

# “BUDDY”® POPPY & VFW NATIONAL HOME AMBASSADOR



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## “Buddy”® Poppy

The “Buddy”® Poppy Program was started about a hundred years ago and it continues to help our disabled veterans, service members and their families around the world. This Program provides continuously from the flower’s fabrication through distribution. It provides support to those who make our Poppies and also to those who benefit from our Poppy drives.

How do we use the “Buddy”® Poppy? We benefit from donations received while distributing Poppies within our communities. We create Poppy displays to bring awareness about veterans and service members to the community. We use them to decorate packages given to our hospitalized veterans. We use them as table decorations for our events. We decorate our wreaths for Memorial and Veterans Day with Poppies. The more we use, and the more we buy, the more veterans, service members and their families benefit.

When reporting on the “Buddy”® Poppy Program, it is important to know that we only count the money going out. We do not need to know how much you brought in from your drives. We need to know how much your Auxiliary donates to veterans and the number of Poppies procured from the VFW.

To remind our membership that “Buddy”® Poppy funds shouldn’t be counted coming in, but rather when funds are donated, or go out, members are encouraged to use #poppiescount when you are posting photos of your “Buddy”® Poppy Drives. Include details about your projects and photos about how you use Poppies in another Program. Doing so will highlight the “Buddy”® Poppy Program and how it benefits veterans, service members and their families.

How do you use the money from your Poppy drives? The money received from the Poppy drives is placed in the Relief Fund. It is used to assist any veteran, service member and their families in their time of need. More information can be found in the *Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual* about how to use Relief Fund monies. One way it can be used is to donate the funds to the VFW National Home.

## VFW National Home

The VFW National Home was founded in 1925. It is located in Eaton Rapids, Michigan. It began as a haven where families left behind by war could remain together. Today it has evolved to meet the changing needs of America’s military and veteran families.

The future is looking bright at the VFW National Home. They have created a new logo, removing the blue screen from around the tree and the words “for Children.” They kept the tree made out of three hearts. The VFW National Home is helping families, parents and their children today. They no longer have house mothers and children without parents. Each home is available to a family that is having difficult times. There are 42 homes available. Each family is allowed to stay at the home for a maximum of four years. During their tenure, families are given the assistance they need. The VFW National Home assists with finding jobs, provides day care, assists with budgets and any mental health and social assistance the family may need. It is truly a new beginning for a family that is struggling day-to-day.

The VFW National Home has strategic goals. The first of these goals is to be the first name that comes to mind for all our veteran service organizations. We need to get the word out about the VFW National Home. If the American Legion or any other veteran service organization has a family in need, we want them to be directed to the VFW National Home. Share their brochure with your local clergyman and veteran service officer. Provide the National Home helpline: 800-313-4200 which is available Monday through Friday from 8am-4pm CST.

The National Home has resources to help our veterans even if they do not want to move to Eaton Rapids. They can connect the veterans to services in their own state.

# “BUDDY”® POPPY & VFW NATIONAL HOME PROGRAM

## “Buddy”® Poppy Education and Community Outreach • National “Buddy”® Poppy Display Contest

### VFW National Home Education and Community Outreach

## “Buddy”® Poppy

The “Buddy”® Poppy has been an integral part of the VFW community for nearly 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.” Poppies were originally distributed by the Franco-American Children’s League 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 a 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.

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.

### How to Order

- Contact your VFW Department Headquarters to order Poppies. Poppies do not need to be ordered through your Post.
- Request the order form from your Department Headquarters at least two to three months (8 to 12 weeks) in advance of your distribution date.
- Brochures, “Buddy”® Poppy distribution supplies and promotional items can be purchased from the VFW Store at [vfwstore.org](http://vfwstore.org) or by calling 1-833-VFW-VETS.

### “Buddy”® Poppy Distribution Tips

- Contact your city/town clerk’s office to see if a permit is required for your distribution event.
- Get permission from the desired distribution location(s) store managers/owners prior to promoting your “Buddy”® Poppy distribution event.
- Make sure all Auxiliary members know the time, day and place of your distribution event.
- Share information about your distribution event with your local paper and on social media. Post flyers in high-traffic areas such as grocery stores, coffee shops, the post office, etc.
- Ask for assistance from youth groups such as VFW and/or Auxiliary youth, JROTC, after-school and faith-based clubs.
- Ask volunteers to wear Auxiliary- and/or VFW-branded clothing to both promote the Auxiliary and VFW and connect the distribution of poppies to the organization.
- Remind volunteers they are NOT SELLING “Buddy”® Poppies, but DISTRIBUTING them for donations.
- Never refuse someone a “Buddy”® Poppy because they are unable to donate. A “Buddy”® Poppy honors all veterans.
- See the VFW’s “Buddy”® Poppy Chairman’s Guide for further assistance in setting up a “Buddy”® Poppy drive, as well as other helpful resources. The guide can be found in MALTA Member Resources.

