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**“Buddy”® Poppy & VFW National Home Program
Department of Maryland
December 2024**

Program Goals

*“Buddy”® Poppy Education/Outreach
National “Buddy”® Poppy Display Contest
VFW National Home Education and Community Outreach*

Holiday Blues

The stress of the holidays can trigger sadness and depression. This time of year is difficult because there's so much expectations placed on us. Many Veterans suffer during this time. Families also suffer when their Veteran is not feeling the Christmas Spirit. Please educate and promote the *National Home Helpline*. Encourage those in need to call 800-313-4200. Remember this is a helpline not a hotline. Be heard, be helped. All calls are answered and no caller is turned away. This is a free service that offers information, creates connections and gives hope to struggling military and veteran families. The *National Home Helpline* is answered by experienced problem solvers who care deeply about veterans and their families. They have the contacts and knowledge to get each caller the needed help. Sometimes an American Hero just needs to be heard. Especially this time of year when depression can set in due to multiple reasons. There are so many triggers to this feeling:

- Finances – Not enough money to buy gifts which leads to guilt
- Stress – Not enough time to do everything that is expected of you during this season; dinners, parties, shopping and just being tired
- Loneliness – Being single or living alone especially when over 65 when health, age and mobility can make it more difficult to enjoy yourself.
- Grief – Missing a deceased loved one. Seniors have more reasons to grieve
- Estrangement – When you're not speaking to a relative, family get-togethers can bring a feeling of sadness.
- Divorce – Especially difficult when adult children need to balance holiday visits.
- Pleasing – Trying to please everyone.
- Sadness – Gloomy weather and decreased sunlight which is called Seasonal Affective Disorder

Promoting the National Home Helpline may save a veteran and their family in their time of need.



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Buddy”® Poppy

We all need to brighten the winter blues with the color red. Brighten the holidays and spread the cheer with a powerful little red flower, our “Buddy”® Poppy. The Buddy”® Poppy can be incorporated in all our programs for the Holidays. Decorate cards for our hospitalized veterans with poppies. This is a good time to remind our veterans that we remember them. Tis the season for Holiday parties for our Youth, our Veterans and Military Families. Wrap a flag with a poppy and include with Christmas stockings given to children at your holiday party. Imagine that, two programs with one project, Americanism and Youth. Does your Auxiliary have a Secret Santa gift exchange? Include a “Buddy”® Poppy with any gift you are giving to a Post or Auxiliary Member. As always remember to count the “Buddy”® Poppy that you use and most importantly, send in your report.

At this time, I would like to wish from our house to yours a holiday season that is merry and bright! Make it a season of remembering our veterans, our military personnel and their families. One that brightens those winter BLUES away.

