



For his country's sake

Thirteen men who enlisted from Uruti did not return from the Great War. Four did not return from the Second World War. Their names are listed on a Memorial wall on the roadside in front of the Uruti All Saints Church and are as follows:

1914 ~ 1918

J Rea
F C Richardson
J W Candy
C S Kirton
T H Walsh
W J Bracken
W James

W Baldwin
A Smith
R Smith
L Stevens
B Stevens
J Hansen

1939 ~ 1945

T B Murray
R C Polglase
B F Rea
E W Saywell

They shall not grow old as we who are left grow old
Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them
We will remember them.

I decided that it would be a good idea to gather a little more information on these men, their names so familiar from being read out at Anzac day services. Anzac day was quite an event in the years following the Second World War and through the 50s and early 60s. Most of the district would turn out. The men were dressed in their best pin striped suits, ladies in best costumes and always wearing hats. (No track suits in those days). In fact the day was often the first outing for the new seasons winter outfit. I remember being so proud of a lovely pale green pure wool coat and yellow hat which I wore for the first time one Anzac day when I was about eight or nine.

Mr Newton Jones conducted the service and often speakers were invited to address those gathered. RSA members also took part and laid a wreath along with other organisations such as Women's Division, and the school. Mr Lange played the last post.

SATURDAY, MAY 3

Rain Spoils Uruti Anzac Day Service

Rain during the day made it necessary for the Uruti Anzac Day service held in the All Saints' Memorial Church, which was filled to capacity. Mr Newton Jones, Pehu, gave an address. Mr L Johnson read the lesson, Mr G Hall the recessional and the president of the Uruti RSA, Mr T Laurence, the roll of honour for both world wars. Wreaths were placed by Mr Laurence for the Uruti RSA, Mr Penwarden for the Urenui RSA, Mrs P Thomson for the Uruti WDF, Miss L Jones for the Pehu WDF, and John Healy for the Uruti school. Mrs Lange was organist, and violinists were Mary and Margaret Bramley and Rodger Lange. Mr D Lange sounded the Last Post.

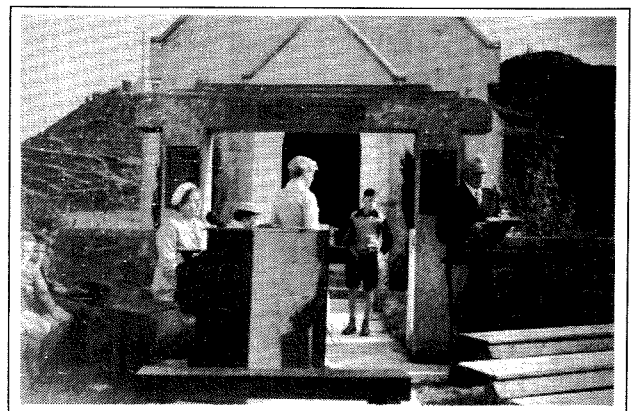


PHOTO: ALBERT LARSEN

Anzac Day service conducted by Mr Newton Jones. Mrs M Bramley plays the organ, Mary Bramley cello, Margaret Bramley and Lawrence Bramley violins. Boys on the left are Max Martin, Spencer Radcliffe and Dennis Larsen.

The details on the men who died in WW2 were supplied by the war archives section of the Department of Internal Affairs, and are as follows:

Sgt Thomas Beeby Murray
431091 RNZAF
Died 17th January 1944 aged 19 years.
Only son of William and Gwen Murray of Uruti.
Served in the Pacific.

Pte Raymond Colin Polglase
35853 21st Bn NZ infantry
Died 25th October 1942 aged 28 years.
Son of Thomas and Hilda Polglase, Pahiatua.
A herd tester who enlisted at Uruti.

Pte Bruce Fifield Rea
41699 19th Bn NZ infantry
Died 28th June 1942 aged 37 years.
Son of David and Violet Rea and husband of Amy Rea Uruti.
Buried in El Alamein in war cemetery.

Flt Sgt Edward Wright Saywell
415372 RNZAF 35th Squadron
Died 14th July 1943 aged 25 years.
Only son of Raymond and Margaret Saywell, New Plymouth (formerly Uruti Road, Uruti).
Shot down over Holland.

Information on the names of the men whose names are listed on the wall as having fallen in the 1914 ~ 1918 war, was a little harder to find. There were so many single men in the district at the time, chopping bush, droving, just passing through, and when war broke out, they enlisted from Uruti. The war archives people sent me many possibles, but so often there was more than one with the same initials and I had no way of knowing which was the right person. That being the case I felt I should only include those of which there was no doubt, in no way are they any more important than those for whom I have no background details.

J Rea is first on the list and as the archives people had no listing for him, I wrote to his sister Mrs Mavis Herbert (née Rea), who has been so helpful in the compiling of this book, and this was her reply.

"My brother Jack Rea joined up with the British army which explains why he is not listed. He tried to join here but was only fifteen years old and so was turned down. He ran away from home and must have got a job on a ship and so joined up in England. He had his sixteenth birthday in France and got killed in France. Bruce and Jack were brothers. After Jack died the British army sent a beautiful copper medal to my Father and Mother which hangs on the wall in our house. We also had a photo sent to my parents of Jack and his commanding officer".

(What a story, just behind that one name ~ Jack apparently biked to Waitara ~ bear in mind the state of the roads).

The second listing is F C Richardson. Actually the correct initials were F G, Sgt Frank Gunning Richardson 10/3068 "c" company 1st Bn. Wellington Regiment, NZEF awarded the Military Medal. He was killed in action on 31st August 1918 aged 23 years, son of Harry and Elizabeth Richardson who lived up the Mangahia Road. Halls' bought the farm off them in 1933.

