

A vast field of red poppies stretches across the landscape under a cloudy sky. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some fully open and others as buds. The background shows rolling hills and a distant horizon.

Armistice Day

Why did it begin...

World War 1, which started in 1914 and ended in 1918, took the lives of 995,939 people. Of those, 886,939 were soldiers. The war started because of an Austrian Duke being assassinated. This caused allies, including Britain, to fight against the central powers, which were countries including Germany.

Why do we have armistice day?

Armistice means an agreement between countries to stop fighting. WW1 ended because Germany surrendered, and agreed to a truce.

The date that fighting stopped was the 11th November, 1918.

It ended on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

Why do we have armistice day?

Throughout 1919, the year after WW1, there were a number of groups who were determined to remember those who lost their lives. These groups combined together and formed the British Legion, who lobbied for a remembrance day to be held. They were successful, and the first armistice day was held on 11th November 1919, with a 2 minute silence being held at 11 o'clock. During this time, people remembered those who they had lost in battle.

Why do we wear poppies?

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.

Lt Colonel John McCrae (1872 –1918)

This is one of the most famous poems written about the deaths of soldiers in WW1, but many other poems also mention poppies.

As a result, the British Legion adopted a poppy as a symbol of remembrance of those who had died serving for their country.

Why do we donate money for poppies?

Whilst the last surviving WW1 soldier died in February this year, there are still a number of war veterans from WW2, and wars since such as the Falklands War, the Gulf War, our current battle in Afghanistan, and many others, who are still alive.

They may well be injured, and not be able to live their life like they could before they fought in wars.

The money raised from selling poppies goes to help these soldiers and their families.