American Legion Auxiliary-Department of Florida

The Poppy Promise
Program Engagement Plan 2026-2027

M.A.S.H. - Mission Auxiliary Serving Heroes

Purpose

The purpose of the Poppy Committee is to educate ALA membership and the public on the significance of the poppy and the program's financial benefit for Veterans, military, and their families. Standing Rules #6, National Committees – Mission Outreach

Florida's Commitment

The Department of Florida is committed to promoting the Poppy Program as a year-round mission of honor, remembrance, education, and service. Through engagement, storytelling, community partnerships, and leadership, we will inspire members and communities to understand that the poppy is more than a symbol, it is a promise to remember those who served and sacrificed while supporting today's Veterans, service members, and their families.

Our Five Promises

1. Remember → Share a Veteran's story.
2. Honor → Tell why you wear the poppy.
3. Inspire → Share your Unit's successes.
4. Grow → Highlight how Poppy Funds change lives.
5. Preserve → Feature Veteran poppy makers and the history behind the poppy.

How We Keep the Promise

PROMISE TO REMEMBER

Challenge your Unit to...

- Wear your poppy year-round.
- Share one Veteran story.
- Teach the meaning of the poppy.

PROMISE TO HONOR

Challenge Your Unit To...

- Hold one poppy distribution.
- Enter one Poppy Poster.
- Crown one Poppy Ambassador.
- Partner with one Legion Family member.

The Poppy Isn't a Season. It's a Promise.
Remember. Honor. Inspire. Serve.

PROMISE TO INSPIRE

Inspire Others to Get Involved

Challenge your Unit to:

- 📸 Capture your Poppy Program through photos and stories.
- 📝 Keep a simple record of activities throughout the year.
- 🏆 Submit Department and National award nominations.
- 🎨 Participate in the Poppy Poster Contest and Poppy Ambassador Contest.
- 📣 Share your Unit's successes to inspire others across Florida.

Every story shared inspires another member to make a difference.

PROMISE TO PRESERVE

Preserve the Legacy of the Poppy

Challenge your Unit to:

- 🌺 Recruit and encourage new Veteran poppy makers.
- 🏥 Partner with VA Medical Centers, clinics, and therapy programs.
- 📚 Educate members and the public about the poppy-making tradition.
- 👏 Recognize and thank Veteran poppy makers for their craftsmanship.
- ❤️ Help ensure that this meaningful tradition continues for future generations.

Every poppy begins with a Veteran and carries
a legacy of service.

PROMISE TO GROW

Expand Our Impact

Challenge your Unit to:

- ❤️ Support projects that benefit Veterans, service members, and their families.
- 🤝 Partner with The American Legion Family and community organizations.
- ✈️ Support Honor Flights and other approved Poppy Fund projects.
- 🏡 Reach Veterans in VA facilities, nursing homes, and your local community.
- 🌟 Share how Poppy Funds make a difference in the lives of Veterans.

Every act of service strengthens our promise to those who served.



In Flanders Fields
By John McCrae

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the dead: Short days ago,
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved: and now we lie
In Flanders fields!
Take up our quarrel with the foe
To you, from failing hands, we throw
The torch: be yours to hold it high
If ye break faith with us who die,
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

-Composed at the battlefront on 3 May 1915 during the Second Battle of Ypres, Belgium.

🌺 **FLORIDA PROMISE CHALLENGE**

Every District crowns a Poppy Ambassador.

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District Poppy Chairperson

Your Leadership Role: The District Poppy Chairperson plays a vital role in advancing the Poppy Program by serving as a mentor, educator, and resource to Units throughout the District. An important responsibility of this position is organizing and conducting the District Poppy Ambassador Contest and crowning a District Poppy Ambassador and reporting name and credentials for consideration for Department of Florida Poppy Ambassador.

Responsibilities

Lead & Support

- Mentor and support Unit Poppy Chairpersons.
- Promote Department goals, initiatives, and year-round engagement.
- Encourage participation in all aspects of the Poppy Program.

Educate & Inspire

- Provide training and share program resources.
- Promote the Poppy Poster Contest and Poppy Ambassador Contest.
- Encourage creative ideas that increase awareness and participation.

Build Connections

- Foster collaboration among Units and the American Legion Family.
- Share successful projects and best practices throughout the District.
- Encourage partnerships with schools, businesses, and community organizations.

Communicate

- Maintain regular communication with Unit Chairpersons.
- Share Department updates, deadlines, and resources.
- Be available to answer questions and provide guidance.

Report & Recognize

- Encourage timely submission of reports, contests, and award applications.
- Assist Units with award narratives and documentation when needed.
- Recognize outstanding Units, volunteers, and community partners.

Grow the Program

- Promote recruitment of new poppy makers when opportunities arise.
- Encourage year-round poppy awareness and community outreach.
- Inspire every Unit to participate, tell its story, and make a lasting impact.

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Unit Poppy Chairperson

📣 **Your Leadership Role:** The Unit Poppy Chairperson serves as the local leader and advocate for the Poppy Program within their Unit and community.

🎯 Responsibilities

Signature Message
Every poppy tells a story.
Every Veteran deserves remembrance.
Every member can make a difference.
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Educate

- Teach the history of the poppy.
- Promote year-round awareness.
- Share updates at Unit meetings.

Engage

- Organize poppy distributions.
- Build community partnerships.
- Recognize military observances.

Inspire

- Promote the Poster Contest.
- Support Poppy Ambassador.
- Involve Junior members

Support Veterans

- Educate members on appropriate uses of Poppy Funds.
- Promote projects that benefit Veterans, military members, and their families.
- Support Veteran-centered programs and activities within the community.

Tell the Story

- Share Poppy Program stories, photos, and successes with your Unit and Department.
- Promote activities through newsletters, websites, and social media.
- Encourage members to share why they wear the poppy and what it represents.

Report & Recognize

- Keep a simple record of activities, participation, and community impact.
- Submit reports, award nominations, and contest entries by established deadlines.
- Recognize volunteers, businesses, and community partners who support the Poppy Program.

Poppy Funds

💲 Poppy Funds:

- Units shall maintain a separate accounting of their Poppy Funds.
- Units shall send to Department 25% of their net proceeds within 30 days of distribution and no later than 30 days prior to Convention, to be in good standing.
- Unit Guide

💲 Poppy Donations Can Be Used For:

- Rehabilitation of Veterans honorably discharged from the United States Armed Forces after April 6, 1917.
- Welfare of the families of Veterans of the above named period.
- Rehabilitation of hospitalized service personnel returning home and awaiting discharge who require treatment in service hospitals.
- Welfare of Veterans, active military personnel, and the families of Veterans and active military personnel of the above named period where financial and medical need is evident.
- The purchase of poppy kits and supplies used to make symbolic poppies and poppy items that will be distributed for donations to the poppy fund.
- Poppy funds are used to support three major national mission outreach activities: *National Veterans Creative Arts Festival*, *Honor Flight* mission, and *food insecurity among service members nationwide*.

NATIONAL VETERANS CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL

Honor Flight NETWORK®

the YMCA®

ARMED SERVICES YMCA

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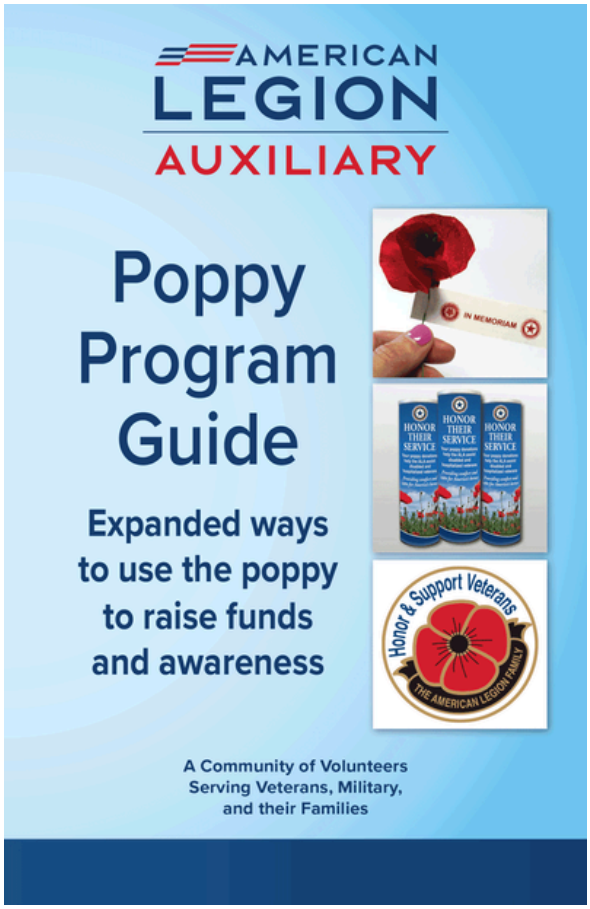
Resources

🧭 Resources Available

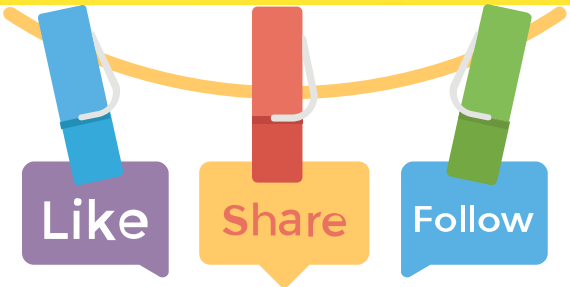
- Visit www.ALAforVeterans.org for donation can label, bookmark, poem, program certificate, PSA, news release, and sample poppy proclamation.
- Poppy Days Resources (felt poppy instructions, cookie recipe, and coloring book)
- Check your Department website
- Follow, like, and comment on our Facebook page
- Tag @ALAFLpoppies on your Facebook posts about your poppy activities and photos.





