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# Tower of London Poppy Removal & Distribution Preparation Process

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## Background

888,246 ceramic poppies were planted in the moat of the Tower of London in Spring of 2014 as part of the Blood Swept the Land and Seas of Red art installation. The project was sponsored by the Historical Royal Palaces to memorialize people from Great Britain who lost their lives during WWI. Installation took a few weeks to complete and removal needed to be more efficient in order to distribute the poppies in a timely manner.



## Conclusions

The majority of the poppies were removed in 4 days. The most helpful part of the proposal was being able to see the numbers and knowing that removing the poppies in a short amount of time was possible. There were also complaints because arrival times were not staggered, and there were long queues in cold weather waiting for assignments and training. These improvements will be taken into account for similar projects in the future.

## Proposed Process

### Proposed improvement highlights:

- Staggered volunteer arrival times and training
- 20 Tents (instead of 1 central) and included lighting, tables, and equipment
- Teams of 10 people working in relays rotating jobs every 30 minutes
- Carefully calculated numbers for necessary equipment and cycle times for tasks
- Highlighting of problem and risks
- Majority of the poppies removed in 11 days

## Actual Process

### Proposal ideas taken into account:

- Increased tent numbers and equipment
- Wheelbarrows to carry poppies to tent
- Detailed tasks for each team member
- Job rotations every 30 minutes
- Teams of 10 people
- Safety of volunteers taken into account

### Proposal ideas not practiced:

- Staggered arrival and training times
- Boxes for preparation and disassembled poppies

## Six Sigma Certification

Completing this project allowed for Six Sigma Green Belt certification through the Center for Competitive Change. This project was especially difficult because the project was located in London, England and no visits to see the actual moat were planned. Detailed questions and instructions for Lonnie Franks, a mentor who took several trips to visit the client throughout the time period, were necessary for remote communication and execution.