

# **What do the different colour poppies mean?**

## **Meaning of red, white, purple and black Remembrance Day symbols**

Since 1921, red poppies have been worn to remember those of the Armed Forces of Britain and the Commonwealth who have fought and died in wars – but there are other colours, too

The red poppy has become an iconic symbol of Armistice Day and is worn by millions to remember those from the Armed Forces of Britain and the Commonwealth who have fought and died in wars.

However, some people choose to wear poppies of other colours, which have different meanings.

## **What does the white poppy mean?**

The white poppy is a pacifist symbol of remembrance which has become more popular in recent years.

According to the Peace Pledge Union (PPU), the pacifist body which distributes them today, white poppies represent three things: remembrance for all victims of war, commitment to peace, and a challenge to the glamorisation of conflict.

They were first produced in 1933 by the Women's Co-operative Guild to symbolise a message of “no more war”, and play a prominent role in the annual Alternative Remembrance Sunday Ceremony.

While the red poppy specifically represents remembrance associated with the British and Commonwealth Armed Forces, the white poppy commemorates all victims of all wars – both military and civilians of all nationalities – and seeks to bring to an end “the exclusion of civilians from mainstream Remembrance events”.

It aims to promote the idea that there are different ways to avoid conflict than through violent means, with the PPU stating: “The best way to represent the victims of war is to work to prevent war in the present and future.”

## **What does the purple poppy mean?**

The purple poppy was introduced by the charity Animal Aid in 2006, in remembrance of animals that lost their lives at war. The charity started the appeal because it felt the animals that die in conflict – many of which are horses and dogs – are often forgotten.

Animal Aid sold purple poppies in 2015. It decided to replace them with enamel purple paw badges, as the charity felt the symbol was being misinterpreted, and the animals were being regarded as heroes rather than victims.

The following year the purple poppy was adopted by the Murphy's Army charity, which helps to reunite missing pets with their owners, raises awareness of pet theft, and helps pets in need.

The Royal British Legion does not endorse the purple poppy, but has no problem with it being worn.

“We see no conflict in wearing the red poppy next to the purple or white poppy. Many animal rights supporters also support our work. We do ask that the items are not offered alongside each other however as this would confuse the public,” it has said.

## **What does the black poppy mean?**

The black poppy was launched in 2010 by Selena Carty. It is in remembrance of black, African, Caribbean and Pacific Islanders who lost their lives at war.

The Black Poppy Rose organisation, which sells the poppies, says it was “created to be a symbol that represents the contributions made by the African/black/Caribbean/Pacific Islands communities to various wars since the 16th century.”

It adds that it aims to highlight “largely untold historical legacies” and to:

- Empower, educate and elevate those who are missing key historical narratives that have assisted in the way the world has been shaped today;
  - Assist with the preservation of African/black history so it is not left deep inside the archives;
  - Share the history and information with the world so we continue to assist with the healing through our shared history and experiences.
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