

## **Intermediate Essay 1st Place**

**Ava E.**

**Branch 192 – Carleton Place**

**Zone G-6**

### The Story of Flanders Fields

I am extremely confident when I say, “We all know the story the poem “Flanders Fields.” The heartwarming poem tells us about the increasingly famous Flanders Fields, where many soldiers, heroes of our country, lay in their graves. There, poppies would grow and blow through the wind, flourishing on the graves. Thanks to the poem, poppies became the most popular symbol of Remembrance Day, in 1921. All in all, this poem gives us many things to be grateful for, but do we know who should be thanked for this wonderful contribution?

The answer to that, is John McCrae, or should I say, Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae. John was born in Guelph, Ontario, Canada. When John was 41 he joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force in early World War 1. John fought and was also medical captain, he helped in many battles, and always lived to tell the tale. Sadly, although John constantly conquered death, he lost a dear friend, named Alex Helmer. John performed his burial service, where he noticed that poppies grew amongst the graves. Now, John always had quite a flare for poetry, and with a heart full with inspiration, and a brain swimming with ideas, John wrote. He wrote to his heart’s content, writing how he felt, with patches of what he’d seen. And the very next day, the poem “Flanders Fields” was born.

John passed away January 28, 1918, and still, in 2017, nearly 100 years later, we still love and read his poem. I think that John made the best out of a bad situation. He lost a friend, laid him to rest, and from there made his contribution of his poem. I find this truly inspiring, and I strongly believe, that like John McCrae, we should try to find the light in even the darkest of tunnels.