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Poppy Campaign launches locally and across Canada

Written By PETER RICHARDSON

Little did Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae realize when he wrote In Flanders Fields, Just how ubiquitous the poppy would become in the years following the First World War.

Adopted as the Official sign of remembrance by the Royal Canadian Legion, in 1925, today the poppy, worn from the end of October until Nov. 11, is synonymous with the sacred pledge to never forget.

Dean Schroeder, Sergeant-at-Arms of the Shelburne Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, is the chairperson of the Poppy Campaign locally.

The poppies are available now at all the major banks and stores in Shelburne, restaurants and grocery stores. They are available by donation and the money generated from the campaign remains exclusively dedicated to the support of veterans.

However, the money is not what is important, it is the act of remembering and supporting our veterans that warms their hearts. Just knowing that people care and choose to show that, by wearing a poppy.

In 2021, donations from the Poppy Campaign totalled more than $14,000 of which more than $4,000 was distributed for veterans programs, service dogs, and even coffee for the vets at the Legion, which gets them out of the house and provides a sense of belonging to the community.

The poppy is a symbol of respect, for veterans, both old and new and their service to their country.

It is a way of saying thank you for that which they have done and that which is still to be done. The support and thanks stretches across Canada and around the world.

Every second Wednesday of the month is when the Shelburne Legion hosts its veterans and holds meetings at their hall.

In 2013, 18 million poppies were distributed worldwide, raising over $12,000,000 for veterans programs, like the previously mentioned service dogs, and hospital trusts, which support providing beds in hospitals for veterans. But there are other programs, such as one which aims to teach veterans to fly fish, to get them out in the community. Drop-in centres, meals on wheels and housing initiatives that not only provide housing but maintain them as well are supported through the Poppy Campaign revenue.

Wearing a Poppy, is a way of telling all our veterans that we remember them and thank them for their service, whether here in Canada or abroad in such places as Bosnia, Iraq, Somalia, Cyprus and Afghanistan or other campaigns where our soldiers have proudly served.

Schroeder has worn a Canadian flag on his shoulder since he was 14 years old and in cadets. Today, in his 50s, he wears a flag tattooed on his shoulder, as a permanent reminder of his service to Canadians.

When asked why support the Poppy Campaign, his reply is the results. Seeing the results of all the things the campaign provides he says is amazing. Schroeder is a strong supporter of the wearing ofa poppy.

This year, the Shelburne Legion will have two Remembrance Celebrations on Nov. 11. The first will be held at the Legion itself, at 9:30 a.m., following which the veterans will march to the local cenotaph at Town Hall for the traditional public Remembrance Day Ceremony, on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of the year, marking the end of the Great War, WWI.