

# **“Buddy” Poppy & VFW National Home**

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## **"Buddy" Poppy**

The “Buddy” Poppy has been honored in the VFW Community for many generations.

Known as the official memorial flower, the Poppy reminds us of the bloodshed and sacrifices made by American service members.

The Poppy movement was inspired by Canadian Army Col. John McCrae’s famous poem, “In Flanders Fields”. Overlooking the endless rows of graves each marked with a lonely white cross and surrounded by fields of poppies, Col. McCrae penned the poem in remembrance of the thousands who had fallen during the second battle of Ypres in Belgium.

Poppies were first distributed by the Franco-American Children’s League to benefit the children of war-torn France and Belgium after WWI ended.

The first VFW poppy distribution was in 1922 just before Memorial Day. The VFW was the first Veterans’ organization to do this nationwide. In 1924, the poppy flower became a registered trademark in the name of “Buddy” Poppy.

These subtle tiny flowers have made powerful impacts for the welfare of our Veterans and their families. A “Buddy” Poppy is not to be ‘sold’, but donations to the program are fundamental to our Veterans’ needs, providing financial assistance over the past 95 years. Rehabilitation, services, essentials, and VFW National Home are supported through these donations!

The poppies still grow, the white crosses remain, and the poem echoes each year in our hearts. Auxiliary Members will be **“Banding together for our Veterans” to “Let Freedom Ring.”**

## **ORDERING POPPIES & SUPPLIES**

- Poppies may be ordered by contacting your VFW Department Headquarters or downloading the order form from the Department website. We suggest you request/order 8 to 12 weeks before they are needed to avoid delays.
- This program requires a minimum purchase by each Auxiliary every year.
- Brochures, “Buddy” Poppy distribution supplies, and promotional items can be purchased from the VFW Store at [vfwstore.org](http://vfwstore.org) or calling 1-833-VFW-VETS

## Distribution Tips

- Contact your city/town clerk's office to see if a permit is required at the location you would like to hold your distribution event. Obtain permission from the property owners/managers prior to your event.
- Share information of your location on websites, social media, newspapers, posters, etc.
- Ask for assistance from youth groups, faith-based organizations, scouts, or JROTC.
- Share time and place with your members, ASK for volunteers, invite your Post & social members to join you. The more, the merrier! THANK YOUR VOLUNTEERS 😊
- Ask volunteers to **wear VFW or VFW Auxiliary branded clothing** to promote the organization and connect the flower distribution to it.
- Remind volunteers that they are **NOT SELLING** but are **DISTRIBUTING** the "Buddy" Poppies for a donation. Use the manners momma taught you, **THANK** people.
- **Please DO NOT refuse someone a flower for any reason.** A "Buddy" Poppy honors veterans and everyone should be able to do so, just ask them to '**WEAR IT PROUDLY!**'
- Use the "Buddy" Poppy Drive guide on MALTA for helpful tips and resources.

## ***HONOR THE DEAD BY HELPING THE LIVING***

- All proceeds from the Poppy drives are to be placed in the Relief Fund with receipts and expenditures in accordance with the Treasurer's Guide, Bylaws and Ritual
- "Buddy" Poppy drives can be ANY time of the year, try something once a month or quarterly if you have enough time and volunteers.....don't be shy, GIVE IT A TRY!
- Use/Display poppies everywhere and anywhere! Use your imagination for all events!

Use **#poppiescount** to post photos of your "Buddy" Poppy Drives

## **National and Department "Buddy" Poppy Display Contest**

Takes place at Department Convention in the following three (3) categories:

**\*\*See Official Rules/Judging Guidelines in MALTA Resources\*\***

1. **Public Promotion of Poppy Campaign**  
Windows, booths, parades, poster displays, campaign promotions, etc.
2. **Memorial or Inspirational Displays**  
Wreaths, memorial tables, plaques, patriotic or devotional themes.
3. **Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies**  
Post Home displays, table centerpieces, corsages.

*\*Winning displays will be sent on to National for judging at National Convention*

## **VFW National Home**

The VFW National Home is a place where Military Veterans and their families can get a fresh start by living rent free for up to four years and have access to case management services, life skills training, tutoring and other educational services as well as recreational and community services needed to aid the healing process. It provides a safe and peaceful environment for the entire Veteran's family.

The 42 single family homes, grounds and facilities are supported by sponsorship.

***Department of Pennsylvania VFW Auxiliary sponsors Cottage #3.***

***The Health and Happiness Fund is a critical resource for VFW & Auxiliary donations.***

On January 7, 1925, the VFW National Home was founded in Eaton Rapids, Michigan. The original goal was to help families left behind by war remain together when their military loved ones didn't come home. National Home serves as a living memorial to veterans by helping our nation's military and their families during difficult times.

The spacious campus includes tree lined streets with family homes, playgrounds, parks, childcare facilities, community center, multiple family-oriented facilities, a guest lodge, chapel, administrative offices, and indoor/outdoor recreational opportunities.

