

NEWSLETTER



Ph: 412-653-1555

• 650 Old Clairton Road, Pleasant Hills, PA 15236 •

June 2016

American Legion • Post 712 • Pleasant Hills



LEGION OFFICERS

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RICHARD J. WOJNAR

Sr. Vice Commander
AL DI LEMBO

Jr. Vice Commander
DON ROTTMAN

Adjutant
LINDA WOJNAR

Finance Officer
BILL MARTINIS

Service Officer
FRANK CAPUTO

Chaplin
EDWARD HLAD

Judge Advocate
BOB HARTUNG

Sgt-At-Arms
RALPH CASCIELLO

Sgt-At-Arms
STAN TUMAS



Commander's Call

As I begin this month's Commanders Call I need to tend to a few issues that deserve some clarity. At the last Legion Executive Committee Meeting, and also at the May Legion Meeting, I stated that I will not be running for another term as Commander. Since I made that announcement I have received numerous emails, regular mail, and phone calls from members and Section/District Commanders. At their request, I was asked to meet with a few groups in order that I reconsider my decision. I met with many great members and Post leaders from most of our divisions. I was humbled as to their loyalty and support for myself as well as to our Post. To make a long story short, I have decided to run for another term and let the members decide. I recently received an email from the District stating that over the past several months our Legion should be considered a template for other Legions to follow. Our Legion has the potential to be the benchmark for other Legions. We have all the necessary ingredients: our dedicated members, best of facilities, and positive attitudes of those who truly care about the Legion.



In March I was honored to be asked to write my military timeline in our "Our Hero's Section". I got so wrapped up in my first six years of my military career in the Army that I forgot to write about my 17 years in the Air Force! I don't regret any of the time I spent in either of these two branches of the military.

This past weekend, myself along with Nick Krawec and Dr. Linda Wojnar attended the Thomas Jefferson Graduation Honors Program held in the TJHS auditorium. The program was well received by the well over 200 students, teachers and very proud family members. On stage, we presented the Legion Oratorical Achievement Awards to the two 2016 senior class recipients. In April, we judged six potential candidates as they gave their three-five minute speech to our panel of judges. This year's recipients were: Cassie Talarico and Jacob Clark. Each recipient received a \$500 check made out in each of their names. American Legion Post 712 salutes our 2016 award winners.

Changing gears, I spoke to Gary Hartman regarding having a pig roast event. He explained there is a lot of waste roasting a pig and it is very greasy. With that being said, the Corporation is going to have an outside picnic, along with music, on June

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JUNE 2016



CORPORATION
OFFICERS

President
RUSS WILSON

VicPresident
DAVE PETERSON

Secretary
DAN MACK

Treasurer
ROB BUTELLI

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DAVE KRILL

JOHN DILLON

RICHARD J. WOJNAR

LES BRANCHEN

DON ROTTMAN

Web Master
THAD WEIDMANN

Newsletter Design
DONNA ROTTMAN

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Notes:

**UPCOMING EVENTS:
LEGION PICNIC
- AUGUST 20**

SUMMER BINGO
June 15 - July 20
August 17

Check out the
"YOUR INVITED"
Invitation
for JUNE 18th
on page 7. . .

 <p>5</p> <p>FREE Pool and Juke Box 4:00 - Close</p>	<p>6</p> <p>• LEGION MEETING 7:00</p>	<p>7</p> <p>• RIDERS MEETING 7:00</p>
<p>12</p> <p>FREE POOL 4:00 - Close</p> 	<p>13</p> <p>• CORPORATION MEETING 7:00</p>	<p>14</p>  <p>FLAG DAY</p>
 <p>19</p> <p>FREE Pool & Juke Box 4:00- CLOSE</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Happy Hour Mon.- Fri. 4:00 - 7:00 Bucket Special</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Try A Coney Island Rootbeer \$3.00</p>
<p>26</p> <p>FREE Pool & Juke Box 4:00- CLOSE</p> 	<p>27</p> <p>• ALA MEETING 7:00</p>	<p>28</p>  <p>FREE Popcorn</p>

Check us out. . . See what's new every day!

