

A Story for Remembrance



This is a story from World War II.

It involves a Padre (a minister with the Army) and a cross he used for services.

World War 2 – El Alamein



This is the Padre with some of his group of soldiers in the desert.
This is a close up of him.

After the battle -



There was a very fierce battle – it lasted all night and thousands of bombs were fired and landed in the desert.

- his things were gone.



In the morning the Padre found that his kit bag had been blown up.
All his things he needed to conduct a service were gone.
He wondered what to do.

Please help -



The Padre

The Sapper



In the army there are some people who are engineers. They make and mend things. They are called a Sapper. They are combat engineers.

The Padre asked a Sapper if he could help.

What he wanted was a cross - one he could put up on a table or on the bonnet of a jeep to be at the front when he took a service with the troops.

It would need a wide base so it could stand up easily.

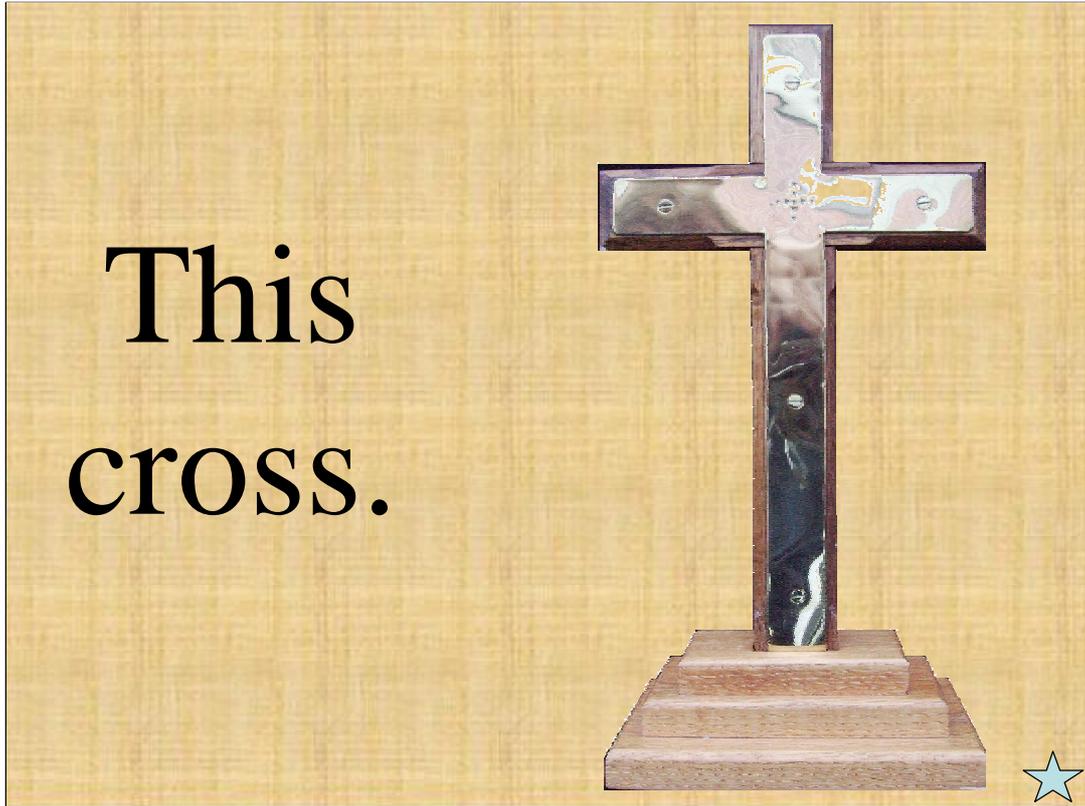
It would be good if it came apart so it could be packed into a bag easily.

It needs to be seen.

