

Halcombe School Memorial Gates, 30 Monteith Street, Halcombe



Figure 1 Halcombe School's war memorial gate in Monteith Street (19 January 2022).

Architect:

Builder:

Construction date: 1949

Visible materials: Concrete posts, marble plaques, timber pergola, metal gates

Architectural style: Gateway

Use/building type: Memorial

Date and Compiler: Val Burr 2018; Ian Bowman 2020

Heritage NZ Listing Nil

Proposed ranking: B

PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY

Halcombe School's war memorial takes the form of a pergola, with three pairs of concrete pillars, a pair of iron gates, and with a wooden framework overhead. The names of the dead of both world wars are recorded on marble slabs affixed to the concrete pillars closest to the road.¹

¹ Peter Olsen & Janet Doyle, *Communities Remember World War One: Memorials of the Manawatu District* (Feilding, 2014), p. 32 ; Also: Halcombe School – The War Memorials: <http://www.halcombe.school.nz/warmemorials2016.htm>

Background

It seems possible that the marble tablet listing the former pupils lost in the First World War might be somewhat older than the Second World War tablet. Certainly the text-style of each is different – something unlikely to have occurred if both were made at the same time. The name of L.M. Natzske, which was added later to the WWI tablet, also more closely resembles the style of the WWII tablet. While a search of the school's records would probably add something to the story of the memorials, the available online records offer some indications to that effect. This information was supplied by the *Rangitikei Advocate and Manawatu Argus'* Halcombe correspondent throughout the war years.

The *Rangitikei Advocate and Manawatu Argus* of 28 September 1915, p. 7, reveals that the idea of a memorial tablet for Halcombe School came very early on in the war: *“Several of our settlers have intimated their readiness to provide suitable souvenirs for our returned soldiers. And what about those heroic mothers whose boys cannot return? They must not be forgotten. Then what about a tablet in our school for the names of the old boys ‘killed in action’ and a ‘Roll of Honour’ placed, say, upon our Post Office? Think it over and evolve something worthy of us, the grateful stay-at-homes.”*

Then on October 5th 1915 came: *“Mr C. Natzke of this town has received notice of the death at the front of his young brother, who was born in Halcombe, and whose name we claim to add to our rapidly extending roll of honour.”*² Lance-Corporal Leo Max Natzske (26) was the man whose name is tacked onto the bottom of the WWI list of names. However, his family had moved away from Halcombe at the time of his enlistment. He died of wounds at Gallipoli on 28 August 1915.³

The report of 23 May 1916, p. 6, records that: *“At the last meeting of our school committee Mr E. Thomas suggested that a Roll of Honour should be compiled and the names placed upon it of all those boys and teachers who had been connected with the school and who had volunteered for the front. All present approved and it was further suggested that later on a marble tablet bearing the names of all the boys who have left this district for the front should be placed upon our post office. Upon Mr Thomas’ list there are over thirty names of Halcombe school boys and teachers who have enlisted.”*⁴

Then on 6 November 1917 came: *“The monthly meeting of the Halcombe School Committee was held on Saturday night, all the members attending. After the usual routine business had been transacted, it was resolved to erect in the Halcombe School a Roll of Honour, to contain the names of all boys from this district who had been educated at the school. Mr Laurie Seigel was told off to get the names of our warriors and up to the present he has over 50 on his list.”*⁵

Serious fund-raising then came with the announcement on 20 November 1917 of: *“The secretary of the School Committee tells me that arrangements for the social (the official notice of which can be seen in this issue of the Advocate), to be held next Friday, to provide funds for the erection of a roll of honour board, are well in hand. Local and outside vocal talent has been secured. The Halcombe Band will play a fine selection, ‘In Memory of the Brave,’ a typical piece for the occasion. Ladies are asked to bring a basket (well filled, of course), and if there are any men in this district who won’t give a shilling, well they are either very poor or are very parsimonious, which is the polite way of saying something else. The secretary says he will be glad of a ham, if anyone has such a thing on hand,*

² *Rangitikei Advocate and Manawatu Argus*, 5 October 1915, p. 7

³ Auckland War Memorial Museum: Online Cenotaph: ‘Leo Max Natzke’: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/online-cenotaph/record/C11329?n=Leo%20Max%20Natzke&ordinal=0&from=%2Fwar-memorial%2Fonline-cenotaph%2Fsearch>

⁴ *Rangitikei Advocate and Manawatu Argus*, 23 May 1916, p. 6

⁵ *Rangitikei Advocate and Manawatu Argus*, 6 November 1917, p. 4(4)

which can be spared. So if any reader of these notes wishes to earn a name for being generous, and also get his or her names in this column now is the time. This latter fact should be worth at least two hams."⁶

