

"BUDDY"® POPPY & VFW NATIONAL HOME AMBASSADOR

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*From the shining lighthouse we want to
honor the dead by helping the living.*

From the shining lighthouse we want to honor the dead by helping the living. This is done by distributing "Buddy"® Poppies within our communities; donations collected are used to aid veterans, service members and their families who are in need. While the Cross of Malta is a recognizable symbol of our organization, the "Buddy"® Poppy is a symbol that reminds Americans of the sacrifices made by our veterans while protecting our freedoms. This small red flower, inspired by the John McCrae poem "In Flanders Fields," has been adopted by veterans' organizations around the world as a reminder of what our veterans have sacrificed. There are now two options for the "Buddy"® Poppy; they are the traditional "Buddy"® Poppy and the VFW also has a metal "Buddy"® Poppy that is available. This new metal Poppy is nice for a collar or suit jacket.

History of the "Buddy"® Poppy

Distributing Poppies dates back more than a century, when it became the VFW's official memorial flower in 1922.

While you are distributing Poppies, you can hand out VFW National Home brochures and explain that this is one of the Programs supported by their donations. The "Buddy"® Poppy and VFW National Home go hand in hand!!

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'd 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 your VFW Post to order Poppies. Each “Buddy”® Poppy purchased by a Department for distribution contributes to the following:
 - 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) cent goes to the Department’s Veterans Service Fund
- Request the order form from your VFW Department Headquarters at least two to three months (8-12 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 or by calling 1-833-VFW-VETS.

Contests

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

VFW National Home

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

Membership

The VFW National Home Centennial Membership Program began April 1, 2024, and will end December 31, 2025. For just \$100, you can join this special program by upgrading your existing membership or becoming a new member. As a

Centennial Life Member, you’ll receive a special centennial membership pin and membership card that will allow you to display your affiliation with pride. Plus, you’ll enjoy discounts on souvenirs and apparel that are not available to regular members.

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 our Departments.





“BUDDY”® POPPY & VFW NATIONAL HOME PROGRAM

“Buddy”® Poppy Education/Outreach • National “Buddy”® Poppy Display Contest

VFW National Home Education

“Buddy”® Poppy

“Buddy”® Poppy

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.” 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.

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.

How to Order

Contact your VFW Post to order Poppies. Please Request the order at least two to three months (8 to 12 weeks) in advance of your distribution date.

“Buddy”® Poppy Items

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

VFW Store

406 West 34th Street

Kansas City, MO 64111

1.833.VFW.VETS (1.833.839.8387)

vfwstore.org

“Buddy”® Poppy Distribution Tips

“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.

- Talk to your VFW Post about a joint drive and splitting the proceeds.
- 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, Scouts, Young Marines 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.
- 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*.
- 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.

Two Versions of the “Buddy”® Poppy Are Available

- Traditional artificial flower “Buddy”® Poppy
- Tin tab “Buddy”® Poppy

Anniversary “Buddy”® Poppies

Special traditional artificial flower Poppies are available to VFW Posts celebrating their 25th, 50th, 75th and 100th anniversaries. The poppies are the same design as traditional poppies but come in silver for the 25th anniversary, gold for the 50th anniversary and diamond (iridescent white) for the 75th anniversary. VFW Posts currently in their 100th anniversary can order any color and as many as they need.

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 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.

Unofficial “Buddy”® Poppy Display Contest VFW National “Buddy”® Poppy Awards

Find details about the Unofficial “Buddy”® Poppy Display Contest & VFW National “Buddy”® Poppy Awards in 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 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.

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 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 child care, 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—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.

Families find healing in a safe and peaceful environment of tree-lined streets with 42 single-family homes and facilities such as a gym, library, computer and science labs, day care center, playgrounds, fishing pond, hiking trails and more.

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

For more information and to find help visit vfwnationalhome.org and click on the Get Help button.

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.

Health & Happiness Fund

One way the Auxiliary supports the National Home is through gifts of 10 cents per member to the Health & Happiness Fund. Contributions are critical since the campus and its programs receive no government funding. The Health & Happiness Fund supports the following at the National Home:

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

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.

To Make a Gift online in MALTA on behalf of an entity (Auxiliary, District and/or Department)

- The Treasurer logs in to MALTA
- Go to the Duties tab for the entity you are making the gift on behalf of
- Select Make a Gift shortcut icon
- Click on Make a Gift blue box
- Choose program and enter amount
- Click on I hereby agree to the terms and conditions of purchase
- Click on Pay Now

Entity gifts are done by ACH, if it asks you for Credit Card information you are not on your duties tab.

To Make a Gift online in MALTA on behalf of yourself, as an individual with a personal gift

- visit vfwauxiliary.org and select MALTA Member Login
- Log into MALTA
- Select Make a Gift from the Main Menu
- Click on Make a Gift blue box
- Choose program and enter amount
- Enter credit card information
- Click on I hereby agree to the terms and conditions of purchase
- Click on Pay Now

To donate by mail, send a check earmarked Health & Happiness to:

VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters
Attn: Health & Happiness Donations
406 W. 34th Street, 10th Floor
Kansas City, MO 64111

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.

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.

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 vfwnationalhome.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.

VFW Auxiliary Sponsorship

The VFW Auxiliary has been involved in the National Home in myriad ways since the very beginning; as vocal supporters, fundraisers and volunteers. The National Home was the Auxiliary's first continuing Program and we named our first official National Home Chairman in 1927.

A few of our projects include:

- Hospital, now the Health & Education Center
- The Margaret A. Armstrong Guest Lodge and Memory Chapel
- Early Education Center
- "Home Life" building, now the Community Center, with a gym, auditorium, kitchen, elevator and additional office space
- National Home's new Welcome Center

For more information, see MALTA Member Resources or visit the National Home's website at vfwnationalhome.org.

“BUDDY”[®] POPPY & VFW NATIONAL HOME PROGRAM AWARDS

Awards for Auxiliaries:

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 the most outstanding activity and/or event with their VFW Post to educate their community about the VFW “Buddy”[®] Poppy.

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the Department “Buddy”[®] Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman by March 31, 2026 for judging.

The Department “Buddy”[®] Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National “Buddy”[®] Poppy & VFW National Home Ambassador by April 30, 2026 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2026 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

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 the 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.

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Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2026 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

"BUDDY"[®] POPPY & VFW NATIONAL HOME PROGRAM AWARDS

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 of activity and/or event with their VFW Post to educate their community about the VFW "Buddy"[®] Poppy.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2026 National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah.

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 of 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.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2026 National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah.

3. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded 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 19.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2026 National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah.