

THIRROUL

(Our Correspondent.)

Unveiling of the Memorial to Soldiers.

On Sunday afternoon (Anzac Day), that long-looked forward to event, the unveiling of the memorial monument and fountain took place. Near the bridge at the northern end of the town a procession was formed up, consisting of the V.A. Detachment, under Commandant Crossle, in the lead, followed by the Citizens' Brass Band, under Bandmaster C. H. Rowan. This was followed by over forty returned soldiers under the command of Sergt.-Major Lawrence. Pride of place was given to Mrs. Riach senr., known so well as "Grannie," in her uniform as a life member of the R.S.A., accompanied by two lads in blue, representing the Royal Navy. Following the soldiers and senior cadets came a large number of school children most of whom had come from the Sunday Schools, under the supervision of their respective teachers. Many beautiful wreaths were carried, and a very significant token, a sprig of rosemary, was worn by many. This noble thought had been materialised by Mrs. Walter Hughes bringing a bunch down for Grannie to distribute. Well to time, the procession moved off along the main street to the front of the School of Arts Hall, where the monument stands. A very large number of residents and others had already gathered around this centre. As the members of the procession were taking their places round the enclosure, it was noticed that a kookaburra (the laughing jackass), that grand quaint bird so typical of Australia, had alighted on an electric light pole overlooking the scene, as if to symbolise Nature's approval of what was to transpire this day.

A platform had been erected near the building, and Cr. J. S. Kirton,

the building, and Cr. J. S. Kirton, chairman of the executive for the Fountain Fund, was chairman. A selection was played by the band, and was followed by Mr. Kirton briefly mentioning the reason of the gathering here. After reading several apologies, he called on Mr. H. Lamond, our Federal member, to speak. This gentleman, in the course of a very able speech, stressed the worthy need of us all never to forget the debt we owe to the brave soldiers who landed at Gallipoli and faced the dangers of the Great War, winning for Australia an enviable position in the eyes of the world. He congratulated Thirroul on the success of the efforts put forth to have a fitting monument to her soldiers.

Cr. Tressider, President of the Bulli Shire, was called upon to speak, and in well chosen words reminded all of their duty towards the soldiers who have returned.

Mr. Price was the next speaker, and stressed the point of the sacredness of the ceremony that was to take place soon, urging all to look towards the Almighty God through Whose goodness all these things are allowed, and on Whom all those who had lost their dear ones could look for comfort.

Mr. Wright's theme was that the monument would ever remind us that we all had a duty to perform in upholding the great name that Australia had gained through the bravery and noble spirit of her sons in khaki over the seas.

Mr. McNaughton, hon. secretary for the fund, explained how the raising of the money had not been an easy matter, how through Mrs. Higgins leaving the town in the early days of the movement, the work had so nobly been carried on by Mrs. M. Riach, who was instrumental in gathering in almost all the money received for this memorial fountain. The band played "Lead, Kindly Light."

The chairman then requested "Gran-

The chairman then requested "Grannie" to perform the ceremony of unveiling the monument. This grand old lady, of over seventy years, now had the proudest moments of her life. She had labored unceasingly for the past five years, so that Thirroul would have a fitting memorial for our soldiers, and here was one that any town might well envy. With clearly spoken words, "Grannie" then said, "Ladies and gentlemen, this memorial has been erected as a slight token of the esteem in which our soldiers and sailors are held. It will serve to remind everyone of our brave heroes who kept Australia safe from the horrors of warfare. I have now much pleasure in unveiling this memorial and I hope that the people of Thirroul will see that it is kept as a sacred memorial to our brave soldiers and sailors of Thirroul" Then the

large Union Jack fell, uncovering the full-size white figure of a soldier above the fountain. Bandmaster Rowan sounded the Last Post, while all remained still with bared heads. Mr. W. Ryan, president of the R.S.A. Branch, on behalf of the soldiers and sailors thanked the citizens for erecting such a magnificent monument. The turning on of the water was performed by little Elsie Riach, a grand child who had many times assisted her grandmother in the work of collecting.

As the committee were in need of about £40 to complete the cost of the monument, a collection taken up by the V.A.'s brought in over £9, and after an appeal by the chairman, the liberal response was such that it was announced that from now nothing would be owing. The full cost will be well over £200. Mrs. J. Ryan, of the Bulli Pass Hotel, presented Miss Elsie Riach with a silver cup, suitably inscribed. The National Anthem, played by the Band, brought proceedings to a

the Band, brought proceedings to a close.

The monument is 18 feet high, of freestone. On either side of the basement block (a portion that alone weighed two tons), is the drinking receptacle. Above this is arranged eight white marble panels round the octagonal pillar, on which are inscribed over 200 names of soldiers and sailors. On each tablet, above the names, are the words "They answered the call," and below are "God bless them all." Surmounting all is an infantryman, natural size, with rifle at the stand at ease position. This is a very clever piece of sculpture, the countenance of which is most lifelike, sculptured from a large block of white freestone, by Mr. Cassingandra, of Sydney. The foundation stone shows that it was laid by Mrs. Arnold Higgins; and opposite tells that it was unveiled by Grannie Riach. The whole is in a conspicuous position in front of the School of Arts Hall. And is a credit not only to this town, but to the whole district.
