



Remembrance Service

Today, British men and women continue to serve their country, in Iraq, the Falklands, the Gulf, Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo, Northern Ireland and Afghanistan.

They need to know that The Royal British Legion will be there to help them when they need it most. The annual Poppy Appeal is the Legion's major fundraising campaign and their aim this year is to raise an unprecedented £27.5 million allowing them to continue the work that means so much to the thousands of serving and ex-Service people and their families who approach The Royal British Legion every year for help.

The first donations for artificial poppies were given in Britain on 11th November 1921, inspired by John McCrae's 1915 poem 'In Flanders' Fields'. Since then the Poppy Appeal has been a key annual event in the nation's calendar.

Some of the bloodiest fighting of World War I took place in the Flanders and Picardy regions of Northern France. In the aftermath of the war's total devastation the only thing which would grow on the land was the poppy. McCrae, a doctor serving there with the Canadian Armed Forces, wrote these verses about what he saw:

*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.*

In Riyadh this year a service of remembrance was held in the Residence Gardens and following a welcome address by Her Majesty's Ambassador, wreaths were laid by HMA representing the United Kingdom and Commonwealth Countries, Commander Kevin Broadley RN representing the Royal Navy; Brigadier Jim Tanner OBE representing the British Army and Air Vice Marshall Peter Ruddock CBE FRAeS representing the Air Force. The service was led by Chaplin Ashley Bell with prayers led by Dr Trevor Vor Matheson, the Ambassador of New Zealand. Binyon's Lines were delivered by Brigadier Ian Liles OBE and Piper Ralph Bowman, Bugler Graham Maddison and organist Egon Liepa all played their part.