National Home is forever evolving to meet the changing needs of Veterans and Military families to better assist them with reintegration, PTSD, unemployment, rehabilitation from battlefield injuries, emotional wounds, financial stress, or fractured family relationships, among other issues that can affect anyone serving our country and his family or her family. ONE thing is asked, COMMITMENT. The family must be committed to making changes in their lives. To remain at National Home, they must show consistent progress toward family goals. Partnering with the home's staff/volunteers in helping the family to reach their full potential.

If you know someone or a family who may need assistance encourage them to:

- **Call the Helpline at 1-800-313-4200**
- **Email [help@vfwnationalhome.org](mailto:help@vfwnationalhome.org)**
- **Visit [vfwnationalhome.org/help](http://vfwnationalhome.org/help)**

Auxiliaries support through their gifts to the **Health and Happiness Fund**.  
**\*\*\*\*25 cents per member is the suggested donation from each auxiliary each year \*\*\*\***

Donations provide:

- Christmas and Graduation gifts
- Maintenance of Auxiliary sponsored buildings including emergency repairs and needed renovations.

**Donate through MALTA:**

Log into MALTA  
Select "Make a Gift"  
Select Amount  
Enter Payment Information  
Click "Pay Now"  
Print Receipt

**Donate by Mail:**

Earmark check "Health & Happiness"  
VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters  
Attn: Health and Happiness Donations  
406 W. 34th Street, 10th Floor  
Kansas City, MO 64111

**Become a Life-Member:**

VFW and VFW Auxiliary Members are encouraged to become life members of National Home. Life members may vote for Trustees who represent their National Home District, and approve any changes to the bylaws and articles of incorporation. An Auxiliary may purchase a life membership and will receive one vote as well.

Any individual or organization not associated with the VFW can also support the National Home by becoming an Associate Life member. These members do not receive voting privileges.

The cost of becoming a **life member is a one-time fee of \$50.00** and includes a membership certificate, a wallet card, and a pin. Visit [vfnationalhome.org/membership](http://vfnationalhome.org/membership) for more information, an application, or to purchase a life membership.

**Other ways to Donate:**

- Purchase a brick in a loved one's name or memory for the Tribute Park
- Become a Hometown Hero Contributor
- Shop the National Home Wish List on Amazon
- Donate to National Commander in Chief/National President joint Special Project funding the VFW National Home Welcome Center Special Renovation Project

**More details can be found on the VFW National Home at [vfnationalhome.org](http://vfnationalhome.org)**

## **NATIONAL BUDDY POPPY/NATIONAL HOME AWARDS FOR AUXILIARIES**

### **1. Most outstanding use of the “Buddy” Poppy in another VFW Auxiliary National Program.**

- Citation to every Auxiliary that uses the “Buddy” Poppy in another VFW Auxiliary National Program.

**Entry form required** and available in MALTA Member Resources.

**Auxiliaries must send the entry form to the Department.**

"Buddy" Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman by March 31, 2024, for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from National Headquarters.

- Citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences with the most outstanding use of the “Buddy” Poppy in another VFW Auxiliary National Program.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into Auxiliary account after the National Convention.

### **2. Most outstanding activity and/or event that educates their community and/or other Veteran Service Organizations about the VFW National Home.**

- Citation to every Auxiliary that hosts an activity and/or event that educates the community and/or other Veteran Service Organization about the VFW National Home.

**Entry form required** and available in MALTA Member Resources.

**Auxiliaries must send the entry form to the Department.**

"Buddy" Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman by March 31, 2024, for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from National Headquarters.

- Citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences with the most outstanding activity and/or event that educates the community and/or other Veteran Service Organization about the VFW National Home.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into Auxiliary account after the National Convention.

### **3. Citation to each Auxiliary that contributes a gift of 25 cents or more per member to the Health & Happiness Fund based on June 30, 2023, membership statistics. Citation will be mailed directly to the Auxiliary from National Headquarters.**

## **DEPARTMENT OF PA BUDDY POPPY/NATIONAL HOME CITATIONS**

1. Citation to the Auxiliary in each membership division who has the best promotion of the “Buddy” Poppy through distribution and education within their Post or Community. (Must submit a description and/or photos to the Department Chairman.)
2. Citation to the Auxiliary in each membership division that hosted or co-hosted with their Post, the most “Buddy” Poppy distribution drives within the Post or community.
3. Citation to the first, second, and third place winners in each category for the “Buddy” Poppy display contest at Department Convention (Rules and Guidelines can be found on MALTA Resources.)
4. Citation to the Auxiliary in each membership division who has the best promotion of the VFW National Home at an event. All entries will be considered and must be submitted with year-end reports. (Must submit a description and/or photos to Department Chairman.)
5. Citation to the Auxiliary in each membership division who purchases the most Life Memberships and/or Tribute Bricks for the VFW National Home.
6. Citation to the Auxiliary who submits the most amount of donations overall to the VFW National Home Health and Happiness Fund. (Must show proof of payment.)

**ALL OBLIGATIONS INCLUDING AUDITS, BONDS, DELEGATE FEES, PLEDGES, SUPPLIES, ETC. TO NATIONAL, DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS AND DISTRICT MUST BE MET FOR YOUR AUXILIARY/DISTRICT PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMEN TO QUALIFY FOR AWARDS**