



A Veterans Day Remembrance

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.

-- John McCrae

Anyone who had a relative who served in World War II remains grateful to Tom Brokaw for his wonderful book, [The Greatest Generation](#), which told the stories of these veterans service and their lives after the war. Through books like Mr. Brokaw's, and Senator Dole's efforts to build the magnificent World War II Memorial on the Washington Mall, we have done to commemorate the service of the men and women who served in the Second World War. Sadly, they are now mainly of an age when their lives' work is done, and they are leaving us at an all too rapid rate.

We have now marked ninety-one years since the end of World War I, and the passage of time is exacting its toll on these great men, too. The last surviving Australian veteran of World War I, Jack Ross, died in June 2009 at the age of 110. This past July we lost Harry Patch at the age of 111. He was the last known surviving British veteran of World War I. Pierre Picault and Erich Kaestner died in 2008. They were the last known living French and German veterans of the First World War. Still surviving are Frank Buckles of the United States and John Babcock of Canada. Both of these gentlemen are well over 100 years old. We hear less about the veterans of World War I, as time puts distance between the living and the fallen dead of that horrific war. Referred to as the War-to-End-All-Wars or the Great War, it proved to be neither. It marked the beginning of modern warfare with the first widespread use of the machine gun, the tank, the airplane as a weapon, poison gas, and unrestricted submarine warfare against civilian shipping. It was also the first war where anonymous death rained down from the skies on a massive scale, as over one-fifth of casualties were caused by artillery fire. The casualties on both sides were enormous.

One thing that we do have from World War I is a trove of fine, somber poetry written by the combatants on both sides. "In Flanders Fields" by Canadian John McCrae is reproduced above and is probably the best know of these works. He did not survive the war, succumbing to pneumonia in 1918. Englishman Wilfred Owen was the most celebrated of these wartime poets. He was killed by machine gun fire on France a week before the Armistice was signed. His parents learned of his death via telegram on the morning of November 11, 1918 just as the church bells were beginning to ring to mark the armistice. Siegfried Sassoon was the leading soldier-poet on the German side. He survived the war and lived a full life. Several collections of World War I poetry have been published. The works are as beautiful as they are haunting.

The armistice that ended World War I went into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. In the United States it is our custom to honor all of our veterans on the anniversary of that day. In the British Commonwealth countries, November 11th is commonly referred to as Remembrance Day, Armistice Day, or Poppy Day. America honors those who died in service to our country on Memorial Day in May. My undergraduate *alma mater*, Williams College, has an institution known as the 1914 Memorial Library. This library was given by the Class of 1914 to memorialize their seven classmates who died in the war. The mission of the library is to provide textbooks for students on financial aid. These men were:

Norman Delafield Dubois
Victor Heath Jones
Henry Manchester Ladd, Jr.
Francis Robbins McCook
Roland Cosby Nickerson
Robert Parker Staats, 2nd
William Bradfield Turner

Several Williams alumni and students also perished in World War I. Their names are printed at the end of this piece. Medal of Honor recipient Major Charles Whittlesey (who would later attain the rank of Colonel) who led the famous "Lost Battalion" in the battle of the Argonne Forest was also a Williams Alumnus. We must never forget anyone who has made the supreme sacrifice in service to our nation.

Please take the time this Veterans Day to reflect on all that the members of our Armed Services have given us. If you are in a restaurant and see service men or women, pay their bill. Thank every veteran that you know for his or her service, and reflect upon the blessings and liberty that they, through God's grace, have provided us all. Across the many towns that make up our great land you will find plaques memorializing the soldiers who have died in service to our nation. You will generally find them in the center of town, outside a VFW Post or American Legion Hall, in a park, or near a playing field. Take the time to read the names of the fallen, and keep them in your thoughts and prayers on this day.

--Dean Morris, CFA
November 11, 2009

Other Williams College Alumni Who Died In World War I

<u>Name</u>	<u>Class</u>
David Everett Wheeler	1894
Joseph William McConnell	1898
Fancher Nicoll	1899
Paul Leggett	1901
Albert Adams Sercomb	1903
William Smith Pettit	1905
James Burch Murray	1908
Stanley Willis Wood	1908

Belvidere Brooks	1910
Edward Raynor Fuller	1910
Wilhelmus Mynderse Rice	1910
Richard Gildersleeve	1911
Charles Francis Hawkins	1912
Branton Holstein Kellogg	1912
Merritt Haviland Smith, Jr.	1913
Edmund Albro Kellogg	1913
Raymond Curtis Bloom	1915
Barron Brainerd	1915
Harold Frederick Cowperthwaite	1915
Ira Willard Dempsey	1915
Daniel Schneck Keller	1915
John Cowperthwaite Tyler	1915
Rowland Wescott Waterbury	1915
Donald Frederick Geddes	1916
Richard Burton Rockwood	1916
Alexander Thomson Burr	1917
Thomas Ripley Dorr	1917
William Bogardus Merselis, Jr.	1917

<u>Name</u>	<u>Class</u>
Winthrop Floyd Smith	1917
Amherst Wight Meeker	1918
Richard James O'Brien	1918
Frederick Dobson Pollard	1918
Lambert Alexander Wood	1918
Richard Ashley Blodgett	1919
Malcolm Gifford, Jr.	1919
Albert Clinton Wunderlich	1919
Donald Guild Bishop	1920
William Heermance Prime	1920
Harry Abram Schectman	1921