



Lest We Forget



A symbol of wartime Remembrance

The poppy has stood as the official symbol of Canada's Remembrance Day since 1921, a visual reminder of all those who made the ultimate sacrifice for war. Some may wonder why this small

flower is used to represent the fallen soldier.

Poppies and fallen soldiers have a long history together. The origins of the flower can be traced back to the Napoleonic wars in France. During these times of unrest and battle, many soldiers went on to final resting places in graves in Flanders, France. Ensuing literature describing how poppies grew so thickly and vibrantly over these graves -- in soil that once could not produce much vegetation. Years later, a soldier would be instrumental in bringing the symbol of the poppy to the hearts and minds of Canadians.

When John McCrae served in World War I as a Lieutenant-Colonel, he was stationed near Ypres, Belgium, the area traditionally called Flanders. McCrae observed how poppies grew so well among the makeshift graves of the soldiers, which were marked by wooden crosses. When McCrae lost a fellow soldier and close friend, he penned a poem called "In Flanders Fields" and portrayed the picture of war and the poppy flower visual.

"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
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.*

To this day McCrae's poem remains among the most memorable war poems ever written. It also paved the way for the poppy flower to be one of the most recognized symbols of wartime remembrance. Thousands of poppies are placed on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and Remembrance Day participants wear poppies on their lapels.



How we mark November 11

At public gatherings in Ottawa and around the country, Canadians pay tribute with two minutes of silence to the country's fallen soldiers from the First World War, the Second World War, the Korean War, the Afghanistan conflict and peacekeeping missions.

Also known as Veterans Day in the U.S., Remembrance Day was first held throughout the Commonwealth in 1919. It marks the armistice to end the First World War, which came into effect at 11 a.m. on November 11, a year earlier.

It isn't a national holiday across Canada, but employees in federally regulated employees do get the day off. Several provinces and territories — including Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, and Yukon — do observe a statutory holiday.

Two minutes before the armistice went into effect, at 10:58 a.m. on November 11, 1918, Pte. George Lawrence Price was felled by a bullet. Price would become the final Commonwealth soldier — and the last of more than 66,000 Canadians — to be killed in

the First World War.

They died fighting at Vimy Ridge, Hill 70, Passchendaele and Ypres — battles remembered for atrocious conditions and Canadian valour. In Ypres, Canadian soldiers were exposed to German gas attacks, yet continued to fight, showing amazing tenacity and courage in the face of danger.

In many ways, the identity of the young country was forged on those bloody battlefields. About 650,000 Canadians and Newfoundlanders (the province then still a colony of Britain) had served during the war, beginning in 1914. The last Canadian veteran of the conflict — John Babcock — died in February 2010 at the age of 109.

After Babcock's passing, the federal government announced that it would hold a national commemorative ceremony on April 9 to honour all Canadians and Newfoundlanders who served during the First World War.

Between the declaration of the Second World War in September 1939 and the conflict's end in 1945, Canadians fought in Dieppe, Normandy, the North Atlantic, Hong Kong, during the libera-

tion of Italy, and in many other important air, sea and land campaigns.

In total, more than one million men and women from Canada and Newfoundland served in the army, air force and navy. More than 47,000 did not come home.

Canadian troops played a crucial role — and made a mighty sacrifice — in the 1944 D-Day invasion and the Battle of Normandy, a major turning

point in the war's Atlantic campaign. More than 5,000 were killed in the land invasion in France.

Since the end of the Second World War, Canadians have taken part in dozens of United Nations peacekeeping missions around the globe, from Cyprus and Haiti to Bosnia and Somalia. Troops have seen active combat as well.

Lest We Forget



Mayor Rick Bonnette and Members of Council convey their respect and appreciation for the sacrifices made by our Canadian men and women, at home and overseas, who served their country in times of war.

Their service will never be forgotten.

Michael Chong
Member of Parliament,
Wellington - Halton Hills

Please take time this November 11th to remember the sacrifice of those that died defending our country. We owe these heroes our deepest thanks and gratitude.

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On Remembrance Day, we pay tribute to all who have defended Canada, and all who serve today.

Thanks to the Royal Canadian Legion, we shall never forget.

Ted Arnott, MPP
Wellington-Halton Hills

We honour those who served our country

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