

# NATIONAL POPPY DAY

## The Poppy Story

After World War I, the poppy flourished in France and Belgium. The red poppy came to symbolize the blood shed during battle following the publication of the wartime poem "In Flanders Fields." The poem was written by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, MD. While serving on the front lines.

On September 27, 1920, the poppy became the official flower of the American Legion Family to memorialize the soldiers who fought and died during the War (World War I). In 1924 the distribution of the poppies became a national program of the American Legion.

Led by the American Legion Auxiliary, each year members of the American Legion Family distribute poppies with the request that the person receiving the flower make a donation to support the future of veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families with medical and financial needs.

Poppy Day is celebrated in countries around the world. The American Legion brought National Poppy Day in the United States by asking congress to designate the Friday before Memorial Day, as National Poppy Day.

The Friday before Memorial Day, wear a poppy to honor the fallen and support the living who have worn our nation's uniform.

## 1919 Poppy Day Poster

The first American Legion red poppy sale took place in 1919 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in honor of Commander George F. Plant.

On September 27, 1920, the red poppy was declared The American Legion's official flower.

The red poppy is an internationally recognized symbol of the military sacrifice. American Legion Auxiliary Units, American Legion posts and Sons of The American Legion squadrons will honor the distinctive symbol May 28 through poppy distributions in their communities, where donations are collected to support American Legion Family programs that help disabled veterans and U. S. military personnel.

### ***In Flanders Fields***

*In Flanders Field the poppies blow  
Between the crosses row on row.  
That mark our places; 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 guard 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.*