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May, 2020

Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association eNewsletter



In Flanders Fields

*In Flanders' Fields the poppies grow
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.*

This poem has been one of my favorites for years. It reflects the horror of wars even back when the most dangerous weapons were artillery shells and bayonets. While I've served my country honorably, and proud to have done so, I want no more inexcusable war.

Another reason this is important to me is intensely personal. My father served in WW1 and fought in the trenches in France. Many in his company were killed. He, a young lad in his early 20s, and I, were fortunate.

John Bredesen
Board Member

The gates to the cemetery will be open from 11:30 to 5 on Sunday and Monday. Pedestrian access will be as usual. Taps will be played at noon on Memorial Day, but no other events are planned. Hope Abbey will be opened on request to place remembrances for loved ones. American flags will be placed on the graves of veterans.

Music To Die For cannot be scheduled at this time because of COVID-19 safety concerns.

John McCrae

John McCrae (1872–1918) was a Canadian doctor and teacher, best known for his memorial poem "In Flanders Fields." McCrae began writing poetry when he was a student at the Guelph Collegiate Institute, and also showed an early interest in joining the military. At the age of fourteen he joined the Highfield Cadet Corps, and enlisted in a militia field battery three years later.

In April 1915 during WW1, McCrae was stationed in the trenches near Ypres, Belgium, in an area known as Flanders, during the bloody Second Battle of Ypres. In the midst of the tragic warfare, McCrae's friend, twenty-two-year-old Lieutenant Alexis Helmer, was killed by artillery fire and buried in a makeshift grave. The following day, McCrae, after seeing the field of graves blooming with wild poppies, wrote this now famous poem.

"In Flanders Fields" became popular almost immediately upon its publication. It was translated into other languages and used on billboards advertising Victory Loan Bonds in Canada. The poppy soon became known as the flower of remembrance for the men and women in Britain, France, the United States, and Canada who have died in service of their country. Today, McCrae's poem continues to be an important part of Remembrance Day celebrations in Canada and Europe, as well as Memorial Day and Veterans Day celebrations in the United States.

John Bredesen, eNewsletter Editor
Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association

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Mission Statement

To restore, rehabilitate, maintain, interpret and operate the historic Eugene Masonic Cemetery and Hope Abbey Mausoleum as a cultural and natural resource for the community.

The cemetery is operated for the public benefit,
but it is private property.
(A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization)



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