

Mr. Mayor, representatives from Taupo Museum, family and friends.

My name is Ramon Neilson and I am one of Albert Reid's grandchildren.

Albert Daniel Harkin Reid was born in Wanganui on 28th March 1889, the youngest of nine children. After completing his schooling, and training in carpentry we know that Albert worked on the boats operating on the Whanganui River between Wanganui and Taumarunui. At some point he moved to Taumarunui and the earliest recording we have of him being in Taupo is a bracelet inscribed 'Tima Rickit bracelet won by A. Reid Taupo Sports 1912.' No doubt he would have been staying with his older brother George Reid who had already moved to Taupo and married in to the Rickit family. At some stage after this Albert went to Niue, and that is another story in itself, but with WW1 looming he returned to New Zealand. Britain declared war on Germany on 4th August 1914 and two weeks later on 18th August Albert, aged 25 years, enlisted. Two months later on the 16th October 1914 Private Albert Reid embarked by ship for the Suez.

Albert saw active service in a number of conflicts including Egypt, the Balkans (Gallipoli), and Western Europe. Having been to the Gallipoli Peninsula and seen the sites where the ANZACS fought the Turks, the trenches and the conditions they endured it must have been horrific for the soldiers involved in these conflicts. I believe also however we need to acknowledge the condition the war graves and sites have been maintained by the Turks, and the esteem in which the Turkish people now hold the ANZACS.

On 17th July 1916 in France Albert was wounded by shrapnel in the right leg and invalided to England where he recovered and was then involved in the training of troops before returning to New Zealand, arriving home on the 25th September 1917. In New Zealand he remained enlisted and I presume involved with training of the armed forces. The war officially ended on the 11th November 1918 and, after having enlisted as a Private, Regimental Sergeant Major Albert Reid was discharged on the 14th December 1918. He was decorated with the 1914 – 15 Star, the British War Medal, the Victory Medal, and posthumously the Gallipoli Medallion. These are inscribed with A. D. H. Reid on the side.

After the war Albert returned to Taumarunui where he met and on 21st June 1922 married Emily Flintoff. He was 33 years old and his occupation was listed as 'Art Dealer'. They lived variously between Taumarunui/Ongarue and Taupo, with their first 3 children born in Taumarunui and the youngest two, Thelma 1925 and Ted 1927 being born in Taupo. In the early 1930's they moved permanently to Taupo and lived in Gascoigne Street. The original house has since been moved to Motutaiko Street where Ted Reid continues to live in it, although it has had some additions since then – but the frame of the long-drop is still in the back yard. After nearly 70 years of paying rates I think this must make Ted Taupo's longest serving rate payer.

Albert had a number of jobs in Taupo working as a carpenter, planting trees on the Napier highway during the depression years and a news correspondent for the New Zealand Herald, Napier Daily Telegraph and the Wellington Dominion. He was a Justice of the Peace and was the Taupo organiser when on 30th January 1955 Margaret Sweeney became the first person to swim Lake Taupo. Albert's sons Darcy, Ray and Ted were some of the support crew who rowed beside the swimmers.

Having survived largely unscathed the perils of WW1 Albert was struck by a car crossing the main street in Taupo and died shortly afterwards in Rotorua Hospital on 16th January 1963, at the age of 73. On his passing his medals went to his eldest surviving son, Darcy, and when Darcy passed away two years ago they went to his son John Reid. After consulting with his sisters and cousins John decided he would like to see the medals offered to the Taupo Museum. John lives in Queensland, Australia and is unable to be with us today however I would like to acknowledge what he has done to make today possible. John made the original contact with the museum and then arranged for the medals to be polished, the ribbons repaired and this display case made. As a family we are very pleased that the museum has accepted our offer of the medals and I am sure that Albert Reid would have been delighted and felt very honoured that his memorabilia will form an important part in your display.

I would now like to call on Albert's two surviving children, my mother Thelma and my uncle Ted to come forward and present the medals.