



Dorchester Town Council Service of Commemoration St George's Church graveyard (north)

Sunday 9th November 2025

at

12.30pm

Why we are here ...

The holding of an annual commemoration at the memorial to German prisoners of war who lost their lives in Dorchester was revived in 1999, but it was a practice which existed throughout the inter-war period and beyond. A report in the Dorset County Chronicle from 15 November 1945 tells how members of the Mill Street Mission placed crosses of Flanders poppies on the graves of the Germans and also on the war memorial in South Walks on Remembrance Day. They held a service in the Corn Exchange in the evening. The Mayor's Chaplain led the service and the Chairman of Dorchester British Legion recited the Exhortation. The Salvation Army Band played.

Today we are not solely commemorating the Germans who died in Dorchester. Wars – whenever and wherever they are fought – affect a great many people. Young and old, civilians and military personnel, wives and husbands, children – everyone.

This morning we remembered the hundreds of Dorchester men and women who, along with countless others of our County, lost their lives in the horrific wars of the twentieth century. This afternoon we remember the millions upon millions of people of many other nationalities who have lost – and continue to lose – their lives through conflict.

Order of Service

Welcome by the Revd. Cora Yarrien,
Team Vicar, Dorchester and the Winterbournes Team

Opening prayer

Ever-living God
we remember those whom you have
gathered from the storm of war
into the peace of your presence;
may that same peace calm our fears,
bring justice to all peoples
and establish harmony among the nations,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Poem read by the Mayoress of Dorchester
Mel Lane

***German Prisoners* by Joseph Lee**

When first I saw you in the curious street,
Like some platoon of soldier ghosts in grey,
My mad impulse was all to smite and slay,
To spit upon you – tread you 'neath my feet.
But when I saw how each sad soul did greet
My gaze with no sign of defiant frown,
How from tired eyes looked spirits broken down,
How each face showed the pale flag of defeat,
And doubt, despair, and disillusionment,
And how were grievous wounds on many a head,

And on your garb red-faced was other red;
And how you stooped as men whose strength was spent,
I knew that we had suffered each as other,
And could have grasped your hand and cried, 'My brother!'

**Poem read by Tess James
on behalf of the Lübbecke Society**

'I am a child who loves peace'

Sawsan Al-Shamiri (aged 10)

I hope that all the pigeons and olive trees grow up
and we will be in peace
I hope the whole world will be filled with peace

I am a child who loves peace
I have always believed in peace
Until I saw something on TV,
Something not expected at all.

I saw on the screen war and destruction
I saw children sleeping in tents
They lost the embrace and protection of their parents
I saw children who are as skinny as ghosts
I saw schools and parks empty of children.

I cried from what I saw and went to the source of love,
my father
I asked him: Where did peace go?
Where are schools and parks?
Where is medicine and where is food?

Homily & Prayers

Read by the Revd. Cora Yarrien

Poem by Kurt Rommel

Read by Jill Kohn

Herr, gib mir Mut zum Brücken bauen, gib mir den Mut zum ersten Schritt. Lass mich auf deine Brücken trauen, Und wenn ich gehe, geh du mit.	<i>Lord, give me courage to build bridges, give me the courage to take the first step. Let me trust you on your bridges, And if I go, you go with me</i>
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The Blessing

God grant to the living grace,
the departed rest,
the Church, the King,
the Commonwealth and all the world
peace and concord;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
Amen

***After the service, wreaths and poppies will be taken to be laid
at the memorial.***