

35th BATTALION

UNVEILING OF TABLET

The annual reunion of the members of the 35th Battalion, A.I.F., was held at the Anzac Institute, Newcastle, on Saturday night. There was a big attendance.

Prior to the function a memorial tablet erected to the men of the battalion who fell in France was unveiled by Lieutenant-colonel White, C.M.G., D.S.O. The tablet, which is of marble, has been set in the wall on the eastern side of the social hall, and is surmounted by a handsome representation of the Rising Sun under which the emblem of the battalion, followed by the following inscription: "In glorious memory of the brave lads of the 35th Battalion who, at the call of duty, laid down their lives for their country in the great war, 1914-18. Battles in

Messines, Passchendaele, Villers Bretonneux, Morlancourt, Aerroche Wood, Bray-sur-Somme, Corin, Hindenberg Line. Erected by their comrades."

"I feel very proud," said Colonel White, "to have the honour of unveiling this memorial tablet. It is erected by the men of the 35th Battalion in memory of their comrades who fell in France." Proceeding after the unveiling, he said it was thought by the battalion in France that it would be a nice thing to erect some memorial to their comrades, as an indication of their feelings towards those who were to be left behind. Every member of the battalion, all ranks included, gave one day's work towards that purpose. The object was to erect the memorial in France, but when they returned to Australia it was found difficult to do anything. The result was they put their heads together and decided on this scheme—a simple but nice tablet. It would help to bring back to them those noble fellows who were left behind in France. They all realized what their worth was, and because of that fact it made it all the harder that they should have to leave them behind. The memorial would remain in the place which sent the battalion forth. The comradeship of its men would ever hinge around Newcastle. There could be no finer place for it than in that fine institution, where every member of the battalion would see it. The memorial would bring back sad but pleasant memories—pleasant memories because of the fact that the records of those fine men in whose honour it was erected would be remembered because of it. (Applause.)

After the tablet had been dedicated by Chaplain-captain W. E. Burkitt, Major H. J. Connell, D.S.O., M.C., was invited to formally hand over the memorial to the trustees of the Memorial Hall. In performing the duty, Major Connell said he appreciated the honour very much. It was with mixed feelings that he recalled those men in whose memory the tablet had been erected. The tablet reminded them of the men themselves, of their worth, and of what the country lost. They were all pleased to do something to honour the memory of those men, because of a proper realisation of the sacrifice that they made. With 50,000 other Australians they paid the greatest sacrifice that any man could make. At the time everybody believed it was to be the last war, but, unfortunately, the prospects did not appear to be so bright to-day as they did some time ago. There could be no greater

be so bright to-day as they did some time ago. There could be no greater inspiration from the memory of those men than the thought that such man or woman, no matter how humble his or her effort might be, should seek to bring about an understanding between the peoples of the world so that such a war as the last would never again be possible. Misunderstanding, the same applied to nations as to people, caused distress, dislike, and even, to a certain extent, fear. He felt it a great pleasure to hand over the tablet to the people of the district, to the committee of the institute, and particularly to the ladies who worked so well to show their appreciation of the men who went away. Unfortunately, many promises that were made to the men as they went were not kept. He was, however, pleased to say that, as far as the Newcastle committee was concerned, a vast amount of good work had been done for the men who came back incapacitated. He, himself, had never brought a genuine case under the notice of the committee that had not been assisted in some way. It pleased him more than anything to know that, now the institute building had been cleared of debt, it was the intention of the committee to donate whatever surplus of revenue there was to the alleviation of distress among the returned men and their dependents. This committee had done more than talk about their loyalty, which they had shown in a practical way. "I trust," he concluded, "that the need of handing over another tablet such as this will never arise." (Applause.)

