

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

1924-2024



THE WAR YEARS and LANSDOWNE

The House Chronicle – a daily record of significant events kept in every Salesian community – simply records on the **3rd September 1939** “**WAR IS DECLARED**”. WW II was to impact every country in the world and Cape Town being an operating and significant sea port/route, saw a great deal of military activity. Salesian boys from Lansdowne and the Institute volunteered, as many others did to serve in the war and some lost their lives.

Owing to the shortage of Chaplains there was also an appeal for priests to serve. Among the several who volunteered from Cape Town was the parish priest and community Bursar of Lansdowne - Fr George Bolger. Fr George, an Englishman, had been a soldier in WW I and was posted as chaplain to Potchefstroom in October 1941.

The chronicle records on **26th September 1941** – “We received the news today of the death of **Killian Spencer** (a pupil from 1933-1938). This is the first past pupil of the school, as far as we know, to have paid the supreme sacrifice. R.I.P.” As the war continued, other such sad entries were made. A Lansdowne Roll of Honour of WW II appeared in April of 1946 in the Salesian Echo magazine, indicating that while we pray for their eternal rest, we shall not forget to pray also that their sacrifice may not have been made in vain.

ROLL OF HONOUR

“The just shall be in everlasting remembrance”

Phillip Clarence (1925-'26)	Ronald McDonald (1935-'39)
Desmond Cook (1934-'37)	John Miller (Parish)
Manuel dos Santos (1932-'33)	Augustine Petrikowsky (1939)
Michael Host (1936)	John Scott (1934)
Ernest Hunter (1938-1941)	Reginald Spinus (1936-'37)
Spencer Killian (1933-1938)	William Worrall (1931-'35)

THE POLISH BOYS

In 1942 Polish military authorities informed their government in London of the presence of large numbers of orphaned and/or deported Polish children who escaped from Siberian camps. In 1943 the London Government secured permission from the then Union of South Africa to transport 550 of these children to Oudtshoorn, for temporary accommodation, care and education.

Most of these children were baptised Catholics. The Apostolic Delegate in South Africa asked the Salesians in Lansdowne whether they would accept 22 boys into the school. A similar number were accepted at the Salesian Institute. The boys arrived as boarders on the **23rd April 1947**. Thus it was that through the combined efforts of the Salesians and staff of Lansdowne, and the Institute, with the assistance of the parishioners and co-operators who were able to play a significant part in the work of Don Bosco, even during the war years, giving these young Polish boys an opportunity to have a fresh start and become good citizens of their adoptive country.

Below are the two groups together at the Institute with the Rectors (Fr Walsh – Lansdowne in the biretta and Fr Millen).



Niech żyje Polska! — Long live Poland!

"Now, Lord, come to our aid! Grant us peace, teach us peace; guide our steps in the way of peace. Open our eyes and our hearts, and give us the courage to say: "Never again war!"; "With war everything is lost". Instil in our hearts the courage to take concrete steps to achieve peace."

An excerpt from Pope Francis Prayer for peace.