

RONALD VICTOR GIORGI,

1931 EARTHQUAKE ACCOUNT

①
with compliments

IT WAS

①
A CLEAR SUNNY DAY, FEB 3rd 1931 AT 10-47 AM TERRIBLE EARTHQUAKE. 7.9 ON RICHTER SCALE. ROARS OF BUILDINGS FALLING. ROADS WAVING LIKE ROLLERS AT SEA.

NAPIER (POP 16,000-00) 10⁰⁰ KILLED. ^{UNIDENTIFIED} 228

HASTINGS (POP. 11,000-00) 85 KILLED. ~~228~~

TOTAL KILLED 258 WHEN H.B. POPULATION WAS MUCH SMALLER. CHOKING DUST AND SMOKE BRICKS, CONCRETE, TWISTED STEEL, AND SPLINTERED WOOD. SHOPS LOOTED; LAUGHED SOME MEN LOOTING OUR RESERVE ROOM.

NAPIER WORST HIT. 7 NURSES ^{KILLED} 4th HOME ON HILL. MONASTRY AT GREEN MEADOWS, SEVERAL ^SPRIESTS KILLED.

OLD MANS HOME ^HAT PARR ISLAND NAPIER. BIG SHAKE LIKE A TERRIER SHAKING A RAT.

OLD SOLDIERS ^{WAR} AND EX-TERRITORIAL SOLDIERS ON PICKET TO STOP LOOTING. COL ~~H.~~ H. HOLLERNESS IN CONTROL. MAJOR PENNINGTON IN CHARGE OF PICKETS KEEPING SWAGGERS OUT WHO WANTED ONLY A MEREK, WATER CARTS, DUG HOKES FOR SEWAGE, BUT WATER & SEWAGE QUICKLY RESTORED. HAVELOCK BRIDGES & WATER MAIN TEMPORARILY REPAIRED. MEN CLEARING

RUBBLE; DIGGING OUT BODIES; HOSPITAL SET UP AT RACE COURSE. DOCTORS & NURSES POURED IN FROM GISBORNE & PALMERSTON NTH.



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~~MOCKED~~

FEB 3rd 1931.

ON FEB 3rd 1931

Clear calm sunny morning
 EXPERIENCES OF THE 1931. H. B. E. MAKE
 was in our Reserve Room: Old Bakery
 when at 10:47 AM a terrific bump,
 + a terrific shaking for 1 or 2 minutes
 young man in front of me as I rushed
 out collected an old tankful of water,
 I turned and saw my father at the
 peak of a pile of bricks. I pulled
 him out - his glass eye was ~~knocked~~
~~out of his head~~, and he had a large
 lump on his head. Around the corner
 came the head ply. tel. reporter with
 blood pouring from his head. I put
 Dad + him in the Buick car + drove
 around to Dr Whyte (Sandy) who couldn't open
 his car shed doors - I yanked them off
 as Dr patched Dad + Ed Culver's head.
 Dr Whyte's wife came screaming down the
 street - their little daughter, Patricia
 was killed, aged 8.

I later found the quake measured 7.9 on
 the Richter scale, at 9:30 PM ~~was~~
~~same night~~ another equally large quake,
 another big one on Friday ~~10th Feb~~ early after
 11 AM.

I just walked out of our home, + saw
 with Elisonard come rolling like bread
 toward me - another big quake. On Feb 3rd



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I saw a brick wall roll over like a wave - killing
 B. L. ...

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My FATHER AND I THEN WENT OUT TO TE
AWANGA, MEETING MR. H. W. C. BAIRD, THIS SIDE
OF THE BLACK BRIDGE, NEAR HOUNGAMA, WHO
WANTED TO GET TO HASTINGS, SO WE CHANGED CARS, &
WALKED OVER THE DAMAGED BRIDGE TO HIS CAR.
AT TE AWANGA WE FOUND MOST PEOPLE HAD GONE UP
TO MR + MRS S'LENNY'S PLACE ON THE HILL, AS THEY
ALL EXPECTED A HUGE TIDAL WAVE WOULD
HAPPEN AS THE SEA RECEDED SOME 1/2 MILE OR SO
EXPOSING THE REEF. WE OR RATHER PAD + I RETURNED
TO HASTINGS, WHERE I FOUND SOME MEN LOOTING
THE RESERVE ROOM. I TOOK A BALANCE OF GOODS
INSIDE OUR MAIN SHOP WHICH HAD WITHSTOOD
THE QUAKE. I THEN WENT TO SEE FRONT WINDOWS
WHICH HAD BEEN SMASHED. WE LATER HAD THEM
BOARDED. OUR FRONT DOOR WOODEN FRAME WAS
SCORCHED, FROM FIRES ACROSS HERETRUMPAH ST. OUR
SHOP PARAPETS CAME DOWN, KILLING ONE LOVELY
GIRL NEXT DOOR. AFTER A COUPLE OF DAYS I
WORKED FOR A WHILE ON ROACH'S STORE, WHERE 17
PEOPLE WERE KILLED. ABOUT 85 KILLED IN HASTINGS,
~~123~~ IN MARIE. MANY BODIES WERE NOT IDENTIFIED.
IN ALL 258 WERE KILLED IN H. B. FROM WAIKANA DOWN
CATHOLIC SEMINARY AT GREEN MEADOWS 17 KILLED
7 NURSES IN MARIE HOSPITAL ON THE HILL, IN
THE NURSES HOME.



