



Dorchester Town Council
Service of Commemoration
At The Memorial to German Prisoners of War Memorial
Fordington Cemetery

Sunday 10 November 2024
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 Robin Potter

***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 John Eldridge of the Lübbecke Society

'Peace'

A dark hand touching a light hand,
A young face looking into an old,
All people working together,
For a goal to be told.

A stranger and stranger together,
A foe and a foe are now friends,
All people helping each other,
Making beginnings meet ends.

A heart understanding other,
A soul reaching out to a soul,
All people feeding their elders,
With plate, fork, spoon and bowl.

A rich man helping a poor man,
A convict dancing with a child,
All people put aside their differences,
And share a hope that is wild.

A shout comes out from the open,
Like a footstep falling on sand,
All people together proclaim,
"Now there is peace in this land!"

Homily & Prayers

Read by the Revd. Cora Yarrien

The laying of wreaths, poppies and flowers led by the Mayor

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