We Shall Keep the Faith
By Moina Michael
November 1918

Oh! You who sleep in Flanders Fields,
Sleep sweet – to rise anew!
We caught the torch you threw
And holding high, we keep the Faith
With All who died.
We cherish, too, the poppy red
That grows on fields where valor led;
It seems to signal to the skies
That blood of heroes never dies,
But lends a luster to the red
Of the flower that bloom above the dead
In Flanders Fields.
And now the Torch and Poppy Red
We wear in honor of our dead.
Fear not that ye have died for naught;
We'll teach the lesson that ye wrought
In Flanders Fields.



@ALAFLpoppies

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👑 Florida Poppy Ambassador (Age 6-12)

Activity: May 1 of the current year to April 30 of the following year.

Every District is encouraged to crown a District Poppy Ambassador and submit online form, digital scrapbook, and narrative by May 1. On the same note - any Poppy Ambassador can submit an application to National by June 1. He or she doesn't need to be the Poppy Ambassador chosen by the department.

The winner's name and supporting documents will be submitted for National Poppy Ambassador.
At Department Convention...2027 Florida Poppy Ambassador will be crowned (crown, sash, and citation). He or she becomes the ambassador for the Poppy Program throughout the following year.

Criteria for judging Poppy Ambassador entries:

- The memorial poppy must be visible in all promotion and publicity submitted.
- There is no specific dress code or dress color for the Poppy Ambassador.
- Promotion of the Poppy Program: What did you share and do?
- Publicity of poppy activities (newspapers, radio/TV, etc.).
- Submitted file must include the following information (both pictures and descriptions)
    - o What I learned during my time as a Poppy Ambassador?
    - o How I shared the story of the poppy with my community?
    - o What does the poppy mean to me?
    - o What activities did I attend to promote the poppy and its meaning?
- Age-appropriate originality with considerations for neatness and creativity.

The National Poppy Ambassador (age 6-12) winner may be invited to the ALA National Convention immediately following her selection, and if they so choose, will travel at their own expense.
The winner of the National Poppy Ambassador contest will receive a citation plaque.

View the National Poppy Ambassador Contest web page.



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Poppy Program Awards

Department Chairperson Award

Most Outstanding Unit Poppy Program - Unit Citation, One Unit Per Member Grouping. From the 6, Award Plaque (One Winner).

Recognizes outstanding achievement in promoting and supporting the Poppy Program. The entry must be typewritten in narrative format not to exceed 1,000 words. The report should cover all relevant information involving program activity describing your use of the poppies throughout the year. Pictures are encouraged with your report. Submit PDF file for the report and send photos in original format separately by email to poppy@alafl.org



***Member Grouping is based on unit membership at close of books thirty (30) days prior to Convention, see unit guide.**

Poppy Promise Award - Unit Citation, One Unit Per Member Grouping. From the 6, Award Plaque (One Winner).

Recognize Unit(s) that consistently promoted the Poppy Program throughout the year.

Criteria:

- Year-round promotion
- Social media posts
- Community education
- Veteran stories shared

Send screenshots of social media, photos in original format, timeline of promotion, send by via email to poppy@alafl.org.

Poppy Ambassador Award - Open To All Members, Citation For All That Submit. One Senior Member and One Junior/Young Member Will Be Awarded a Plaque (2).

Recognize individual members who went above and beyond promoting the Poppy Program.

Criteria:

- Community outreach
- Education efforts
- Poppy distributions
- Contest promotion
- Recruitment of volunteers

Send screenshots of social media, photos in original format with captions, timeline of promotion, send by via email to poppy@alafl.org.

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Department Award

Shirley Harbour Award (expires in 2030): Awarded to the unit submitting the best narrative, not more than 1,000 words, on 8 ½" x 11" paper, describing their promotion of the Poppy program. Report should include the number of Unit members recruited (Junior and Senior) to support Poppy Days, the community involvement in our Poppy Program, and the publicity used in the promotion of the Poppy story. Unit must have ordered a minimum of 1,000 Poppies.
Fly page to include name, number and location of the Unit, name of the Unit President and the Unit Poppy Chairman. Entry to reach Department Chairman by thirty (30) days prior to Department convention.



National Awards

Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Poppy Program (per division*) All unit entries must be submitted via electronic form by 5 p.m. EST on June 1.
Note: You will receive a confirmation when your award is submitted.
To view the National Awards Form, go to www.legion-aux.org or scan QR code.

***Florida is in the Southern division, along with Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.**



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Together We Promise To:

- Remember those who served.
- Honor their sacrifice.
- Support Veterans, service members, and their families.
- Preserve the legacy of the poppy.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

#PoppyPromise

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