



# Remembrance Day



## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW:

- Remembrance Day is a holiday celebrated in Canada every November 11
- It is a holiday that commemorates all the soldiers that have died in service since the Boer Wars of the late 1800s to the present day.
- Remembrance Day was previously called Armistice Day
- The first Remembrance Day was held in 1919 in commemoration of the end of World War One on November 11, 1918 at 11 am. (11<sup>th</sup> month, 11<sup>th</sup> day, 11<sup>th</sup> hour)
- Over 100,000 Canadian soldiers died in WWI and WWII.
- All government buildings will fly the Canadian flag on this day.
- People will observe a two minute period of silence at 11 am to remember all the Canadian soldiers who lost their lives in past wars, and all the soldiers who are currently fighting wars overseas today.

## THE POPPY

- During the bombardments of the First World War, the chalk soils became rich in lime from rubble, allowing poppies to thrive and grow rapidly afterwards.
- After John McCrae's poem "**In Flanders Fields**" was published in 1915, the poppy became a popular symbol for soldiers who died in battle.
- The poppy is the symbol of Remembrance Day and people wear them on this day as a sign of respect.



### John McCrae and "In Flanders Fields":

- John McCrae was a Canadian soldier/physician/teacher who first served in the artillery during the Second Boer War in South Africa from 1899-1901
- He enlisted for WWI in 1914 and was appointed brigade-surgeon to the First Brigade of the Canadian Forces Artillery stationed at Ypres, Belgium.
- He wrote the famous poem "In Flanders Fields" in 1915.
- It is considered one of the most popular and influential war poems and is still referenced today on every Remembrance Day in Canada.

#### 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.

Major John McCrae, 1915

