memorial and Honour Roll of trachyte and red granite would perpetuate their memory for hundreds of years. There had been a divergence of opinion as to what form the memorial should take but to him it was something sacred, and moreover should be of a permanent character. A hall could not fulfil these conditions. All contributions had been direct and voluntary , and amongst them was a magnificent donation from the Wauchope branch of the R. S. and S. T. League. Many who had seen the memorial said it was one of the finest on the North Coast, and personally he considered they had done the right thing. He would call on the mayoress, Mrs. J. H. Hill, to unveil the memorial.

Mrs. Hill then unveiled the Memorial, and as the flag which covered it was removed, bandmaster McKee sounded the "Last Post", the crowd standing with bared heads as the notes of the bugle rang out.

Mr. R. Davidson thanked the committee for the opportunity to address the largest gathering he had ever seen in Port Macquarie. They had that day been celebrating the centenary of Port Macquarie , and reference had been made to the town's unfortunate beginning. The monument unveiled that day showed that the founders had builded far better than they knew, and the names on the Honour Roll showed what had been done by descendents of those who came here a hundred years ago, and had left the spirit of the British Empire behind them. Great as that Empire was, it was unprepared for the world-war, and might have gone down, just because of her unpreparedness, but for the help of the allies. They

Appendix Two

The Port Macquarie War Memorial.

must remember the gallant stand of little Belgium, at Liege, which enabled the British Regular Army to get to the front; of France, with the élan and dash of her soldiers, which enabled them to hold the foe at the Marne in the early days of the war; of Italy, who came in late; of Japan for her naval help; of America, whose army and navy rendered great help; and the smaller nations which helped to stem the rush of the common enemy. As new facts were disclosed, they more fully recognized the help rendered to England when she was almost on her knees. They were now feeling the aftermath of the war and there were still ominous rumblings in Russia, Greece and Turkey. The most of the trouble was due to finance and wisdom was needed to deal with this phase of the war's after effects. They must make good the great loss incurred, and ever increasing production alone would make up for the stupendous losses. When they thought of the work of the pioneers they realised what great difficulties had been met and overcome, and the progress made was patent to all; but the younger generation must realise that the days of pioneering were not yet over. New land was waiting to be opened up, new industries to be begun, and vast areas to be populated.

Port Macquarie was destined to become the sanatorium of the North Coast, and was becoming increasingly popular with those who sought rest and recreation. The monument they had just seen unveiled was constructed of Australian trachyte and Aberdeen granite, and would stand for hundreds of years as a record of the heroism of Port Macquarie and district soldiers, who had played their part well. These men had answered the call of duty voluntarily. They had gone away free and unfettered and their record was imperishable one [sic]. The Committee could be congratulated on its choice of a design, as the Memorial was an ornament to the town. They were thankful that so many of their brave boys had returned to take up the battle of peace in the same fine spirit they had displayed in war. The people responded freely towards defraying the cost of the monument, but the sum of £60 was still required, and he appealed for this so that the structure could be handed over free of debt. The sum required was collected in a few minutes, and Mr Davidson then formally handed the care of the monument over to the Mayor as the peoples representative, and expressed the hope that the Council would always see that it was well cared for.

Mr R.A. Price, M.L.A., said the monument was a credit to the town and district, and should be a scared and inspiring object to the generation now growing up. The memory of the lads would had not returned would dear(sic)to them all by reason of the great sacrifice they had made. No more righteous war had ever been waged, and if the German desire had been accomplished, they would not be free today. All would remember the enthusiasm displayed when the boys went away, and the paeans of joy when they returned, and they should not forget what they should not forget what they owed to their valor (sic) and self-sacrifice. He had always fought for preference to returned soldiers; for he believed "That greater love hath no man than this, that he should lay down his life for his friend". The boys had made the name of ANZAC famous, and it was hard to realise fully what these great Australians had done. Their mothers heartstrings had been torn asunder at the parting, and they had left everything to fight for liberty and the Empire. It was a very slight recompense for all they had endured to be granted preference on their return., and it was up to all to see that right and justice were meted out to them. Port Macquarie was worthy of the memorial, and the memorial of Port Macquarie and the boys in whose it was erected. He honoured the women

Appendix Two

The Port Macquarie War Memorial.

for the great sacrifices they had made. At the speakers request three cheers were given for the women, and heads were bared in honor of Nurse Cavell.

