

November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016 **LEST WE FORGET! MEMORIAL DAY MERCHANDISING**  
by Linda McKendry

All the men in the last generation of our fathers served in the Second World War to some capacity. Canada has many war-bride stories, especially of women from England who came to Canada with their grooms to raise families here. Because of what they did, North American has become a wonderful place to live and many from around the world flock to become immigrants in this home of the “Free and Land of the Brave.”

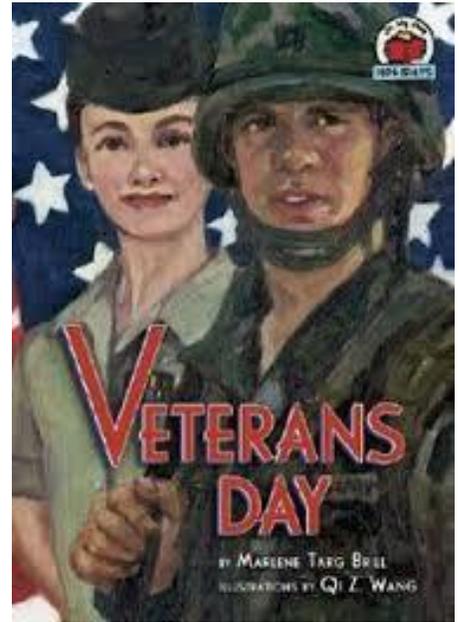
We were raised to respect veterans and never forget that the freedoms and privileges we enjoy are due to the sacrifice they made to free those in other countries under attack. When you go to Ottawa in the Spring and see the Tulips the tour guides are quick to let you know they came from Holland as a gift to Canada for helping to free them from the Nazis.

Making a display for Memorial Day(Canada) Veterans Day (US/EU) in your store window is the BEST way to separate Halloween from Christmas and make an impact in your community with this sobering event. The traditional symbols to use for props are:

- Poppies
- Green Wreaths
- Purple Ribbon
- White Crosses
- National Flags
- Uniforms from the Forces: including medals, helmets, etc.



- Pictures of Veterans, especially those known in your community
- Posters of WWI or WWII (set the theme)
- Signs with your message
- Guns and weapons: ( I would avoid those!)



When tastefully done and with good intentions this will not be seen as glorifying war, but rather remembering those who gave their lives so we have the freedoms we enjoy. While the two World Wars are the ones people think of the most, it's important to remember those veterans who are living and have returned from duty. So you can think of ways to honor them, either by displaying their names and pictures, or just a sign to thank them.

Most of the merchants I have worked with over the years give some thought to making a Memorial Display in their store window. Often it's just wreath on a stand with poppies on it and sometimes a sign that says: "We Will Remember" or "Lest We Forget".



(Display by SCHS working with Jefferson Barracks Historical Site)

Some retailers have gone to great lengths during the month of November to make their whole window into a Memorial Day window. They have framed pictures of veterans from their neighborhood and their names. They have

statues and flags along with bouquets of poppies so the windows are very colorful and get attention, but it all points to the message.

Those in the garment industry have borrowed uniforms from men and women in the forces and dressed the mannequins in the windows to give a very realistic and 'life size' picture for the event. The amount of work you do will be determined by the neighborhood you live in and what the cultural views are on remembering these people. It is also dependent on how much space you have in your front windows, or in a key feature display in your store.

Time is always a an issues, especially with Christmas right around the corner. If you have a plan, it will always make the display assembly easier. Don't feel bad if you can only devote a small corner to a memorial display because you already have your windows decorated to capture the most Christmas Holiday shoppers possible. I understand that! Even a small space, say 2 square feet, right by your front door or at eye level for those passing by will have an impact and bring you good will. It's good PR and lets those shopping know that you care.