



# THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY

## NATIONAL POPPY DAY®

### Lace up your running shoes and support National Poppy Day

To honor those who have served and died for the United States, The American Legion Family petitioned Congress for National Poppy Day. Celebrated Friday prior to Memorial Day, the Legion Family honors the sacrifices of our servicemembers and veterans by wearing a red poppy. The poppy has been recognized and worn by Americans as a symbol of sacrifice since World War I.

National Poppy Day is May 22 this year. Leading up to this significant day, a virtual 5K will happen throughout May to raise awareness and support. Keep a lookout on ALA National Headquarters' social media for more information. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) @ALAforVeterans.

### How to Participate

There are many ways individuals and groups can help bring greater awareness to this symbolic flower, honor our fallen and support the living heroes on National Poppy Day®.

### EVERYONE CAN HELP

Anyone can participate in National Poppy Day®. Here are a few simple ways:



❖ Wear a red poppy

Wear a red poppy all day and tell everyone why.

❖ Distribute Poppies

Distribute poppies to friends, co-workers and family and tell everyone why.

❖ Collect Donations

Collect donations to give to the Poppy Program. [CLICK TO BUY A COLLECTION CAN](#)



❖ Share on Social Media

Tell the story of who you are wearing your poppy to remember or support. **#PoppyDay**

❖ Make a Donation

Accept a poppy and [make a donation](#) if you see ALA members distributing poppies.

❖ #PoppyDay

Use this hashtag to share poppies on an [Instagram virtual garden](#).

## The Friday before Memorial Day

The American Legion Family has the support of Congress to designate the Friday before Memorial Day as National Poppy Day®, a day that encourages all Americans to wear a red poppy as a symbol to honor the fallen and support the living heroes who have worn our nation's uniform.

National Poppy Day® is an initiative supported by the entire American Legion Family, which includes The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, and the American Legion Riders.

After World War I, the poppy flourished in Europe. Scientists attributed the growth to soils in France and Belgium becoming enriched with lime from the rubble left by the war. The red poppy came to symbolize

the blood shed by those who fought and those who continue to fight for our country following the publication of the wartime poem "In Flanders Fields." The poem was written by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, M.D. while serving on the front line in World War I, to honor soldiers killed in battle.

The mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad.

Each year, members of The American Legion Family, led by the American Legion Auxiliary, distribute poppies with a request that the person receiving the flower make a donation. Proceeds from the sale of items such as jewelry and other themed merchandise also benefit the mission to support the future of veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families with medical and financial needs.

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*Primary Source by John D. McCrae, J. A. Armstrong, and Ella Jane Osborn*

**World War I poems: "In Flanders Fields" and "The Answer," 1918**

*A Spotlight on a Primary Source by John D. McCrae, J. A. Armstrong, and Ella Jane Osborn*

Ella Osborn's 1918 diary provides insight into the experiences of an American nurse serving in France at the end of World War I. In addition to her notes about the men under her care and events in France, Osborn jotted down two popular World War I poems, "In Flanders Fields," by Canadian surgeon Lt. Col. John D. McCrae, and "The Answer," by Lt. J. A. Armstrong of Wisconsin.

McCrae composed "In Flanders Fields" on May 3, 1915, during the Second Battle of Ypres, Belgium. It was published in *Punch* magazine on December 8, 1915, and became one of the most popular and frequently quoted poems about the war. It was used for recruitment, in propaganda efforts, and to sell war bonds. Today the red poppy of McCrae's poem has become a symbol for soldiers who have died in combat.

## 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. Col. John McCrae

"The Answer" is one of many poems written in response to "In Flanders Fields":

### The Answer –

In Flanders Field the cannon boom  
And fitful flashes light the gloom;  
While up above, like Eagles, fly  
The fierce destroyers of the sky;  
With stains the earth wherein you lie  
Is redder than the poppy bloom  
In Flanders Field.

Sleep on ye brave! The shrieking shell,  
The quaking trench, the startling yell,  
The fury of the battle hell  
Shall wake you not; for all is well.

