



American Legion Auxiliary Department of California Poppy DEC Mid-Year Report

Madam Department President,

This Flower Girl is excited about the direction the Poppy Program is progressing. The Poppy Flower Shop, located on Poppy Way, is flourishing with various poppy displays. Perhaps you saw some of them yesterday while strolling along the Boardwalk. The Poppy Bouquets (district chairmen) are doing a great job working with the Poppy Seeds (unit chairmen). Your Mid-Year Poppy Reports were full of projects and various ways you are promoting the Poppy Program.

According to the Mid-Year Reports, there has been waves of work done already at the District and Unit levels. Twenty-two districts submitted Mid-Year Reports showing 113 units responded. Nine districts had 100% reporting.

In October 1921, the ALA adopted the Poppy as its Memorial Flower at its organizing convention in Kansas City – that is one hundred years ago! Since this year represents the 100th Anniversary, the October bulletin asked units to get creative and find ways to celebrate this 100th poppy anniversary. Twenty-nine units responded that they celebrated in a variety of impressive ways. District 11, for instance, reported two units celebrated; one unit reported they held a community day lunch with the Post and Honor Guard while the Poppy Story was read, another unit handed out poppies at assisted living homes while the Flanders Field poem was read to residents. Unit 79 in District 21 did several dinners with the Hall decorated appropriately, they placed the Flanders Field Poem and individual poppies on the dining room tables. Their Halloween Bash included poppies incorporated into the festivities and decorations, and they ended their event with 100-Year Poppy birthday cake.

I promised to present an award at DEC for the best Unit Poppy Anniversary Celebration. Unit 377 of District 20 submitted the First Place supplemental describing their celebration. They will receive a check for \$25.00 personally from this . Their celebration included a Poppy Wall with a 30" 3-D "Lest

We Forget" Poppy. It was placed under a banner that read "Poppy 100-Year Celebration, 1921-2021." They laminated a poster board sign that depicted the symbolism of the different components of the poppy. They also designed coasters replicating the poppy, laminated them and taped a poppy to each one for the bartenders to hand out with drink orders. Poppy donation cans were also placed throughout the Post during the month.

District 18 reported on the following district-wide Veterans Day project: Units donated left over poppies and attached them to Poppy coloring books and Poppy cards. Charter Cove Unit 755 hosted a "Poppy Party", complete with a light lunch, and attached 1,325 poppies to the books and cards. They delivered 825 poppy coloring books and 500 poppy cards to the principal of Lewis Elementary School prior to Veterans Day to teach the elementary and middle school children of Fort Irwin about the meaning of the Memorial Poppy. I quote Laura Bradshaw, District 18 Chairman: "Mission accomplished? Not quite". She continues in her report that on November 10, five District officers and chairmen were invited to Fort Irwin Army Base. There they were informed that the teachers had incorporated the Poppy Story into their curriculum. They saw students with poppies on their backpacks and wearing poppies on their clothing. Now she declared, "Mission Accomplished"! I totally agree – and what an awesome Mission that was!

Despite losing Long Beach and Yountville, we will have enough poppies for each order to be fulfilled. Our 2021-2022 one and only Poppy Production Manager, Lois Cornish, is working harder than ever with her Poppy making veterans. Lois' WAVE clinic and other recruits will make more than 100,000 to cover poppy orders. Not only is she trying to pick up the slack of the missing two PPM locations, she and her poppy makers have been put out of their WAVE clinic while the VA is relocating them to another refurbished area, and the refurbishing of that location is not going smoothly. Lois deserves many, many thanks and a show of appreciation from all of us for going above and beyond the call of duty. (pause for clapping) Thank you, Lois, for being truly dedicated to our veterans, the American Legion Auxiliary and our Poppy Program. You are appreciated! Jean Sudbeck and Leisure World Auxiliary Unit 327 volunteered to make over 21,500 poppies to cover District 21 and District 29 Poppy orders. Jean and Unit

327 also deserve a show of appreciation for stepping up to help. (begin applauding)

Gerda Shupe, the Poppy Production Manager from Yountville, had 40,000 pre-made poppies which is enough to fulfill Northern California's Poppy orders. Please join me in showing Gerda she was appreciated for the years she spent working as the PPM. (begin applauding)

Before I close, we will need poppy makers for 2022-2023. Yountville is still in discussions regarding reinstating their Poppy Program. There has been no show of interest yet in reinstating the Long Beach program. One detriment, of course, is that visitors, including Auxiliary members, are not yet allowed into the VA facilities because of the COVID pandemic. There is a strong possibility that we must rely on Districts and Units to be poppy makers in the 2022-2023 year. If your District and/or Unit is interested in making poppies next year, please see me to add your information to the list. We will be looking into workshops in the next months to teach you how to make the poppies, if needed.

Madam President, thank you for asking me to do this Poppy Chairmanship. I am sincerely enjoying it as well as learning from the assignment.

Linda Hayes
Department Poppy Chairman



Before I go, who can tell me how many times I said either "Poppy" or "Poppies" in the report?