



# BUDDY POPPY / NATIONAL HOME

## FEBRUARY 2026

WOW! The Auxiliaries in the Department of Kansas have been very busy promoting the National Home and doing Buddy Poppy Drives!

### BUDDY POPPY

There have been 8,650 poppies purchased for a total dollar spent of \$2,880.00

35 Poppy Drives have been held with 12,886 poppies distributed

Those drives have brought in \$5,890.26 for Auxiliary Relief Funds.

746 Poppies were distributed to our Youth. Some were tied to small American Flags, some were attached to pencils, and some tied goody bags shut on Halloween.

6 Auxiliaries reported that they made poppy displays and used 1,045 poppies

Several Auxiliaries not only distributed poppies, but, gave out the Buddy Poppy story pamphlet as well. One Auxiliary place poppies and a donation can near their kitchen window. Donations were collected and poppies replenished monthly. Poppies were used to secure the napkin for wrapped silverware, some were attached to grave markers, they were distributed at church services on Patriotic Sunday, used in a downtown window display, and distributed at the baseball fields during Military Appreciation Night.

### NATIONAL HOME

Only 16 Auxiliaries have reported that they have paid their Health and Happiness for a total of \$1,173.40. If your Auxiliary hasn't paid theirs yet, please consider doing so and don't forget to report it.

2 Life Membership have been purchased 1-Haysville, 1-Mankato, and 1- Wakeeney

6 Auxiliaries have donated to the Kansas Cottage Fund for \$565.00

6 Auxiliaries have donated to the National Home General Fund for \$412.00

VFRC - \$10.00 Donation

Stock the Store – \$10.00 Donation

School Supplies – \$50.00 Donation

Hives to Heros – \$40.00 Donation

Amazon Wish List, items were purchased for a total of \$122.92

Santa/Xmas Store – \$350.00 Donation

Only 7 Auxiliaries reported that they donated seeds to the Regenerative Farming Program, if your Auxiliary donated, please be sure to report it.

TOTAL DOLLARS DONATED TO THE NATIONAL HOME - \$7,750.32

Guitars 4 Veterans: Your support for this program has absolutely been above and beyond my wildest dream. There has been 33 new guitars purchased, 1 new guitar donated by a Veteran, and 2 very nice used guitars donated for a Total of 36 instruments. \$4,917.00

1. Deliver on Saturday April 11<sup>th</sup>. We would leave on Thursday the 9<sup>th</sup> and travel ½ way and then arrive in Eaton Rapids late on the afternoon of Friday the 10<sup>th</sup>. We would leave after the tour on the 11<sup>th</sup> travel ½ way and arrive home on Sunday the 12<sup>th</sup>.
2. 12 passenger van and fuel cost per person would be approximately \$125.00
3. There would be nights in motels, so you would want to bring a buddy to split the cost figuring approximate cost at \$120.00 per room
4. Cost of your meals and anything additional you would like to purchase

If anyone is interested in traveling with us, please let me know no later than February 20<sup>th</sup> so that I can get the van or vans reserved.

Thank you to those Auxiliaries that decorated a "HONEY BEE" for our project today. Be sure to make your donation for the bee of your choice. I will let you know at the end of the meeting how much money has been raised for the Heros to Hives program.

Kathy McCandless

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The Department of KS decorated honey bees at their Mid Winter Conference, using Buddy Poppies to raise money for the Heros to Hives program at the National Home. The Auxiliary Buddy Poppy/Nat'l Home Chairman received a small gift and their Auxiliary \$25.00. 9 Auxiliaries participated and raise \$500.00. Way to go Kansas!



DEC 23, 2025

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## Kansas VFW and Sunset Sinners collaborate to provide guitars to US Veterans

*Posted Dec 23, 2025 1:05 PM*



*Kathy McCandless and Blake Blackim at Midwest Music (210 S Santa Fe) with the guitars that are slated to be given to US Veterans at the VFW National Home. Photo by Jeff Haines*

**By: NICOLAS FIERRO**

*Salina Post*

Quality acoustic guitars are set to get into the hands of US Military veterans, thanks to two people who care about our servicemen and women.

Kathy McCandless, Junior Vice President for the VFW Auxiliary Department of Kansas also apart of the VFW Post 1432 Auxiliary in

Salina, and Black Blackim, drummer of Sunset Sinners collaborated to help initiate a generous gift of guitars going to veterans in the VFW National Home at Eaton Rapids, MI.

This was made possible through the *Guitars for Vets* program, which offers veterans, particularly those dealing with PTSD and service-related trauma, free, weekly one-on-one guitar lessons over a 10-week period, culminating in a graduation where they receive a new acoustic guitar and accessory kit.

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McCandless reached out Blackim to see about donating several guitars to veterans at the National Home. Blackim did not hesitate to help, and so he contacted his guitar vendor and was able receive a large amount of guitars to be given to the veterans.

"Sunset Sinners is all about supporting veterans and active military," said Blackim.

The could not have been done without generous donations from the public as well. McCandless stated she wanted to let the public know that their donations are being well spent.

"People are enthused and give more when they see where their money goes," she said.

While the organization of Guitars for Vets started in 2007, it wasn't until 2023 that the program got into the VFW National Home.

Just this year, the VFW chapter in Kansas was able to get into the mix and opened the doors for McCandless and Blackim to help donate the guitars.

The guitars are planned to arrive to the veterans at the VFW National Home in Spring 2026.

Sunset Sinners are scheduled to perform at the Stiefel Theatre on **February 13, 2026**. [Click here](#) to purchase tickets.

For more information about Guitars for Vets, [click here](#).

More information about the VFW National Home, [click here](#).