Mr. Theo. Hill, M.L.A., said Mr. Davidson's eloquent address had left him little to say. The speaker then reviewed the last seven years of history. The nations had been lulled into the belief that there would be no more wars, and England gave little heed to Lord Roberts' repeated warnings to the contrary. The consequence was that when the storm broke the Empire was unprepared. he believed then as he did now that it was the most just war that England had ever engaged in. They all knew how well their boys had acquitted themselves. The deeds of their men had been taken as the highest standards of courage. The young men here had done their duty nobly and well. Mr. Davidson had four children at the war (three sons and a daughter), and Mrs Dennis had four sons there and he was glad to know that all had returned. Their memorial was a magnificent one, and go where they would, a more handsome or appropriate one could not be seen. He wished to impress on them all the value of the men's' services, and hoped the memorial would inspire the young boys if the time ever came, with the need for doing their duty as the men whose names were there had done theirs. He congratulated the people of Port Macquarie on their achievement, and stated that anything he could do to advance the cause of returned soldiers he would gladly perform.

The Mayor said he had received telegraphic apologies for absence from Dr. Earle Page, M.H.R., and the Royal Historical Society. On behalf of the citizens he was pleased to accept the gift of the monument to Municipality of Port Macquarie and trusted that the present and succeeding councils would care for, cherish and look after it which he was sure they would do. It was an ornament to the town, and a magnificent gift, there being few memorials like it.. On behalf of the committee he thanked visitors from Sydney and elsewhere and all present, and hoped they would carry away pleasant recollections of the greatest day in Port Macquarie.

A good number of A.I.F. men were present, some in uniform, and many in civilian attire.

The Town Band, under the conductorship of Bandmaster McKee, played a well selected programme of music appropriate to the occasion in the intervals between the speeches. The bandsman mustered in force, and have rarely been heard to better advantage. The playing of "God Save the King" terminated the proceedings.

The memorial, which occupies a conspicuous position, and is seen to advantage by those entering the town by the main thoroughfare, has inscribed on it the names of 254 district soldiers. A star opposite a man's name denotes he was killed. As the dread sign recurs no less than 51 times, it will be realised what a heavy toll the war extracted from the flower of the district's manhood. On one side of the base of the memorial there is an inscription that reads, "Erected to Commemorate the Great World War, 1914-1919, and the Victory of the Allies". On another side is inscribed, "Unveiled on Port Macquarie Centenary, 30/3/21. J.H. Hill, Mayor". The memorial is an artistic piece of work, well executed. The design of the monument is a modification of an original drawing executed by Mr. good himself, and selected by the Port Macquarie War memorial Committee. On being submitted to the

Appendix Two

The Port Macquarie War Memorial.

Advisory Board of the Minister for Local Government, alterations to the die and cap mould were suggested, and, on the monument being redrawn, it was approved by the Minister. It consists of a Doric column, mounted on a pedestal and steps, the whole being architecturally correct, both in design and proportion. The total height of the monument is 21 feet, and it is 9 foot square on the bottom step, the material used being a combination of Bowral trachyte and red granite, partly polished and partly fine axed. The column proper is a beautiful piece of stone, made in one piece 10 feet 6 inches high by 1 foot 6 inches in diameter, and highly polished. The memorial serves the double purpose of an Honor Roll to those who enlisted and a memorial to the killed. We are of the opinion that the monument, although not as large and as costly as some already erected in New South Wales, is, in proportion and appearance, one of the best, and is certainly a credit to the town; and the contractor for the work (Mr. Alfred Goode, of George Street, West Sydney), who has carried out the work in a very satisfactory manner."