

HONORING OUR SOLDIERS.

Unveiling of Tilba District Memorial.

On Wednesday last week, the unveiling of the Tilba District Soldiers' Memorial was a notable event in local history, and a fitting climax to local warwork, marking permanently the district appreciation of its gallant soldiers. The memorial, which is erected at the intersection of the main roads at Central Tilba, is fashioned from the famous "Tilba Grey" granite obtained from a recently opened quarry a few hundred yards away from the site of the monument. It is proposed to level and concrete the base of the memorial, a description of which has already appeared in this paper. Mr. S. W. Bate was the prime mover in having the memorial erected expeditiously after the war, contributing a big proportion of the money required. The monument is the first of its kind erected in the district embraced by the Mumbulla Dromedary Soldiers area, and Tilba district is to be congratulated upon so soon and so handsomely perpetuating the names of some 70 soldiers.

On Wednesday last the town was profusely decorated with bunting, and there was a very large attendance when the unveiling ceremony was performed by Mrs. Hurley, wife of Lieut. Colonel Hurley. Arrangements had been made for the Lieut. Colonel to carry out this duty, but it was to his great regret that urgent business recalled him to Sydney.

Shortly after 12 o'clock, a number of returned soldiers, in charge of Lieut. Clem Bate, paraded, and formed up around the memorial. Mrs. Hurley and her mother, Mrs. S. W. Bate had seats within the enclosure at the base of the memorial, and the programme for the ceremonial was in charge of Mr. O'Brien.

After the singing of the National Anthem, the chairman said that he had been associated with the Tilba district in all the patriotic activities which had engaged the people during five years of war. It was a great pleasure to him to be associated with this last public and permanent appreciation of the Diggers, the erection of the first district memorial of the kind. Nearly 25 per cent of the population of the district had offered for service, and if the same percentage had offered

and if the same percentage had offered throughout Australia, nearly one million of men would have gone to the front. He did not mention the district's record in a boastful spirit, but it had done remarkably well also in warwork in comparison with other districts. On this last occasion they were to show again their respect for the boys and their fathers and mothers, and appreciation for what they had done for the citizens of Australia. He would like the children to remember it as an historical occasion in their district. In every country monuments were erected to great men who had accomplished reforms or righted wrongs. The boys to whom this memorial was erected did not exactly bring about a reform, but they had defended a right, and had offered their lives in its defence. The children would remember this monument containing the names of 72 men who had done something big for Australia, and had left their footprints on the sands of time. What they had done in the cause of Freedom and Liberty would live long in the annals of their country long after this monument had crumbled to dust. Their names would be remembered as the great heroes of the past in a world's crisis which affected the liberty of their country. He had received a message from Lieut. Colonel Hurley, who unfortunately could not remain for the unveiling; that message would be handed to the press. He had a special message for the women, who had kept a brave heart and smiling face through the sad and anxious days of the war. He would ask Mrs. Hurley (daughter of Mr. S. W. Bate) to perform the unveiling. The district was indebted to Mr. Bate, not alone for his splendid contribution which ensured the erection of this memorial, but also for his great monetary assistance and influence in all the warwork undertaken by the people.

Mrs. Hurley then unveiled the memorial. She said that in the unveiling of a monument such as this it was first of all a memorial to the glorious dead, and secondly, an everlasting appreciation of those who suffered untold misery in order that we might continue to enjoy the liberty and freedom of the freest country in the world. Our boys were not taken—they voluntarily responded to the call of their country. Some have not come back—they paid the supreme sacrifice for us. Is it

the supreme sacrifice for us. Is it possible we can forget? If in the hurry scurry of life any of us be apt to overlook the debt which we owe, let this monument remind us; and let us, as hundreds of thousands of people do in London to day when passing the great war monument in Whitehall, salute "The Glorious Dead" and those others of our boys who fought so valiantly, who suffered so sorely, in holding for us all that is so dear. To be associated in any way with a function of this description is indeed a very great honor. To be associated in any way with our splendid fighting men is an equal honor, and I want particularly to ask those of our soldier boys who are present to accept this mark of our appreciation with our genuine and everlasting gratitude for their pluck, their capacity, and for the manner in which they assisted to uphold the honor of our young nation and the prestige of the British Empire. I have much pleasure in unveiling this monument—a monument that, I hope, will ever stand to the glory of the men whose names appear upon it—and a monument that will ever stand as an incentive to the rising and future generations to "play the game."

