



Jimmy's Own

Official Newsletter of the Signals Association

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Signaller of Note
General George Meiring

Keeping the flame burning
2nd Signals Association Reunion Luncheon

Do you know your Signals Units?
Take the Jimmy Quiz and find out



GOOD FOOD, GOOD COMPANY: Some of the guests at the second Signals Association luncheon.

The day will come, when I will join the row

Of birds inside their even flying chain,

And call you, whom I left behind, below,

By the voice of a slender, white-winged crane”

She also honoured Syd Ireland by presenting him with a book titled “The Hidden Thread”, which is about Russia and South Africa in the Soviet Era.

The event ended with the “Flame of the Signaller” in the hand of Mercury being extinguished.

The Two-Minute Silence

Article and photograph by Regine Lord.

On Monday, 14 May 2018, the Noon Gun of Cape Town fired not just once, but twice, with a brief pause between the two thunderous booms.

The reason for this unusual occurrence was that a special tradition was being commemorated that day: the Centenary of the Two-Minute Silence, which was first introduced right here in Cape Town on 14 May 1918.

In 1918, news of the terrible battles being fought on the Western Front in France, and of the many soldiers killed and wounded, had been reaching their families in Cape Town. When lists of casualties were read out during church services, parishioners were asked to participate in brief moments of silence in honour of the fallen.

Cape Town Mayor Sir Harry Hands was grief-stricken on receiving the news of the death of his eldest son, Captain Reginald Harry Myburgh Hands. After days of continued fighting and being repeatedly exposed to mustard gas, Captain Hands had died during a poison-gas bombardment on 20 April 1918, while off-duty and seemingly safe behind Allied lines.

After a special City Council meeting, at which those present expressed their sympathy to the Mayor and his wife, one of the councillors, Mr Robert Rutherford Brydone, approached the Mayor in his office at the City Hall.

On hearing the boom of the Noon Gun, and the Westminster Chimes coming from the clock tower, they stood up, united in their grief, to observe the traditional Angelus pause that was common practice in the Anglican Church they both attended.

Councillor Brydone then suggested that the observance of a brief period of silence be introduced in the city centre, in remembrance of all those who had fallen in World War I. Mayor Hands was taken by this idea, and after some discussion, it was implemented.

The daily public ritual was synchronised with the firing of the Noon Gun on Signal Hill, to remember the fallen and acknowledge their ultimate sacrifice, and to give thanks for those who had returned alive, wounded and carrying the scars of the terrible fighting they had endured.

Thus, on 14 May 1918, as soon as the Noon Gun was fired, all residents of Cape Town stopped what they were doing, traffic and trams came to a halt, and all stood in silent prayer, heads bowed, thinking of their loved ones who had given their lives and those who were still fighting on the battlefields of WW1. A bugler on a balcony of the Fletcher and Cartwright building on the corner of Adderley and Darling Streets, played the Last Post and then the Reveille to signal the end of

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the silence.

In Cape Town, this midday pause continued daily until 17 January 1919; it was revived once more during the Second World War.

A year after the signing of the Armistice had ended the Great War on 11 November 1918, an annual Armistice Day service was being introduced by then King George V. It was to be held throughout the UK and the Commonwealth at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month every year, marking the time and day on which WW1 – ostensibly the War to end all Wars – finally ended.

South African author and political figure Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, who had personally experienced the impact of the two-minute silence in Cape Town in 1918, wrote to King George V, suggesting that it be adopted for the Armistice Day service. The King was so taken by this proposal, that he immediately approved it and gave instructions for its adoption throughout the British Empire.

And thus, this simple yet profoundly stirring ritual spread throughout the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and beyond.

The Jimmy Quiz Answers

1. 2 Signals Regiment
2. School of Signals
3. 84 Mech Signals Unit
4. 5 Signals Regiment
5. Army Gymnasium
6. 3 Signals Regiment
7. 71 Brigade Signals Unit
8. Natal Command Signals Unit
9. 1 Signals Regiment