The following week the newspaper's Halcombe correspondent wrote a detailed account of the function at the local hall. It had been very well-attended, with the money needed for the Roll of Honour being over-subscribed by several pounds. Amongst the speeches was that of John Morrison, and included in his remarks was the comment: *"In the absence of a public memorial he could conceive of no better way to preserve the memory of our brave soldiers than by placing their names conspicuously before the notice of the children. The board would serve the purpose of keeping before the children's eyes the splendid manner in which former scholars of that school had rallied to the standard which called them to war, and he was quite sure the lesson conveyed would be productive of nothing but good. He would like to see a roll of honour board in all schools..."*⁷

Although the war still had another ten months to run, in January 1918, the Halcombe correspondent wrote: *"I was privileged a few days ago to see the Roll of Honour Board, which our School Committee are going to place in the school. It is a fine piece of work, and great credit is due to all concerned in its production. The board is about four feet long by two feet nine inches wide, with heavy moulding at the top. It is stained black, and the lettering is in gold. At present more than 60 names have been placed on the board and there are more to follow. Mr E. Thomas is procuring the names of the soldiers entitled to appear on the Roll of Honour, and has already gone to a deal of trouble in a matter which is proving one of considerable difficulty. It is intended to unveil the board when the school opens."*⁸

There is no indication in the two books⁹ that cover Halcombe's war memorials as to what became of this wooden WWI Roll of Honour board. However, presumably the marble tablet for the dead ended up replacing it at the school. The people of the Halcombe area also began fund-raising for the main war memorial in the middle of Halcombe after this time, and that memorial was eventually unveiled on 27 July 1921. Both the school memorial and the main town memorial name only those who lost their lives during the war. Thus the wooden Roll of Honour with its sixty-plus names still had a role to play as a community record, wherever it ended up.

The Unveiling of the Pergola Memorial

The idea to build the present memorial pergola and gates traces to a successful concert held in the Halcombe Hall on 20 September 1946. This concert had raised about £30 for school purposes. At this time *"the idea for the Memorial Gates was first brought before the school committee by Mr W. Powell. An appeal for funds was launched, to be followed by a house to house appeal."*¹⁰

On 2 May 1949, *"The school committee received a letter from the (Wanganui) Education Board asking for plans of the Pergola Memorial and that the work be suspended until the Board's approval be secured, (At this stage the Memorial was practically completed.)"* On May 24th the Memorial Gates were officially unveiled, and *"Members of the School Committee, R.S.A. and a fair attendance of parents were present. These gates commemorate the past pupils who gave their lives in the two World Wars."*¹¹

⁶ *Rangitikei Advocate and Manawatu Argus*, 20 November 1917, pp. 5 & 8

⁷ *Rangitikei Advocate and Manawatu Argus*, 27 November 1917, p. 4

⁸ *Rangitikei Advocate and Manawatu Argus*, 8 January 1918, p. 4

⁹ Olsen & Doyle; and Sarah Rolston, *Halcombe Heroes: World War One* (Feilding, 2015)

¹⁰ *Halcombe School 1877-1977* (Halcombe, 1977), p. 22

¹¹ *Halcombe School 1877-1977* (Halcombe, 1977), p. 23

The *Manawatu Standard's* Halcombe correspondent then reported the following in its issue of 2 June 1949: "Owing to the unsuitable weather conditions on Anzac Day, the unveiling of the Memorial Gates at the Halcombe School took place on Empire Day, May 24. The Rev. H.R. Wright addressed the children and residents. Mr Page unveiled the names of the men who lost their lives in World War I and the names of the men of World War II were read by Mr H.M. Monk."¹²

There are fifteen names of former pupils who were killed in World War One, and a further ten were killed in World War II. While not researched in any depth for this study, of the fifteen from WWI, eight are also named on Halcombe's main war memorial at the intersection of Stanway Road and Willoughby Street. These are J. Cuff, W. Cuff, N. Hogg, C. Seigel, J. Seigel, F. Voss, C. Wapp and H. Wishnowsky. This number included two sets of brothers, the Cuffs and the Seigels. A third pair of brothers, the Lintons, appears on the school list only.¹³ Only two former pupils are listed on both war memorials for WWII. These are W. Clapham and P. Te Punga. Harry 'Cautley' Clapham on the WWI list, was almost certainly an uncle of William Courtley Clapham on the WWII list.¹⁴ The brothers Alexander Walter Crozier and Noel Henry Crozier both served in the RNZAF and were killed nine months apart in the European war.¹⁵

Recent Years

As the centenary of the First World War approached, a decision was made to publish the stories of the men from that war who are named on the town's two war memorials. The *Manawatu Standard*, of 18th May 2012, then published an article entitled: 'Honouring Halcombe's heroes'

An annual grant of \$2,700 from Manawatu District Council and the 2014 Gallipoli centenary have prompted Halcombe Community Committee to research the names on the Halcombe School memorial archway and the cenotaph in the village.

