

**“BUDDY” POPPY  
&  
VFW NATIONAL HOME**



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The “Buddy” Poppy program is one that helps our disabled veterans, service members, and their families around the world. From its inception, this program has helped the VFW live up to its motto, **“to honor the dead by helping the living”**.

The poppy program got its start when Madame E. Guerin, founder of the American and French Children’s League became concerned that the free world was “forgetting too soon those sleeping in Flanders Fields”. Guerin decided on the poppy as the most appropriate memorial flower. In May 1922, the VFW conducted the first nationwide distribution of poppies in the United States. Then at its National Encampment in Seattle in August 1922, the organization adopted the poppy as the official memorial flower of the VFW.

In 1923, a plan evolved to pay disabled and needy American veterans to make the poppies. This plan was approved in 1923 and a VFW poppy factory was set up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania therefore veterans would be manufacturing poppies for the 1924 sale.

All over the country, the little red flower became known as the “Buddy” Poppy. That name was registered with the U.S. Patent Office on May 20, 1924. A certificate was issued granting the VFW, under the classification of artificial flowers, all trademark rights to the name of “Buddy”. No other organization, firm or individual can use the name “Buddy” Poppy.

Each year, A Poppy Girl or Poppy Boy is selected from the VFW National Home’s residents and starts the annual campaign by presenting the first poppy to the President of the United States.

From our “Buddy” Poppy drives, our **relief fund** is benefited so that we can assist our veterans and their families in need.

“Buddy” Poppy drives can be hosted at any time during the year – not just Memorial Day and Veteran’s Day. Try doing one at least a quarter. If you have enough volunteers, host a monthly Poppy Drive.

**STATEWIDE PROJECT**

Since this is the 100<sup>th</sup> year of the “Buddy” Poppy let’s do a bit of celebrating. Make/decorate a piñata using poppies and decorations. Remember one “Buddy” Poppy **must** be kept in its original form with **stem, flower and label attached**. Auxiliaries will take their piñata to be judged at the District meetings **before** the Mid-Winter Round-up in January. The winning piñata from each District will be brought to Mid-Winter to be judged.

## **STATE AWARDS**

1. **Plaque** to Auxiliary in each Membership Division for **BEST PROMOTION OF “BUDDY” POPPY PROGRAM.** Citations to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners
2. **Plaque** to 1<sup>st</sup> place winner of the **PINATA** contest at **Mid-Winter.**  
Citations to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners

**AWARDS WILL BE PRESENTED AT DEPARTMENT CONVENTION IN JUNE**

## **NATIONAL AWARD**

Citation to every Auxiliary that uses the “Buddy” Poppy in another VFW Auxiliary National Program. Entry form required. This form will be sent to me no later than March 31, 2024.

\*\* Just a reminder to continue to work on the “Buddy” Poppy Displays for VFW State Awards to be held at the State Convention in June.

The three (3) categories for displays are:

1. Public Promotion
2. Memorial or Inspirational
3. Artistic or Decorative

(Remember to leave one “Buddy” Poppy in its original form with stem, flower and label attached).

## **VFW NATIONAL HOME**

The VFW National Home can be traced to a woman names Amy Ross. In 1922 at the age of 23, she made it her mission to help find jobs for the thousands of unemployed veterans in Detroit. Ms. Ross reached out to Corey Spencer, who was a millionaire cattleman. Mr. Spencer gifted 472 acres of land near Eaton Rapids, Michigan.

On January 7, 1925, the VFW National Home was founded, helping to fulfill the VFW pledge to “honor the dead by helping the living”. That same year during the spring, the National Home welcomed its first family in an old farmhouse. The family was Mrs. Pollett and her six children. Mrs. Pollett had become suddenly widowed and lost her husband’s pension. The VFW National Home is a place where families can remain together, keeping the family circle intact even when their serviceman didn’t come home.

Through the years, the VFW National Home has grown from an old frame farmhouse to a sprawling campus with playgrounds, park areas, and multiple buildings, including single-family homes, a community center and gymnasium, childcare facility, guest lodge, chapel, and administrative offices.

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. These families must be committed to making changes in their lives. They are expected to demonstrate consistent progress toward family goals.

One way the Auxiliary supports the National Home is through gifts of 10 cents per member to the Health and Happiness Fund. This fund supports the following:

- Christmas gifts
- Graduation gifts
- Maintenance of Auxiliary-sponsored buildings
- Emergency repairs and renovations.

Another way to offer support is by becoming a Life Member of the National Home. 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 Life Member Pin.

### **STATEWIDE PROJECT**

Purchase at least one lifetime membership.

Purchase a National Home Tribute Brick.

### **AWARDS**

1. Plaque to an auxiliary in each membership division that **PURCHASES THE MOST LIFE TIME MEMBERSHIPS**. Citations for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>.
2. Plaque to an auxiliary in each membership division that **PURCHASES THE MOST TRIBUTE BRICKS**. Citations for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place.

**“Wind Beneath Our Veterans Wings”**

**“Banding Together for Our Veterans”**