

Sermon for 11.11.18 Defence Sunday. 150 commemoration of the Armistice.

We begin with Hugh sharing entries from his grandfathers "log".

War declared: 28th July, 1914 Wilfrid Hollins started his "log" on 12th August, 1914. There were five November 11th s during the war.

Thursday 17.9.14 Harwich

Great news this morning by letter from our Dear Mother. A Baby girl born to me two days ago, i.e. 15th - great excitement. Am longing for details. When I told them in the mess, Champagne was produced & we all drank to the newcomer's long life & happiness. I may say that no excuse is too insignificant for drinks nowadays.

Tuesday 10.11.14 Harwich

Returned to Parkeston No 1 at 8 o'clock after oiling from the Suwanee. Went home in the afternoon. Learned of the destruction of the "Emden" by the "Sidney" & that the Königsberg was bottled up on the east African Coast.

Wednesday 11.11.14 Harwich

Back to Felixstow No 1. Weather bad. 48 the 3rd returned, looking the worse for wear.

Tuesday Nothing doing, but the gale still blows.

Wednesday 10.11.15

- Ditto - We are doing our standby at 1 hours notice.

Friday 12.11.15 Boness

It is still blowing strong. We went out at 2.45 AM Thursday & joined up with the 3rd B.S. & some cruisers on which we had to form a screen the while they indulged in battle tactics. It was bitterly cold & a heavy sea was running giving us a wet shirt, nothing to eat, & no fire. We came in late at night. I have been on shore today.

November 1916

Friday 10th

Nothing startling has happened.

Sunday 12th

Went out with Obdurate early yesterday to do the outer patrol & returned at 10 o'clock this morning. We leave for the Tyne tomorrow to escort back one of the new Wonder ships.

November 1917 10th We made May Isle about 12.15 today & came into the pens. The Ulster goes to Dundee.

11th All peace

November, 1917

Monday 12th

We are at a buoy & expect to go out about 10 PM. The Italians are having a bad time. A week ago I was surprised to read of how they had been forced back. Now it looks as if Venice is threatened.

November, 1918

Friday 8th

Still in harbour. Hun delegates are supposed to cross the "line" to hear what Foch has to say about terms.

Saturday 9th

Out today for target practice. Returned shortly after noon. Tomorrow we go out on Outer patrol.

Monday 11th

The armistice was signed this morning. A wireless message came thru' in the forenoon to say the signing took place at 5 o'clock

November, 1918

& would take effect at 11 AM. At that time another message came to say Cease Hostilities. Submarines met on the surface were not to be attacked unless they showed hostile intentions. All the usual defensive measures remain in force. And so ends the great war to all intents & purposes for I take it our terms will preclude the possibility of the Huns commencing again. Red revolution has broken out in Germany. There have been rumours all week about the Hun navy being in a state of mutiny. Now we know for certain There has been street fighting & general uproar. The Kaiser & the Crown Prince have been forced to abdicate & the Red flag flies from the roof of Potsdam Palace.

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November, 1918

Tues 26th

Our job is done. The Hun fleet has ceased to exist as a fighting unit. As the sure shield of England we have been tried and not found wanting. The Admiral of the Atlantic is no more. His ships are lying impotent for mischief in the Northern mist where our Grand fleet spent so many weary month awaiting.

November, 1918

But this is only a plain tale so let me set out to the best of my knowledge & ability the final act in the great world tragedy as played at sea.

{describes George V inspecting and addressing the sailors}

November, 1918

Then he left us with our cheers ringing in his ears. He walked along the pens with Beatty, & passed quite close to me, & I could not help but contrast his happy smile with the careworn look he had when last I saw him 2 ½ years ago.

He went on board the "Oak" Beatty's dispatch T.B.D. & was taken to the Q.E. & various other big ships. Our men returned on board & quietly changed into their sea rig & the stokers went below. About on o'clock a signal was hoisted at the yard arm of the "Champion" & we slipped out of the pens, formed up in divisions & moved down stream to anchor in Aberlady Bay. (Exerts from the "log" finish here.)

Sermon continues: Rev'd Jenny.

When people live under the cloud of war there are many who give all they have to ensure the safety of their fellow human beings.

I know that when I hear stories about people in the war, who do their very best in their humanity not only by their courage, but also by their acceptance of the situation in which they find themselves, I am always amazed and encouraged by their resolve and fortitude to face what must be an all-encompassing life situation.

I think that such resolve and fortitude carried humanity to the end of the 1st world war and played a large part in the formation of the Armistice 100 years ago.

The story of the widow's mite in today's gospel speaks about a woman who gave her all to uphold the way of worship to God in the temple. She gave her all so that the temple – the place of God – could function. The poor widow played her part in upholding the tradition of the temple with, as our Lord says, her whole livelihood – literally, her whole life – she affirms, and means to affirm, the importance of temple worship.

She did this because that is where she put her hope and trust.

In a similar way, I believe that is what the Armistice did. It offered reconciling hope that people trusted in, with the view that peace would reign and that war would be no more.

The Christian faith is all about reconciliation and peace through God's merciful love. In our faith tradition the three are interconnected. Christ made manifest God's merciful love and showed us our need for reconciliation - not because we have to make God happy, or pay some debt, but because we need to be reconciled within ourselves, with our fellow humans and with God to come in to our fullness as human beings where there is peace that passes all understanding.

May we on this Remembrance Day 100 years after the signing of the Armistice seek to be for those around us the effective sign of God's merciful presence within us through our own reconciliation and peace.

The Lord be with you.