**Essays on Mount Crosby - Returned Soldiers Celebration 1919**

If you look carefully at the Mount Crosby State School Roll of Honour, you might be curious about something I noticed when I was an easily distracted student in 1971. In those days the Roll was hung high on the wall inside the school room occupied by the grade 4-7s; so high, in fact, that it seemed dark and remote up there, but I suppose it was calculated to be safe from the accidental happenings of a school room that might damage it. It all looked very old and from a time long past; much older to me then than its seems right now.

I would have been truly surprised to know that some of the names were living people and I had even seen them about the town. What I noticed most during my reading and re-reading of it (proud to say more diligent than my study) was its implication that the war ended in 1919, when I "knew" the war had ended in 1918. I'm a little shamefaced to admit that I thought it perhaps a mistake, which I excused as part of the approximation known to me as the "olden days". But that was my great underestimation of the importance of all this, and I now know that those were such awful days for local families that they would never have made such a mistake and I am pleased to be able to tell you the reason for the date.

When signing up for war service, the volunteers had expected to be home within a few months of war's end but when the seemingly endless war did finish in November of 1918 the logistics of getting all those men home meant a much longer wait. Many were also suffering a great deal and could not be moved on so quick. It wasn't until August of 1919 that the largest group of our local boys came back to a long anticipated reunion held at the old Mount Crosby School, for which their families and proud locals had many months to prepare. Among the returning soldiers were Lieut. F. Perrett, L.-Cpl. W. Craddock and Privates W. Mayne, R. McDougall, F. Hutchins, A. Ferguson, B. Lofgren, H. Parker, J. Stunden, E. Burow, and S. Thompson.

According to those who attended, it was the largest gathering that had ever assembled at Mount Crosby. The school was beautifully decorated with festoons of coloured paper and even electric lights showing colours of red, white and blue. Across the schoolroom was hung the motto, "Welcome Home to Our Boys" and the general effect was very fine.

The proceedings began with a grand march by the returned soldiers and lady partners, followed by a substantial meal at which there were very earnest speeches breathing of patriotism and loyalty. During the supper half-a-dozen Mount Crosby ladies attired in white frocks, with flag aprons, acted as waitresses. Only young Stan Craddock was absent, for he had fallen in some French field and was never coming home.

Col Hester