



John McCrae



Remembrance is part of modern British life, culture and heritage. It becomes a particular feature of the public calendar on or about Remembrance Sunday and 11 November, Armistice Day, each year. This is when public, private, formal and informal Remembrance events take place throughout the UK. Millions of people each year stop what they are doing and observe a Two Minute Silence at 11 am on the 11th day of the 11th month, commemorating the original Armistice of 1918 which signalled the "stilling of arms" and led to the formal end to the First World War (eventually signed in 1919). Over 40 million poppies are distributed by The Royal British Legion every year at the end of October and up to 11 November. Each and every poppy is a symbol of Remembrance and hope and millions of people make the individual choice to wear one.

THE POPPY IS...

- A symbol of Remembrance and hope
- Worn by millions of people
- Red because of the natural colour of field poppies

THE POPPY IS NOT...

- A symbol of death
- A sign of support for war
- A reflection of politics or religion
- Red to reflect the colour of blood

WEARING A POPPY...

- is a personal choice
- reflects individual and personal memories
- is not compulsory
- is appreciated by those it helps

THE STORY OF THE POPPY

During the First World War (1914 – 1918) much of the fighting took place in Western Europe. Previously beautiful countryside was blasted, bombed and fought over, again and again. The landscape swiftly turned to fields of mud, bleak and barren scenes where little or nothing could grow. Bright red Flanders poppies (*Papaver rhoeas*) however, were delicate but resilient flowers and grew in their thousands, flourishing even in the middle of chaos and destruction. In the spring of 1915, shortly after losing a friend in Ypres, a Canadian doctor, Lt Col John McCrae was inspired by the sight of poppies to write a now famous poem called "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.



Tomb of the Unknown Warrior



Moina Michael