

How the Poppy Appeal began.

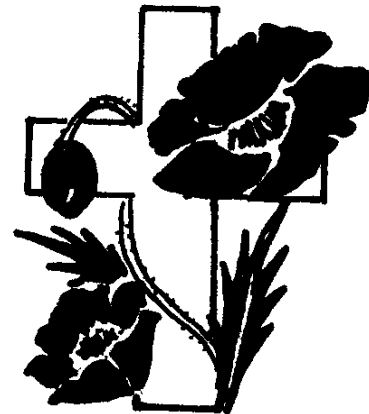
The first donations for artificial poppies were given in Britain on 11th November 1921, inspired by John McCrae's 1915 poem 'In Flanders' Fields'.

Some of the bloodiest fighting of World War One took place in the Flanders and Picardy regions of Northern France. In the aftermath of the war's total devastation the only thing which would grow on the land was the poppy. McCrae, a doctor serving there with the Canadian Armed Forces, wrote these verses about what he saw:

*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.*



In Britain, Major George Howson, a young infantry officer, formed the Disabled Society, to help disabled ex-Servicemen and women from World War One. Howson suggested to the Legion that members of the Disabled Society could make poppies and the Poppy Factory was subsequently founded in 1922.

The original poppy was designed so that workers with a disability could easily assemble it and that principle remains today. More than 70% of Poppy Factory employees have a disability or chronic illness.

The Royal British Legion

The Royal British Legion, founded in 1921 is the leading charity safeguarding the welfare, interests and memory of those who have served in the Armed Forces. Nearly 15 million people are eligible for support from the Legion.

The Legion provides:-

- accommodation in seven residential care homes
- care in three convalescent units
- home visits to the long-term sick and housebound
- free advice and help over war disablement and war windows pensions
- holidays for severely disabled people
- help for those who would like to visit a relative's war grave