



2023-2024

Strathroy-Caradoc Poppy Project

MUSEUM
STRATHROY-CARADOC
Discover Our Story!

STRATHROY-CARADOC
URBAN OPPORTUNITY - RURAL HOSPITALITY



OVERVIEW

In 2023, Museum Strathroy-Caradoc (MSC) began brainstorming ideas to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Strathroy Cenotaph in 2024, and fell in love with the idea of a community driven project like a large-scale poppy installation. Spearheaded by the Museum Curator, Michelle Wright, the project began to take shape with the assistance of other municipal staff including Crystal Loyst, Kait Topham, Len Taverner, and Jessy Van der Vaart. After obtaining permission from Dominion Command for the use of the poppy image, MSC, along with the rest of the Community Services department and the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 116, officially announced the Strathroy-Caradoc Poppy Project on Remembrance Day of 2023.

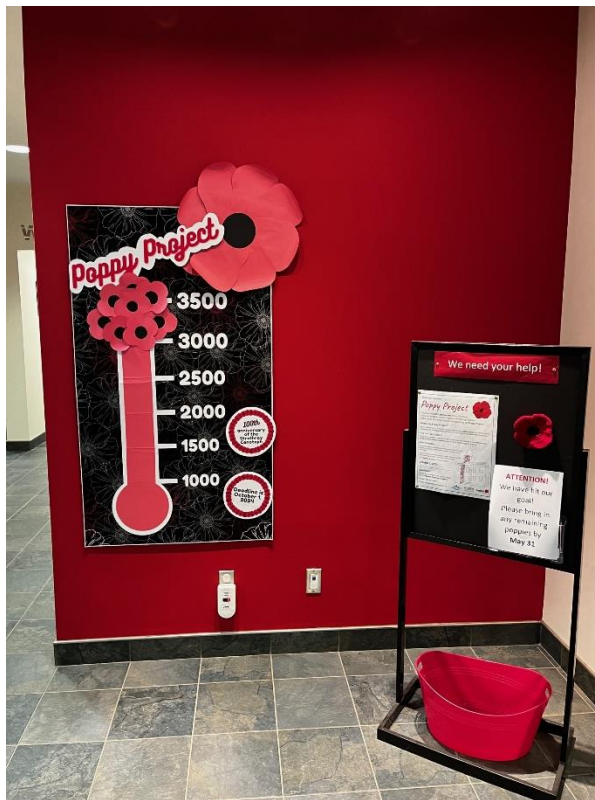
MSC asked the community to create over 3000 knitted or crocheted poppies that would be attached to netting and cascade down the front of Town Hall, located beside the Strathroy Cenotaph. With the involvement of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 251 confirmed in March, staff developed plans for an installation near the Caradoc Cenotaph in Mount Brydges. The 100th anniversary for the Mount Brydges Cenotaph took place in 2020 but unfortunately, due to COVID-19, celebrations were minimal. Staff developed plans for an installation there and asked for additional poppies. Additionally, staff reached out to Royal Canadian Legion Branch 510 in Melbourne to discuss the inclusion of an installation for their cenotaph, however in June of 2024, members moved forward with their own project.

The Museum developed the poppy pattern according to the trademarked guidelines and shared it through physical handouts available at the Museum, on the Museum's website, and tutorial videos on the Museum's YouTube channel. Local news outlets, including MyFM, Keepin' it Local, and Strathroy Neighbours, also promoted the project. From December 2023 to April 2024, ten drop-in sessions were held at the museum and at Branch 251 with staff available to assist volunteers with their poppies.

By the end of April, nearly 8000 poppies had been donated. Museum staff asked the community to bring in any remaining poppies they had by the end of May so that they could work on expanding the project. By October 1st the museum had counted over 10,000 poppies, more than tripling the original goal. To account for the extra poppies MSC adjusted to expand the project, set aside ones for future repairs and potentially creating other installations.

Throughout October, MSC hosted six Attaching Days, where over 100 volunteers, including municipal staff, came out to attach poppies to the netting. Roughly 4000 poppies were attached for 2024's display. With 6000 more poppies in storage, MSC has been working on plans to expand the installation for 2025.

Both installations were installed November 1, 2025 and remained up until after Remembrance Day. During this period, MSC developed a series of events for the 11 Days of Remembrance. Wright was also invited to speak at the Strathroy Remembrance Day Ceremony about the project.



