



Poppy Days

Poppy Days have become a familiar tradition in almost every American community. This distribution of the bright red memorial flower to the public is one of the oldest and most widely recognized programs of the American Legion Auxiliary.



American Legion Auxiliary

Peter J. Courcy
Unit 178, Frisco, Texas

Poppy Program

Connecting the visual image of the poppy with the sacrifice of service made by our veterans has been the No. 1 goal of the American Legion Auxiliary Poppy Program since its inception in 1921. Typically on Memorial Day and Veterans Day, millions of red crepe-paper poppies, handmade by veterans whenever possible as part of their therapeutic rehabilitation, are distributed across the country in exchange for donations that go directly to assist disabled and hospitalized veterans in our communities.



The Poppy Program raises community awareness and respect for our veterans by educating Auxiliary members and the public about the symbol of the poppy, memorialized from a line in the poem **“In Flanders Fields,”** written on the battlefield during World War I by Col. John McCrae. He was inspired to write it on May 3, 1915, after presiding over the funeral of friend and fellow soldier Alexis Helmer, who died during the Second Battle of Ypres.

*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 go
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. Col. John McCrae

The Poppy Story

From the battlefields of World War I, weary soldiers brought home the memory of a barren landscape transformed by wild poppies, red as the blood that had soaked the soil. By that miracle of nature, the spirit of their lost comrades lived on. The poppy became a symbol of the sacrifice of lives in war and represented the hope that none had died in vain.



Meeting the continuing needs of our veterans should be the concern of every American who values his or her freedom.

The Auxiliary promotes the poppy as a symbol of the sacrifices our military have made; a symbol to open people's hearts and inspire them to donate.



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ALA Unit 178 Website:

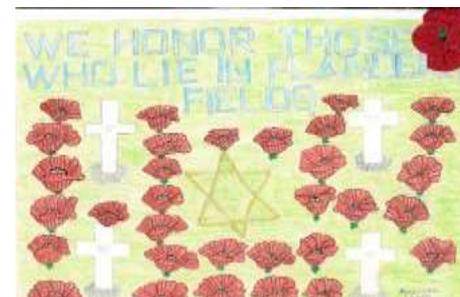
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The American Legion Auxiliary poppy has continued to bloom for the casualties of four wars, its petals of paper bound together for veterans by veterans, reminding America each year that the men and women who have served and died for their country deserve to be remembered.

The financial benefit realized by our nation's veterans as a result of poppy distribution is huge; annually, nearly 7 million poppies are distributed to units, raising nearly \$2 million. In addition, making poppies allows disabled and hospitalized veterans to earn ancillary spending money.



Children are also involved in spreading the poppy message by participating in the Poppy Poster Contest, which is held in local schools for students in grades 2 through 12.

The Miss Poppy contest is a fun event for Junior Auxiliary members who develop local programs to promote the Auxiliary memorial poppy.