

"BUDDY"® POPPY & VFW NATIONAL HOME AMBASSADOR



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This year we are going to **CELEBRATE!** One hundred years ago, a 23-year-old woman's mission was to help veterans in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, and we are still doing it today. On January 7, 2025 the VFW National Home will turn 100 years old! The VFW National Home was the **FIRST** National Program for the VFW Auxiliary.

Over the span of a century, the VFW National Home community has undergone a remarkable transformation. In the beginning, the teenage boys oversaw the fire department for the National Home. When the Home first started there was a hospital and a dentist office on campus. This has now been renovated into the Health and Education Building, which has the Veteran and Family Resource Center located in the basement. This has been a positive area for the veteran and their family to meet with employment specialists, peer support specialists and case managers to work on their personal goals, family goals and self care.

Regardless of all of the changes, our unwavering dedication to our veterans remain steadfast and unchanged. Now more than ever the families are participating in activities held on campus and when you see the interaction with the residents you sense the "community" feeling they have.

Within a year, the National Home went from a Silver to Gold-Level award for being a veteran friendly employer by the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency. This positive change came under the direction of Executive Director Mike Wilson. He has energized the staff and brought a brightness back to the Home. Some other new changes are:

Guitars for Vets Program – Ten free lessons for the veterans and then a new acoustic guitar for completing the program.

Cup of Joe – Spend two hours on a Saturday morning with other veterans having coffee, donuts and telling stories.

Golf Event – Annual golf outing to raise money for the activities and events at the Home.

Heroes to Hives – National Home staff and residents participated in beekeeping classes facilitated by a local beekeeper and VFW member.

The Veteran Tribute Tree – To honor our living, deceased or deployed by placing a ribbon on the tree at Christmastime.

During this year, I would like Auxiliaries to take the time to **CELEBRATE** with me. I am hoping each Auxiliary will consider sending a heartfelt birthday card to the VFW National Home in celebration of its 100th birthday. Please have the cards to the National Home by the beginning of January so they can be displayed for the birthday party. Plans are being made to have the celebration shared so everyone can join in on the fun. Instead of sending gifts for the traditional birthday party remember the VFW National Home has an Amazon Wish List with things they could use or your Auxiliary could make a donation to help with costs of the 100th celebration in June.

Auxiliaries across the Nation have supported the National Home for a century in ways that range from building a chapel to most recently renovating the Welcome Center. There are so many different ways to support the Home, here are just a few others:

- National Home's Amazon Wishlist
- Become a Life Member
- Donate to Health & Happiness
- Purchase a brick for the Tribute Park
- Become a Hometown Hero contributor

Over the course of the year, we will have many events and special things for the National Home and I hope Auxiliaries will participate and help in all of the celebrations. Our biggest celebration will be when we hold our event on the National Home grounds in June 2025. We will be inviting alumni back to the Home and you may even see former "Buddy"® Poppy children in attendance.

Website – <https://vfwnationalhome.org>

- News and events
- Testimonials
- Strategic plans
- History
- Online store
- And more
-

Facebook – follow at VFW National Home
See exciting events and current happenings along
with photos of the families on campus.

The VFW “Buddy”® Poppy is worn as a profound
gesture of respect to honor the valor and sacrifice of
those who have laid down their lives for their country.
The first “Buddy”® Poppy distribution was held on
Memorial Day 1922.

When you have a “Buddy”® Poppy distribution you are
honoring the dead by helping the living and you are
also able to include bringing awareness to some who
may not understand who and what we are. Why not
collaborate with JROTC, Scouts or other youth groups
and ask them to join you in the distribution of the
“Buddy”® Poppy?

Donations collected during your “Buddy”® Poppy
distribution will be allocated to the Relief Fund per
our Bylaws. I encourage you to consult the Booklet
of Instructions found within your Podium Edition:
Bylaws and Ritual on ways to use the funds.

When you are ready to hold a “Buddy”® Poppy drive
be sure you order your Poppies from your VFW Post,
if the Post will not order them for you, please contact
your VFW Department headquarters and be sure to
allow 4 weeks for delivery. There are now two options
for the “Buddy”® Poppies, 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. 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

"BUDDY"® POPPY & VFW NATIONAL HOME PROGRAM

"Buddy"® Poppy Education/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 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 Post to order Poppies.
- Request the order form from your VFW 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 or by calling 1-833-VFW-VETS.

"Buddy"® Poppy Distribution Tips

- 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.

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.

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

Turning 100 this Program Year, 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, or
- Visit 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.

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:

- Christmas gifts
- Graduation gifts
- Maintenance of Auxiliary-sponsored buildings
- Emergency repairs and renovations. Donations can be made online in MALTA or by mail.

Making a gift is easy on 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 into 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

Another way to offer support is by becoming a Life Member of the National Home. There are two types of membership:

1. 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 National Home has your correct name and email address since bylaws/ ballots are emailed.)
2. Any individuals or organization wishing to support the National Home's mission can become an Associate Life Member. Associate Life Members do not have voting privileges.

The cost of becoming a Life Member is a one-time fee of \$50 and includes a membership certificate, a wallet card and a Life Member pin.

Visit vfwnationalhome.org/membership for:

- More information
- Life Membership application
- To purchase a Life Membership

For more information, 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 using the VFW “Buddy”® Poppy to educate their community about the VFW “Buddy”® Poppy.
 - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that hosts the most outstanding activity and/or event using the VFW “Buddy”® Poppy to educate their community about the VFW “Buddy”® Poppy.
2. Most outstanding activity and/or event to recognize and celebrate the VFW National Home’s 100th Birthday.
 - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that hosts the most outstanding activity and/or event to recognize and celebrate the VFW National Home’s 100th Birthday.

Entry forms required for each award and available in MALTA Member Resources. VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry forms to their Department “Buddy”® Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman by March 31, 2025 for judging. The Department “Buddy”® Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry forms to the National “Buddy”® Poppy & VFW National Home Ambassador by April 30, 2025 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to the winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the winning VFW Auxiliary account after the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

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 the uses of the VFW “Buddy”® Poppy while educating the community about the VFW “Buddy”® Poppy.
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 recognizing the VFW National Home’s 100th Birthday.
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 18.

Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2025 VFW Auxiliary National Convention in Columbus, Ohio.