



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

Sunday 8th November 2026

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 Mayor of Dorchester **Cllr Les Fry**

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**

Poems for Peace

FOR DAD

VIKTORIJA

12 years old - Kryvyi Rih - 2025

With pencil, in silence, I write these lines
For you, as war rages on and grinds
For thousands of days, as darkness deep
Has swallowed our world in shadows steep.

With whispers of hope, 'midst the thunder of guns,
I search through my words for solace that comes
Through ruins and flames, in cold dawns breaking,
Dreamy lines in my notebooks I'm carefully making...

With pencil, in secret, I'm sketching the spring
Where flowers will bloom when peace takes wing,
Where you'll return like a bird to blue skies,
And never again shall pain make us cry!

May these lines, like the morning's first light,
Pierce through the darkness to your distant shore
My voice in the silence, for you, ever bright,
For faith in love is stronger than anger's roar.

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.

*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*

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 can be taken to be laid
at the memorial.***