Web site: alpost712pa.org

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JUNE 2016

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

<div>1</div> <p>\$1.00 Drafts During Pirate Games</p> 	<div>2</div> <p>FREE Popcorn</p> 	<div>3</div> <p>Stuffed Pork Loin, Mashed Pot. & Gravy Take Out Available</p>	<div>4</div>  <p>FREE JUKE BOX 4:00 - Close</p>
<div>8</div> <p>Happy Hour 4 - 7</p>  <p>Monday thru Thursday</p>	<div>9</div>  <p>at 6:30</p> <p>CORN HOLE</p>		<div>11</div> <p>Free Pool</p> <p>FREE JUKE BOX 4:00 - Close</p> 
<div>15</div> <p>7:00 SUMMER BINGO</p>	<div>16</div> <p>Try a Mike's Hard Black Cherry Lemonade \$3.00</p>		<div>18</div> <p>OUTSIDE PICNIC 3:00 - 6:00 \$5.00 Acoustic Guitar Player Justin Kunzelman Sponsored by Corp.</p>
<div>22</div> <p>\$1.00 Drafts During Pirate Games</p> 	<div>23</div>  <p>at 6:30</p> <p>CORN HOLE</p>		<div>25</div>  <p>Free Pool</p> <p>FREE JUKE BOX 4:00 - Close</p>
<div>29</div>  <p>4:00 - 7:00 Bucket Special</p>	<div>30</div> <p>• SAL MEETING 7:00</p>	<div>24</div> <p>Regular Menu and Stuffed Green Peppers & Hot Banana Peppers</p> <p>POST 712 ANNUAL PICNIC Jefferson Park August 20, 2016 Cost: \$5.00 - Cover \$20.00 - Family (more details to follow)</p>  	

AMERICAN LEGION POST 712
FEATURES NON-SMOKING ATMOSPHERE IS NOW OPEN TO THE PUBLIC EVERY FRIDAY

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ALA OFFICERS

President
MARY ANN MARUNICH

1st Vice President
DONNA McCRUMB

2nd Vice President
VICKY GOLDEN

Secretary
LEIGH ANNE CASTANET

Treasurer
ANNE GIOVANNITTI

Chaplain
BARBARA TERIHAY

Sgt-At-Arms
ROSE BREEN

Sgt-At-Arms
DONNA ROTTMAN

Sgt-At-Arms
PAT O'TOOLE

Auxiliary Corner,

May has been a very busy month for the ALA. The veterans from Heinz Hospital came to our post and were well received. Thanks to all that helped by donating food and most importantly, their time. I received a call from the representative at the hospital and she said it was one of the best trips they had. The same week we went to the Southwestern Veterans Hospital to have a cook out. The weather was beautiful. No rain. Thank you to all who came and helped. We were very proud to have a winner in the essay contest at the state level. Kenneth McCrumb, the grandson of Donna McCrumb did very well on his essay, taking unit, county and state. Congratulations are in order. Along with some post members, we distributed poppies on May 21st. The weather was horrible but we were pleased with our results. Thanks to all that came out in the rain and gave us a hand. This year is coming to an end and I want to personally thank all of the auxiliary members who have been such a great help in all of the things that we did this year. Our unit is known through-out the state for our generosity to the veterans and their families. There will be no meeting in June. Our next meeting will be on Monday, July 25th. Don't forget the donation box in the hall of the post. Most of those items are being taken to the homeless veterans. God Bless and Protect Our Troops.

Mary Ann Marunich
ALA President

Next Meeting
Monday, July 25th

Sons of the Legion,

At this time I would like to thank everyone that supports our events and also the SONS that help with the events. Because of this, we were able to give a very generous donation to the Homeless Veterans on Washington Boulevard. Their request in need was for us to donate socks, T-shirts and underclothing. We purchased all the items in sizes Medium, Large, X-Large and 2X. Thanks again for your support.

