



by Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae



Canadian Expeditionary Forces  
Ypres, Belgium  
1915

**On August 4, 1914, Britain declared war on Germany. Canada, as a member of the British Empire, was automatically at war, and its citizens from all across the land responded quickly. Within three weeks, 45,000 Canadians had rushed to join up. John McCrae was among them. He was appointed brigade-surgeon to the First Brigade of the Canadian Forces Artillery with the rank of Major and second-in-command.**

**In April 1915, John McCrae was in the trenches near Ypres, Belgium, in the area traditionally called Flanders. Some of the heaviest fighting of the First World War took place there during what was known as the Second Battle of Ypres.**

**On April 22, the Germans used deadly chlorine gas against Allied troops in a desperate attempt to break the stalemate. Despite the debilitating effects of the gas, Canadian soldiers fought relentlessly and held the line for another 16 days.**

**In the trenches, John McCrae tended hundreds of wounded soldiers every day. He was surrounded by the dead and the dying. In a letter to his mother, he wrote of the Battle of Ypres.**

**The day before he wrote his famous poem, one of McCrae's closest friends was killed in the fighting and buried in a makeshift grave with a simple wooden cross. Wild poppies were already beginning to bloom between the crosses marking the many graves. Unable to help his friend or any of the others who had died, John McCrae gave them a voice through his poem. It was the second last poem he was to write.**

**During the summer of 1917, John McCrae was troubled by severe asthma attacks and occasional bouts of bronchitis. He became very ill in January 1918 and diagnosed his condition as pneumonia. He was moved to Number 14 British General Hospital for Officers where he continued to grow weak. On January 28, after an illness of five days, he died of pneumonia and meningitis. The day he fell ill, he learned he had been appointed consulting physician to the First British Army, the first Canadian so honoured.**



# In Flanders' Fields

John Mac Crae  
ESSEX FARM CEMETERY / BOEZINGE  
May 1915

In Flanders' fields the poppies blow  
between the crosses, row on row,  
that mark our place; and in the sky  
the larks, still bravely singing, fly  
scarce heard amid the guns below.

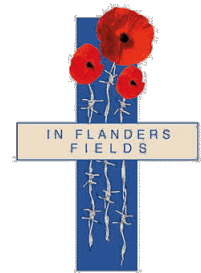
We are the Dead. Short days ago  
we lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
loved, and were loved, and now we lie  
in Flanders' fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
to you from failing hands we throw  
the torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
we shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
in Flanders' fields.

KALLIGRAPH: HELENE VÖÖL - ÖZGÜR 2002

### Journal #5 - Why is it important to recognize national holidays like Remembrance Day?

- \* Complete a well-developed 3 paragraph response to the above prompt.
- \* Be sure to use the format discussed in class.
- \* Use the points on the board to help you with your response.
- \* (Be as neat as possible).

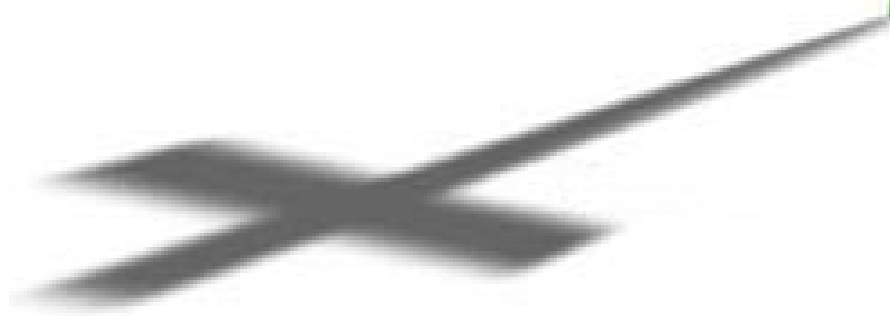


Photos courtesy of the Dept. of National Defence



*Tracy Bowman Russell*

Always  
&  
Forever



## Attachments

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In Flanders Fields.mp3

O Canada.mp3

the-last-post.mp3