

Remembrance Day Etiquette

History of Poppy

Each November, poppies are worn by millions of Canadians to pay respect to fallen soldiers. Poppies grew over the graves of soldiers in Flanders, France. Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae first introduced the Poppy to Canada. After serving in the war as a doctor, he wrote In Flanders Field. The poem soon was published and read at memorial services in efforts to recruit soldiers. Moina Michael, a professor at the University of Georgia, heard the poem and it resonated with her. She began making poppies and selling them to raised money for returning veterans. The poppy was adopted as a National emblem of remembrance, and soon after many more countries followed suit.

How to Wear A Poppy

1. Poppy should be worn on the left hand side over the heart
2. The poppy should be worn by itself – with no other pin/broach obstructing it
3. The poppy should be worn in the remembrance period between the last Friday of October until November 11
4. The Legion encourages the wearing of a poppy for the funeral of a veteran and for any commemorative event honouring fallen veterans
5. Disposing of the poppy should be done in a respectful way after November 11
6. Instead of disposing your poppy – it can be left on a war memorial to show respect (ex. Cenotaph, or a veteran's grave at the end of a commemorative ceremony)
7. Reusing your poppy for next year is considered faux-pas, it discourages people from contributing to the poppy fund the next year
8. Don't alter the poppy – although it may be tempting to swap out the straight pin for a closed pin, the poppy is a sacred symbol and should not be defaced. Using a rubber stopped at the sharp end is a better alternative

Remembrance Day Etiquette

1. When attending Remembrance Day ceremony, dressing formally is a sign of respect
2. Gentlemen should remove their hats – women are exempt from this rule – unless hat is blocking view at a ceremony
3. No selfies – although this day may be a special day – refrain from using cellphones and feel the unity and reverence
4. Pause for two minutes of silence at 11:00 a.m. on November 11th
5. Bow your head, stand still, reflect and honour veterans in this meditation of gratitude and peace
6. The official rules for wearing medals allow only official awards to be worn by the recipient

Ways To Honour

1. Organize a candlelight tribute ceremony at a cemetery to remember those who died during military service
2. Wreaths are common at commemorative services, and can be laid at a ceremony
3. Educating youth on our history and honouring our veterans is of utmost importance

In Flanders Fields

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.

Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae
~ May 3, 1915