Mr. C. A. Earp, president of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers' Memorial Institute, said that the trustees of the institute were proud to have the handsome tablet placed in the building to the memory of those men who gave up their lives for their country in the Great War. There was no need for him to speak of the battles, the names of which were inscribed on the tablet. All he could say was that the people of the Newcastle district were proud, indeed, to regard the 35th Battalion as "Newcastle's Own." With regard to the institute, it was only acquired four years ago, and £11,000 had been expended on it, and yet it was entirely free of debt and was entirely self-supporting. He wanted the men of the 35th Battalion and their friends to recognise that the institute was their own, it was their home, and the committee desired that they make the fullest use of it. There was one thing that he desired should be made known as widely as possible. It was that in the case of any soldier who should die, his dependents, if in distressed circumstances, could come to the committee of the institute, present their case, and something would be done to ride over the difficulty. "I would like to say in conclusion," said Mr. Earp, "that the trustees of this institute accept this tablet with pride, and assure you that it will be cared for as it should be." (Applause.)

In memory of the fallen the assembly stood in silence for some minutes prior to the loyal toast being honoured. The toast of "The Comradeship of the 35th Battalion" was proposed by Colonel White, who expressed the hope that they would continue to come together at least every twelve months. Their comradeships were formed under the greatest tests that men could be put to, and could not be brought out by any other conditions. If that comradeship was maintained it must mean a great deal to the men of the A.I.F., and it must have a great effect on the national life.

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In support of the toast, Captain Renwick spoke appreciatively of the officers of the battalion, referring especially to the death of the late Captain Cadell and regretting that General Goddard had not found it possible to be present. He was reminded by the faces around him of incidents connected with every one of them. It was the memory of those incidents that bound them all together. They were, however, inclined to think too much of the past. They had to think of the present and of the future. The good they got from the battalion in the past—that spirit of comradeship which permeated them—still remained. They might have different religious feelings and political views, but they had to remember that they were brother Australians, and as such were bound together by a common tie. (Applause.) Speaking of the future he went on to say that all of them had been soldiers, but none of them wanted war. They looked for peace, they wanted to practice the arts of peace so that their country would advance as one of the great nations of the world. He would ask them to unite as one to work for a universal peace and the brotherhood of mankind. The fact that among their number was a man from Tweed

Heads, signified that they had come together in unity. He wished them all a prosperous year.

The toast was also supported by Major Connell, who recalled many humorous events in the life of the battalion. As far as the Comforts Fund was concerned it would be the last occasion on which its members would be treating the men of the 35th in the handsome manner they always had done. It was up to the men now to see that these reunions did not fall through. They were all moving in different circles, but it was good to get together and renew old associations.

"The Australian Military Forces" was toasted at the instance of Brigadier-General Paton, C.B., C.M.G., V.D., who referred to the recent march of the military in Newcastle. He asked the men of the 35th Battalion to take an interest in the young soldier of to-day. They all hoped that there would never be another war, but they could not view the armaments that were being maintained on the other side of the world, and feel sure that this country with its limited population, could be kept, unless its people were prepared to defend it. They hoped to work out their destiny in peace under the British flag, but it was necessary to have a small defence force, and he hoped they would encourage those who were endeavouring to keep the flag flying.

An acknowledgment was made by Major E. T. Harnett, officer-in-charge of the 35th Battalion, Australian Military Forces. He had endeavoured to impress on the boys that they were wearing colours that were handed down to them and that they were carrying on the traditions of the 35th Battalion, A.I.F.

Alderman R. G. Kilkour, the Mayor of Newcastle, proposed "The Comforts Fund." Nothing could have given him greater pleasure than to testify to the work of those ladies. The response was made by Lieutenant-Colonel W. Suedden.

During the evening the following programme was contributed: Violin solo, Mrs. I. Morgan; pianoforte solo, Mrs. H. E. Howard; monologue, Miss Beatrice Welch; vocal solo, Mr. R. P. Breden; conjuring exhibition, Mr. C. H. Barnett; vocal quartette, Messrs. D. and W.

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social quartette. Messrs. D. and W.
Lloyd, A. Adam and F. Pickover. Items
were also given by the orchestra of the
Messrs Evans.