

THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY NATIONAL POPPY DAY®

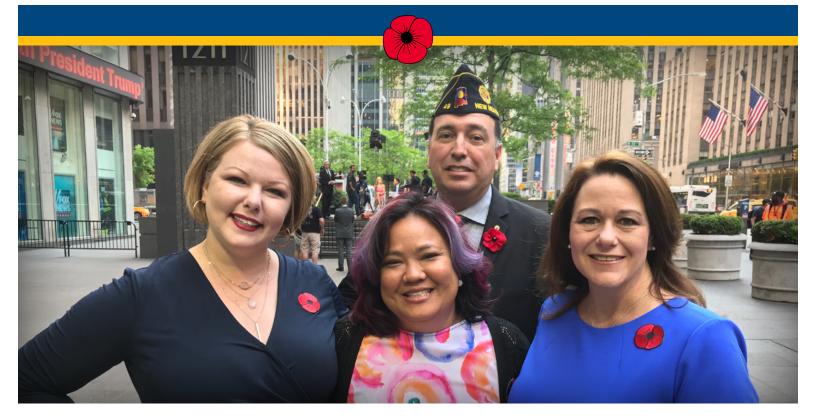
National Poppy Day®

TOOLKIT









NATIONAL POPPY DAY® TOOLKIT INSTRUCTIONS

The tradition of wearing a poppy dates back to 1920, when it became the memorial 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 servicemembers and their families.

This year, The American Legion Family is continuing to bring attention to this symbolic flower by calling upon all Americans to honor the fallen and support the living on National Poppy Day[®], May 27, 2022. Though times have changed, your post and unit can still find ways to assemble and distribute poppies.

The American Legion Family will promote National Poppy Day[®] with:

- a) Legion.org/poppyday
- b) Merchandise in the <u>Poppy Shop</u> section of The American Legion Emblem Sales webstore
- c) Poppy distribution
- d) National and local media engagement

THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY NATIONAL POPPY DAY*

Posts and units are encouraged to build on this heightened awareness by hosting socially distanced poppy awareness activities. These events could include things like inviting local government and civic leaders to a poppy making event in advance of National Poppy Day[®], hosting an outdoor poppy making event at a local park, or holding a drive thru poppy distribution at your local post or in a shopping center parking lot. At this difficult time, we must be creative.

This toolkit is designed to aid in local promotion. It contains a sample civic proclamation, media alert, press release, social media posts, graphics and talking points to help you speak to the importance of National Poppy Day while ensuring a consistent message by all in The American Legion Family. It also includes a tip sheet for hosting a poppy making event. If you have any questions or need assistance, please reach out to your department.

• **State and Citywide Proclamations:** Ask your local government to declare May 27, 2022, as National Poppy Day[®] in your community. A sample proclamation and request letter have been included that provide language that can be used to help your post and unit garner support from state and local officials. In some cases, proclamation request instructions can be found online at the mayor's or governor's website.

A proclamation can be very effective at generating awareness and media attention, but requests typically take time to process. It is a good idea to submit your 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 let them know the request will be forthcoming.

• Media Alert: A media alert announces local poppy making events, poppy distribution and other activities planned around National Poppy Day[®]. This at-a-glance reminder should be distributed to local media outlets two days prior to an event taking place. List the specifics of where the media can go to learn more about National Poppy Day[®] and interview local members of The American Legion Family.

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! It increases the chances of an outlet running the story if all of the details are provided in a clear and organized way.

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.

- **Quick Facts:** The quick facts sheet is a good leave behind for media following an interview. It helps ensure that information and facts are accurately reported by the press. It can also be used to provide post and unit members with information, especially for those distributing poppies who may encounter questions from the general public.
- **<u>Tip Sheet Poppy Making Event:</u>** The tip sheet is provided as a guide for hosting a poppy making event. It is organized in a start to finish format and can be used for reference when planning your event. If hosting an event, be sure to adhere to local health and safety guidelines.
- **Social Media Suggestions:** Post and unit websites and social media feeds can increase awareness about National Poppy Day[®] to members and followers. Be sure to regularly post information during the weeks leading up to May 27, 2022 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.

