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□ Parkinson Monumental Works during the 1940s. Lewis Charles Robinson is second from left.

Robinsons of Maunu Road

Robinson Memorials have created permanent monuments to Northlanders since Lewis Robinson took out a returned soldiers' rehabilitation loan to buy the firm after World War II, and became a foundation member of the New Zealand Master masons association.

For many years the corner of Maunu Road and Central Avenue, with its big crane and outdoor display, was home to monumental masons Parkinson Monumental Works, where Lew served his apprenticeship and worked before the war, later becoming Staples Memorials, then Noton and Staples.

Peter Robinson joined the firm in 1967, and took over on Lew's retirement.

The corner section was occupied by a pharmaceutical company when Robinson Memorials moved next door to 8 Maunu Road 15 years ago.

Clients now have drive through off street parking and a modern recently refurbished showroom and office to view and choose a memorial in privacy.

Master mason Peter Robinson engraves and installs the granite headstones and bronze plaques he sells. Extensive concrete work is often included in the installation and as part of his regular service he photographs the completed job, and sends

the photo to the client with his invoice. He also cleans and reletters granite memorials and restores older marble monuments.

Mr Robinson is assisted by Beverly Martin, who manages office and showroom, meets and assists clients and sets out inscriptions and graphics to be engraved. Another stonemason will join the business in a few weeks.

Robinson Memorials will soon become Whangarei's Monument Centre, part of a New Zealand wide group which will import ready cut and polished African, Indian or Australian granite.

"With direct importing as a group we can offer our clients real cost savings on standard shaped stones," says Mr Robinson.

Nowadays clients have the benefit of modern technology. Computer imaging means quality ceramic portraits can be produced within a few weeks.

"There's plenty of scope for individual taste using standard stones," says Mr Robinson. Computerised techniques allow stones to be cut into a huge variety of shapes limited only by imagination, council bylaws and safety.

