“Poppies: Women, War, Peace” will open at the Hargrett Gallery of the University of Georgia Richard B. Russell Building Special Collections Libraries June 14.

Part of the observance to mark the centennial end of the First World War, the exhibit also pays homage to Moïna Belle Michael, originally from Monroe, who was instrumental in ensuring the red poppy flower became a symbol to remember the victims and veterans of war. Michael was inspired in her quest by the war poem ‘In Flanders Field’ written by Lieutenant Colonel John Alexander McCrae in 1915.

The story of Michael’s relentless, lifelong remembrance campaign is largely forgotten. Each year thousands of women suffer as a result of war, their stories lost behind the bigger stories from the battlefields.

“Poppies: Women, War, Peace” remembers women in times of war, from the First World War to the present day. It combines a portrait series of women whose lives have been affected by war with a botanical series of the red ‘Flanders Fields’ poppy. For the red poppy, despite its delicate appearance, is able to generate new life when everything else has been destroyed.

The exhibit is the work of Lee Karen Stow, an independent documentary photographer and visual artist based in the North of England, UK. Since 2007 when she met women in Sierra Leone displaced by a decade of civil war, she has devoted her practice to recording the personal narratives of women of war, conflict and genocide.

“‘Poppies: Women, War, Peace’ is not an attempt to cover every conflict,” Stow said. “My research and my portraits, initially inspired by Moïna Belle Michael’s vision, grew organically as women and their stories entered into my own awakening. I wasn’t aware for instance of my own mother’s traumatic childhood during the five-year bombing blitz of our home city Hull, England, during the Second World War. ‘You never told me,’ I said. ‘You never asked,’ she replied. I began to ask more.’”

The exhibit will be on view through Dec. 14. Stow will present a lecture at the Special Collections Libraries, followed by a reception, in mid-November, details will be announced later.