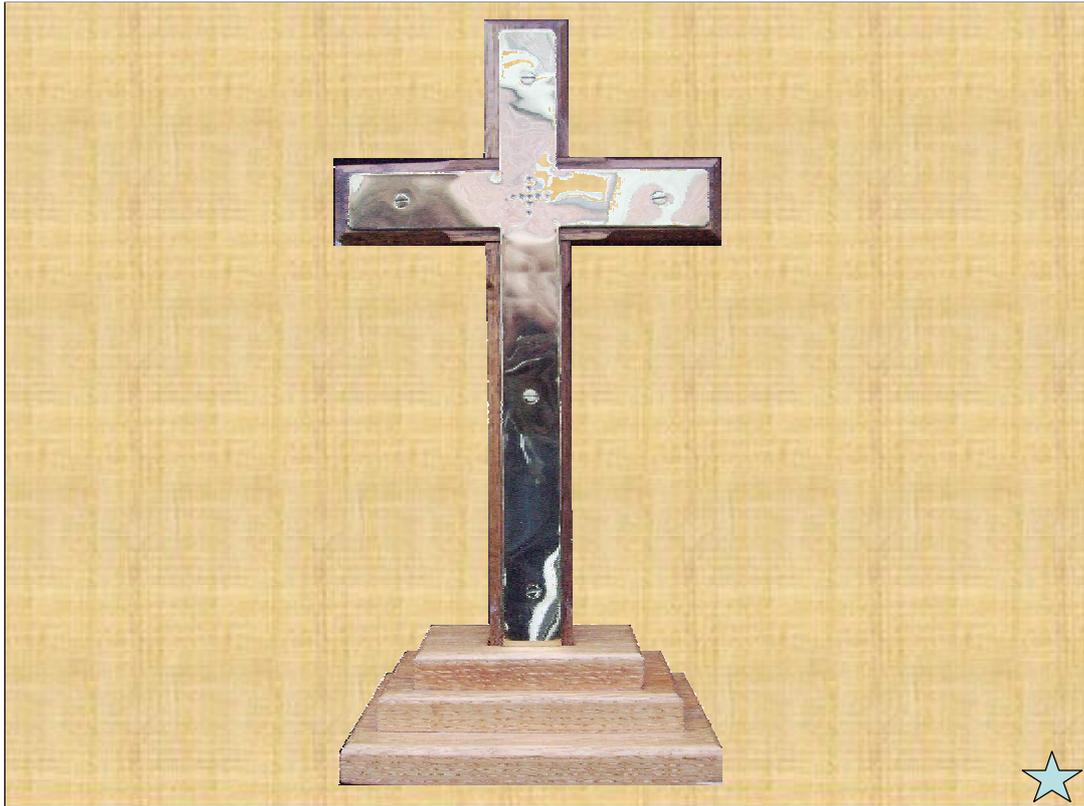
3
days
later . . .



The Padre was surprised that 3 days later . . .



This cross was brought to him by the Sapper.



The Padre was delighted.

The cross was perfect just what he needed.

BUT

Where on earth did the Sapper get the beautiful wood and metal to make the cross? In the middle of the desert after a bombardment that smashed up so much equipment and killed so many men.

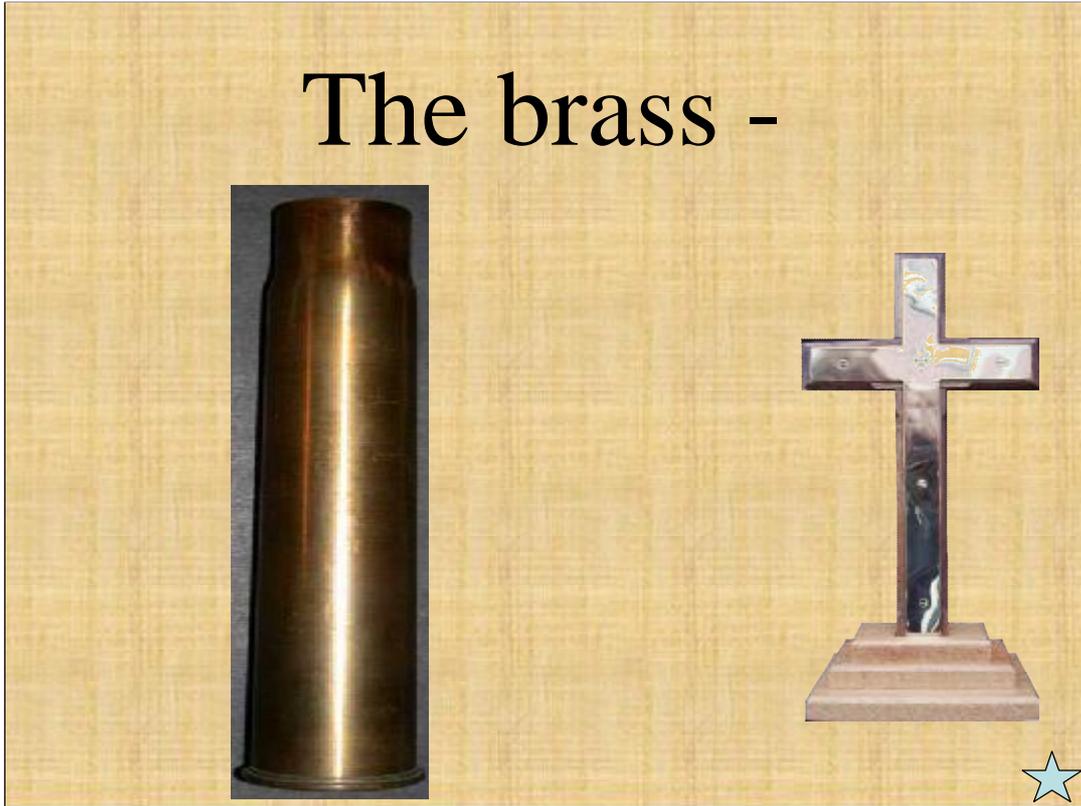
The wood -



The Sapper explained:

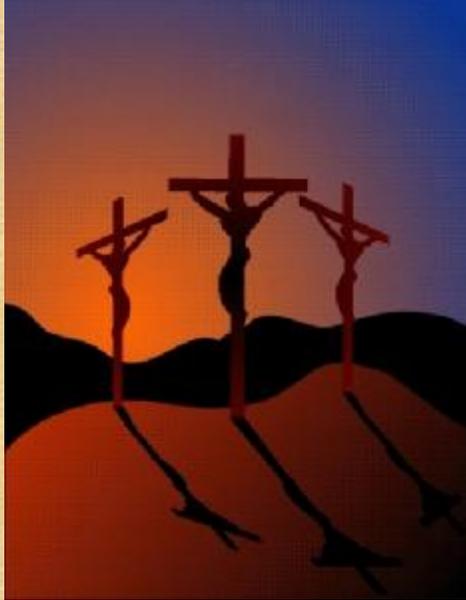
The wood came from an Italian gun carriage. Some parts were made from good quality oak which is very hard.

The brass -



The metal was brass. It was from a German shell casing. The Sapper has cut the case down the long edge and flattened it out with a hammer. He then cut out the cross shape.

Jesus' story -



The Padre went on saying how wonderful the cross was.

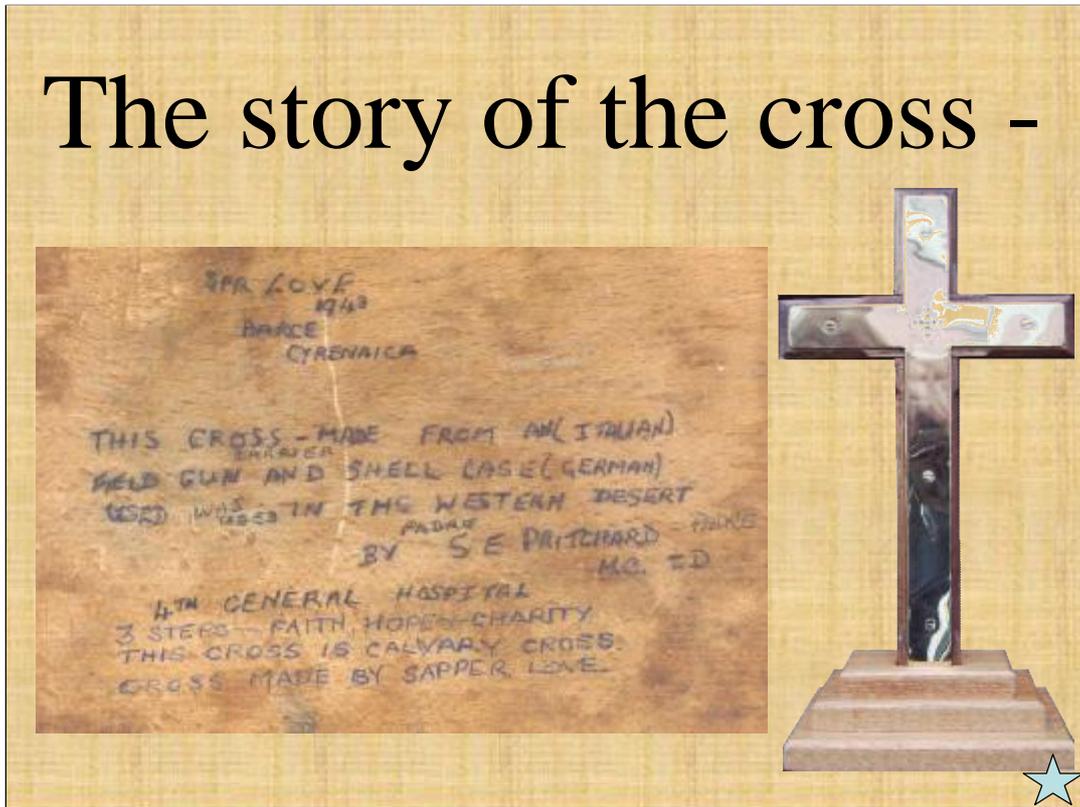
He explained to the Sapper that in making the cross, whether he knew what he was doing or not, it looks as if he was guided by God in the design.

The base, which was wide to make the cross stable, had three steps. This is very special, crosses like this are sometimes known as Calvary crosses.

The three steps are very symbolic to Christians.

There were 5 screws holding the brass on to the wood. Just like Jesus who had five wounds on the cross.

The story of the cross -



Before you go, said the Padre, I must know your name. I can't just keep calling you Sapper.

The Sapper said "My name is Love, Sapper Love".

The Padre was amazed – Love made the cross, just as the Love, expressed in Jesus, made the cross for all of us.

continues -



And the story of the cross and the Sapper and the Padre continues.

The Padre always retold the story every year at Remembrance. He showed it to his congregations and explained how Love made the cross and that he made it out of the weapons of war when so much around had been destroyed.

The padre told the story at special services for Remembrance Sunday and at War Memorials right up until he retired.