This project was made possible with the assistance of The Royal Canadian Legion and our local Branches. The Poppy has stood as a national symbol of Remembrance since 1921, and it is the recognized symbol for the Legion’s Poppy Campaign, which raises funds to support Veterans and their dependents. The Poppy Design is a trademark of The Royal Canadian Legion (Dominion Command) and was used with permission for the two installations near the cenotaphs.

A big thank you goes out to all the amazing community members who continue to support this project, the Royal Canadian Legion, Community Sponsors, Vari-Form, Entegrus, Nortera, and Execulink, and Museum and municipal staff.

Workshops and attaching days

16

Poppy creation time donated

~7000 hours

Number of volunteers

92

Media Articles

12

10,152

Special Events

9

Poppies Donated

Countries from which people donated

5

Volunteer hours

~1300 hours

VOLUNTEERS

This project was made possible thanks to the efforts of volunteers. In total 10,152 poppies were donated to the museum with an estimated 7000 hours for creation of poppies. While the majority came from our community and Southwestern Ontario, packages and support also came from Toronto, Ottawa, Peterborough, Kingston, Calgary, New Brunswick, New York (USA), Maine (USA), London (England), The Netherlands, Nice (France), and more.

Volunteers not only made poppies at home, but participated in Poppy Workshops at MSC and Legion Branch 251. These workshops were led by Wright to assist those learning and to create a space for those who wanted to connect with others working on the project. These workshops concluded in April when the goal of 3500 poppies was reached. Volunteers returned in October over six days to help attach poppies to the netting. Throughout these attaching days, other municipal staff joined volunteers to assist in this process.

Not everyone that donated gave their names for recognition; therefore, the names listed here do not encompass everyone who helped make this project happen.

Aidan Kotilehti
Alma Hutton
Ann Pearce
Anna Dalton
Anne Carruthers
Antonia Speelman
Aretina Veh
Barb Graham
Barb Vandermeulen
Beth Kennedy
Betty MacInnis
Betty Powell
Beverley Byer
Brenda Barker
Brigitte Quinney
Carol Freer
Carol Huston
Carol MacPherson
Carol Stanley

Cathy Worsfold
Cheryl Losch
Christianne McCrimmon
Christina Cohen
Cillian Geary
Cindy Lavoie
Daniel Meinen
Deanna DiMenna
Donna Laurin
Donna Sheridan
Dorothy Bosman
Dorothy Hoan
Dov Covey
Elaine Adams
Ella De Ruiters
Ellen (Gordon) Fisher
Evelyn Parfitt
Felix Kowalski
Fieny McDougall



G. Klassen
Glenda Dunsater
Grace Mclahor
Heather Horning
Heather Lalonde
Jake Lewis
Jan McReid
Jane Garnham
Jean Ireland
Jean James
Jeanette Martin

Jennifer Duffy
Joanne Vanderheyden
Joy Squire-Smith
Joyce Bopltton
Karen Bradshaw
Kia vanden Heuvel
Liana Pitel
Linda Hoffner
Lorraine Powell
Lori Clarke
Lori Vander Tuin
Marcia Bennett
Marg Hill
Margaret Fuller
Marge Langlois
Marian Addison

Marie Darrach
Marion Smith
Marnie Stoner
Mary Bursey
Mary Gibson
Mary-Anne Nagel
Miriam Barclay
Naelle Coelhhk
Nancy Gogh
Neusa Marques
Pam Hillis
Paul Lattimore
Roy McCrimmon
Sharon Parker
Shelley Breault
Sieka Vansteeg

Susan Arnold
Susan Gowlers
Susan Grant
Thea Van Wensen
Tracey Hill
Valerie Sooley
Vickie Clark
Vicky Langford
Vicky Langford
Chris Culos Jr.
Vari-Form
Entegrus
Norrera
Execulink

EVENTS

Both installations were on display from November 1-12, 2024. During this period, MSC and Strathroy Events created a series of events and content for the 11 Days of Remembrance. The events saw around 200 participants, not including the Remembrance Day Ceremony. The highest attendance were the two Unveiling Ceremonies. Many volunteers, local and provincial Legion members, staff, and delegates attended. Besides local council members, MP Lianne Rood and MPP Steve Pinsonneault attended the unveiling. Additionally, Wright was invited to speak at the Legion's Remembrance Day service, which saw a record number of people at the event.

The events were as follows:

Friday November 1: Documentary showing of "The Commandant's Shadow" at the museum.

Saturday November 2: Strathroy Unveiling Ceremony at 11am and the Mount Brydges Unveiling Ceremony at 1pm.