*Once again the SONS will be sponsoring the **Father's Day Breakfast Buffet on Sunday, June 19th from 9am to 12pm. Cost is \$9.00 and free for children under 5. Spread the word.***

This breakfast is Opened to the Public.

Next meeting – June 30th at 7:00pm.

Gary C. Hartman
Commander of the SAL



SAL OFFICERS

Commander
GARY HARTMAN

Sr. Vice Commander
DON W. GOULDER

Jr. Vice Commander
DON J. GOULDER

Adjutant
JAMES CHRISTOFEL

Finance Officer
RICHARD HARTMAN

Chaplin
AL DANKO

Sgt-At-Arms
TIMOTHY MOWRY



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DAN OELER

Road Captain
STEVE HORVATH

Road Captain
DAVE PETERSON

Road Captain
DAN TILLERY

Sr. Sergeant-at-Arms
TOM BODNER

Sergeant-at-Arms
ED HARMON

Treasurer
MIKE DUDENUS

Assistant Treasurer
BILL WEIKEL

Adjutant
LLOYD RAY

Chaplain
MARK SMITH

American Legion Riders,

Greetings American Legion Family. I would like to thank all the **Riders who volunteered** to support the ALA lunch with Veterans at Post 712 on May 9, 2016. These Riders took time out of their own lives to spend the afternoon with Veterans to give them a day out of the hospital. Thanks to **Tom Bodner, Chris Bodner, John Caligiure, Kevin Jackson and Dave Saunier**. Your actions are a great example of what it means to be a member of the American Legion.

Rider and Airman Tim Oeler is exceling at his first duty station with the **819th Red Horse Squadron**. Red Horse is a Rapid Engineer Deployable unit and the 819th is home-based in Montana. Tim led a discussion pertaining to Basic Training circa 2016. Tim noted that Drill Sergeants may not use profanity and they are not allowed to single out a recruit for instant disciplinary action; i.e. ... pushups. After graduation Airmen receive training on non-traditional military topics such as sensitivity training and learning to be empathetic to the feelings of others. Now, before all you Grunts get too fired up, keep in mind all the services are a kinder, gentler place these days. Oh, and a big hearty congratulations to **Captain Kristen Grist**, Ranger School graduate and the first female Officer assigned to the U.S. Army Infantry ... Sounds like sensitivity training is in store for those Grunts also.

As we prepare for upcoming elections it's natural to look back at the fading year. Thank you to **Commander Rich Wojnar and the Officers from the Post and Home Association that support him**. The CDR led the way by making the tough decisions on policies and procedures that had to be made to benefit the Membership and the bottom line of Post 712. The Post actually made a profit and gained membership under Rich's leadership. The Riders support the CDR as he prepares for his second year of leadership, and indeed, the Riders support the entirety of the American Legion Family. Well Done Commander, Officers and Volunteers! Reminds me of an old saying from my Infantry days, **Lead, follow or get out of the way!**

Hooah,
Top

Mark
your calendar ...
Sunday, August 14th
Annual Benefit Ride

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Commander's Call... continued from page 1

18th. Linda and I will be on vacation most of June and part of July so we will have to take a rain check. Would someone please save me a hot dog? Also, stay tuned as Gary and myself will be working on a few events that we (The Legion) will team-up and deliver.

Another detail we accomplished this month was replacing worn and tattered flags at two local cemeteries and a smaller cemetery of Revolutionary War members. A special thank you goes to the volunteers who helped us replace these flags this month.

This past year the number of volunteers that have participated in all of our events has been phenomenal to say the least. Every volunteer came with a great attitude and a real desire to keep our Legion strong. Your time and efforts did not go unnoticed. I received a call from the Pleasant Hills Police regarding their Night Out event that will take place Tuesday, July 26. They stated that they are extremely appreciative of our Legion. They also stated that they will be there to support us with any needs we may have in the future. Our community awareness is beginning to ratchet up. Many area businesses and borough officials from both Pleasant Hills as well as Jefferson Hills are calling upon us for services. This huge community awareness turn-around is a tribute to those who care about our Legion - our members. We began our Community Awareness Program late last year and the dividends are starting to come in as we speak. The public needs to know that we are more than a place with the helicopter outside. We play a vital part in the community and as the Pleasant Hills Planning Committee says, "We are great neighbors"! Our Open-to-the-Public events have also made an impact and I need to thank all those that work so hard to make it possible.

