

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

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## **“Buddy” Poppy**

**“Every Day is Veterans Day”** while we stand **“From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans.”**

We can enforce our dedication to our veterans by distributing “Buddy” ® Poppies within our communities. Donations collected are used to aid veterans, service members and their families who are in need.

There are three options for the “Buddy” ® Poppy:

1. The traditional “Buddy” ® Poppy.
2. A metal “Buddy” ® Poppy. This new metal Poppy is nice for a collar or suit jacket.
3. Special traditional artificial flower Poppies are available to VFW Posts celebrating their 25th, 50th, 75th and 100th anniversaries.

### **The “Buddy” Poppy and how it all started.**

The “Buddy” ® Poppy has been an integral part of the VFW community for 100 years. As the VFW’s official memorial flower, the Poppy represents the blood shed by American service members. It reiterates that we will not forget their sacrifices. The Poppy movement was inspired by Canadian Army Col. John McCrae’s famous poem, “In Flanders Fields.” The Franco-American Children’s League originally distributed poppies to benefit children in the devastated areas of France and Belgium following World War I. The VFW conducted its first Poppy distribution before Memorial Day in 1922, becoming the first veterans’ organization to organize nationwide distribution. In February 1924, the VFW registered the name “Buddy” ® Poppy with the U.S. Patent Office. A certificate was issued on May 20, 1924, granting the VFW all trademark rights in the name of Buddy under the classification of artificial flowers. No other organization, firm or individual can legally use the name “Buddy” ® Poppy.

### **Honor the Dead by Helping the Living**

These small but mighty memorial flowers have raised millions for the welfare of veterans and their dependents. The Poppy Program also provides financial assistance in maintaining state and national veterans’ rehabilitation and service programs and partially supports the VFW National Home.

**Here are some important things to consider when preparing for your “Buddy” ® Poppy distribution:**

- Identify potential volunteers within your Post and Auxiliary and gather them together for an informational meeting explaining the purpose of the “Buddy” ® Poppy campaign.
- Plan for each volunteer to distribute a certain number of Poppies.
- Determine how many Poppies you should order based on the number of volunteers.
- Choose distribution dates. Memorial Day and Veterans Day are always a popular time, **but any time is a good time** to distribute this memorial flower.
- Stake out key distribution venues in advance. Choose high traffic areas and determine the number of workers you need to cover the locations. Ideal locations include storefronts, office or factory entrances and recreational areas. Make sure you get permission from the business owners before setting up shop. Post flyers, with permission, around town in key areas such as the post office, coffee shops, gas stations, etc. It will let people know when and where they can get a “Buddy” ® Poppy. If your local newspaper has a community calendar section, be sure to let the editor know about two weeks in advance that you would like to place your Poppy announcement on the calendar.
- Encourage your volunteers to smile and be enthusiastic during the distribution. If they appear friendly, it will project a good image for the VFW and Auxiliary.
- Make sure your volunteers wear their VFW or Auxiliary gear.
- Remind your volunteers that they are **not** “selling” Poppies but distributing them with the hope of getting **donations**. If you follow these simple steps, your “Buddy” ® Poppy campaign is sure to be a success.

**Where to get Poppies?**

Contact the Department of Pennsylvania VFW Headquarters to order poppies using their official form, 6-8 weeks in advance of your poppy drive.

Please note the following for each poppy purchased:

- ❖ One (1) cent goes to the VFW National Home
- ❖ One (1) cent goes to the VFW National Headquarters Veterans Service Fund
- ❖ One and a half (1.5) cents goes to the Department’s Veterans Service Fund

“Buddy” ® Poppy Items “Buddy” ® Poppy apparel, distribution supplies and promotional items can be purchased from the VFW Store.

**Contests**

For rules and questions about the “Buddy”® Poppy Display Contest, refer to MALTA Member Resources.

## **VFW NATIONAL HOME**

The VFW National Home was founded in 1925 as a place where families left behind by war—mothers and children, brothers, and sisters—could remain together, keeping the family circle intact even when their serviceman did not come home. The VFW National Home serves as a living memorial to America's veterans by helping our nation's military and veteran families during difficult times. Over the years, the National Home has met the changing needs of America's military and veteran families. Through it all, one thing has remained constant: the National Home's commitment to honor our nation's veterans and service members by providing help and hope for their children and families.

The VFW National Home honors and supports veterans and service members by aiding their families. Let's focus this year on promoting the VFW National Home's Military & Veteran Family Helpline. To learn more visit the VFW National Home website: [vfwnationalhome.org/get-help](https://vfwnationalhome.org/get-help)

### **The VFW National Community**

The VFW National Home located in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, has helped military and veteran families who need a fresh start. Families can live there rent-free for up to four years and have access to professional case management services, on-site licensed childcare, life skills training, tutoring and other educational services, as well as recreational and community service opportunities. The National Home's community is open to families of service members, veterans and their descendants. For more information visit [vfwnationalhome.org](https://vfwnationalhome.org).

### **Promoting the VFW National Home**

This year, the focus is to create awareness about and education of eligibility and who qualifies for help from the National Home. Let's promote this way to help veterans and their families in the Department of Pennsylvania.

### **Health & Happiness Fund**

One way the Auxiliary supports the National Home is through gifts of 25 cents per member to the Health & Happiness Fund. Contributions are critical since the campus and its programs receive no government funding.

Donations can be made online in MALTA or by mail. Making a gift is easy in MALTA. Gifts can be made by an entity (Auxiliary, District, Department) or by individuals.

### **VFW National Home Life Membership and Associate Life Membership**

Another way to offer support is by becoming a Life Member of the National home. There are two types of membership.

1. VFW and VFW Auxiliary members and organizations are eligible to become Life Members. Life Members may vote for the Trustees who represent their National Home District and approve any proposed changes to the bylaws and articles of incorporation. Please be sure the VFW National Home has your correct name and email address; the bylaws and ballots are emailed.

2. Any individual or organization wishing to support the VFW National Home's mission can become an Associate Life Member. Associate Life Members do not have voting privileges. For more information on membership, visit [vfnationalhome.org/membership](http://vfnationalhome.org/membership).

#### **Other Ways to Give and Offer Support**

- Become a Home Front Hero
- Purchase a Tribute Brick or a Centennial Garden Brick
- Purchase an item for the Tribute Park
- Gifts from your IRA, stocks, and securities
- Amazon Wish List
- Create awareness by wearing VFW National Home apparel and distributing promotional materials.

### **NATIONAL "BUDDY"® POPPY & VFW NATIONAL HOME PROGRAM AWARDS**

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event with their VFW Post to educate their community about the VFW "Buddy"® Poppy.
  - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions for outstanding activity and/or event with their VFW Post to educate their community about the VFW "Buddy"® Poppy.
2. Most outstanding activity and/or event that creates awareness and education of eligibility and who qualifies for help from the VFW National Home and promoting it within their Department to help veterans and their families.
  - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions for outstanding activity and/or event with that creates awareness and education of eligibility and who qualifies for help from the VFW National Home and promoting it within their Department to help veterans and their families.

From July 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026. Entry form (required) available at [\*vfwauxpa.org\*](http://vfwauxpa.org) website under *Program – Buddy Poppy National Home – National Awards Forms*.

**DEPARTMENT “BUDDY”® POPPY &  
VFW NATIONAL HOME PROGRAM AWARDS**

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 for the VFW National Home.
6. Citation to the Auxiliary in each membership division who purchases the most Tribute Bricks for the VFW National Home.

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