

The Poppy was first chosen as The American Legion's memorial flower at the 1921 National Convention and was worn in memory of the men who lost their lives in World War I. Picture vast armies on two sides in a long four year battle, along a double line of trenches.

This was Europe from 1914 to November 11, 1918. In this area of death and destruction, hundreds of thousands of American boys advanced in 1917 and 1918 determined to put an end to the horrible war. You all know the story of how they did end the war, restoring peace and liberty to subjected peoples. But, many thousands of fine young lives were required to complete the task.

The one bright color on the shell torn fields and hills of these war-torn areas was the little, red poppy. On the edges of the trenches, in the ragged shell holes, brave little poppies grew and bloomed on the graves of those men buried in the sacred plots of French soil, which was Flanders Field. Remembrances of the cheery bright red flowers returned to America with our boys. And so, the poppy became the symbol of the dead, their memorial flower. It became the sign that the high ideals for which these brave young men gave their lives, still live, and are honored.

Soon a double significance was attached to our memorial poppy. Disabled veterans quickly learned to assemble poppies while growing well again. In Connecticut, The American Legion and Auxiliary are united in our efforts to help those hospitalized veterans within our state. Through the winter months, cut materials are delivered to these veterans and soon boxes of bright red poppies are ready for a big distribution in May. And when payday arrives, what a thrill to receive their pay for a job well done! And what a joy it is to wear a poppy made by a disabled veteran, when you know the money it brought him filled a desperate need.

All money taken in over expenses is returned to the veterans and their families through our service program. Since the \*wars, we find our organizations carrying on for another generation.

At the present time, thousands of veterans are confined to beds in Connecticut hospitals and we have not as yet reached the peak of hospitalization. By the time Poppy Day arrives, many more veterans will be added. That is why each year, prior to Memorial Day, millions of Americans wear little red poppies in memory of those who have died in all wars and to assist in the rehabilitation of those veterans who are now hospitalized suffering from wounds and illness.

This is the story of our Memorial Poppy, millions of which are distributed by unpaid, volunteer workers on Poppy Day.

***Please remember by wearing a Poppy!***