- **Talking Points:** The entire American Legion Family is participating in and supporting National Poppy Day[®]. It is very important that everyone communicates 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 Family is helping communities show their support for our heroes and servicemembers on National Poppy Day[®]. These talking points should be given to your media spokespeople and localized with details of events in your community.
- **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.
- Logo: The American Legion Family logo and poppy graphic can be found online for download at Legion.org/poppyday. We encourage you to use these logos on all National Poppy Day[®] communications.

More information about National Poppy Day[®] can be found at Legion.org/poppyday.



SAMPLE LETTER TO ACCOMPANY PROCLAMATION

[DATE] [NAME] [ADDRESS] [CITY, STATE ZIP]

Dear [Mayor NAME],

The American Legion Family, with the support of Congress, has designated May 27, 2022, as National Poppy Day[®]. We encourage 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 the servicemembers who have made the ultimate sacrifice fighting for our freedom.

The American Legion Family would be honored to have your support by sponsoring an official proclamation in [CITY/STATE] to recognize May 27, 2022, as National Poppy Day[®] in our community. Your proclamation would lend official recognition to the importance of all citizens, residents and visitors in [CITY] observing this day to honor every servicemember who has died in the name of liberty, freedom and democracy. I have enclosed a sample proclamation which may be of use to your office to compose the appropriate proclamation for [CITY/STATE].

EVENT INFORMATION SAMPLE: The American Legion Family will be holding a special event on [DATE] at [LOCATION] to distribute poppies to citizens. We extend an invitation to you to attend this special event and present your proclamation. If you are unable to attend, a representative of your office is welcome to read the proclamation to our supporters on [DAY OF EVENT].

If you or your staff have any questions concerning the request, the sample proclamation, or National Poppy Day[®], please call me at [TELEPHONE NUMBER]. I will follow up on this request with your office in the next few days. As always, we appreciate your support of National Poppy Day[®] and helping The American Legion Family to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms.

Sincerely,

[NAME] [TITLE], American Legion [Post #/American Legion Auxiliary Unit #]

Enclosure



PROCLAMATION EXAMPLE

The Mayor's Office

Expressing support for the designation of May 27, 2022, as National Poppy Day[®] in honor of our fallen.

THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR [DATE, 2022]

American Legion [Post #/American Legion Auxiliary Unit # TITLE NAME] submitted the following proclamation; which was referred to the [OFFICE OF THE MAYOR] for review.

PROCLAMATION

Expressing support for the designation of May 27, 2022, as National Poppy Day[®] in [CITY] and recognizing the importance of honoring those who 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 Family adopted the poppy as a symbol of freedom and the blood sacrificed by troops in wartimes. The symbolic use of the poppy 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-up earth of newly dug soldiers' graves over parts of Belgium and France; 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 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 27, 2022, would be an appropriate date to designate as National Poppy Day[®].

Now, therefore, be it Resolved, that the [OFFICE OF THE MAYOR] —

(1) supports the designation of May 27, 2022 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.



MEDIA ALERT Celebration of National Poppy Day® — Friday, May 27, 2022

Honor 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.

WHEN: Friday, May 27, 2022

Interview Opportunity: [XX:00 a.m. – XX:00 p.m. NAME, title, Post#/American Legion Auxiliary Unit #]

WHERE: [POPPY DISTRIBUTION SITE, ADDRESS, CITY, STATE]

WHAT: EXAMPLE: The American Legion Family will be distributing poppies to the community at [LOCATION NAME(S)] for National Poppy Day[®]. Everyone is encouraged to make a donation in exchange for a poppy. All donations will provide support for the future of veterans, active-duty military and their families with medical and financial needs.

EXAMPLE: The American Legion Family will be hosting a drive through poppy distribution for the community at [LOCATION NAME(S)] in celebration of National Poppy Day[®]. Everyone is encouraged to stop by and make a donation in exchange for a poppy. All donations will provide support for the future of veterans, active-duty military and their families with medical and financial needs.

