



THE ROYAL C

PTE. UJ (JOE)

POPPY

This is a letter sent home to parents in Stirling, Ont.

**Somewhere in England,
June 2nd, 1944**

Dearest Mother, Dad & family:

As the time is not far off when we shall be called on to do far greater things for our country, I want to leave this message for you should something happen and I do not return. It is a hard thing to say, but in war anything can happen so quickly, yet one life is small compared to a world of slavery which would have happened except for our great comeback. We give all that our dear Canada, especially, may be forever free, a land where good Christian fellowship shall prevail. I know as well as you that this world lacks the real Christian faith and living, wouldn't it be much better "*Loving thy neighbour as thyself*" than all this idea of killing and destroying?

So while you at home are bound to be nerved up and waiting for word of our invasion of the European continent, doing a lot of worrying because I am one of the boys going in, I want you to know that I am not afraid; I go strong and brave, the good faith and prayers of you at home with me. God knows I do not want to kill, but must to rid the world of this awful Nazi way, that threatened to envelope us.

I speak to you first, Mother, as you were always nearest my heart, so kind and good to us all, ever by our side to doctor and comfort us when ill. Do you recall how backward I used to be when you insisted I give a solo, or help in the choir on Sundays, but afterward felt better because I had helped with the service? So now, dearest Mom, I don't want you to be sad, just be proud and happy that I have done my share in the cause of freedom.

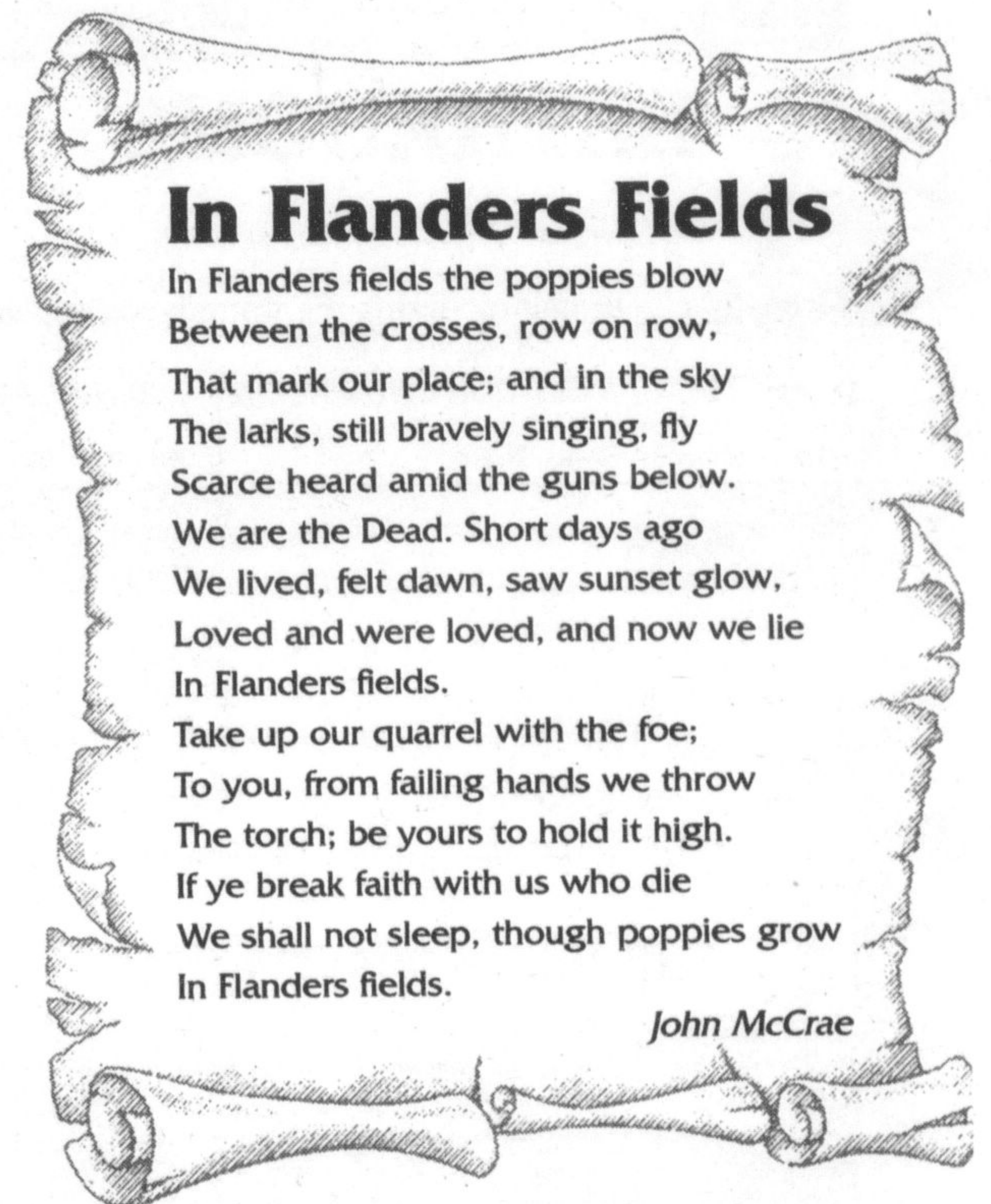
Dad, you have always been a fine loving father, ever standing with Mom to help and guide us through the right way of life. I could never forget the years we worked together, sawing lumber or threshing, the kind of work we loved so well – just to hear the engine puffing, or the saws ringing – music to us wasn't it? Remember the times when we attended church in Stirling, especially the meetings through the week – we drove in with the horse and cutter, the lantern under the robe to keep our feet warm. I was perhaps too young at the time to know the real meaning of these meetings but I have thought a lot about them the last few years, sometimes I find myself singing those nice songs we learned there "*Everybody ought to love Jesus,*" "*I love my Saviour*" and others. If only everyone would turn to this good Christian way, how bright and happy this old world would be. Don't let your heart be heavy, Dad, just try to carry on the way of a real man and father.

To each and everyone of my sisters and brothers I can say I've always been proud to speak of you, ever a very deep respect to each of you in my heart. Be kind and good to Mom and Dad, then there need never be any heart-aches or worries for them to endure.

And now, dear family, I bid you all "*Good-bye,*" may God bless and keep you safely throughout the coming years.

Your loving son & brother

*They shall grow not old, As we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them, Nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun, And in the morning, We Will Remember Them.*



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.

John McCrae

**Take two minutes to say
thank you**



"The Wave of Silence"