

## SOCIAL SECURITY HONORS ALL WHO SERVE

By Adrienne Vavricka

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Every day of the year, Americans across the nation remember friends and family members who have served and sacrificed for their country. Memorial Day is a day when we all come together to honor those who have given their lives in the defense of freedom and the principles we hold dear in this country.

May is also National Military Appreciation Month. As we observe Memorial Day and Military Appreciation Month, we would like to let members of our military know how much we value what they do for our nation.

At Social Security, we offer a wide range of services for our service members. Families of fallen military heroes may be eligible for Social Security survivors benefits. Learn more about Social Security survivors benefits at [www.socialsecurity.gov/pgm/survivors.htm](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pgm/survivors.htm).

For service members who return home with injuries, Social Security is here to help. Visit our Wounded Warriors website. You can find it at [www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors). We use an expedited process for military service members who become disabled while on active military service, regardless of where the disability occurs.

The Wounded Warriors website answers a number of commonly asked questions, and shares other useful information about disability benefits, including how veterans can receive expedited processing of disability claims. It is important to note that benefits available through Social Security are different than those from the Department of Veterans Affairs and require a separate application.

Even active duty military who continue to receive pay while in a hospital or on medical leave should consider applying for disability benefits if they are unable to work due to a disabling condition. Active duty status and receipt of military pay does not necessarily prevent payment of Social Security disability benefits. Receipt of military payments should never stop someone from applying for disability benefits from Social Security.

If you've served in the Armed Forces and you're planning your retirement, you'll want to read our publication, Military Service and Social Security at [www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10017.pdf](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10017.pdf).

You also may want to visit the Military Service page of our Retirement Planner, available at [www.socialsecurity.gov/retire2/veterans.htm](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/retire2/veterans.htm).

At Social Security, we honor all those who served in the military and we remember those who died for their country.

## Keeping the Memory Alive - A dream that lives on

By Karen Edwards

We live on Tomahawk Lake in Blooming Grove. There is a house a few doors away that's been rented out periodically. Last year, Barbara Elizabeth Walsh and her husband rented the house. Barbara is the author of the book, "The Poppy Lady". My husband Gregg had helped her and her husband a few times while they were renting. Barbara was kind enough to give us a signed copy of her book.

Our daughter Colleen is in 5th grade at Taft Elementary. She read Barbara's book and loved it. We come from a military family. Colleen's Uncle Jay Gavigan, (my brother), is a Major in the Army and has served 3 tours in Iraq. He currently prepares for deployment to Afghanistan.

After reading "The Poppy Lady," Colleen asked me if we could do something for our Veterans; just like the poppy lady, Moina Belle Michael, did in the book. She asked me if I thought her teacher could have some kind of "Poppy Contest" in school. I reached out to Colleen's art teacher, Ms. Gehmen. She thought it would be a great idea to have the children in Colleen's class make poppies. She also asked me if I would come into the classroom & read the book to the class. I had the pleasure of reading "The Poppy Lady" to Colleen's 5th grade class, as well as to a 1st grade class at Taft Elementary on Friday May 24th.

When author, Barbara Elizabeth Walsh was 10 years old, she found a box labeled WWII, which belonged to her father. Inside, there was a postcard with a Poppy attached to it. It was signed "Pat's Poppy Lady". Barbara's father had met the poppy lady, Moina, while he was a Private 1st class in Georgia, during WWII.

The story of the Poppy Lady began at the start of WWI. Moina was a young school teacher in Georgia. She realized that many of her students were going to be affected by the war; that so many loved ones would be deployed. Moina vowed to do everything she could for the soldier to remember and honor them. Moina trained to become a canteen worker for the YMCA, but by the time she finished training, she was 49, and was told she was too old to go overseas. Moina didn't let such a set-back deter her ambition. She found that she could comfort soldiers BEFORE they went to war. Moina set up a desk in Columbia's Hamilton Hall, in NYC. Servicemen would spend their free time in the hall's basement before they went off to battle. It was a dark and gloomy place. Moina knew what to do...she started placing flowers on the tables.

One evening, Lt. Colonel John McCrae left a magazine on Moina's desk. The periodical contained a poem about the battlefields of Flanders Field. There was a picture of Flanders Field, with white crosses with no names, and bright red poppies growing all around.

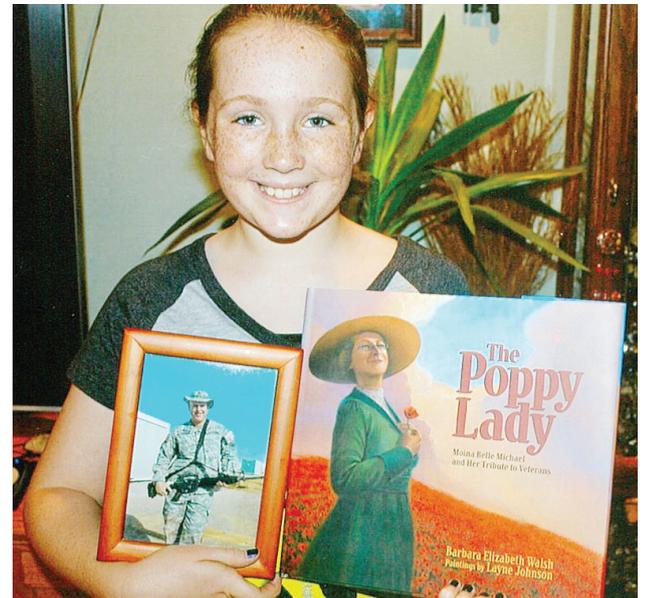
Flanders Field was Moina's inspiration. She used her own money to buy poppies for the soldiers who were leaving for France. The soldiers pinned them on their uniforms. Moina desired to do more. She would not stop until every American wore a poppy to remember the soldier Always.

After WWII was over, Moina returned to the University of Georgia and taught a class for disabled servicemen. Many of the servicemen needed financial and occupational support. Once again, Moina sprang into action to provide support for the soldiers. Moina sold silk poppies as a means of raising funds to assist disabled veterans. In 1921, her efforts resulted in the poppy flower being adopted as a symbol of remembrance for war veterans by the American Legion Auxillary.

Each time we wear a red poppy, we thank the men and women who gave so much for our country's freedom. We, just like Moina, promise to remember them... Always.

I've spoken to author Barbara Walsh by phone and email. She was absolutely thrilled that Colleen wanted to share Moina's story with her classmates. A few days later, a box came in the mail for Colleen; it was from Barbara. Enclosed was a signed copy of the "The Poppy Lady" for the Taft Elementary School library, 60 signed postcards and bookmarks, and two bags full of bright red poppies that Colleen happily shared with her classmates.

I'm proud of my daughter Colleen for wanting to do something for our soldiers and for helping to keep Moina's dream alive!!



Colleen proudly displays her uncle's picture and her cherished book.

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