EXAMPLE: The American Legion Family and [NAME CITY/TOWN OFFICIAL] will be signing a proclamation bringing National Poppy Day[®] to [NAME OF CITY/ TOWN].

EXAMPLE: The mayor of [NAME CITY/TOWN] will take part in a special poppy making event to show support for veterans in the local community. Mayor [NAME] will then hand out poppies at [LOCATION] on National Poppy Day[®] as the community joins together to honor the fallen and support the living.

- **WHY:** By wearing a poppy on National Poppy Day[®], we not only honor every servicemember who has died in the name of liberty, freedom and democracy, but we provide the opportunity to support veterans for generations to come. National Poppy Day[®] is an initiative supported by the entire American Legion Family, which includes The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, and the American Legion Riders.
- **ABOUT:** The American Legion designated the Friday before Memorial Day as National Poppy Day[®]. This designation adds to the tradition found in many countries around the world. National Poppy Day[®] encourages all Americans to wear a red poppy to honor the fallen and support the living heroes who have worn our nation's uniform. The poppy is also the memorial flower of The American Legion Family.

The red poppy came to symbolize the blood shed during battle following the publication of the wartime poem "In Flanders Fields," written by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, M.D. He wrote the poem while serving on the front-line during World War I to honor soldiers killed in battle.

For many years, The American Legion Auxiliary has distributed poppies with a request that the person receiving the flower make a donation to support local veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families with medical and financial needs.

About The American Legion



The American Legion is the largest wartime veterans service organization with nearly 2 million members in more than 12,000 posts across the nation. Chartered by Congress in 1919, The American Legion is committed to mentoring youth and sponsoring wholesome community programs, advocating patriotism and honor, promoting a strong national security, and continued devotion to servicemembers and veterans. Learn more at <u>legion.org</u>.

About the American Legion Auxiliary



The American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) is a community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families. Our members also support the mission of The American Legion in improving the quality of life for our nation's veterans. Proud sponsor of ALA Girls Nation, National Poppy Day[®] and recognized for advocating for veterans on Capitol Hill, the more than 600,000 ALA members across the country volunteer millions of hours annually and raise millions of dollars in service to veterans, military, and their families. Founded in 1919, the ALA is one of the oldest patriotic membership organizations in the U.S.A. To learn more and to volunteer, join, and donate, visit <u>www.ALAforVeterans.org</u>.

[CONTACT]:



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE [CONTACT]: [EMAIL]: [PHONE]:

The American Legion Family encourages community to wear a red poppy on National Poppy Day[®], May 27, 2022

Wear a red poppy on National Poppy Day[®] as a symbol to honor the fallen and support the living heroes who have worn our nation's uniform.

[CITY, STATE, DATE], 2022 – With Memorial Day on the horizon, The American Legion Family reminds the public that Congress supports May 27, 2022 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 Family is pleased to have brought National Poppy Day[®] to the United States," said [_______, TITLE] of American Legion [Post #/Americacn Legion Auxiliary Unit #]. "Wearing a poppy the Friday before Memorial Day is a reminder to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice and is 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. 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 fight for our country following World War I. It was popularized by the publication of the wartime poem "In Flanders Fields." Written by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, M.D. while serving on the front line in World War I, the poem honors soldiers killed in battle. In 1920, the poppy became the memorial 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 Family to support the future of local veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families with medical and financial needs.

For more information about National Poppy Day[®] and to purchase poppy-themed items please go to Legion.org/poppyday.

About The American Legion



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QUICK FACTS

National Poppy Day:

- The American Legion has the support of 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 honor the fallen and support the living heroes who have worn our nation's uniform. National Poppy Day[®] will take place on May 27, 2022.
- 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 wartime poem "In Flanders Fields." The poem was written by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, M.D. while serving on the front line in World War I, to honor soldiers killed in battle.

