

Two minutes to remember

Sue Spiller, Sobus CEO

I've said it before, I'll say it again – it seems that there are days to celebrate just about everything in every month throughout the year. You have to admire the creative minds and advertising executives who came up with the ideas of Roast Dinner Day (7th), British Pudding Day (9th) and the intriguing, if not potentially dangerous, Hug a Bear Day (7th)!

However, November is also a time for serious reflection and commemoration – when we give thanks to and remember our armed forces on Armistice Day (11th) and Remembrance Sunday (13th)

Armistice Day marks the ending of World War I, at 11am on the 11th day of the 11th Month, and a two minute silence is held at this time. In the UK, we commemorate this on Remembrance Sunday, which is the Sunday closest to November 11th, with ceremonies taking place across the UK and commonwealth, again with a two minute silence at 11am.

In Hammersmith & Fulham, events will take place at the war memorials in both Shepherds Bush and Fulham. Parades will be held in both the north and south of the borough, each followed by a service. For further information on these events, please visit: <https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/community/remembrance-sunday>

Remembrance Sunday is not only used to commemorate those who died in WWI, but also WWII, the Falklands War, the Gulf War, and conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. With wars still happening around the world, including the terrible situation in the Ukraine, Remembrance Sunday also provides a chance for us to give thought to the armed forces and civilians who are living amongst war and conflict today, fighting for their freedom, democracy, independence and their very lives.

Wear your poppy with pride

The red poppy is a symbol of both Remembrance and hope for a peaceful future and is worn as a show of support for the Armed Forces community.

The poppy's origin as a popular symbol of remembrance lies in the landscapes of the First World War and were a common sight, especially on the Western Front. They flourished in the soil churned up by the fighting and shelling. Artificial poppies were first sold in Britain in 1921 and proved so popular that in 1922 the British Legion founded a factory - staffed by disabled ex-servicemen - to produce its own. It continues to do so today and is based in nearby Richmond upon Thames.

Other charities sell poppies in different colours, each with their own meaning but all to commemorate the losses of war. White poppies, for example, symbolise peace without violence and purple poppies are worn to honour animals killed in conflict.

Nugget, the Sobus office dog, wearing her poppy with pride!



Supporting veterans and survivors of war and conflict

Sadly, many veterans and survivors of war and conflict continue to struggle long after they have left the battle field or conflict zone. Many experience post traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) for many years, if not for life – and many of these do not seek, or struggle to secure the support they need. All too often, people struggling with addiction, facing homelessness or experiencing mental health problems are the survivors of conflict – whether veterans or civilians.

Local charities and organisations who provide support and assistance to veterans include: Stoll (<https://www.stoll.org.uk/>) who provide housing and support for vulnerable veterans, and The Royal British Legion H&F (<https://doit.life/organisation/811550/profile>).

Other charities providing support and assistance for refugees include:
<https://www.westlondonwelcome.com>
<https://hfreugeeswelcome.uk/>

If you have a story to share about your organisation's support for veterans or survivors of war or conflict that you would like to share, please contact us.