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October 30, 2020

Dear Members;

Re: Guidelines for the wearing of the Poppy

As November 11th, Remembrance Day approaches, here is some poppy etiquette and history.

Poppies are worn from the last Friday of October (today) until the 11th of November. On Remembrance Day, you may leave your poppy at the cenotaph if you wish, but they should be removed from your uniform after the services are complete. Poppies should be worn on the left lapel of a business suit, centered above the left pocket of the uniform shirt, or on the left breast of your outerwear if there is no pocket. Please see the photo for a guideline on wearing the poppy.

Also: "It is the position of the Legion that the Poppy is the sacred symbol of Remembrance and should not be defaced in any way. No other pin, therefore, should be used to attach it to clothing." use a simple unadorned silver pin in place of the pin that comes with the poppy, but never anything else. Please see the attached picture for reference on where to attach your poppies on your work uniforms. They may also be worn on fleece jackets, centred on the left side, but should not be worn on the outer (yellow raincoat) jacket to avoid damage to the coat.

The same guidelines apply to the wearing of the poppy on civilian attire. If you have any questions, please feel free to send questions to: honour.guard@apbc.ca

History of the Poppy: Each November, Poppies bloom on the lapels and collars of millions of Canadians. The significance of the Poppy can be traced back to the Napoleonic Wars in the 19th century, over 110 years before being adopted in Canada. Records from that time indicate how thick Poppies grew over the graves of soldiers in the area of Flanders, France.

Fields that had been barren before battle exploded with the blood-red flowers after the fighting ended. During the tremendous bombardments of the war, the chalk soils became rich in lime from rubble, allowing the "popover rhoeas" to thrive. When the war ended, the lime was quickly absorbed and the Poppy began to disappear again.

The person who first introduced the Poppy to Canada and the Commonwealth was Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae of Guelph, Ontario, a Canadian Medical Officer during the First World War. John McCrae penned the Poem "In Flanders Fields" on a scrap of paper in May 1915, on the day following the death of a fellow soldier. Little did he know then that those 13 lines would become enshrined in the hearts and minds of all who would wear them. McCrae's poem was published in Punch Magazine in December of that same year, and the poem later served as inspiration three years later for Moina Michael, an American teacher.

Moina Michael made a pledge to always wear a Poppy as a sign of Remembrance. During a visit to the United States in 1920, a French woman named Madame Guerin learned of the custom. Madame Guerin decided to make and sell poppies to raise money for children in war-torn areas of France. The Great War Veteran's Association in Canada (predecessor to the Canadian Legion) officially adopted the poppy as its Flower of Remembrance on July 5, 1921.

Today, the Poppy is worn each year during the Remembrance period to honour Canada's Fallen.

The Legion also encourages the wearing of a Poppy for the funeral of a Veteran and for any commemorative event honouring Fallen Veterans. It is not inappropriate to wear a Poppy during other times to commemorate Fallen Veterans and it is an individual choice to do so, as long as it's worn appropriately. Thanks to the millions of Canadians who wear the Legion's lapel Poppy each November, the little red flower has never died, and the memories of those who fell in battle remain strong.

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

Lest we forget,

In Honour,

Ceremonial Unit
Ambulance Paramedics & Emergency Dispatchers of BC
CUPE Local 873

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Attachment:

