

THE POPPY CAMPAIGN



THE POPPY...THE FLOWER OF REMEMBRANCE

Each November, millions of poppies blossom in Canada. Since 1921 they have blossomed on the jackets, dresses and hats of nearly half the Canadian population. The poppy is the symbol that individuals use to show that they remember those who were killed in the wars and in peace keeping operations that Canada has been involved in.

The association of the poppy with those who had been killed in war had existed for at least 110 years prior to being adopted in Canada. There are records of a correspondent who, during the Napoleonic Wars, wrote of how quickly poppies grew over the graves of soldiers in the area of Flanders, France.

The person, who was responsible more than any other, for the adoption of the poppy in Canada was Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae of Guelph, Ontario, a Canadian Medical Officer during the First World War. He came away from Ypres with thirteen lines scrawled on a scrap of paper which started: "In Flanders fields the poppies blow..." These lines are enshrined in the innermost thoughts and hearts of all soldiers who hear them. John McCrae was their voice.

In the United States, a woman named Moina Michael was working in a New York City YMCA canteen when she started wearing a poppy in memory of the thousands who died on the battlefield. The American Legion was inspired to adopt the poppy as the symbol of Remembrance. During a 1920 visit to the United States a French woman, Madame E. Guerin, learned of the custom. On her return to France she decided to use handmade poppies to raise money for the destitute children in war-torn areas of the country.

In Canada, the poppy was officially adopted by the Great War Veterans' Association in 1921, following the example of Mme. Guerin. There is little doubt that the impact of John McCrae's poem influenced this decision.

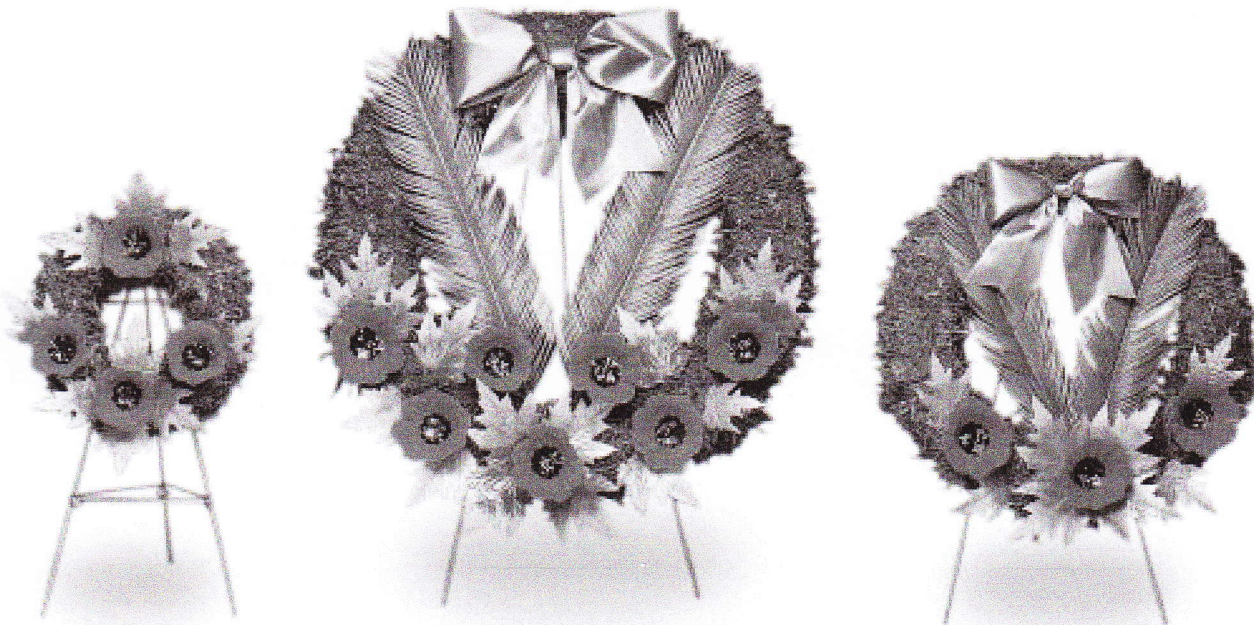
Thanks to the millions of Canadians who wear poppies each November, the little red plant has never died, nor have Canadians failed to remember the extreme sacrifices that 116,031 of their countrymen made on behalf of future generations.

