

## BECOMING PROFESSIONAL: ARTHUR CURRIE'S ARMY

Oh! To be killed outright,  
Clean in the clash of the fight!  
That is a golden death,  
That is a boon, but this ...  
Drawing an anguished breath  
Under a hot abyss,  
Under a stooping sky  
Of seething, sulphurous fire,  
Scorching me as I lie  
Here on the wire ... the wire ...<sup>1</sup>

Robert Service, the Yukon poet who had immortalized 'Dangerous Dan McGrew,' served as an ambulance driver in France. His graphic, bitter, and long-forgotten war poetry was closer in tone to that of British poets such as Siegfried Sassoon and very different from that produced by most of the other Canadian soldier-poets.



If Robert Service was different, so too was Arthur Currie, who stands out prominently among the Canadian and Allied generals of the Great War. Certainly he did not look the part of a dashing commander – as the square-jawed and bristly mustached Sir Douglas Haig certainly did. Instead, Currie was