

Words about the World War I Poem,
“In Flanders Fields”

During World War I, Canadian Col. John McCrae read to his fellow commanders the poem he called “In Flanders’ Fields.” They encouraged him to publish it. He submitted his simple poem to Britain's famous *Punch* magazine, which readily published it in a rarely-used bold type. The effects of the poem washed across Britain like a giant wave. All of Britain was moved and encouraged by the words and the poem quickly spread throughout the allied nations.

The poppy became a symbol of 'Life' and 'Resurrection': the red petals were the colour of the blood that stained the battlefield; the yellow/black center represented the mud and desolation; the green of the stem became representative of the forests and fields where generations of men have died to make their land free; the stem itself symbolized the courage of the fallen soldiers. Life and freedom, all in this tiny, overlooked flower.

In 1918, a seriously-wounded Col. John McCrae was carried by stretcher to a rear base hospital on the coast of France and placed in a room where he might look out the window toward the Cliffs of Dover across the channel. He died three nights later. He was buried in the cemetery of Wimereux.