POPPY FUNDS

The distribution of poppies and the sale of wreaths during the two weeks leading up to Remembrance Day raises the funds necessary for the Legion to operate Service Bureaux which act as advocates for veterans, ex-service people and their dependants seeking compensation from the Government for service incurred disabilities. Every year in excess of one million dollars of the money collected as a result of the annual Poppy Campaign is also used for direct assistance for ex-service people and their dependants in financial distress. Examples of the uses Poppy Funds are: payments for food, accommodation, utilities, clothing, educational assistance, furniture, medical, dental and optical services, and hospital comforts. The funds are a blessing for the many thousands helped.

The beneficiaries of aid from the Legion's Poppy Fund are not limited to veterans and ex-service members. Over the years, many millions of dollars have been given to worthy charities or spent providing the aged and disabled with medical assistance and equipment, meals-on-wheels, transportation, shelter and clothing. Funds are also provided for disaster relief. The Legion helps non-members and members alike, wherever need arises.

Since the workers who carry out the Poppy Campaign are volunteers from Legion membership, campaign expenses are limited largely to the cost of supplies, such as the manufacturing of the poppies and wreaths. The money collected is held in trust and cannot be spent on anything other than purposes specifically authorized in the General By-laws of The Royal Canadian Legion. Costs associated with branch, provincial, and Dominion Command operations are covered by dues paid by the membership.



ALL YOUR ANSWERS ON
THE POPPY CAMPAIGN

- 1. What does the poppy represent?** The poppy represents the symbol of Remembrance.
- 2. Why should I wear a poppy?** When you wear a poppy or display a wreath, you honour the war dead and help ex-service personnel and their dependants.
- 3. How do I help needy ex-service personnel and their dependants?** Contribute to the Poppy Campaign. The basic purpose of poppy funds is to provide immediate assistance to ex-service members in need. This may include food, shelter or medical attention for them or their families.
- 4. Are there any other uses for poppy funds?** Yes. Poppy funds can be used for low-rental housing and care facilities for the elderly or disabled, community medical appliances and medical research, day care centres, meals-on-wheels, transportation and related services for veterans and their dependants. Donations may be given for relief of disasters declared by the federal or provincial governments. Scholarships and bursaries are also provided for needy dependants of ex-service members.
- 5. Aren't ex-servicemen and women eligible for government pensions?** Yes. Many ex-servicemen and women do get pensions, but many others, although handicapped, do not. However, no pension can provide for eventualities such as fire, a long illness on the part of the breadwinner or other medical expenses.
- 6. Do you have to be a Legion member to get help from the poppy fund?** No. Any ex-service member or dependant is eligible to apply for financial aid from the poppy fund. The poppy funds also support the Legion service bureaux, and a large number of service bureau cases involve people who are not Legion members.
- 7. What are Service Bureaux?** Throughout the Legion, at Branches in virtually every community in Canada, in ten provincial commands, and in Ottawa, there are service officers who assist ex-service members or dependants with disability pensions or veterans legislation. The national and provincial offices not only provide advice but act on behalf of the individual. Every year thousands of representations are placed before the federal government on behalf of "clients". There is no charge for this service which is available to any ex-service member or dependant who can qualify for such assistance.
- 8. Does all the money raised through the distribution of poppies and wreaths go into poppy funds?** After expenses, such as the cost of poppies, wreaths and other supplies are deducted, all remaining monies are placed in trust to be used on those purposes authorized in the General By-laws of The Royal Canadian Legion.
- 9. How are poppy funds held?** The Legion's constitution stresses that poppy funds must be held in trust. They are subscribed to by the public. They are held in a bank account separate from that of the branch or command and cannot be used for any purpose other than those stipulated.
- 10. Are campaign expenses high?** Campaign expenses are unusually low because most of the work is voluntary.
- 11. How much should I give?** You should give according to the dictates of your conscience. You might remember that the cost of all the things the poppy fund provides is always on the increase; therefore, it takes more money from year to year to provide the same service.