The only listing the Internal Affairs Department had under the name Kirton was for the initials C I Kirton, listed on the Memorial wall as C S Kirton, so I had some checking to do. Fortunately Keith Nicholls who farms on the Uruti Road is related to the Kirtons and he was kind enough to take the time to confirm the details for me. Pte Chudleigh Inwoods Kirton 56795 NZ reinforcement. Killed in a railway accident in England on 24th September 1917 aged 21 years. His parents were Robert and Frances Kirton of Fitzroy. Kirtons farmed in the Tangitu, their land backing on to the Waitara River. Keith told me it was easier for them to travel up the river in those early days, rather than try to go overland from Uruti!

You can imagine how many Smiths there were in the casualty lists ~ dozens and dozens of them. (How depressing it was reading through column after column of names, a generation of fine fit young men just wiped out). I have not been able to confirm any details regarding the A Smith but do have details of R Smith and W Smith, kindly supplied by Mrs Merle Jensen.

Walter and Robert Smith were originally from the Isle of Man. They came out to New Zealand with their sister and the boys both worked with Mr George Jensen at the sawmill in the Tangitu, as it was then called. There is a photograph of them in the saw mill section of this book. Mrs Jensen has several photographs of the Smith brothers and a lovely old shaving mug left by Robert with George Jensen for safe keeping. Sadly he never returned to collect the mug.

Pte Robert Smith, 22876 Otago Infantry Regiment. Died of wounds in France 17th September 1916 aged 28 years.
Pte Walter William Smith 25609 Auckland Infantry Regiment. Killed in action in France 21st February 1917.

When I was unable to find listings for L and B Stevens, it was suggested to me that they were Lawrie and Burrell Stevens who just prior to W.W.I were cutting bush in the Moki. If indeed they were the correct men, they were known locally by their second names.

Trooper Duncan Burrell Stevens, 24934 Wellington Regiment was killed in action Palestine 1st April 1918.
Pte John Lawrence Stevens, 39561 Wellington Infantry Regiment. Killed in action France, 31st July 1917.

Money for the erection of a Memorial wall was raised in typical generous Uruti spirit through a series of fund raising events, such as card parties, stalls, dances and a Queen Carnival. Three young ladies were the "Queens". Miss Ruth Oxenham was the blue queen representing the southern area. Miss Dorothy Reeve was the gold queen and she represented the northern area, from the main road bridge and up. Miss Olive Saywell was the green queen who represented the Uruti Road and Pehu areas.

CARNIVAL PARTIES URUTI DISTRICT NEWS

A successful euchre party was held at the home of Mr and Mrs C Rigg, Uruti, in aid of the Blue queen. Prizes were won by: Miss Haylock 1 (after tie with Miss P Richards), Miss R Oxenham consolation; Mr A G Oxenham 1, Mr Anderson consolation. Mr Rex Larsen thanked Mr and Mrs Rigg. A pleasant evening was arranged for the Gold queen at the home of Mr and Mrs W Murray. The evening was spent in playing

bridge. A competition was won by Mr W Gillbanks who gave his prize back to the fund.

A party to raise funds for the Green queen (Miss Olive Saywell) was held at the home of Mr and Mrs S Musker recently. The winners of the card tournament were Miss M Saywell and Mr F Cosbrooke. Mrs R Atkinson and Mr S Laurence won the ping-pong prizes. Mr Alpe thanked Mr and Mrs

Musker for the use of their home. Mr H Musker suitably replied.

Another event arranged by the supporters of the Green queen was a "bring-and-buy" afternoon arranged by Mrs R Larsen at Pehu. Winners of competitions were Mesdames Thomson, Linn and Miss J Musker. Items were given by Mesdames V Larsen and N Jones, accompaniments being played by Mrs R Larsen.

Due to the outbreak of the Second World War, monies raised for the wall had to be set aside and it was not until May 29th 1949, that the Memorial wall was finally unveiled.

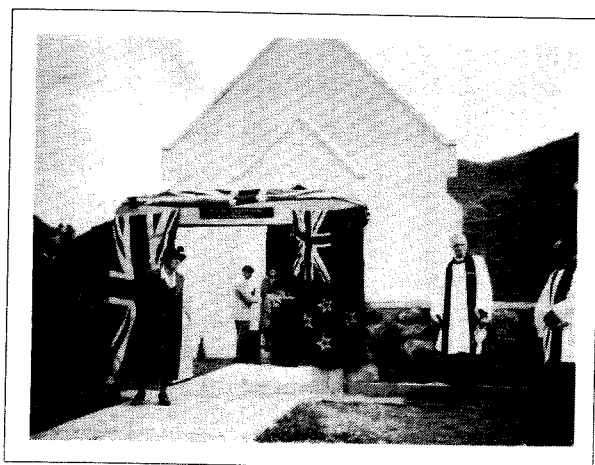


PHOTO: OLIVE REA Neé OXENHAM

*Mrs Clara Larsen with officiating clergy, Archdeacon Gavin, Rev Goldham-Fussell and Rev Utting.
Mrs Lange is at the organ. Roy Jones played the violin.*

A sepia-toned photograph of a valley. In the middle ground, a small, light-colored house with a porch and a chimney sits on a slight rise. A dirt road or path curves around the house. The background is a steep, forested hillside with many trees, some of which appear to be dead or skeletal. In the foreground, a rustic fence made of vertical wooden posts and horizontal rails runs across the bottom of the frame. The overall scene is rural and somewhat desolate.

How Green Was Our Valley

Collected Memories of Uruti