

Takaka Memorial Park

(Compiled by Noel Baigent – 18 June 2023)

The Takaka Memorial Park is situated in Commercial Street, on the site of the former Memorial Library which was razed to the ground in 2010. The park was designed and created by members of the Golden Bay Returned and Services Association in collaboration with the Tasman District Council, Golden Bay Community Board and local iwi Manawhenua Ki Mohua. The Park and the Memorial were officially opened and dedicated on 31 October 2015.

The memorial, pathways and pillars are positioned in such a manner as to reflect the curvature of Farewell Spit and the gardens contain only New Zealand native fauna, except for the Australian grasses which represent the spirit of ANZAC. During the day water flows down the face of the memorial to represent tears of sorrow and at night the flow stops and lights come on to illuminate the Waharoa, the Memorial and the pillars.



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Special features include;

The Waharoa (Gateway) at the entrance to the Park is a first for the Takaka Township and gives recognition to the iwi of Golden Bay. The carving at the Top Centre is the New Zealand Defence Force crest. The carving to the left represents the times of War (Sword/Spitfire/Frigate/Tank) and to the right the times after the Wars (Whales/Birds/Mining/Agriculture). The reverse side has poppies representing the battle fields of the Somme. The 28th Maori Battalion plaques on the inner sides contain the names of Battalion members from across the entire 'Top of the South' region.



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The patterns on the two Waharoa pillars are described as follows;

Nga hau e Wha' (the four winds), the Iwi wha, and the Rangatahi (younger generation) pushing forward with the four central Mangopare representing the remembrance poppy with a small circle in the centre. The four main lines of Mangopare represent the three Iwi and the community (Returned and Services Association and all other Iwi).

The pattern is repeated using the central vertical leading from one pattern to the next forming a series of diamond or stars (eyes of tipuna). To Maori this "Wheturangitia" depicts the stars above, where our ancestors go after they pass away.