After a round of applause, the school children sang "Boys of the Young Brigade," and there was a pause in the proceedings while photo-

graphs were being taken.

Cr. H. J. Bate (Eurobodalla Shire) said he was proud to represent the Shire at the unveiling of this beautiful monument. He was proud to represent this particular Riding, which had applied for 65 per cent of the soldiers' certificates issued. The Shire had for its policy the employment of returned soldiers, and when the Govt. grant was expended the policy was continued. The individuals, as well as the public bodies, could carry out this policy more. He had yet to learn of any district instances of employers giving the soldiers preference when a good job was offering. How many of the individual citizens look for a returned soldier to employ him? He had yet to hear of the man who had offered his best or good land to the Govt. for the soldiers. He was still looking for the man who would sell a beast cheaper to a returned soldier, or sell his land cheaper, or give the soldier a better job. It was a good policy and

should be left to the Govt. or the Shire Councils only to practise. The speaker paid a compliment to the designer and the workmanship in the memorial, to the warworkers who had raised such large sums of money in the war period. He complimented the district on possessing such a remarkably handsome monument, making special reference to the man who did so much to erect it, concluding by paying a tribute to the fine type of men whose names were so permanently written in local and Australian history.

Cr. T. Kennelly (Mumbulla Shire) said it was a great pleasure to him to be present at the unveiling. The memorial was a credit to the district, and to Mr. S. W. Bate who did so much towards securing its erection. Though a mark of appreciation which the district was proud to establish, it was not so valuable now as it would be in years to come. The children present at the unveiling would realise more in the future that it was through these men whose names were written in letters of gold that this fair land was saved from the ravages of the Hun. It was fitting that in a local monument the material from which it was made was obtained close at hand and in the district from which the men had enlisted. It had been decided that the Cobargo memorial to be erected shortly would be of the same material, Tillya granite. The speaker referred to the fine war record of Tillya district. Before the war concluded, an officer informed him that the district from Narooma to Brogo was the only one which had sent its quota of men, and was the only one which had maintained it during the wastage of the campaign. When the armistice was signed, there were 40 or 50 men in camp (many of them school boys at the outbreak of hostilities) ready to go to the front. The memorial was an illustration to the children of what they owed to these men.

Mr. J. P. O'Reilly said he never felt more strongly the force of Tennyson's words—"Would that my tongue could utter the thoughts that rise in me." It was distressing to him, however, to feel that he was "on the rocks" (a reference to the granite boulder upon which the monument was based). He did not feel equal to the occasion to speak, as a trustee of the

occasion to speak, as a trustee of the soldiers' fund, at this first unveiling of a memorial. He could not do justice to what had been accomplished by a fund that had been hampered in its good work by a mandate from the Govt. prohibiting the further collection of money. He recalled the wonderful response to the appeal on behalf of the soldiers, the sums subscribed so gladly by the people from Narooma to Quasima. In subscribing so liberally the people were only doing what they ought. They appreciated the boys who were ready to make the supreme sacrifice in the defence of Australia. There was a sadness in the fact that some of the names on the memorial were indicated by crosses, but they could rejoice that the toll was not greater in such a savage war. Mr. S. W. Bate had taken a great interest in the prompt erection of this monument. They should glory in the fact that they had a man of means not afraid to use his money in appreciation of the boys. In other districts there were wealthy men whose sons did not go to the war, neither did they show any appreciation of the boys who fought for them. Mr. Bate sent one of his two boys. He not only sent one of his boys to the fighting line, but he gave liberally to support our lads in the trenches, and those who might suffer disability when they came back.