Sarah Rolston has set herself the task of tracing the names of soldiers whose names are recorded on the two memorials, and try to source photographs of as many as possible.

The annual grant to community councils is to be used by community committees for a project such as this one, signs or seats which the community consider will benefit their community.

"The idea of producing a booklet with photos of the soldiers and a little about each one, was prompted by a similar project undertaken by George Kereama for Maori Battalion soldiers. Researching local soldiers in the Feilding Library, I came across a book by the Feilding Agricultural High School Old Pupils Association in 1948 which lists a number of the same names, which has given me a head start."

One of those former pupils was Hamuera Paul Te Punga, who had been dux of the school, a rugby hero and was training as a lawyer when he enlisted. He left New Zealand with the Maori Battalion in 1939, and returned but then went back and held the rank of Major when he was killed in Italy on September 23, 1944.

¹² *Manawatu Standard*, 2 June 1949, p. 9(6)

¹³ Rolston: pp. 19-22, 32-35, 49-52

¹⁴ William Courtley Clapham (1917-1942) was the son of William John Clapham of Halcombe, who in turn is almost certainly the same as William John Ward Clapham (1876-1953), son of Lambert and Maria Clapham, who in turn were also the parents of Harry Cautley Clapham (1892-1918). (Sources: Births, Deaths & Marriages online references, including Birth: 1876/7084, 1892/1719 & 1917/7593; Marriages: 1903/259 & 1916/4326; & Deaths: 1918/79924, 1945/64590 [ref to death on 14 November 1942], 1953/27801 & 1963/27915. <https://www.bdmonline.dia.govt.nz/>)

¹⁵ Auckland War Memorial Museum: Online Cenotaph: Noel Henry Crozier (NZ411742) & Alexander Walter Crozier (NZ415549): <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/online-cenotaph> [Then search their names]

"He was easy to research, because he was well known. But other soldiers will be harder to find out about. Some will still have family in the area, but others may not be known now, particularly WW1 soldiers. The Crozier brothers were also in the book, but less was known about them."

Mrs Rolston has some information about 11 of the names, but would be interested to hear more of their stories.

She intends to make use of the Manawatu District Community Archives to search for more information about the names on the memorials, and has been given a few names of people who may have more information.

Mrs Rolston describes herself as an adopted New Zealander, and her knowledge of New Zealand's military history is very limited. She said finding out about these soldiers is intriguing.

"Some names are listed on both memorials, such as J Cuff, yet WM Cuff¹⁶ is only listed on the cenotaph and not at the school. Maybe that means he was an older brother, cousin or uncle who did not attend Halcombe school. It would be interesting to hear those stories."

Among the names on the memorials known to be still in the area is Natzske (since changed to Nitschke), Cowdrey, Te Whare, Gotty, Wapp and Sandilands.

"At the Halcombe Anzac service this year I was told the first soldier to die at Gallipoli was from Halcombe. I would really like to know more about that," Mrs Rolston said.

There are 40 names listed on the two arches and Mrs Rolston would be grateful for any information about these soldiers.

They are 1914-18: C Clapham, L Clover, J Cuff, W M Cuff, N Hogg, R Linton, W Linton, A Palmer, C Phillips, C C Seigel, J A Seigel, F Voss, C Wapp, H Wishnowsky, L M Natzske, M H Hogg, A Cowdrey, R Fearon, J Hammond, W McDonald, A Neilson, P Roberts, W Tua.

1939-45: W Clapham, L Calman, A Crozier, N Crozier, P Elliott, A Gillon, J Neilson, J P O'Dea, B Sandilands, F Boddington, E Campbell, J H Davey, D Gotty, B Hogg, T Rewai, P Te Punga, J Te Whare.

If photographs of the soldiers can be obtained, the intention is to reproduce, frame and hang them in a public space within the village, possibly the rugby clubrooms or the school hall.¹⁷

The book *Halcombe Heroes: World War One* was duly published in 2015.

