



## VETERANS

Having been born in a country liberated by Canadian soldiers, my love and respect for veterans have always been an essential part of me. Personally, I was very young so I remember very little of the war waged in the area where I lived. However during my youth I heard many stories. There was also physical evidence everywhere such as the steeple of the beautiful Basilica in Hulst, my hometown, having been destroyed. This was the church we attended every Sunday and is located in the centre of Hulst, The Netherlands. Our town, close to the Schelde River, needed to be liberated as quickly as possible so that the Allies could gain full control of the important Port of Antwerp, Belgium. We lived just 20 minutes by car from the city of Antwerp. Even today, buried bombs are still discovered in the fields in this area. “ In Belgium, the Army has a 150-person Disposal and Destructive of Explosive Devices unit that handles 3,000 calls a year. This is because of the 1.5 billion shells shipped to the front in the First World War, one third never exploded.” (Good Times magazine, Nov. 2016, p.48, Allan Lynch). While searching for bombs human remains were also discovered. They were



gathered and [veterans.gc.ca/remember](http://veterans.gc.ca/remember) the result is the Grave of the Unknown Soldier in Ottawa in a place of honour.

Well-known is the large park-like Canadian soldiers' cemetery in Bergen op Zoom which is a short drive from my hometown. I actually discovered the grave there of my Lively friend's father, Clifford Donahue. That was an uncanny discovery! I knew he was buried in the Netherlands but had no idea where.

Canadian veterans of all wars deserve our respect and gratitude. Wearing a poppy is just one way of showing that and even though it might seem insignificant the meaning of the poppy is a visual reminder of our deceased soldiers who fought for our freedom. It is also a symbol of Canada's devotion to peace and goodwill. The poem "In Flanders Fields", composed in 1915, deserves be memorised by all school children and the meaning explained. The region of Flanders is composed of both the south of Holland and the north of Belgium. I know that region very well. Red poppies grow everywhere in the fields, ditches, beside the roadways, so it is no wonder that Canadian Lt. Colonel John McCrea, poet and physician, saw them



as the blood shed by the young dying Canadian soldiers around him in WW1.



*Lights on for every deceased Canadian soldier's grave in this military cemetery in the Netherlands.*

Many soldiers could not talk about the horrors they had witnessed on the battlefields. It's easy to understand their reasons. They wanted to try to lead normal lives with their families. For some, this was very difficult and they suffered frightening nightmares for many years.

Remembrance Day on November 11 is so much more than a day off. It's a reminder that, "all gave some....some gave all."

**IN FLANDERS FIELDS**

*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  
Scars heard among amid the guns below.*



*We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunsets 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.*

**\*REMEMBER:**

It is the soldier, not the reporter,  
Who has given us freedom of the press.  
It is the soldier who, not the campus organiser  
Who has given us the freedom to demonstrate.  
It is the soldier who salutes our flag,  
Who serves beneath that flag, and  
whose coffin is draped by that flag  
Who allows the protester to burn the flag.



\*(Father Dennis Edward O'Brien, \* Author\*  
Sergeant, US Marine Corps.)

>> In 1919, a Canadian poet, Edna Jaques, wrote a poem replying to the lament in Col. McCrea's poem.

I was totally unaware of this until I came across it very recently in a magazine.

**IN FLANDERS NOW**

*We have kept faith, ye Flanders' dead,  
Sleep well beneath these poppies red,  
That mark your place.*

*The torch your dying hands did throw  
We've held it high before the foe,  
And answered bitter blow for blow,  
In Flanders Fields.*

*And where your heroes' blood was spilled,  
The guns are now forever stilled,  
And silent grown.*

*There is no moaning of the slain,  
There is no cry of tortured pain,  
And blood will never flow again,  
In Flanders Fields.*

ERNA de BURGER FEX

LEST WE  
FORGET



Pause to Remember  
11·11·11



*(758 words)*

ERNA de BURGER FEX

LEST WE  
FORGET



Pause to Remember  
11·11·11