Moving forward, I would like to reflect on what it means to be in charge. As you well know, people talk. In my case, most of the people talk to me, but unfortunately some talk behind my back. The highest honor a leader could receive is when that person has gained the trust of followers and when those followers can list what you have done to "make a difference". Leadership is all about making positive changes and making a difference for the betterment of the group. It's one thing to have a title, and being a military-based organization people will respect a title as some of you may have done at some point in your military careers, but respecting a title alone is not a definition of a leader. You need to earn your stripes. You know how it goes! For those of you in leadership positions, I ask you to reflect "Where do you fall?" Take a really close look at your organizations. Look for hard core evidence that demonstrates you are contributing to the success of the Legion: by improving the bottom line financially; by doing your part to recruit new members while retaining current members; and by elevating customer service to its highest level when you speak about the Legion both in the Legion itself and outside the Legion. Make

being the best you can be a part of your organization. Take time to honestly re-evaluate your objective contributions. If you don't, it should be no surprise to you that others have been doing this without your knowledge. People want to be led by leaders who will take them somewhere. We have accomplished an insurmountable amount of positive changes, both financially as well as procedurally, over the past eight months (although it feels like it was much longer). It could not have been accomplished if I did not have your support and loyalty.

In closing, I will put my hat in the ring to be your Commander for another year. Being your Commander is truly a great honor to me and to my family. This past year was just a start. I plan to "keep the pedal to the metal" as necessary changes are on the horizon to take us where we need to go.

As always we support our troops.
Richard J. Wojnar, Post 712 Commander

2017 Membership Information From The Adjutant

Beginning July 1, you can pay your 2017 Legion dues (\$30.00). To avoid late notices and reminders from National, you can pay your dues early by mail, online at MyLegion.org, taking dues to the Post (bar area) or paying at the Legion picnic on August 20. Please write your phone number on your renewal slip when you pay your dues. It's very important for us to have your most current information on file. Although dues are due on January 1 each year, paying your dues early avoids all the reminders. Thank you in advance!

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Fallen Soldier Battle Cross Ceremony ... Submitted by Don Rottman

The Fallen Soldier Battle Cross is a visible reminder and a symbolic replacement of a cross on the battlefield or at a base camp, for a soldier who has been killed in action while serving his or her country. It is made up of the soldier's rifle with bayonet, helmet, identification tags and the boots of the fallen soldier. Its purpose is to show honor and respect for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. The origins of the Fallen Soldier Battle Cross lie in the American Civil War. Prior to this period, fallen soldiers were commonly buried where they lie, with crude markers being erected. During the Civil War, soldiers began to be sent home for burial or buried in a cemetery near the recent battlefield. After a battle was over, people would move through the battlefield to mark the bodies. The most convenient marker was the soldier's rifle with its bayonet stuck into the ground with this hat placed on top. During WWII, soldiers and Marines would often bury the bodies of their fallen comrades in shallow graves. Once again, placing a rifle with bayonet fixed into the ground and a helmet on top, to indicate that here lies the remains of an American soldier. Later, graves registration units would follow and recover the remains for proper identification and burial. More recently, it has been seen in the base camps of Iraq and Afghanistan, as an immediate means for the still living members of his or her unit to honor... show their respect... and to mourn for their fallen comrade. "The last round has been fired, the inverted rifle is a memorial to the fallen soldier, it signals a time for prayer and to pay tribute to our friend and hero... For the soldier, the battle is over. These military identification tags are commonly referred to as Dog Tags... This set is blank; no name, no serial number, no religious preference... These dog tags represent all those who have died in service to their country. The helmet, a valuable piece of equipment, more than just for protection. How many have shaved, bathed, or even cooked in it... It is a symbol of the soldier's great sacrifice... this helmet will no longer be used. The has made his final march. There stands our tribute to all the fallen soldiers. This battle cross is a symbol of remembrance... and a reminder, that freedom is not free. -- Reprint from The 4th Ivy Division Newsletter



GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN . . .



Pictured here are the volunteers that gathered to put flags on the graves of veterans from the Revolutionary War to present. Two church cemeteries included the United Presbyterian and United Methodist in Jefferson Hills.

See In Flanders Field on page 11

You Are Invited to a Picnic!

Sponsored By

The Corporation

When : **June 18Th. 3:00 - 6:00**

Where : **Legion Parking Lot**

**Hot Dogs, Hamburgers
and Kielbasa on the Grill,
Beans and Salad**

Cost: \$5.00 per Person

\$1.⁰⁰ - 12^{0Z}. Drafts

\$2.⁰⁰ Frozen Drink Special

50/50 Drawing at 9:00

A Join Us Inside for Modern
Country and Classic Rock
Acoustic Guitar Player

Justin Kunzelman

from 7:00 - 10:00!

AGIA INSURANCE: \$5,000.00 ACCIDENT PROTECTION LEGION MEMBER-ONLY BENEFIT

- As a Legionnaire, you're eligible for up to \$5,000.00 in NO COST To You benefits. But your Confirmation is REQUIRED for full activation.

- Register by phone at:
1-800-235-6943

- Register online at:
<https://www.thelit.com/no-cost-legioncare>



OUR HEROES

BILL ALLAN

**Charter President
of the American Legion Riders**

June 25, 1968 started off as just another day for Specialist 4 Bill Allan of the 446th Transportation Company based out of Dong Ha, South Vietnam. Troops needed supplies so Bill volunteered for the lead convoy truck to haul those supplies. Just outside the village of Calu Bill's truck hit an IED that exploded with such force rendering the 5 ton diesel destroyed. The blast catapulted Bill out of the vehicle. However, Bill always lined the floor of his truck with sandbags and his forward thinking saved his life as the sandbags absorbed the shrapnel that was intended for him. Bill was shaken, but he was still in one piece. Bill's Commander gave him the next day off for a little R & R. However, that night a Texan named John Henry pleaded with Bill to ride with him in the next days' convoy. Bill initially refused as no soldier gives up R & R easily. However, the Texan explained there was no way anyone would get hit with two IED's in two days so Bill's presence would guarantee his safety. Being a good friend, Bill agreed, but made John Henry promise to position the truck in the middle of the convoy and to line the cab of the truck with sand bags; just in case.

Once again, on a dirt road outside Calu, Bill's truck hit an IED and once again the big 5 ton diesel was rocked by the blast. Bill was again catapulted out of the vehicle, but this time, Texas logic failed and Bill was severely injured. Bill remembers the explosion and thinking he lost part of his leg; and then remembers being Medevac'd out by chopper.

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Given the chaos of war Bill did not receive a Purple Heart Medal for the wounds he suffered on June 26, 1968. However, during 2009, Bill began working with a VA Rep and was finally awarded the Purple Heart Medal for wounds he suffered 41 years earlier. Bill believes his own experience illustrates the VA system can work for Veterans, at least sometimes.

Bill's impact on Post 712 is significant and long-lasting. During 2009, Bill partnered with JoAnn Simmons and Tom Bodner and formed the American Legion Riders of Post 712. He then accepted the unanimous vote to serve as the Riders' Charter President and lay the foundation of Riders activities for the future to come. To this day the Riders remain a strong and active group within the American Legion Family and Bill continues to volunteer as a current Vice President in the organization he launched.

After the Army Bill made his way to Wall Street where he worked as the Lead Electrician of the New York Stock Exchange retiring in 2004. Bill's life partner of 44 years is Donna, who herself is an ALA member and active in Post activities. Bill and Donna returned to the Pittsburgh area during 2006 to be close to their son's Bill and Brian, their six grandkids and daughters-in-law Jen and Melissa. On any given day you may see the Allan family at the Post enjoying a family dinner or supporting a charitable event. That's just who they are.