Sunday November 3: Online content

Monday November 4: War artifacts at the Museum from 10am-4pm

Tuesday November 5: Strathroy Cadets lead workshop at the museum in the evening.

Wednesday November 6: Author Talk with C.J. Fredrick on her new book Rooted and Remembered.

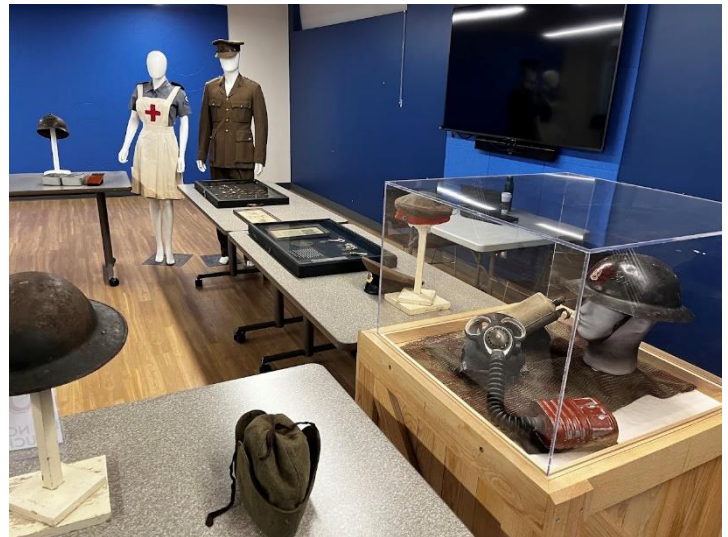
Thursday November 7: Special War Graves walking tour of the Strathroy Cemetery.

Friday November 8: Guest Speakers from Huron University on the Japanese perspective in WWII.

Saturday November 9: Guest historian Andy Robertshaw at Caradoc Community Centre at 4:00pm

Sunday November 10: Online content

Monday November 11: Remembrance Day Ceremony (Organized by the Legion)



Top left: Mount Brydges Unveiling Ceremony, left to right Museum Curator Michelle Wright, Councilor Greg Willsie, MP Lianne Rood, Mayor Colin Grantham, MPP Steve Pinsonneault, Councilor Sandi Hipple, Events and Booking Coordinator Kait Topham.

Top right: War artifacts on display in the programming room at the museum.

Bottom left: Special walking tour of the cemetery, led by Crystal Loyst and Museum co-op student Cillian Geary.

Bottom right: Michelle Wright at the Strathroy Unveiling Ceremony.

MEDIA

The project was featured in 12 media articles including Age Dispatch newspaper, CTV News London, Hometown Strathroy-Caradoc, Keepin' it Local, Marathon of History, Sarina News Today, Strathroy Neighbours, and The Banner. These articles covered all stages of the project, from the collection to the unveiling and events. The project was also highlighted by MPP Steve Pinsonneault at Queen's Park on November 8th during his Member's Statement.

In addition to the multiple social media coverage through the Museum's and Municipal's sites, the project was shared widely by other people involved or interested in the project. An overwhelming positive response came from the community with comments:

- What a wonderful community project. Both installations are absolutely beautiful.
- Absolutely gorgeous! Well done to all who contributed and organized!
- Fabulous, looks great and a wonderful honour to our veterans
- Congratulations to Strathroy City Hall & all participants. CHEERS!
- I hope it stays like that. It looks beautiful and a lot of hard work went into it.
- A commendable initiative and wonderful end product on display – kudos
- It's so lovely! Great job to the Town! What a beautiful tribute.
- As A Vet I want to say thank you it looks absolutely amazing

Sprawled in remembrance: Strathroy-Caradoc City Hall to be covered in poppies

By Sean Paine
Published March 06, 2024 at 6:00AM EST



Volunteers have created thousands of poppies in anticipation of their unveiling in advance of Remembrance Day 2024. Sean Paine reports.

Volunteers have created thousands of poppies in anticipation of their unveiling in advance of Remembrance Day 2024.

"Essentially, what we are going to be doing is attach the thousands of poppies to basically bird netting, and we are going to cascade it down from the bell tower," explained Michelle Wright, the curator of Strathroy-Caradoc Museum.

The project mirrors those in some nearby centres, including Stratford. There, a bridge was covered in poppies.

In Strathroy, the poppy project is personal for Wendy Lenders.

Her father served in the Second World War.

"He was a man of few words," she said.

The primary purpose of the project is to

When combined with the cascading poppies