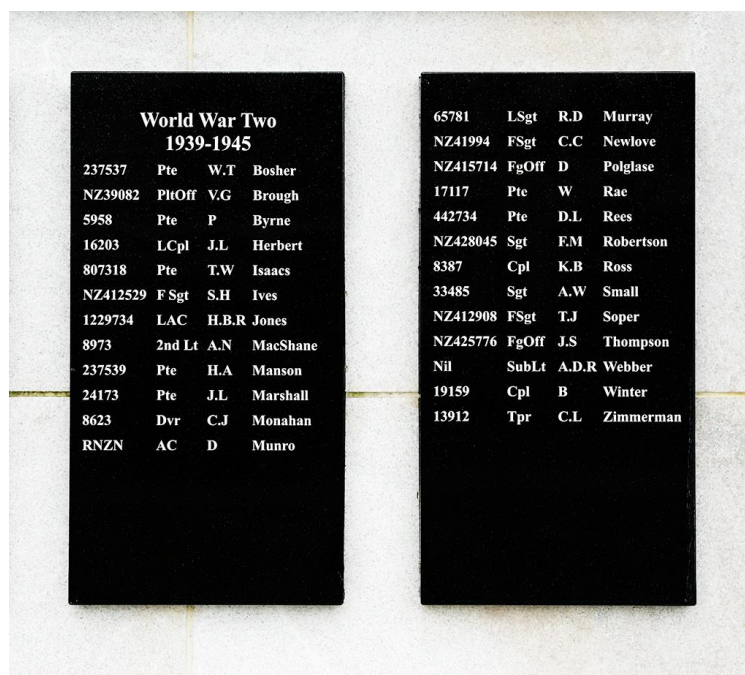
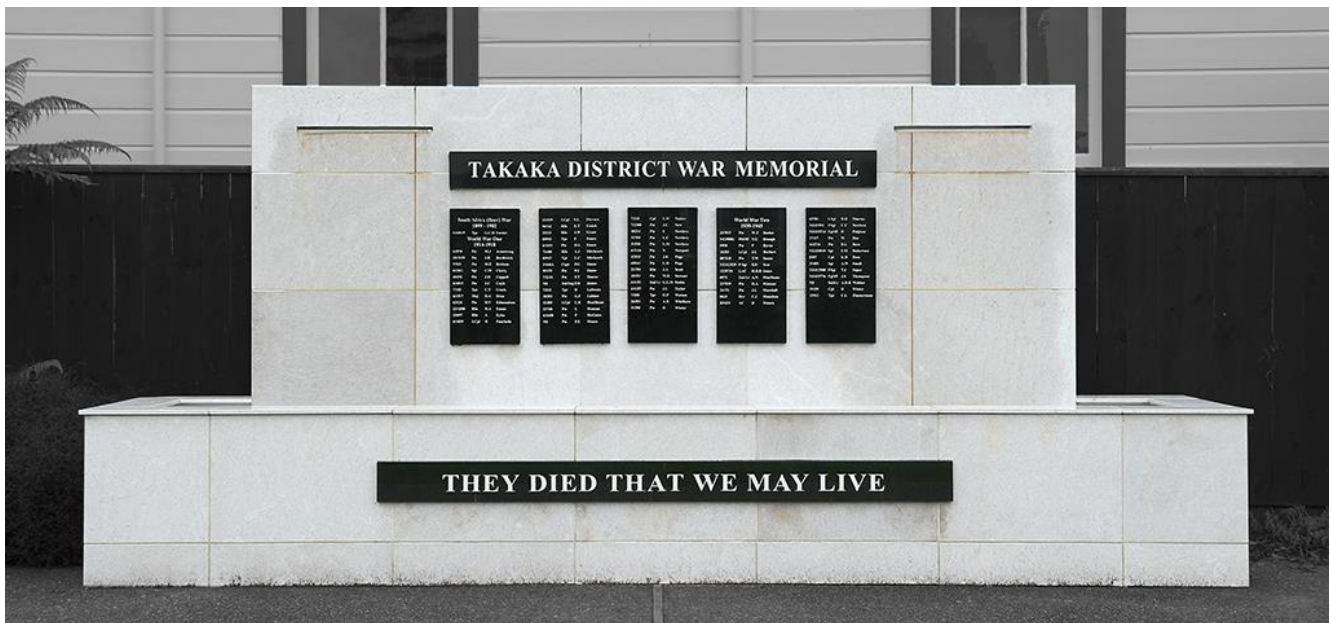
The Mangopare 'Shark' is renowned by Maori as being the epitome of strength, agility, and tenacious determination. The qualities of this awesome predator were respected and Maori warriors sought to emulate them on the battle field. When the Mangopare fought its enemy it would always fight to the death. Today the Mangopare represents those qualities of strength and determination and also as a fierce protector to those who utilise this symbol.



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The Weeping Wall contains plaques naming all those from the Takaka District who perished in War and never returned – ‘THEY DIED THAT WE MAY LIVE’.



The Campaign pillars/columns are unique in that the New Zealand (Maori) Wars are commemorated on the same site as the traditional wars. Also, this is the only War memorial in New Zealand to have a pillar recognizing 'Our former foes' – foes whom we fought but who are now our friends and allies. A silver fern and a poppy are incorporated into each pillar.



The 'Mauri' stone (touchstone) pounamu (greenstone) named 'Ka roimata o totoweka' (Tears of totoweka) was gifted by South Westland Iwi 'Te Runanga o Makaawhio' symbolizing the trail of tears we collectively shed for the many New Zealanders lost in war. The pounamu brings Spiritual peace and tranquility to those who caress it. It is mounted on marble sourced from the Takaka valley. A water fountain is situated nearby.



The Gallipoli rock is a large marble rock, nearest Commercial Street, selected from a local quarry and has become known as the 'Gallipoli Rock'. Its features resemble the terrain our soldiers faced when they came ashore at ANZAC cove on 25th April 1915.



The grassed area is known as the The Field of Remembrance and on ANZAC day, Armistice day and other days of significance, small white crosses are erected to honour, remember and commemorate the lives of Takaka men lost on the battlefield.



Four park benches placed about the park are made from native timber sourced in Golden Bay.



The original marble War Memorial plaques remain in the foyer of the Tasman District Council Takaka Office – formerly the 'County Council Offices'