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Some thoughts on Memorial Day 2016

By Nick Krawec

"Since this nation was founded, each generation of Americans has been summoned to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe. Now the trumpet summons us again..."

-- President John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, January 20,

The words of President Kennedy as cited above speak to the very heart of the holiday of Memorial Day. It is a time to remember those Americans who sacrificed all to protect our cherished freedoms. Each generation of Americans has answered its country's call, because each generation of Americans has faced a challenge to those freedoms. Since that cold January day in 1961 when President Kennedy, a member of the World War II generation, uttered those cogent words, subsequent generations were called to fight, and die, to protect our freedom. Since that day, the sons of World War II veterans faced challenges in the jungles and rice paddies of Viet Nam from the mid 1960's until 1975. More than 58,000 soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen paid the ultimate price in that conflict. A generation later, in 1991, young Americans, many being the sons and daughters of Viet Nam War veterans, braved the scorching deserts of Iraq and Kuwait in Operation Desert Storm, to repel a brutal aggressor whose imperial aims in the Middle East, had they been achieved, also would have posed a major threat to American freedom and security. The number of American combat deaths was not as large in that rel-

atively brief conflict, but they are not any less painful to us, or to the friends and families of the fallen. And in the current, ongoing Global War on Terror, more than 6,600 U.S. service members have been killed in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. And while it is understandable for us to ask, "when will the killing end?" it is equally important to adhere to the principle, "we dare not forget those who sacrificed all." Combat deaths of service members from our hometown area strike a particular chord within many of us. In November, 2015, shortly after Veterans Day, a memorial plaque was unveiled at the City-County Building in downtown Pittsburgh, honoring troops from Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the Global War on Terror. A photograph of that commemorative plaque, listing the names of the 29 fallen local soldiers, Marines and sailor, appears with this article. This past February, 2016, the U.S. Army Reserve Center in nearby Greensburg, PA, commemorated the 25th anniversary of the loss of thirteen soldiers from its 14th Quartermaster Detachment, in an Iraqi Scud missile attack on Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. The names of those soldiers are: SPC Steven E. Atherton, SPC John A. Boliver, Jr., SGT Joseph P. Bongiorno III, SGT John T. Boxler, SPC

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Beverly S. Clark, SGT Alan B. Craver, SPC Frank S. Keough, SPC Anthony E. Madison, SPC Christine L. Mayes, SPC Steven J. Siko, SPC Thomas G. Stone, SGT Frank J. Walls, and SPC Richard V. Wolverton.

There will be, and have been, those who, on Memorial Day, thank us, those who returned home, for our service. While we should certainly appreciate that sentiment, our holiday, and the appropriate time to express such thanks to those of us who returned, is in November, specifically Veterans Day. Memorial Day is the time to thank our comrades, who did not return

home, for their service and sacrifice. I continue to struggle with a way to express that thought, without sounding ungrateful for the person's expression of gratitude. But mere words cannot adequately express the gratitude of a nation for the sacrifice of these brave men and women. Perhaps the words taken from memorial plaque posted in the City-County Building best express the sentiment we should feel this Memorial Day season: "they deserve our remembrance and honor for time immemorial....take pause and reflect on your freedom and their bravery."

THE STORY BEHIND THE REMEMBRANCE POPPY

This is the story of how the red field poppy came to be known as an internationally recognized symbol of Remembrance. From its association with poppies flowering in the spring of 1915 on the battlefields of Belgium, France and Gallipoli this vivid red flower has become synonymous with great loss of life in war. Yet the scope of the poppy and its connection with the memory of those who have died in war has been expanded to help the living too. It was the inspiration and dedication of two women who promoted this same "Memorial Flower" as the means by which funds could be raised to support those in need of help, most especially servicemen and civilians suffering from physical and mental hardship as a result of war.



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.

~ Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae