

Poppy Year End Report
Department of Florida
Chairman: Debbie Sviderskas

I am very proud to report that 100% of our Districts have turned in a Poppy Report for the year 2015-2016. They have worked the program with class, flair, and determination to spread the word about poppies and their importance to our veterans. Our department was very much in need of Poppy makers. Therefore, we recruited veteran inmates from the Charlotte Correctional Institution, who have produced 30,640 poppies so far this year. The Department of Florida has collected \$12,537 to date from poppy distributions. Using over 4945 volunteer hours to promote this program.

The units in the department of Florida promoted the poppy program by setting up booths at community events like fresh markets, craft show, and Thunder Beach Bike Week. They scheduled volunteers in shifts at local stores such as Winn Dixie and Publix to also distribute the poppies. Several local papers ran articles explaining the reason for the poppy and how donations collected from donors help our veterans. The units worked with churches, rode in parades, had Miss poppy at functions, and did what they do best, talked.

To increase revenue, the units tried new locations to get the word out. They talked to radio stations and got help from them. Poppy plates were hung up in the post with donors names on them to encourage others to participate. Many forms of media were used to get the message out such as, TV, Radio, Bulletin Boards, Fliers, Newsletters, Facebook, and Twitter.

District 8's Unit #69 collected donations for poppy corsages and got the Mayor of Avon Park to declare February Poppy month in their city.

Rood-Williams Unit #271 from district 11 trained their volunteers to answer questions at their poppy distributions by giving them "Facts surrounding the Poppy". They had 40 volunteers between the legion families and their girl staters.

Titusville Unit # 1 from District 12 created a poppy decoration in the shape of the state of Florida using 154 poppies and taking 6 hours to create. They raffled it off.

Unit 303 John F. Murphy from District 13 used poppies in all the memorial services the hold for their legion family members and then collect them off the table where they are placed to form them in a bouquet. They present the bouquet to the family.

District 13 also has Unit 336 Ralph W. Sparks who distributed poppies on Memorial Day in conjunction with restaurants that were giving away free dinners to veterans.

They were rewarded with a large collection day by doing this.

Two units in the State of Florida promoted the poppy poster contest. Eleven posters were turned in. One unit went to the local elementary school to get participants. Arthur Sawyer Unit 28 sent a letter to a day care center asking for their UPK class to make posters. They received 10 entries from the day care.

Little Miss and Miss Poppy were promoted mostly with our Juniors. Thirteen girls participated in local parades, Auxiliary events, and Post family events. In the 6th District, Unit 286 had Little Miss and Miss Poppy visit the city and county Mayors offices to distribute poppies and received proclamations. These young ladies also attended workshop and Fall Conference.

District 11 has Rood-Williams Unit #271 who had 2 Little Miss Poppies. The first one was ill with cancer and had to have cancer treatments so they let the two girls share the responsibilities as they worked together spreading the word. The girls also promoted the program to their fellow school mates by passing out poppies and the cards explaining it's meaning.

Cross Bayou Unit #252 from District 16 was asked by Indian Rocks Christian School to participate in their Church Veteran's Program on Veterans Day. This happened because one of their students, a former Girl's Stater, told them how the American Legion Auxiliary takes care of our veterans.

These are just a few of the events the units in the State of Florida held to raise funds by distributing poppies for our veterans. They worked hard to get the word out and to make sure the reason for our poppy program, our veterans and their service, is not forgotten.