

WWI. JOHN McCRAE.
CARVE THIS NAME WITH PRIDE.



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*

Punch
Dec 8-1915

John McCrae

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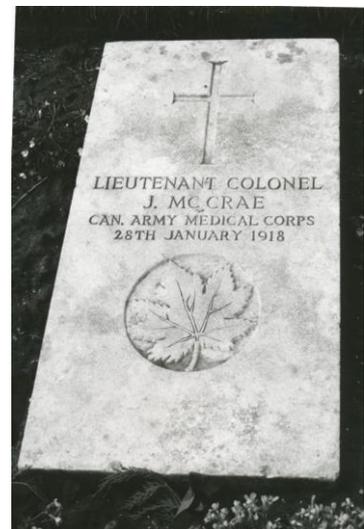
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The Canadian medical doctor and soldier John McCrae (30 November 1872 – 28 January 1918) is internationally known for his famous poem 'In Flanders Fields'. He wrote this during World War One (WWI or The Great War) after conducting the short burial service at the grave of his friend, Lieutenant Alexis Helmer (22 years old). This poem, which took him about 20 minutes to write, was accepted internationally as the reminder to "Remember" all soldiers especially on Remembrance/Armistice Day; 11 November annually.



The grave of John McCrae (left) who wrote the well-known WWI poem "In Flanders Fields". His grave can be seen at the Wimereux Communal Cemetery, France (near Boulogne).



In 1901 on John McCrae's return from South Africa where he had fought as a gunner in the Anglo Boer War, he remarked, "I am getting quite used to soldiering now: feel as if I were born to it."

55 Soldiers with the surname McCrae are recorded on the registers of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission as having died in WWI. One of them was another Canadian Private 718793 Robert Henderson McCrae of the Canadian Infantry who died on the very day that the Armistice was signed on 11 November 1918. A South African soldier Pte No 17479 J. McCrae of the 4th South African Regiment died on 4 November 1918 and is buried in the Richmond Cemetery, Surrey, close to Richmond Park where the SA Military Hospital had been located.

The surname McCrae is honoured in South Africa for yet another reason. A Victoria Cross winner with the same name and surname: John McCrae and also a medical doctor is remembered.

The medical doctor and soldier Surgeon Major John McCrae VC was decorated with the Victoria Cross for his exceptional valour during the Basotho War in Southern Africa (1880 – 1881).

The Victoria Cross is the highest British military decoration awarded for valour, in the face of the enemy. The VC was instituted by HRH Queen Victoria in 1856. To be awarded a VC is such an honour that when a recipient goes on parade, no matter what his rank, all on parade are called to "attention". When a recipient enters a room or enclosure in public, all the men stand as a token of respect. On the streets, complete strangers lift their hats, caps or peaks out of respect when the maroon ribbon and VC medal is spotted on the left side of the recipient's chest.



The Victoria Cross

**HONOUR HIS NAME
JOHN McCRAE**

J. C. Abrahams (Tannie Mossie)

Reference:

Ian S. Uys; *For Valour*, pp.1 & 81.

Dianne Graves; *The World of John McCrae*; pp.xix & 200.

S. O'Moore Creagh VC GCB GCSI; *The Victoria Cross 1856 – 1920*; p.98.



South Africa's John McCrae



**The grave of Surgeon Major John McCrae
VC in Kokstad, South Africa –**

**“IN MEMORY OF
SURGEON MAJOR J.F. McCRAE. V.C.
Cape Mounted Riflemen
Died 16th July 1894. Aged 40.
Erected By His Comrades”**