

THE POPPY



In the United States, Memorial Day is observed on the last Monday of May to honor military personnel who have died while serving their country. Originally called Decoration Day, this holiday was established shortly after the Civil War as a time to place flowers on the graves of those fallen. This day was initially celebrated on May 30 as it was thought that on this day flowers would be blooming throughout the country. Flowers continue to be an important part of this national holiday and many veterans will wear poppy flowers to commemorate the day. In fact, Memorial is sometimes known as Poppy Day.

The origins of Poppy Day begin with the poem, "In Flanders Fields," written during World War I. The poem describes the rows of poppies that grew among the graves of the many soldiers who died on the Flander battlefields located in an area between western Belgium and France.

Two women, Anna E. Guerin (France) and Moina Michael (USA) worked hard to sell artificial poppies to help orphans or people impoverished by World War I. In 1922 Moina turned to the Veterans of Foreign Wars to help make the Memorial Day poppy an official symbol of remembrance of the those who died serving their country.

Today poppies are distributed by veteran service organizations nationwide. Donations received for these flowers help veterans, widows, widowers, and orphans left behind by those who fell.

VFW

NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.



CONTACTING THE POST

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VFW

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

SAMUEL R. SHELTON
POST 2294



SAMUEL R. SHELTON VFW POST # 2294

HISTORY OF THE VFW

In 1899, when veterans of the Spanish-American War returned home, there was no medical care, veteran's pension or assistance for their families. In the years following the war, the American Veterans of Foreign Service, the Colorado Society Army of the Philippines, and three newer veteran's organizations would merge into one association. United under the name, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, these veterans would pursue their dream of better treatment for all American veterans. Official approval, coupled with the adoption of the constitution occurred at the 1914 VFW Convention in Pittsburgh, PA.

PURPOSE OF THE VFW

The purpose of this corporation shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable and educational; to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members; to assist worth comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their widows and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; to foster true patriotism, to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom; and to preserve and defend the United States from all her enemies, whomsoever.

(Congressional Charter, Section 230102)

POST HISTORY

Like today, in 1931 there was a need for veterans, who served in combat overseas to unite in a common cause of camaraderie, survival and support. To address this need the Samuel R. Shelton Post 2294, Inc, Veterans of the Foreign Wars of the United States and it's Ladies Auxiliary was chartered on December 8, 1931 in Jersey City, NJ. The Charter proudly lists the names of original charter members.



Private Samuel
Raymond Shelton

The Post was named in honor of Samuel Raymond Shelton, a resident of Jersey City who served and fought in the 818th Transportation Corp in France during World War I.

He was born in New York City on December 5, 1889, and worked as a laborer at the Safety Cable Company in Bayonne, NJ. Private Shelton was inducted into the U. S. Army on April 19, 1917.

One of the first veterans returning to our community from overseas duty, he was honorably and medically discharged in 1919. On November 11, 1920 Samuel R. Shelton died as a result of his wounds. He was buried at the Bayview Cemetery in Jersey City, NJ.

CHARTER MEMBERS DECEMBER 8TH 1931

Henry Ward Spencer	Roland Cromartie
George Kennie	John F. Richardson
Clifford Saunders	Warner Willis
Robert T. Thornton	Albert E. Hall
Leroy J. Randall	James Taylor
Charles Russell	George W. Rich
Burnett L. Gholston	Earnest Wedge
Nathaniel Johnson	Emmet Frazier
George Worthy	Floyd M. Thornton
David B. Wilson	Samuel Jones
Charles Carter	Wilson Rhodes
Earnest Clark	Charles Banks
Fletcher Lassiter	Lubin Spencer
Oscar F. Johnson	Charles Dixon
Winfred Thomas	John Jefferson
Henry L. Parham	Sullivan C. Johnson

IN FLANDER'S FIELD

by John McCrae

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.