- The poppy became the memorial flower of The American Legion on September 27, 1920, in Cleveland, Ohio.
- National Poppy Day[®] is an initiative supported by the entire American Legion Family, which includes The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, and the American Legion Riders.
- 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.

The American Legion:

- Chartered by Congress in 1919, The American Legion is the largest wartime veterans service organization with nearly 2 million members in more than 12,000 posts in communities across the U.S.
- 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 servicemembers and veterans.

- More information about The American Legion can be found at legion.org. Information about the American Legion Auxiliary can be found at <u>legion-aux.org</u>.
- More information about National Poppy Day[®] is available at Legion.org/poppyday.

The American Legion Auxiliary

- The mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad.
- The vision of the American Legion Auxiliary is to become the premier service organization and foundation of every community, providing support for our veterans, our military, and their families by shaping a positive future in an atmosphere of fellowship, patriotism, peace and security.

Sons of The American Legion:

- Sons of The American Legion place high importance on preserving American traditions and values, improving the quality of life for our nation's children, caring for veterans and their families, and perhaps most importantly, teaching the fundamentals of good citizenship.
- Sons of The American Legion assist their posts in activities such as veterans programs, VA home and hospital volunteerism, children youth projects and fundraising.



TIP SHEET POPPY MAKING EVENT & DISTRIBUTION

Goals:

- Engage members of the community to educate them about The American Legion Family, National Poppy Day[®] and what it means to be a veteran who is still serving their country.
- Raise awareness about why it is important to wear a poppy to honor the fallen and support the living.
- Provide event participants with a supply of poppies to share with their family, friends and coworkers.

Location:

- When planning your event, consider local public health safety guidelines. If your community has COVID-19 restrictions and best practices, be sure to follow them. If you are unable to host an event, individuals can make poppies at home and deliver them to the post for distribution.
- Host members of the community at your post. Or, if you are inviting local government and civic leaders who work in offices that are not near your post, consider hosting the poppy making event in a public space that is conveniently located.
- For public distribution, consider using a retail parking lot, a public library, bank/fast food drive thru, church lobby, or even at the office of the mayor or governor with appropriate permissions.
- By setting up the event in a public space, your post can engage with members of the community who may be curious and inquire about the symbolism of the poppy and/or membership. It may also generate media interest.



Preparation:

- Order supplies from the <u>Poppy Shop</u> section of The American Legion Emblem Sales webstore well in advance of the event to allow enough time for delivery before your event.
- Confirm the location and attendee list a week or two in advance to be sure the event is well attended.
- Send your media alert two to three days in advance and follow up with a phone call the day before to see if any local reporters plan to cover the story and possibly participate in the event.

Set-up:

- Depending on the number of expected attendees, have plenty of tables and chairs to make it comfortable for participants.
- Allow ample room for social distancing where applicable.
- Provide personal protective supplies such as face masks and hand sanitizer.
- Red, white and blue tablecloths can be used to help create a patriotic atmosphere and sense of pride in what participants are creating. A National Poppy Day[®] banner image is also available for download at Legion.org/poppyday.

Timing:

- Limit the event to approximately one hour.
- If local government and civic leaders are being invited, let them know it is okay to simply "drop by" and attend for 10-15 minutes. They likely have busy schedules and can at least participate for a little while to make a few poppies and show their support.

During the Event:

- Ask participants to sign a media release form so that images may be used on social media pages.
- If local government and civic leaders are attending, ask if you can include their name in a photo caption and share the image with the media.
- Be sure to get the correct spelling of names.

Post Event:

- Send a press release to local media that recaps the event.
- Be sure to include a photo and caption.
- Distribute the poppies at a high traffic location, such as a grocery store or shopping center. Or host a drive through at your post, at a bank/fast food drive thru or in a church parking lot. People will find it easy to drive by, receive a poppy and make a donation.
- Educators teaching in a virtual environment provide another opportunity for distribution. Send poppies to the school along with information about National Poppy Day[®] and encourage them to wear a poppy and share the meaning of the flower with their students, as we honor the fallen and support the living.



