



THE AMERICAN LEGION

National Poppy Day Event Toolkit



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National Poppy Day™ **Toolkit Instructions**

The American Legion tradition of wearing a poppy dates back to 1920, when it became the official flower of The American Legion Family. The American Legion Auxiliary has used poppies for many years to raise awareness and support for our nation's veterans, active-duty service members and their families. This year, The American Legion is bringing greater attention and awareness to this symbolic flower by calling upon all Americans to honor our fallen and living heroes on National Poppy Day™, May 26, 2017.

The American Legion will promote National Poppy Day™ with:

- A new website, www.legion.org/PoppyDay
- New items on the relaunched "**Poppy Shop**" section of The American Legion Emblem Sales webstore
- A Congressional resolution to name the Friday before Memorial Day "National Poppy Day™"
- Events to raise awareness including: a Congressional reception, an American Legion Riders poppy-themed ride and poppy-making media events in our nation's capital
- National media engagement

Posts are encouraged to build on this heightened awareness by expanding existing poppy awareness activities. A toolkit has been developed to promote National Poppy Day™ locally. The toolkit contains a sample media alert, press release, social media posts and talking points to ensure a consistent message is used by everyone in The American Legion Family. If you have any questions or need assistance, please reach out to your Department.

State and Citywide Proclamations: This document outlines how anyone in The American Legion Family can play a valuable role in garnering National Poppy Day™ support from state and local officials. These requests typically take time to process but can be very effective at generating awareness and media attention.

We recommend sending this request as soon as possible. It is also useful to call the selected office responsible for this type of request to ensure all requirements have been met prior to submission and to alert them of the request. In some cases, proclamation request instructions can be found online at the mayor's or state governor's website.

A sample proclamation has been provided along with a request letter to be tailored to meet your needs.

Media Alert: A media alert announces planned National Poppy Day™ events and activities. This at-a-glance reminder should be distributed to local media outlets two days prior to an event.

List specifics of where the media can go to learn more and interview members of The American Legion Family about National Poppy Day™.



Toolkit Instructions, Continued

EXAMPLES: *If you have arranged for the Mayor to sign a proclamation naming May 26, 2017 “National Poppy Day™,” put it in the media alert. If The American Legion and Auxiliary members will be distributing poppies at a specific location, put it in the media alert. If The American Legion Family members will be hosting a poppy-themed event, put it in the media alert.*

A sample media alert is included with areas in parenthesis and all caps for editing and localizing. Make sure to include the names and credentials of those willing to be interviewed, along with the time and location they will be available to answer questions from the media.

Press Release: A press release is issued AFTER an event to recap the details and highlights for the media. You should include a picture, if possible. In essence, you do their work for them! A sample press release is included with areas highlighted in yellow for editing and localizing. Make sure to provide information about how the public can get a poppy to wear or display. The release can also be used to inform the public about local efforts to collect donations that will be used to support living veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families with future financial needs.

Social Media Suggestions: Post websites and social media feeds can increase awareness about National Poppy Day™ to members and followers. Be sure to regularly post information during the two weeks (May 15 – 25) leading up to May 26, 2017, and encourage members to share the links with their friends and family. This ensures that your post promotes National Poppy Day™ outside The American Legion Family. Sample posts are included for reference.

Community Calendar Posting: Many print and web publications announce events in their community bulletin board sections. A sample post and submission instructions have been provided to have your event(s) included on any community calendar. For web publications, event information can be emailed to the website point of contact.

Talking Points: The entire American Legion Family is participating in and supporting National Poppy Day™. It is very important that we all communicate a consistent message to the media. Talking points are provided to ensure the campaign provides one clear, united voice that explains how The American Legion is helping communities show their support for our heroes and service members on National Poppy Day™. These talking points should be given to your media spokespeople and localized with details of events in your community.

Logos: New logos have been created and can be found online for download at www.legion.org/PoppyDay/toolkit. We encourage you to use these logos on all National Poppy Day™ communications.

More information about National Poppy Day™ can be found online.

www.legion.org/PoppyDay





May 8, 2017

*Expressing support for the designation of May 26, 2017,
as "National Poppy Day" in honor of our fallen.*



Celebration of National Poppy Day™

Remember the fallen and support the living

Wear a poppy to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice and support the future of veterans, active-duty military and their families for generations to come.

WHO	
WHAT	
WHEN	
WHERE	
WHY	By wearing a poppy on National Poppy Day™, we honor every servicemember who has died in the name of freedom and democracy, and we show our support for future generations of veterans.
HOW	
ABOUT	<p>National Poppy Day is a tradition found in many countries around the world. The American Legion has brought this tradition to the United States by designating the Friday before Memorial Day as National Poppy Day™ – a day where all Americans are encouraged to wear a red poppy to remember the fallen and support the living heroes who have worn our nation’s uniform. The poppy is the official flower of The American Legion Family.</p> <p>The red poppy came to symbolize the blood shed by those who have fought, and those who continue to fight, for our country following the publication of the wartime poem “In Flanders Field” by Lt. Col. John McCrae, M.D., which he wrote while serving on the front line in World War I.</p> <p>The American Legion is the largest U.S. wartime veterans service organization with 2.1 million members in nearly 14,000 posts in communities worldwide. Chartered by Congress in 1919, The American Legion is committed to mentoring youth, advocating patriotism, promoting strong national security, and devotion to service members and veterans.</p> <p>For decades, the American Legion Auxiliary, the nation’s largest patriotic women’s organization, has distributed poppies, with a request for a donation to support local veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families with medical and financial needs.</p>





National Poppy Day™ **Social Media Posting Suggestions**

Below are sample posts for use on Facebook and Twitter during the week of May 22, 2017, as a lead-up to National Poppy Day™.