Rev. Wesley Stocks (Bega) felt keenly the honor of being privileged to speak on this occasion. He congratulated the Tilba people on the splendid site which had been given to the monument, erected to the memory of the men who went at the call of King and country and all that was highest. It was a monument to the warworkers as well, and a monument to those who will never return. The people could continue to show their patriotism by always treating the lads as returned soldiers who had suffered much. These boys felt it very difficult to settle down, and sometimes the people were apt to get impatient with them. They should bear in mind that it will take time for them to settle down in civic life. And it was no wonder. They had seen sights that we do not dream of. We should give them a hand to help them up if they have fallen. They should think of the men who will never come back with reverence and gratitude; he recalled an old cobbler in the dead soldier Dunbar, who labored in

the dead soldier Dunbar, who labored in this circuit for some time, a man first and a parson next, who with other men laid down his life in a great cause. He believed that his friend Dunbar and others were serving together in the army of the King of Kings. He thanked the chairman for the opportunity to publicly appreciate the soldiers and congratulate the people on the good monument erected to their memory.

Mr. John McMillan said that a great many of the men who paraded that day in uniform were children when he lived in Tilba. The people were there to sympathize with the parents of sons who we will never see again, and to congratulate those parents whose sons have returned. The monument just unveiled would stand as long as Australia stands. There was a movement to erect a memorial at Narooma, which centre had suffered more severely in casualties. The people there took a different view as to a memorial, and had about £300 in hand for the erection of a Memorial Hall. He asked all hands to come along and help lay the foundation stone at Narooma.

Mr. Alick Sutherland (Dixons Creek) said the monument was a credit to Tilba district and the designer alike. The Govt could not do all things for the returned men, and it was up to the individuals to help.

The chairman was good enough to say a word in appreciation of Cobargo "Chronicle's" attitude towards the boys and those who worked in their interest during the war. He said the local paper's full reporting of all war functions and interest in the soldiers had undoubtedly contributed largely towards the proud enlistment record of the districts surrounding.

Mr. V. Henry briefly acknowledged the chairman's remarks, and said that apart from what his inclination and partiality dictated as a pressman, there was the greater claim still of personal friendship for most of the boys and their families. The monument just unveiled set the seal on a splendid record of district war

ment just unveiled set the seal on a splendid record of district war-work, and he would like to see a similar monument erected in every centre. A nation without monuments was a nation without history.

The school children sang "Lest We Forget," after which at the request of the chairman the audience stood in silence to the memory of the fallen.

A number of wreaths were placed on the memorial to the memory of the dead, a laurel wreath also being placed above all. Rev. G. E. Morris, Rector of Christ Church, delivered a brief memorial address. He was honored at being given such a solemn and important part in the proceedings. They were celebrating an historic event, the significance of which would be taught to and remembered by future generations. It was needless to recount the deeds of those whose names we were honoring and who were first in our memory. Suffice it to say we were deeply grateful for all they accomplished and suffered for us. Our soldiers made the name of Australia famous, and gave us the right to a place among the nations, notwithstanding anything America might say to the contrary. Australia suffered more and gained less through the war than America. Of the fallen we were not to think as dead, but as the living, as those who have gone Home. They have a constant place in our thoughts and in our prayers. Our hearts go out in deep sympathy to those mourning for dear absent ones, but the Easter memory shines bright and clear, and they can look forward with confidence and joy to a great and happy reunion.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the ladies of the district entertained the great gathering at luncheon, a formidable task undertaken cheerfully and capably in the School of Arts and Skating Rink.

During the afternoon, a programme of athletic sports for soldiers was gone through on the cricket ground, the public giving liberal patronage, the Diggers enter-

eral patronage, the Diggers entering enthusiastically into the sport. The school children also competed for a number of prizes.

Messrs O'Brien and Corkhill were in charge of the sports, Mr. Edwards of the flag decorations, Mr. J. Endicott was general secretary, and in conjunction with a good live committee helped to make what was undoubtedly the biggest function that has ever taken place in Tilba district the grand success it certainly was.

The ball at night was well attended, and all seemed to enjoy themselves.

The ladies of the district, by their untiring efforts in catering, very materially assisted in the big undertaking.

Mumbulla Shire Council years ago solved the problem of arresting the drift of beach sand across the road between Tilba and Bermagui. The drift has been effectually checked by a luxuriant plantation of marram grass, the plants of which were brought here by the late Engineer Miller. All along our beaches, where the natural timber growth has been cleared off, the sand is being shifted inland by the N.E. winds, a notable instance of its unsightly effect occurring in the wide sand belt which has swept across the beautiful headland on South Bermagui recreation ground. Mumbulla Council has just approved of a further planting of eleven chains to cope with a drift near Mr T. Mead's property, adjacent to Wells' beach.