SOCIAL MEDIA SUGGESTIONS

Below are sample posts for use on Facebook and Twitter during the weeks leading 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 27. Encourage everyone to honor the fallen and show their support for living veterans and servicemembers by wearing a red poppy.
 #PoppyDay #LegionFamily
- National Poppy Day is Friday! Join us in honoring those who died in the name of liberty, freedom and democracy. #PoppyDay #LegionFamily



- The poppy a symbol of hope and remembrance. Wear yours on National Poppy Day May 27. #PoppyDay #LegionFamily
- Pin on your poppy May 27! Honor the fallen, support the living! #PoppyDay #LegionFamily
- Congress supports May 27 as National Poppy Day! Pin on your poppy to honor 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 27? #PoppyDay #LegionFamily
- Volunteers will be distributing poppies at [LOCATION] on [DATE]. Get yours for National Poppy Day. We'll be wearing masks, but you'll see the gratitude in our eyes. #PoppyDay #LegionFamily
- Teachers would you like to share the meaning of the poppy with your students? Let us know and we'll deliver poppies to your school. #PoppyDay #LegionFamily
- 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 Friday, May 27 to honor the fallen and support the living.
 #PoppyDay #LegionFamily

Community Calendar:

• National Poppy Day is Friday, May 27, 2022. American Legion volunteers will be distributing poppies at [LOCATION] on [DATE]. Wear a poppy to remember the fallen and show support for the living.

TALKING POINTS

About National Poppy Day®:

- With the support of Congress, May 27, 2022, is designated as National Poppy Day[®]. The American Legion Family 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.
- National Poppy Day[®] is an initiative supported by the entire American Legion Family, which includes The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, and the American Legion Riders.
- More information about National Poppy Day[®] can be found at Legion.org/poppyday.

About the Poppy:

- The poppy flower adorned the battlefields of Flanders Field in 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 memorial 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 nearly 2 million members in more than 12,000 posts in communities across the U.S.
- 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.

About the American Legion Auxiliary:

- The American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) is a community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families. Our members also support the mission of The American Legion in improving the quality of life for our nation's veterans.
- Founded in 1919, the ALA is one of the oldest patriotic membership organizations in the U.S.A. To learn more and to volunteer, join, and donate, visit <u>www.ALAforVeterans.org</u>.



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

In addition to sending a media alert about a poppy making event or poppy distribution day, you can also reach out to community websites and online publications that may include event calendars or community bulletin boards as part of their editorial coverage. These listings provide a great opportunity to let others know about the work your post or unit is doing on behalf of raising awareness about the poppy, National Poppy Day[®] and The American Legion Family.

Where to Look:

- There may be an "Events" or "Calendar" button at the top of the website. Clicking the button will take you to the listings page which often includes a "Submit" button or link to an online form.
- Websites may include a button to submit an event at the bottom of their homepage. Scrolling down to the end of page often leads to "Events" or "Contact Us" links which may include an online form or an email address where you can submit your information.
- If the "Contact Us" page provides a list of editors, and doesn't include calendar or event contacts, look for an editor that reports on lifestyle or community news. They may be a good first contact that can point you in the right direction to get your poppy making event or poppy distribution day listed.

What to Say:

- Example: The American Legion Family will be distributing poppies at [LOCATION] on [DATE] from [TIME]. The red poppy is worn to honor our fallen servicemembers who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. National Poppy Day[®] is Friday, May 27, 2022.
- Example: The American Legion Family will be distributing poppies at [LOCATION] on [DATE] from [TIME]. Wearing the symbolic red flower pays tribute to the fallen and the future of living veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families. Please join us by wearing a poppy on National Poppy Day[®] Friday, May 27, 2022.
- Example: The American Legion Family will be distributing poppies at [LOCATION] on [DATE] from [TIME]. The red poppy is worn to honor our fallen servicemembers who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Donations will be accepted to support the future of veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families with medical and financial needs. National Poppy Day[®] is Friday, May 27, 2022.

