National Poppy Day Event Toolkit
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## National Poppy Day Event Toolkit

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**The American Legion**
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 highlighted in yellow 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](http://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](http://www.legion.org/PoppyDay)
Dear (TITLE OF ELECTED OFFICIAL)(FULL NAME),

The American Legion, with the support of Congress, has designated May 26, 2017, National Poppy Day. We are encouraging all patriotic Americans to wear or display a red poppy on this day as a symbol of remembrance and hope. This is a wonderful opportunity to educate the public about those service members who have made the ultimate sacrifice fighting for freedom.

The American Legion would be honored if you would sponsor an official proclamation in (CITY/STATE) to recognize May 26, 2017, as National Poppy Day. Your proclamation would lend official recognition to the importance that all citizens, residents, and visitors in (CITY/STATE) join in observing this day to honor every service member who has died in the name of liberty, freedom and democracy. I have enclosed a sample proclamation which may help your office compose the appropriate proclamation for (CITY/STATE).

American Legion Post (POST NUMBER) will be holding a special poppy distribution event on (MONTH DAY, YEAR) at (LOCATION) to distribute poppies to citizens. We would like to offer you the opportunity to attend this special event to present your proclamation. If you are unable to attend, a representative of your office is welcome to attend and read the proclamation to our supporters on (MONTH DAY, YEAR).

If you or your staff have any questions concerning the request, the sample proclamation, or National Poppy Day, please contact me at (CONTACT INFO). I will follow-up with your office on this request in the next few days. As always, we appreciate your support of National Poppy Day and helping The American Legion to honor those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms.

Sincerely,

(NAME)
(TITLE)
American Legion Post (POST NUMBER)

Enclosure
The Office of the (Title of Elected Official)
May 8, 2017

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

American Legion Post (POST NUMBER) Commander (NAME) submitted the following proclamation; which was referred to the office of (TITLE OF ELECTED OFFICIAL) for review.

PROCLAMATION

Expressing support for the designation of May 26, 2017, as “National Poppy Day” in (CITY OR STATE) and recognizing the importance of honoring those that have worn our nation’s uniform; and

WHEREAS, poppies are worn and displayed as a symbolic tribute to our fallen and the future of living veterans and servicemembers; and

WHEREAS, at the end of World War I, The American Legion adopted the poppy as a symbol of freedom and the blood sacrificed by troops in wartimes; and

WHEREAS, The use of the poppy symbolically comes from the poem In Flanders Fields, which movingly begins, “In Flanders Fields the poppies blow, between the crosses, row on row,” referring to the poppies that sprang up in the churned earth of battlefields across Belgium and France where soldiers died fighting; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion Family has long utilized the red poppy as its official flower, symbolizing the blood shed by those who have served in our U.S. military, and it is fitting that as The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary approach their 100th anniversaries, they expand the meaning and symbolism of the poppy, mirroring the manner in which the poppy is symbolically showcased in England and Canada in celebratory fashion on their Remembrance Day, also known as Armistice Day and Poppy Day; and

WHEREAS, wearing a poppy will unite citizens from across the country who decide to show their patriotism; and

WHEREAS, May 26, 2017, would be an appropriate date to designate as “National Poppy Day”

Now, therefore, be it Resolved, that the Office of the (TITLE OF ELECTED OFFICIAL) —

(1) supports the designation of May 26, 2017 as “National Poppy Day;” and

(2) encourages all citizens, residents, and visitors in (CITY) to join in observing this day to honor every servicemember who has died in the name of liberty, freedom and democracy while also showing their support for living veterans, servicemembers and their families.
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.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>American Legion Post (POST NUMBER)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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| WHAT | The American Legion Family of Post (POST NUMBER) will distribute veteran-made poppies to the community at (LOCATION NAME(S)) for National Poppy Day™. All are encouraged to make a donation in exchange for a poppy. All funds raised provide direct support for veterans, active-duty military and their families with medical and financial needs. OR
The American Legion Post (POST NUMBER) and (TITLE AND FULL NAME OF ELECTED OFFICIAL) will be signing a proclamation bringing National Poppy Day™ to (CITY/STATE). |
| WHEN | (DAY /DATE /LOCAL START TIME.) |
| | Interview Opportunity: (TIME): (FULL NAME), (POSITION OR TITLE), American Legion Post (POST NUMBER) |
| WHERE | (FULL STREET ADDRESS FOR EVENT LOCATION) |
| 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 | Learn more online at www.legion.org/PoppyDay |
| | Call (NAME, PHONE NUMBER, EMAIL ADDRESS). |
| | Or visit the post at (FULL STREET ADDRESS). |
| ABOUT | 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. 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. 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. 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. |
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT: (FULL NAME OF POST CONTACT)
(E-MAIL ADDRESS)
(PHONE NUMBER)

American Legion Post (POST NUMBER) encourages community to wear a red poppy on National Poppy Day™, May 26, 2017

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.

(CITY, STATE, DATE) – With Memorial Day on the horizon, American Legion Post (POST NUMBER) reminds the public that Congress has designated May 26, 2017, as National Poppy Day™. The American Legion encourages all patriotic Americans to wear or display a red poppy as a symbol of remembrance and hope.

“The American Legion is pleased to have brought National Poppy Day™ to the United States,” said (FULL NAME), Commander of American Legion Post (POST NUMBER). “Wearing a poppy the Friday before Memorial Day is done to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice and as a symbol of hope for the generations to come who will answer our nation’s call to military service. It is important for Americans to remember that we have an entirely new group of veterans, and supporting them and their families is absolutely essential.”

The red poppy came to symbolize the blood shed by those who fought and those who continue to still fight for our country following World War I. It was popularized by the publication of the wartime 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. In 1920, the poppy became the official flower of The American Legion Family.

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. All donations received on National Poppy Day™ will be used by The American Legion to support the future of local veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families with medical and financial needs. This year, The Boeing Company became the first National Poppy Day™ sponsor.

For more information about National Poppy Day™ and to purchase poppy-themed items visit us online at www.legion.org/PoppyDay.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN LEGION

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.

###
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.
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

» 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

» 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