

One year ago I was charged with writing the bulletin on the eve of Remembrance Day, as it is called here in Canada. Tonight I find myself, once again, sitting at the computer contemplating the bulletin. For me the poem In Flanders Fields is inseparably connected with Remembrance Day. I was required to memorize it in school and on a good day can still repeat most of it. Last year I wrote a small piece about the history of the poem and if you will indulge me I would like to repeat it again this year.

Five battles were fought in Ypres, Belgium during the First World War. The first in the fall of 1914; the second in the spring of 1915; the third, also known as the Battle of Passchendaele, summer and fall of 1917; the fourth known as the Battle of the Lys or Battle of Estaires in the spring of 1918; the fifth during the fall of 1918.

It was during the second battle that poison gas was used on a large scale on the Western Front. Major John McCrae, a surgeon from Guelph, Ontario, attached to the 1st Field Artillery Brigade spent 17 days treating injured men in the second battle of Ypres. In his own words:

"I wish I could embody on paper some of the varied sensations of that seventeen days... Seventeen days of Hades! At the end of the first day if anyone had told us we had to spend seventeen days there, we would have folded our hands and said it could not have been done."

Within the space of just 48 hours there were over 6000 Canadian casualties. One of those who died was a friend, Lt. Alexis Helmer. Major McCrae witnessed his death and later, in the absence of a chaplain, presided over the funeral.

The next day found McCrae north of Ypres. As he sat on the back of an ambulance in a rare break he pondered the poppies growing wild in a nearby cemetery. It was at this time he penned the famous poem, *In Flanders Fields*.

A soldier watching him later wrote, *"The poem was exactly an exact description of the scene in front of us both. He used the word blow in that line because the poppies actually were being blown that morning by a gentle east wind... It seemed to me just an exact description of the scene."*

In Flanders field 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

If you would like to learn more about Colonel John McCrae I recommend the History to the People site:

<http://historytothepeople.ca/2010/08/colonel-john-mccrae-birthplace-and-memorial-gardens-in-guelph-ontario/>

In this Bulletin

Announcements – FHC Closures; Ancestry's military collection free this weekend

The Forum – Don't forget to send us your most puzzling questions

Announcements –

FHC will close at noon on Tuesday, November 15 and November 22.

You can search Ancestry's military collection for free until Sunday, November at 11:59pm.

Canada http://www.ancestry.ca/11remembrance?cid=4105&o_iid=49334&o_lid=49334&o_sch=Web+Property

United States

http://www.ancestry.com/militaryrecords?o_iid=31731&o_lid=31731&o_sch=Web+Property

Australia & New Zealand

http://www.ancestry.com.au/remembrance2011?o_iid=49444&o_lid=49444&o_sch=Web+Property

United Kingdom http://www.ancestry.co.uk/ukmilitary_records?o_iid=49390&o_lid=49390&o_sch=Inbound

The Forum

Questions:

No new questions were received this week.

Films received in the 7 days ending 10 November 2011 and due for return on 8 December 2011.

Film Content	Film No
DEU HES/NAS 4 Parish PRs 1574-1876	1337912
DEU MEC Berendshagen BMBs 1652-1866	0068996
DEU MEC Jördenstorf PRs 1817-1876	0069227
DEU MEC Qualitz BMDs 1718-1869	0069456
DEU MEC Retschow Baptisms 1795-1870	0069495
ENG BRK Aldermaston PRs 1558-1882	0088167
ENG DUR Middleton-St George PRs 1616-1871	1514629
POL BK Białystok Jewish Recs 1881-1882	1618509
PRU WPRU Riesenkirh PRs 1680-1821	0208269

A patron wishing to view a film ordered by another should check first with staff. The ordering patron will always have priority. The description of the film given above may not be a full description but a search in the Family History Library Catalog will reveal the full content. The geographical abbreviations are Chapman codes.

Toronto Family History Centre Current Opening Hours.

(Always phone us if you do not have a booking to ensure that we are open.)

Monday 9.30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Tuesday 9.30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Closing at noon on Nov 8, 15 and 22.

Wednesday 9.30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Thursday 9:30 a.m. to noon; 6.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m.

Friday 9.30 a.m. to 12 noon

Saturday 9.30 a.m. to 12 noon.

Closures: If you do not have a booking, call before you come.

For a copy of a searchable listing of all the films, fiche, CDs and books held at the Toronto Family History Centre in pdf format, go to the Toronto FHC Website at <http://torontofhc.blogspot.com/> and look for it under Resources.

Should you decide that you no longer wish to receive this bulletin, reply to this email with the word "Delete" in the subject line.

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