# THE

# RESERVE FORCE VOLUNTEER

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# THE UPDATED RESERVE FORCE SERVICE SYSTEM

PART-TIME VOLUNTEERS - MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR A BETTER LIFE FOR ALL







# **Durban Remembers its Fallen**

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Col Pat Acutt, SSO Res PO KZN, laying a wreath.

The past three months have seen a hive of activity being played out by the Defence Reserves Provincial Office KZN (Def Res PO KZN), the SA Legion Durban Branch and the eThekwini Council in preparation for the Centenary Armistice Remembrance Day (1918 to 2018) on Sunday 11th of November 2018.

#### 1918 to 2018

The commemoration of the end of the First World War 100 years ago was celebrated around the world. Durban was no different. As a port city, thousands of soldiers embarked or disembarked from the harbour. Ships carrying Australians and New Zealanders broke their long journey by docking in Durban. Many needed medical attention and there are evocative photos of wounded men taken on outings from the DLI headquarters, which had been

converted into a hospital, to Mitchell Park.

### The Battle's O'er

In the early morning hours, as the sun rose, the first ceremony to mark the signing of the armistice a 05h00 on 11 November 1918, was held at the Cenc taph. South African National Defence Force (SANDF Memorable Order of the Tin Hats (MOTHs) and Stagion (SAL) along with the pipes and drums band of the Natal Mounted Rifles (NMR), Durban Regimer (DR) and 1 Medical Battalion were present.

The Group assembled at 05h30 and formed up. Wit the early morning sun rising over the City Hall, th ceremony concluded with the pipe and drum band playing "When the Battle's O'er", a traditional a played by pipers after a battle. It was in the Fores of Compie'gne, 52 miles NE of Paris, that German signed the uncompromising instrument of surrende Six hours later, at 11h00, hostilities ceased. On hea ing that the war was over, one soldier exclaimed: "So it is really over! It was like the gift of another life." He would not be killed.



### Mendi

ereafter, at 07h00, a dignified lament was held at Mendi Memorial Stone alongside the Maritime useum. This simple stone was unveiled by Present Zuma on 21 February 2017 to commemorate sinking of the SS Mendi. This was South Africa's orst maritime tragedy: 660 men died, comprising of 8 black volunteers from the South African Native bour Corps, 33 crew, 2 white officers and 7 white COs. One of those NCOs was Colour Sergeant narles Botha, a manager at the De Beers Diamond ne in Kimberley. Representing their forbearer were great grandson, Winston Owen and great grandughter, Therese Owen who found the ceremony eply moving. Botha's death left his 14 children thout a father.

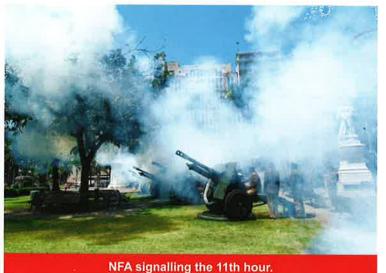




**Durban Cenotaph.** 

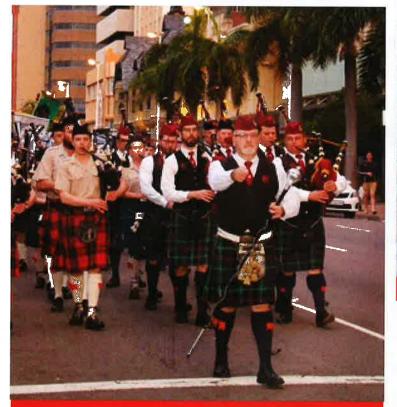
Playing of the Last Post.





Flame of hope

As the day drew to a close, it was the turn of the military veterans to pay homage to those that 'gave their today for our tomorrow'. This year saw the Shadow March which included the lighting of the Flame of Hope at sunset.



The combined bands of 1 Medical Battalion Group, Durban Regiment and Natal Mounted Rifles leading the Military Veterans to the Flame of Hope Ceremony.

# **Armistice Centenary Service**

The main service began at 10h30 at the cenotaph, now bathed in sunlight. With troops provided by SA Army Support Base KZN, SA Air Force Base Durban, SA Naval Base Durban and Area Military Health Unit KZN who were turned out smartly on parade. The event enjoyed a much larger turnout than in recent years. The desecration wrought upon the Cenotaph by scrap metal scavengers a year ago, was carefully concealed by nets of poppies made up by the SA Legion, symbolic of the fields of red poppies growing in Flanders during the horrors of the bloody trench assaults of the First World War.



Flame of Hope at sunset.