



The Weeping Cross of Delville Wood

The Weeping Cross is located in the Pietermaritzburg Garden of Remembrance. Dedicated to soldiers who died during the two World Wars, the Garden of Remembrance with its Delville Wood Cross is a popular attraction in Pietermaritzburg.

The somber Garden of Remembrance is actually quite attractive and contains a number of monuments in honor of servicemen who died on the battlefields of the World Wars.

In 1916 a number of South African troops were sent to France to the village of Longueval to provide support to the British in World War One. The South African brigade was ordered to occupy the French wood and hold it at all costs to protect British troops who had just taken the adjacent village of Langleueval. Shells razed the woods, slamming into trees and leaving only a few tree stumps intact. By July 18 the South Africans had been driven from their trenches, the wounded could not be evacuated and reinforcements could not get through.

After the battle, three wooden crosses were cut from the few remaining stumps and presented to Durban, Cape Town and Pietermaritzburg as memorials. The Pietermaritzburg cross, which is made from Scots Pine, is the only one that weeps. The cross has been named the Weeping Cross of Delville as it is known to “weep” around the time of the July anniversary of the World War One battle in which South African soldiers lost their lives. Locals believe that when the last remaining soldier of Delville breathes his last breath, the weeping will end.

Visitors to Pietermaritzburg are encouraged to stop at the Garden of Remembrance and view the Weeping Cross of Delville Wood.

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