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People were AMAZING. ARMY, ^{NAVY} TERRITORIALS, & OLD WAR I SOLDIERS. HASTINGS VERY SELF RELIANT - TOOK NO TIME TO BRING ORDER INTO A WRECKED TOWN. PEOPLE SOON WENT BACK TO THEIR HOMES, EVEN TO LIVE IN TENTS, BESIDE THEIR HOUSES. CLEANING UP THE MASSES INSIDE THEIR HOMES. AEROPLANES WERE USING BRIDGE. ~~PAT~~ ^{RO} PROME, BRINGING IN MEDICAL SUPPLIES ETC., MINISTRY OF WORKS ALSO CAME TO HELP CLEAR UP. NAPIER TECHNICAL COLLEGE, ^{DOWN} SOME BOYS ³ WERE KILLED IN NAPIER. ONE MAHARA SCHOOL BOY KILLED SEVERAL YOUTHS KILLED IN TOWNS. WAIRUKURAU PUT UP SOME ³⁰ PATIENTS, & WITH WAI PAWA & WAIPIKA SUPPLYING CUPS OF TEA WITH SANDWICHES ETC., A GREAT EFFORT BY SMALL TOWNS WHO WERE THEMSELVES BADLY SHAKEN BY THE CHAIKE.

INSURANCE ON BUILDINGS. HIST'S MUNICIPAL BLDG, GENERAL HALL, MUNICIPAL THEATRE,

ALSO OUR M. & S. BLDG & COMMERCE BLDG, BOTH STOOD, AS DID H.B. FARMERS. AND THE THEN UNION BANK ^(OF BRICK) WITH A HEAVY PORTICO ALL STOOD UP, WITH MINOR ^{DAMAGE}. KOACH'S LARGE STORE CAME DOWN AND 17 KILLED.

AMATEUR RADIO STATION (MAX L'S BROS) I SAW FILM MILLS - MESSAGE TO MILLENCEPT ^{my}

FINANCE AT THAT TIME IN DUNEDIN. SHE RECEIVED MY TELEGRAM.



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1/4 HOUR

BEFORE NAMES KILLED WERE READ OUT.

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EVACUATION BY TRAIN FROM HASTINGS FOR INSURED & HOMELESS. SOME WENT TO PALMERSTON NTH, WANGANUI, WELKINGTON & STH ISLAND. SCHOOL BOYS & GIRLS WENT TO WAITARA.

2ND BIG QUAKE ON FRIDAY 9TH FEBRUARY. REST OF GRAND HOTEL CAME DOWN & FIRES RESTARTED. KINSLEY PETERS PINNED ^{UNDER} BEAM. ARMY SUPPLIED TENTS, & COOKING ~~STOVES~~ STOVES FOR SOUP & STEW. NAVY SAILORS FROM HMS VERONICA, & HM.S. ^{PIONEER & LEANOR} ~~LEANOR~~ ^{PROVED} ~~PROVED~~ ^{UNAVAILABLE} ~~UNAVAILABLE~~ - MOSTLY IN NAIPER, SMALL NUMBER IN HASTINGS.

MAYOR OF HASTINGS MR GEORGE ROACH WAS CAUGHT BETWEEN SLIPS NEAR WAITARA, SO MR HENDERSON TOOK OVER - HE WAS DEPUTY MAYOR & FIRE CHIEF. FIRE STATION COLLAPSED & THE FIRE ENGINE HAD TO BE DUS OUT - NOT MUCH WATER ANYWAY.

COL H.H. HOLDERNESS WAS PUT IN CHARGE OF PICKETS & PATROLS; COL JAMES MANSON (LATER "BLACK ROD" IN PARLIAMENT) WAS IN CHARGE OF REGISTRATION. MAJOR R. LES MYGAGGIN IN CHARGE OF TENTS, ETC. 500 TENTS. 12,050 ARMY BLANKETS, 2 ARMY STOVES. CAPT. CHARLES SLATER IN CHARGE OF FOOD DISTRIBUTION. PALLIAGES BY THE 100S, CARLTON CLUB HOTEL, & ALBERT HOTEL. BROUGHT OUT BEDS ETC. SGT MAJOR GEORGE O'LEARY - A GRAND OLD SOLDIER FROM



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WAR I
AFTERWARDS A COLONEL, THEN ON GOVT. FINANCE BOARD.

