



American Legion Auxiliary

Department of California

Poppy Program 2023-2024

Pre-convention Poppy Meeting Report

The Pre-convention meeting for the Poppy program was held at the Visalia Convention Center in Kaweah A room at 9:10 am. The start time was delayed accommodating members who were coming from the DEC meeting that was running late.

Alberta Cummings, D23 was appointed secretary, Sandy Felix, D14 was appointed Chaplain and Rosemary Barron, D28 was appointed Sergeant-at-Arms. Roll call showed 20 delegates and 10 guests in attendance.

The statistical report for this program can be found in the Convention book of reports on page 34.

The Chaplain offered prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The Committee agreed upon this report:

- Department Code was read
- Addition to Poppy code new 7a to read "Poppies shall be ordered in groups of 25, with 25 being the minimum number allowed to be ordered." (2024) The rationale is that poppies are bundled in groups of 25. It is not realistic to accept orders of 10 or 15. By direction of the committee, I move to accept this addition to the Poppy Code.
- Housekeeping: Current number 7a to be renumbered 7b, 7b to 7c, 7c to 7d and 7d to 7e.
- Housekeeping: Poppy policies #1 change the word "needed" to "the necessary" as recommended by spell check.
- Housekeeping Poppy Production #6 to add a hyphen between the words cost and effective as recommended by spell check.
- Housekeeping Poppy Production #8 to remove "California Veterans Home at Yountville" as their poppy production has been discontinued.
- Housekeeping: Poppy Production #10 to add a comma after the word production.

The floor was then opened for discussion and suggestions.

Discussion included:

- The importance of adhering to order guidelines. The correct number of poppy kits cannot be ordered when the orders from Units are not submitted on time. The continued need to adjust the orders puts additional work on the Department Secretary and Treasurer, not to mention the PPM's or Poppy Production Managers. They already have enough to do.
- The need for more districts and units to consider and participate in poppy production.
- The possibility of getting our high school youth i.e., JROTCs or ASB groups to participate in poppy production as part of their community service requirements. Discussion followed regarding the necessity to ensure the level of responsibility and adherence to details, and quality of work that is needed to produce quality poppies.
- Making poppies out of other materials. It was noted the crepe paper poppies are made by the Veterans and it benefits them in multiple ways. It is also allowable to make poppies out of other materials to promote the poppy program and both are correct. They are separate issues within the poppy program.

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Proposed Code Changes	Poppy Program	Robin Falkenberg-Chairman 2023-2024
Code #	Currently reads:	Rationale
Department Code 7a	New code to read: Poppies shall be ordered in groups of 25, with 25 being the minimum number allowed to be ordered. (2024)	Poppies are supplied in groups of 25. It is not realistic to accept orders for less than 25 poppies. This Chairman received several orders for 10 or 15.
7a-7d (old) Housekeeping	Renumber to align appropriately Current 7a to 7b Current 7b to 7c Current 7c to 7d Current 7d to 7e.	n/a
Poppy Policies #1 Housekeeping	Change "needed" to "the necessary"	Recommended by spell-check
Poppy Production #6 Housekeeping	Add hyphen between words cost and effective	Recommended by spell-check
Poppy Production #8 Housekeeping	Remove "California Veterans Home at Yountville"	As stated by the past PPM at Yountville, poppy production

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		ceased several years ago, and it is very unlikely to start up again anytime soon.
Poppy Production #10 Housekeeping	Add comma after word "production"	Recommended by spell-check



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Poppy Program 2023-2024
Convention Floor Report

The Department of California aka the Department of Forestry has been very busy cultivating poppies throughout the Golden State this past year. In all, the 221 Units throughout the state ordered a total of 143,374 poppies. That is a decrease of 2,000 from last year. I know my numbers may differ from the Department total as additional orders were placed and some Units did not submit their orders by the deadline. I will be recommending next years Poppy Chairman to not allow flexibility in ordering. Every late order means an adjustment to the supplies that need to be ordered. If Units want their poppies in a timely manner, make sure your orders are in on time. Plain and simple. I will say no more about this at this time.

Many Units have conducted various activities to include mailing out self-addressed envelopes with a poppy and donation letter. Other Units had poppies available at community events as well as information about the poppy and the poppy story. Other members have poppies available at bingo nights, church craft fairs and even provided poppies to veterans at a local standdown. We had Unit members handing out poppies at the local farmers market, and

several Units hand them out at their annual Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies at their local parks. Other Units provided poppies at their local Veterans building. There were poppy quilts, such as the one offered at the back of the hall, as well as corsages and boutonnieres for special events and ceremonies. Poppy Christmas ornaments as so forth.

There are so many more examples of how American Legion Auxiliary members promote the poppy and the poppy program. We would be here for hours if I were to mention them all. Districts and Units donate funds to a local food pantries that serves homeless and at-risk Veterans and cover the cost of turkeys and hams during the holiday season. Another Unit raised over \$2,000.00 from a poppy mailing. During the COVID shutdown, many Units were not able to work the Poppy program as they had in the past. They found new and inventive ways to share this information with their communities. As most of the poppies are made by hospitalized veterans, the number of Veterans participating in poppy production has decreased. Our Department has had to have Units and Districts help with poppy production to meet the needs of the Units. During the shutdown, our Department lost a couple of poppy production sites, so filling the orders was a challenge. Our Department secretary reached out to other Departments to fill our orders. She was amazing! Thank you, Liz. Also, thank you to those Districts who made poppies as well as the Units who donated their extra poppies to ensure we were able to fill the orders. You know who you are, and I greatly appreciate your willingness to help. We are also working on getting additional poppy production facilities up and on board for this coming year. Districts and Units-please consider joining the poppy production program. The

more hands we have doing the work, the lighter the work will be. Please reach out to the 2024-2025 Poppy Chairman if you would like more information.

Two of our Districts submitted entries for the Poppy poster competition. There were some amazing artists participating this year. Thank you so much for sharing your talents with the Department of California and our nation. Good luck on the National level. As far as our poppy display and poppy hat competition. Thank you all who took the time to create these awesome works of art. I appreciate your adhering to the guidelines and rules. It is extremely painful for a chairman to have to disqualify an entry for not following the guidelines/rules. You all made my job much easier with your compliance. When it came to judging the display and hat entries, I recused myself from judging as I knew there were entries from my District. I did not know which ones they were, but I did not want any appearance of impropriety. Thank you to the volunteer judges. It was a pleasure working with you. The second and third place winners for both the displays and hats were delivered to the districts. The first-place winners will be awarded during the awards section of my report. I must say the votes were very close and all entries are beautiful. Thank you to all participants for your hard work. You are to be commended.

I could go on and on shouting out the amazing work done by our districts and units promoting the poppy program. I have only one thing to say: THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO TO SUPPORT OUR ORGANIZATION, OUR VETERANS, AND THEIR REHABILITATION. As the saying goes: "It takes a village to raise a child". I

feel this is also true for the American Legion Auxiliary and our programs. It takes more than one person to get it done. Together we can move mountains.