



South African National Society

History – Culture – Conservation
PBO No 930011633



NEWSLETTER November – 2018

Celebrating the Armistice of 1918 at St Cyprians Church, Umbilo

On Sunday morning as we led up to the 11th hour of the 11th month the Society played its part by participating in the Mass which celebrated the signing of the Armistice a century ago. St Cyprians Anglican Church is the church of the Natal Field Artillery and Father Dane Elsworth the NFA Padre making this an appropriate place for many people.

It truly was a memorable service with its program covering 28 pages; the last few being some of the most beautiful yet sad poems from that tragic time.

The Society was able to replicate in a small way the DLHM WW1 and Delville Wood – DHS exhibitions, and include a little of the ss Mendi Memorial, thanks very largely to ongoing help from Glenwood High School's Museum and archives – thank you again Kevin Jordan for you are always there for us.

As worshipers arrived everyone was offered a poppy, still sold by the SA Legion to support old soldiers, and the DLHM booklets from both exhibitions.

**Hardy Wilson Society Chair
Fr Dane Elsworth Padre to NFA
Charles Bothma SA Legion**



The start of the service saw Hardy Wilson share thoughts on the background to the war; the actual start and how it changed to trench warfare and a war which simply swallowed people. South Africa's involvement after the government of the day had ensured internal stability; capturing German South West Africa followed by the drain caused by disease as the South Africans fought the East African Campaign.



**Tin Hat of the
Rhumbelow Shellhole-
the flame of its candle
alight through the
service**

In Europe Australia and New Zealand suffered appalling losses at Gallipoli, remembered still with an annual holiday of remembrance on April 25, by both nations. The Battle of the Somme saw South Africa endure the terrible losses of Delville Wood, followed just a few months later on 17 February 1917 by the tragedy of the ss Mendi when over 600 black South Africans perished in the bitter cold waters of the English Channel.

1917 however saw the entry of America into the conflict and by 1918 their superior numbers and ability to provide materials wore down the German army to the point it launched a final desperate push which ended in failure and suing for peace.

Members can find the 15 minute talk on the Society website and thanks to Rhea Gwynn and Astrea Wilson we have a few photos from the service and event.



Rhea Gwynn took this photo of two young servers snuffing candles after the service. St Cyprians is the church of the Natal Field Artillery and contains many plaques and items with a military connection, collected over its own century and longer of existence.



The drum section of Glenwood School Band provided lusty entertainment for everyone after the service; whilst the Moths sold boerewors and hamburgers for their funds. During the service the band, positioned opposite the choir played inspiring music which was totally in sync and harmony with the church organ. **Rhea Gwynn**

Scarlet the Roses

White is the damask
Gleaming the silver
Scarlet the roses symbolic of blood
Suave are the manners,
Deep are the pockets
Where finance meets finance
They say for man's good.
Servile the waiters,
'Yes men' of dictators
Who grovel and smirk where the honest rebel
These are the men truth must sweep from her tables
When life could be heaven they serve to us hell!

Oh where is our manhood that keeps women weeping?
And lets the babe starve from the impoverished breast
While strumpets go strutting the mother's lie sleepless
Can find for their sorrows no solace or rest.
Scarlet the roses symbolic of bloodshed
Sick are the hearts of tired mothers through years

God is compassionate,
But will He forgive men
For drenching the earth with their blood
and their tears?
Oh God, take our hoardings,
our Godless Dictators
And give to us courage for freedom and truth
Unfurl the banners, march onwards Christ's soldiers
The world still holds promise
Not death for our youth!

Scarlet the roses
The candles have flickered
The tables are silent and gone is this day
Teach us, O God, full truth of Thy wisdom
For only through love
Can Peace come to stay.

By Frances Emily Katz (nee Ashton) on the Peace Treaty 1918

Gillian VD Heijden sent this beautiful poem which was written by her mother in 1918, and which we will ask Gillian to recite, time allowing, at the AGM this Saturday 17 November.

<http://sanationalsociety.co.za/>

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