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500 TESTS. BELL

HASTINGS. COL. H. H. HOLDERNESS IN CHARGE
PICKETS + PATROLS. CAPT JACK MANSON (LATER
BLACK ROD IN PLI) ON REGISTRATIONS. MAJOR
LES MCGAFFIN ^{500 TESTS} 12500 BLTS, 1000 OF PALLIA
-SES. CAPT CHARLIE SLATER ON FOOD DIST -
Sgt MAJOR. GEORGE O'LEARY ^{WAS} EVERYWHERE.
WATER PIPE OVER H. NTH BRIDGE BROKEN,
SO WATER CARTS USED. SEWAGE BROKEN. DUG HOLES
EX TERRITORIAL + OLD WAR I SOLDIERS WERE
IN VALUABLE LIE.

HASTINGS + SPANIER INJURED SENT TO
WAIPIKA. 39 BEDS. PALMERSTON NTH.

WANGANUI, + WELLINGTON. HUNDREDS
OF REFUGEES TO PALM NTH. WHTM,
EVEN 5TH ISLAND. 3 GIRLS 5 BOYS TO WAITAKI
BOYS + GIRLS H.S. IN DAMARU. ALL N.Z.

HELPED. MONEY ~~EVERY~~ POURED IN FROM
OVERSEAS. NAVY PERSONNEL GREAT HELP.

MITSUBISHI VERONICA, LABURNUM, DIOMEDE, PUNEDON
AND LEANDER, FIRST NAMED STRANDED AT
INNER HARBOUR. NAPIER.

TELEGRAM TO FINCEER PER MR SIM MILLS BEFORE 9 PM

SMITHSON BRIDGE PR HERZOGOME OPEN. SMALL PLANTS
COME + WENT FOR DAYS. SUPPLIES, MEDICAL SUPPLIES ^{EX. CO}

NAPIER RISE 8 FT (ABOUT 2 1/2 METERS) H.B. SEA SWALL
AND SEA RECEDED + STAYED OUT 1/2 MILE AT LEAST.

NAPIER ~~FROM~~ ^{FROM} ~~THE~~ ^{THE} ~~SEA~~ ^{SEA} WHERE H.B.



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AIRPORT NOW IS; DRY. PORTS. SKINNING TELY.

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ALL MESSAGES HAD TO GO THROUGH WELLINGTON; HMS. "VERONICA" AT WHARF AT THE SPIT (INNER HARBOUR). ALSO CAME LATER ~~WABURNAM~~, DUNEDIN, & ~~DIOMEDE~~, THE SAILORS, MOSTLY IN NAPIER, DID GRIND WORK. MERCHANT SHIPS ~~NORTH HUMBORLAND~~ ^{AND TARPMAKI,} ~~WATER~~ SENT OUT MESSAGES TO WELLINGTON, HASTINGS. QUICKLY INTO HIS NORMAL ROUTINE. WATER AND SEWAGE, WATER CARTS, HOLES FOR SEWAGE, TENTS NEXT TO HOMES.

Mrs. AGRI ~~SOCIETY~~ COLLEGE. (M.A.C.) AT BRIDGE PA, CAME DOWN AND WAS NEVER REPLACED BUT WENT TO HAMILTON. TEA ^{BOTH MARRIAGE HOUSES} EARLY DAMAGED. HSTGS. BOROUGH COUNCIL MET IN METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOL ON AFTERNOON OF FEB. 3RD. PREMIER FORBES, + LATER GOD. GEN LORD BLEDSLOP + HIS WIFE VISITED NAPIER + HASTINGS AND GAVE GREAT LARGE SUMS OF MONEY FOR RELIEF.



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People. Women ASKED TO LEAVE IF POSSIBLE, WHILE MEN WORKED ON CLEANING RUBBLI ETC, MANY HEROIC DEEDS - SO MANY EARNED MEDALS FOR GOOD WORKS DRs, NURSES, MEN, SAILORS, SOLDIERS COUNCIL STAFF.

151 E.Q. SHOBKS Feb 3rd 1931.

612 1st Month

938. year 1931

FRIDAY FEB 13th 1931 ANOTHER BIG SHAKE; Some SAY BIGGER THAN 3rd FELT SEVERELY IN WAIROA AREA.

ON FEB 13th COL HOLDENWASS DISMISSED HIS TEAM IN HASTINGS.

MAYOR GEORGE ROACH, DEP MAYOR BOB HENDERSON, (LADY WATKINS FATHER) FIRE CHIEF.

MAYOR ROACH TRAPPED NEAR ON NAPIER - TO WAIROA RD, SO DEP MAYOR HENDERSON TOOK OVER.



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