National Poppy Day is Friday! Pin on your red poppy as we honor our fallen and give thanks for our freedom. **#PoppyDay**
#LegionFamily

Pass it on! National Poppy Day – May 26. Encourage everyone to support the fallen and future of living veterans.
#PoppyDay #LegionFamily

National Poppy Day is Friday! Join us in honoring those who died in the name of liberty, freedom and democracy.
#PoppyDay #LegionFamily

Thanks to @Boeing for sponsoring National Poppy Day and supporting servicemembers and veterans. **#PoppyDay**
#LegionFamily

Our thanks to @Boeing for sponsoring National Poppy Day. Don't forget to wear a poppy this Friday, May 26. **#PoppyDay**
#LegionFamily

The poppy - a symbol of hope and remembrance. Wear yours on National Poppy Day – May 26. **#PoppyDay**
#LegionFamily

Pin on your poppy May 26! Remember the fallen, support the living! **#PoppyDay #LegionFamily**

Congress designated May 26 National Poppy Day! Pin on your poppy to remember the fallen and show support for the living! **#PoppyDay #LegionFamily**

The red poppy is a national symbol of remembrance. Do you have yours ready for National Poppy Day – May 26?
#PoppyDay #LegionFamily

Volunteers will be distributing poppies at **LOCATION** on **DATE**. Get yours for National Poppy Day. **#PoppyDay**
#LegionFamily

FACEBOOK ONLY

Volunteers will be distributing red poppies on **DATE** at **LOCATION**. Tell your friends and family to stop by and show their support. Remind them to wear their poppy on National Poppy Day – May 26 – to remember the fallen and support the living. **#PoppyDay #LegionFamily**

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

National Poppy Day is May 26. American Legion volunteers will be distributing poppies at **LOCATION** on **DATE**. Wear yours to remember the fallen and show support for the living.



National Poppy Day™ **Talking Points**

ABOUT NATIONAL POPPY DAY:

- » This year, The American Legion asked Congress to designate May 26, 2017, as National Poppy Day™, and encourages all patriotic Americans to wear a red poppy as a symbol of remembrance and hope.
- » The poppy is a symbol of the sacrifices made in service to our country. Wearing the flower on National Poppy Day™ pays tribute to the fallen and the future of living veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families.
- » More information about National Poppy Day™ can be found online. [*www.legion.org/PoppyDay*](http://www.legion.org/PoppyDay)
- » This year, The Boeing Company became the first National Poppy Day™ sponsor.

ABOUT THE POPPY:

- » The poppy flower adorned the battlefields of Flanders Field in Belgium and France during World War I and was looked upon by those serving as a living symbol of their fallen comrades' sacrifices.
- » In 1920, after World War I, the poppy became the official flower of The American Legion family to memorialize the soldiers who fought and died during the war.
- » Poppies are never sold. 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. The donations support the future of veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families with medical and financial needs.
- » Distribution of poppies became a national program of The American Legion in 1924.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN LEGION:

- » Chartered by Congress in 1919, The American Legion is the largest wartime veterans service organization with more than 2.1 million members in nearly 14,000 posts around the world.
- » Focused on four distinct pillars, The American Legion is committed to advocacy for veterans, strong national defense, mentoring youth and keeping patriotism and honor alive and well.



National Poppy Day™ **Quick Facts**

NATIONAL POPPY DAY

- » This year, The American Legion asked 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 remember the fallen and support the living heroes who have worn our nation's uniform.
- » 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 poem "In Flanders Fields." The poem was written by Lt. Col. John McCrae, M.D. while serving on the front line in World War I, to honor soldiers killed in battle.
- » The poppy became the official flower of The American Legion on Sept. 27, 1920, in Cleveland, Ohio.
- » 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.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN LEGION

- » Chartered by Congress in 1919, The American Legion is the largest wartime veterans service organization with more than 2.1 million members in nearly 14,000 posts around the world.
- » Founded in 1919, during the first National Convention of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary has more than 8,000 units, with nearly 750,000 members. It is the world's largest women's patriotic service organization.
- » Focused on four distinct pillars of service, The American Legion is committed to advocacy for veterans, a strong national defense, mentoring youth and keeping patriotism and honor alive and well.
- » The American Legion leads efforts to advocate for veteran benefits earned as a result of service to our country. The Legion works with government officials on local, state and federal levels to ensure the issues most important to veterans are top priorities for our government leaders.
- » Membership in The American Legion allows veterans to be part of an organization that belongs to the people it serves and the communities in which it thrives. The American Legion is committed to mentoring youth and sponsorship of wholesome programs in our communities, advocating patriotism and honor, promoting strong national security, and continued devotion to our fellow service members and veterans.

More information about The American Legion and National Poppy Day™ is available online.

www.legion.org and www.legion.org/PoppyDay