The memorial has been restored in recent years, including the installation of a new gate. The timing of the various Google Street View images indicates that this work was undertaken between February 2010 and October 2013.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

The memorial comprises three pairs of rendered concrete posts with a timber pergola structure above forming a gateway into the school. There are marble plaques, one each on the front posts and metal gates. On the eastern plaque are the names of those who were killed in World War One with the names of those who died in World War Two on the western plaque. On the front rafter are three plaques, on the east is "1914-18", in the centre is "Remembrance" and on the west "1939-1945".

The pergola entry design of the memorial is not common. Most entries to schools were in the form of an arch. A brief on-line search found only the Te Awamutu and District War Memorial Park that includes a pergola structure.

¹⁶ Both Cuffs are in fact named on the school memorial

¹⁷ *Manawatu Standard*, 18 May 2012: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/manawatu-standard/your-manawatu/feilding-herald/6945111/Honouring-Halcombes-heroes>

The archway is an entry to the local school which is located on Monteith Street to the south of Halcombe. Surrounding the school is farmland with scattered housing. The main war memorial for Halcombe is located at the junction of Stanway Road and Willoughby Street to the south of the village centre.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE VALUES

The war memorial has **low** to **high local** significance for **architectural, technological, rarity, representativeness, group, authenticity, people, event, pattern, cultural, public esteem, commemorative** and **education** values.

The memorial has **moderate architectural** and **technological** values as an example of a pergola styled war memorial using common materials, style and symbolism of the period. However, it is a **rare** example of this memorial type.

The memorial has **high representativeness** and **group** values as one of many war memorials erected throughout the region and New Zealand to remember fallen and serving armed soldiers in World War One and World War Two.

The memorial has **high authenticity** as it remains on its original site.

The memorial has **moderate historic people, event, pattern and cultural identity, public esteem, commemorative** and **education** values as a war memorial commemorating those who died in both world wars and where memorial services have been held. It is also sited outside a school, a common location intended to inspire the students with the sacrifice of those who died serving their country.

SOURCES

Printed Sources

Manawatu Standard, 2 June 1949, p. 9(6) [Microfilm, Palmerston North City Library]

Olsen, Peter, & Doyle, Janet, *Communities Remember World War One: Memorials of the Manawatu District* (Feilding, 2014)

Rolston, Sarah, *Halcombe Heroes: World War One* (Feilding, 2015)

Online Sources

Auckland War Memorial Museum: Online Cenotaph: <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/online-cenotaph/> [Search the various people's names]

Births, Deaths & Marriages: <https://www.bdmonline.dia.govt.nz/> [as per footnote]

Google Street View <https://www.google.co.nz/maps/> [as per references in text]

Halcombe School and District: Diamond Jubilee 1877-1937 (Feilding, 1937)

http://www.halcombe.school.nz/index_files/Halcombe%20School%20Diamond%20Jubilee%201937.pdf

Halcombe School 1877-1977 (Halcombe, 1977)

http://www.halcombe.school.nz/index_files/Halcombe%20Centenary%201877%20-%201977.pdf

Halcombe School – The War Memorials: <http://www.halcombe.school.nz/warmemorials2016.htm>

Halcombe School memorial gates', URL: <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/photo/halcombe-school-memorial-gates>, (Ministry for Culture and Heritage), updated 15-Jul-2013

Manawatu Standard, 18 May 2012: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/manawatu-standard/your-manawatu/feilding-herald/6945111/Honouring-Halcombes-heroes>

Papers Past: <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers> (*Rangitikei Advocate and Manawatu Argus* [as per footnotes and text])

Other Sources

Val Burr's research file for No: O1 Halcombe War Memorial – researched for Manawatu District Council in 2016



Figure 2 This photo is from the NZ History website and appears to date to 2010. Since it was taken, the gate shown in the photo has been replaced. (Source: <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/photo/halcombe-school-memorial-gates>)



Figure 3 The two lists of names of pupils lost in the two wars, with fifteen lost in WWI and ten in WWII. The name of L.M. Natzske appears to have been added later. Its print-style appears more like style of the WWII tablet. Possibly the WWI plaque is somewhat older than the WWII plaque, although no information to that effect was found during this study. (Source: NZ History: <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/photo/halcombe-school-memorial-gates>)

SOCIAL

In Aid of Funds for the erection
of a "ROLL OF HONOUR" Board
in the Halcombe School

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 23rd
at 8 p m.

ADMISSION TO SOCIAL :
Gents 1s, Ladies a Basket
DANCE TO FOLLOW.

R. C. ORR, Secretary.

Figure 4 Advertising a fundraiser for the school's Roll of Honour (Source: *Rangitikei Advocate and Manawatu Argus*, 20 November 1917, p. 8)