Sleep peacefully, for all is well.  
Your flaming torch aloft we bear,  
With burning heart an oath we swear  
To keep the faith to fight it through  
To crush the foe, or sleep with you  
In Flanders Field

~Lt. J. A. Armstrong of Wisconsin

# Poppy Palooza Challenge Incentive Reminder

• **Each District** that hosts a Poppy Palooza will be entered into a **drawing for a gift**, selected by **President Robin**, to be presented at **Department Convention**.

• The **District that makes the MOST poppies** between **September 1, 2025 – May 31, 2026** will receive a **special gift**, selected by President Robin and presented at Department Convention.

**Important:** These poppies must be made for our **Department**, helping eliminate the need to purchase poppies from outside departments. **All poppies MUST be verified** with the Department Poppy Chairman for an accurate count. Please call or email with your total poppies sent to Department.

## Poppy Palooza Challenge

**It's Easy – and It Makes a Difference!**

Hosting a **Poppy Palooza** is a fun, meaningful way to support our veterans and help our **Department** remain self-sufficient in poppy production.

### **What a Poppy Palooza Can Include:**

- Invite surrounding **Posts, Units, and interested poppy makers**
- **Veterans get paid** to make poppies ✓ **\$0.10 / small poppy & \$0.25 / large poppy**
- Poppy snacks, poppy trivia, and poppy history
- Making **large and small poppies**
- Fellowship, fun, and productivity!

*(These are just a few ideas — make it your own!)*

## Poppies Made for Department by Districts as of 3/14/2026

### **Small Poppies**

- District 1 ~ **1,000 poppies**
- District 2 ~ **2,000 poppies**
- District 3 ~ **23,793 poppies**
- District 5 ~ **5,775 poppies**
- District 6 ~ **25,725 poppies**
- District 7 ~ **17,500 poppies**
- District 10 ~ **1,000 poppies**

### **Large Poppies**

- District 2 ~ **84 dozen (1008) poppies**
- District 3 ~ **296 dozen (3552) poppies**

## Poppies Made During Poppy Paloozas

### **District 3**

- Forest Lake – **1,000 poppies**
- Waconia – **1,250 poppies**
- St. Paul Park – **1,500 poppies**
- Cleveland — **1,500 poppies**

### **District 6**

- Kimball – **1,275 poppies**

### **District 7**

- Cosmos – **3,000 poppies**

### **District 9**

- *To be held May 16, 2026*

**Total poppies = 89,318 small poppies + 4560 large poppies (380 Dz)**

## The Impact We're Making

In **2024**, the Department ordered **135,400 poppies**. So far this year, only **100,900 poppies** have been ordered.

This significant decrease is due to **Units ordering kits and making poppies for their own use**.

**The best news? NO poppies were purchased from outside departments this year.**

The Department is excited to continue encouraging **Individuals, Units, and Districts** to create poppies **year-round**, strengthening our mission and supporting our veterans.

# Poppy Contest for Department Convention 2026

250<sup>th</sup> Celebrate the USA

### **Contest 1 – Craft Project**

Celebrate 250 years in “Poppies” **without using** the American Legion Auxiliary Poppies.

- ❖ The words Celebration, Freedom and Sacrifice are your inspirational words.
- ❖ Find a creative way to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the USA without using the crepe paper poppy.
  - This can be done in any number of ways.
    - Diamond art, paint, yarn, popcorn, etc. use your imagination.

### **Contest 2 – Wearable “Honor Flight” wear.**

In 2025-26 our MN Project this year is Honor Flights.

- ❖ Your challenge will be to **use** the American Legion Auxiliary Poppy to create an item that could be worn on an Honor Flight.
  - This can be done in any number of ways.
    - Hats, scarves, sashes or possibly a piece of wearable jewelry i.e.. Bracelet, broach, veteran pin. etc. The sky is your limit.

1<sup>st</sup> Place -\$20.00

2<sup>nd</sup> Place - \$15.00

3<sup>rd</sup> Place – \$10.00

People’s Choice - \$20.00 -with funds going towards President Robin’s Project – Honor Flights

Poppy entries must be brought to the Department Convention at Willmar Conference Center by Friday July 10th, 2026, at 10:00 am. Let’s see how many tables we can fill.