

## Friends of the 416th Bomb Group (L)

"Keeping memories alive by perpetuating the accomplishments and Heritage of the 416th Bomb Group for present and future generations"



# MAIL CALL

## VETERANS DAY 2023

**Dear Friends,**

Veteran's Day is November 11 and I wanted to issue a Call for us that on that 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month, we take a moment to reflect upon the sacrifices made by the men and women in the U.S. military. Veterans Day pays tribute to all American veterans—living or dead—but especially gives thanks to living veterans who served their country honorably during war or peacetime. This includes our beloved veterans of the 416<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. The Friends of the 416<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group offers us the unique opportunity to honor the memories of those brave patriots who served. Their families, memories, and legacies continue to remind us of their service during a time when the world needed them and their buddies the most. May we acknowledge their commitment and service on November 11.

The memories of the 416<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group have been shared, documented, and posted on the 416<sup>th</sup>.com website for many years. The website includes videos, interviews, and documentaries concerning the experiences, service, honors, and stories of our beloved 416<sup>th</sup> BG veterans. Some of us have had the privilege and honor of meeting the 416<sup>th</sup> Veterans at the annual reunions spanning the decades. Let us never forget. We remember them this day and are thankful.

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### Ever Wonder Why We Have Veterans Day?

World War I officially ended when the Treaty of Versailles was Signed on June 28, 1919, but the fighting actually ended seven months before then, when the Allies and Germany put into effect an armistice on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. Thus, Nov. 11, 1918, was largely considered the end of "the war to end all wars," and called Armistice Day. Congress officially recognized Nov. 11 as the end of the war in 1926, declaring it as an official holiday to honor veterans of World War I in 1938. When World War II and the Korean War occurred, various veterans' organizations urged Congress to alter the meaning of the holiday to be broader and honor all veterans – dead or alive – for their sacrifices. On June 1, 1954, Congress amended the holiday by changing it from Armistice Day to Veterans Day, honoring American veterans of all wars.

### What's the Deal With the Poppy?

In conjunction with the spirit of Remembrance Day worldwide, many wear a simply red poppy, reminiscent of the red poppies that were among the first plants to bloom in the devastated battlefields of northern France and Belgium. The connection with the poppy and the fallen soldier was solidified with one of the era's most famous poems, *In Flanders Field*, written by Canadian



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physician Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae. McCrae was reportedly inspired to write the poem after presiding over the funeral of his friend and fellow soldier 22-year-old Lieutenant Alexis Helmer, who died in the Second Battle of Ypres. The poem gives voice to those soldiers buried in the battlefield, pleading with survivors to take up the torch of their fight, and to remember them even though red poppies now cover the battlefield. The poem gained widespread notoriety after McCrae was convinced to submit it for publication,



and it was translated into many languages and published around the world. When American professor Moina Michael read the poem a few years later, she was so moved by it that she wrote her own poem in response, *We Shall Keep the Faith*, assuring those dead and buried beneath fields of poppies that those still alive will take up the torch of their fight and “cherish the poppy red.” From there, efforts to distribute poppies led to them becoming widely known as the “Flower of Remembrance,” with it later being adopted by the Veterans of Foreign Wars as the official memorial flower in 1922. Today, many wear the poppy as a lasting tribute to all who served the country and sacrificed their lives for freedom. Thank you, Veterans. We wear our poppies proudly in your honor!

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.

## We Shall Keep The Faith

a poem by Moina Michael – she was  
greatly moved by McCrae’s poem,  
*In Flanders Fields*, and wrote this as her  
response vowing to wear a red poppy  
as a sign of remembrance,  
November 1918

Oh! you who sleep in Flanders Fields,  
Sleep sweet – to rise anew!  
We caught the torch you threw  
And holding high, we keep the Faith  
With All who died.

We cherish, too, the Poppy red  
That grows on fields where valor led;  
It seems to signal to the skies  
That blood of heroes never dies,  
But lends a lustre to the red  
Of the flower that blooms above the dead  
In Flanders Fields.

And now the Torch and Poppy Red  
We wear in honor of our dead.  
Fear not that ye have died for naught;  
We’ll teach the lesson that ye wrought  
In Flanders Fields.

## In Flanders Fields

poem by Lieutenant-Colonel  
John McCrae  
3 May 1915