

WAIMATE.

OWN CORRESPONDENT

TAWAI WAR MEMORIAL.

UNVEILING CEREMONY.

There was a large attendance of residents at the Tawai School yesterday afternoon, on the occasion of the unveiling of the Tawai Soldiers War Memorial and Roll of Honour.

The proceedings opened with the singing of the National Anthem, after which the chairman of the Roll of Honour Committee (Mr O'Brien) introduced the various speakers who had gone out for the occasion, and also read an apology from the Rev. Father Peoples and Mr J. Bitchener, M.P.

Mr O'Brien said that it was a strange coincidence that the day they were unveiling their war memorial at Tawai was the anniversary of the Battle of Mons, and that day they had with them, in the person of Dr. Wylie, one of the Old Contemptibles, who could tell them of that great battle. Mr O'Brien detailed the ways and means adopted by the committee to raise the memorial, in which he said they had been very kindly assisted by the residents of Tawai. The Base Records Office in Wellington had forwarded a sheet containing the military history of all those on the Roll of Honour, including the place of death and burial. It was proposed to place that record in a drawer of the memorial, so that in the years to come it would be a permanent record of service of all those who had made the supreme sacrifice. Tawai had a war record to be proud of. That day they had on the table medals belonging to a local family that had been won in the Indian Mutiny. The same family also had medals belonging to their son, who had made the supreme sacrifice in the late war. He was very pleased that they had the Rev. J. D. Wilson with them to unveil their memorial. The padre was known as one of the Diggers, and when a padre was called a Digger one knew that he was 18 carat — (laughter and applause) — what the soldiers called "a white man." He then called upon Mr Wilson to address the gathering.

Mr Wilson thanked the committee for asking him to take part in that ceremony of remembrance, and said he was glad of the opportunity to speak on behalf of the men who came not back to tell the message of those fields on the other side of the world, and also on behalf of the men who came back, but were too diffident to tell of the things they had seen enacted in the world tragedy. He never lost an opportunity to tell of the men and women, their brothers and sisters, who played such heroic parts in the western world and the middle of the Far East. Those men and women gave their very best in the harrowing days of

1914-18. "We forgot our little class distinctions, our political and religious differences, and remembered only that we were all equal sons and daughters of the Empire." It was good to speak of the spirit of the men and women who went abroad. Heroism was only commonplace. It was seen in the blizzard, in the desert sand storms, in the mud, slush and filth, with fearful wounds, and death screaming around. And still they went on steadily and calmly in the great adventure. There was one stupendous revelation of the war, and that was the grandeur of the average common man – his endurance, courage and unfailing sacrifice, on the sea, on the earth, under the earth, and in the air. When they thought of this they were humbled, but could take satisfaction that the end of our Empire was not yet. He again thanked the people of Tawai for the opportunity to pay his respects to the great men and women, sons, brothers, sisters, and husbands, who died overseas.

The speaker then unveiled the memorial, "To the glory of God, and in memory of the men from Tawai District who made the great sacrifice."

The prayer of dedication was then said.

Dr Wylie said that he was not gifted in the matter of public speaking and these occasion reminded him all too vividly of war experiences that were more painful than pleasant. The awful tragedy of war was not easily forgotten. As President of the Waimate branch of the R.S.A., he wished to thank the committee for asking a representative of that body to be present that afternoon. With Mr Wilson he also liked to take every opportunity of paying his respect to those who fell. On occasions like this it was well to ask why men went out to war. It was not for the sake of experience as was the case in past wars, or a grand trip. It was first of all because all true Britishers should, that they went to the assistance of weaker countries who needed their help. Many went from an inherent pulse and to give the Kaiser a lesson for ignoring scraps of paper nine years ago. He had seen the first casualty, an officer in the Connaught Rangers, and he again saw the same man in France after he had recovered from his wounds. He was glad to see that the people of Tawai realised their indebtedness to those who did not return and also to those who did. Their roll of honour would long remain a memorial to generations of children of those who once went to fight for fair play.

The Rev. Charman of Morven, addressing the school children, said that "no greater love hath any man than that he lay down his life for his friend." He impressed upon them the sacrifice that had been made for them and exhorted them to do their work well and follow in the footsteps of those who had gone before.

Mr D. Fraser, chairman of the Tawai School Committee, and a South African veteran, and Mr Wallace, also addressed the gathering.

The Benediction was pronounced by the Rev. J. D. Wilson, and the singing of Rule Britannia and the National Anthem concluded the ceremony.

Refreshments handed round with the usual Tawai hospitality, concluded a very pleasant function.

THE MEMORIAL.

The memorial, which is a very beautiful piece of work, contains the following names.

Bates, A.	Gray, C.
Bates, J.	Humphries, T.
Bates, S. T.	Humphries, W.
Blackwood, W.	Kirk, O.
Cochrane, D.	Leonard, P.
Cosker, J.	Marwick, D.
Cruickshank, D.	Major, J.
Fahey, P.	Smillie, J. (M.M.)
Fahey, M.	Tobin, J.
Forde, J.	Wright, P.
Gray, G.	Watson, W.

In the centre is the inscription:

“The supreme sacrifice,” and under an emblem of laurel leaves the following names :

A. Cruickshanks (M.M.).
H. Cottingham.
R. Hawthorn.
J. Leonard.
G. Pelvin,

And the inscription: “They died that we might live.”