### Honor the Dead by Helping the Living

- At the Auxiliary and Post level, all proceeds from Poppy drives are to be placed in the Relief Fund with receipts and expenditures in accordance with the Treasurer’s Guide and the *Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual*. (Sec. 904)
- “Buddy”® Poppy drives can be hosted at any time during the year – not just Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Try doing one at least once a quarter. If you have enough volunteers, host a monthly Poppy drive.

- Distribution of “Buddy”® Poppies should be included in every Auxiliary, District or Department activity including parades, patriotic events, membership drives, BINGO or trivia nights, etc.
- There are many creative ways to distribute the “Buddy”® Poppy including window displays, posters, wreaths, remembrance walls, hats, event centerpieces, etc. Let your imagination run wild!

### **Official National VFW “Buddy”® Poppy Display Contest**

- Takes place annually at National Convention.
- Displays are judged in three (3) categories.
- This is an official National VFW contest.

Contest rules and judging guidelines, etc. are available in MALTA Member Resources. This is a VFW contest and the rules cannot change. If you have further questions after reading the rules and guidelines, please contact Lynn W. Rolf III at [lrolf@vfw.org](mailto:lrolf@vfw.org).

### **Unofficial “Buddy”® Poppy Display Contest**

If your Department decides to hold an unofficial “Buddy”® Poppy Display Contest, for example holiday tray favors, please ensure that all participants and judges understand the rules and guidelines. The winners of an unofficial contest will not be forwarded to National for judging.

## VFW NATIONAL HOME

For nearly 100 years, 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 child care, life skills training, tutoring and other educational services, as well as recreational and community service opportunities. Families find healing in a safe and peaceful environment of tree-lined streets, 42 single-family homes, facilities such as a gym, library, computer and science labs, day care center, playgrounds, fishing pond, hiking trails and more!

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 didn’t 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.

Reintegration, post-traumatic stress, high unemployment, rehabilitation from battlefield injuries, emotional wounds, financial stress, fractured family relationships, hopelessness and more can be the outcome for families with a parent serving our country—now, recently, or from earlier generations. Over the years, the National Home has met the changing needs of America’s military and veterans’ 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 National Home’s community is open to families of service members, veterans and—recognizing that the effects of war can last for generations—descendants of members of the VFW and the VFW Auxiliary. The family can include one or both parents with one or more children.

In accepting families to the program, only one thing is asked of them: They must be committed to making changes in their lives. To remain at the National Home, they are expected to demonstrate consistent progress toward family goals. Together, in partnership with the whole family, the National Home is dedicated to helping each family reach its full potential.

Even military families not living on the National Home campus can receive invaluable assistance through the National Home Helpline, which is staffed by caring professionals who help callers with urgent needs seek solutions in their own communities. If you know someone who needs assistance, encourage them to:

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

The VFW National Home, a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, is governed by a seventeen (17) member Board of Trustees made up of VFW and VFW Auxiliary members, who as Life Members of the National Home, are dedicated to the mission of the National Home.

# “BUDDY”<sup>®</sup> POPPY & VFW NATIONAL HOME PROGRAM AWARDS

## Awards for Auxiliaries

1. Most outstanding use of the “Buddy”<sup>®</sup> Poppy in another VFW Auxiliary National Program.

- Citation to every Auxiliary that uses the “Buddy”<sup>®</sup> Poppy in another VFW Auxiliary National Program. Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department “Buddy”<sup>®</sup> Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman by March 31, 2024 for judging.

The Department “Buddy”<sup>®</sup> Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman must email National Headquarters by April 30, 2024 at [info@vfwauxiliary.org](mailto:info@vfwauxiliary.org) a total combine list of every Auxiliary in their Department that completed and submitted an entry form.

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”<sup>®</sup> Poppy in another VFW Auxiliary National Program.

The Department “Buddy”<sup>®</sup> Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National “Buddy”<sup>®</sup> Poppy & VFW National Home Ambassador by April 30, 2024 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the Auxiliary account after 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 their community or another Veteran Service Organization about the VFW National Home. Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department “Buddy”<sup>®</sup> Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman by March 31, 2024 for judging.

The Department “Buddy”<sup>®</sup> Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman must email National Headquarters by April 30, 2024 at [info@vfwauxiliary.org](mailto:info@vfwauxiliary.org) a total combine list of every Auxiliary in their Department that completed and submitted an entry form.

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 their community and/or another Veteran Service Organization about the VFW National Home.

The Department “Buddy”<sup>®</sup> Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National “Buddy”<sup>®</sup> Poppy & VFW National Home Ambassador by April 30, 2024 for judging.

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

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

### **Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen**

1. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department "Buddy"® Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion to educate their community about the "Buddy"® Poppy. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2024 National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

2. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department "Buddy"® Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion to educate their community and/or Veteran Service Organization about the VFW National Home. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2024 National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

3. Outstanding Performance Award in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on Page 5 and for the promotion of the Program Goals listed at the top of Page 18. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2024 National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.