

ANSWERED THE CALL OF DUTY.

WEST BRUNSWICK PUPILS.

GENERAL BRAND ON "DIGGERS."

The West Brunswick State school in Victoria st. presented a lively appearance on Saturday afternoon. Wherever one went flags to the right of them, flags to the left of them, fluttered and thundered in the strong wind blowing. Opposite the school a house was appropriately decorated for the home-coming of its soldier. Inside the main school-room the flags of all the allied nations hung around, and the platform was also decorated while a huge flag covered the honour board, a handsome work of art designed by Mr T. McFarlane Cullen, who up till May last had acted as correspondent for eight years. The honour board contained the names of the 300 odd gallant past pupils of the school who had responded to the call of country and Empire, and duty, and enlisted — thirty-three of them never to return but to leave their memories an undying honour to their families, to their old school, and to the City of Brunswick.

Outside the main entrance there was a guard of honour of senior cadets and a band. In addition to the military element of welcome (both the Regimental Band and Senior Cadets, there was the Mayor (Cr Wales), Cr Phillips, Balfe and Johnson, Mr W. Dowsley (chairman of the School Committee), Mr J. W. Blight (head teacher), and Mr Arch. Raeburn. To supply the requisite political element, Messrs. Fk. Anstey, M.H.R., for Bourke, and Mr J. R. Jewell, M.L.A., for Brunswick, were also there.

The State Commandant, Brigadier-General Brand, who had been requested to perform the ceremony of unveiling the extension honour board, arrived in a Defence Dept. motor, and was received with a general salute, after which he inspected the guard and chatted with returned soldiers around and in the ranks of the band. A move was then made to the interior.

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Mr Dowsley, who provided, alluded to the happy occasion which had brought them together, now the war was over, and gave a brief epitome of the enlisting movement which had been so freely responded to by past pupils of the school. Of those who went, 33 had paid the supreme sacrifice, 3 had won the Military Cross, 7 had won Military Medals, 1 the Meritorious Service Medal, 1 the Distinguished Flying Cross, and 1 the King of Italy's Medal for Valour.

A programme of songs and recitations was given during the afternoon.

Brigadier-General Brand, at the request of the chairman, unveiled the honour board, after which the buglers sounded the "Last Post" and the band played "Nearer, My God, to Thee."

General Brand said that unquestionably the qualities which made the Australians unsurpassed in the field had a bedrock foundation in a sound education. He had been a State school boy in Queensland. They called them "public schools" in New South Wales, but in Victoria and Queensland they were known as State schools. He had had a sound education, and he had only "wagged" it once, and that was when a Victorian team came up to Maryborough to teach the Australian game of football. In Queensland, they still played rugby and great crowds were attracted to the matches. The occasion he referred to was a Wednesday, and he made up his mind to go. Getting up behind an omnibus, he got a lash from the driver's whip which was convincing, but it was as nothing to what the teacher said, physically, the next day. As a consequence he had to take his meals standing for a fortnight. (Laughter.) The Australian soldier was one of the wittiest fellows on earth, and on the field seldom equalled, never surpassed. (Applause.) It was the spirit of emulation which did it. A wounded man was being brought in at Pozieres. He was one of his (the speaker's) brigade, and so he spoke to him. "Did we do as well as the Anzacs at Gallipoli, sir?" When he was assured that they had done as well, the wounded man was quite cheered up. It was a common theory that the Irishman was the most gifted with ready wit but he thought the Diggers could

man was the most gifted with ready wit, but he thought the Diggers could hold their own. A platoon was going up to the firing line, and as was the case on all such occasions, was heavily loaded. Each man carried some galvanised iron on his back, sandbags wound round his legs, bombs in his pockets, rifle and ammunition, and 48 hours' rations, in addition to something he never had the balance of rations unused. (Laughter.) One of the platoon stopped to have a cup of cocoa at a comforts fund dugout, and was trudging along to catch up to his mates, when an artilleryman passed and ask-

ed: "Where are you going, Digger?" "At the knees," was the quick response. (Laughter). There was one thing that should never be forgotten, although much had not been heard of it and a great many people were unaware of it, and that was that the Australians in April, 1917, unaided by tanks or other assistance, broke the Hindenburg line. (Loud applause.) That fact would be more generally known and appreciated when Mr Bear had written his book on the war.

Mr Frank Anstey, M.H.R., was glad to be there to do honour to the occasion, and to the men who had taken their lives in their hands for their country. He, too, knew some yarns of Diggers, and therefore he did not propose to let the General have it all on his own. (Laughter.) There was a private who was leaving the lines once en deshabille, and the colonel called out to him: "Here, where are you going?" "To get some water, sir." "What! —in those clothes?" "No, in a bucket, sir." (Laughter.)

Mr Jewell, M.L.A., also spoke, expressing the hope that peace had come for all time, and that this was the last occasion in which an honour board would have to be unveiled in West Brunswick.

The Mayor, Or Balfe and Mr J. A. McAlester (late head teacher), also gave brief addresses, and the National Anthem brought proceedings to a close.