**“Buddy” Poppy & VFW National Home for Children**

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**“Buddy” Poppy**

In April of 1915 a battle-weary Canadian Army Col. John McCrae looked upon the final resting place of thousands of young men who had fallen in the second battle of Ypres in Belgium. He sadly gazed at the endless rows of graves each marked with a lonely white cross and surrounded by fields of poppies. As he stood silently in remembrance of the lives that were sacrificed, he heard larks singing overhead of the graves row on row. It was then that he penned the poem “Flanders Field.” Published a short time later in PUNCH magazine, this poem brought a message of confidence to millions of people during WWI. It established the Poppy as a symbol of Faith and Hope for a war-ravaged world. Col. McCrae did not live to see the end of the War, but the Poppies still grow, the white crosses remain, the larks still sing, and his poem lives on in print and in the hearts of generations. Many times, a year it is read or passed out at ceremonies to honor fallen soldiers everywhere.

Poppies were first distributed by the Franco-American Children’s League to benefit the children of war-torn France and Belgium after WWI ended.

The *Veterans of Foreign Wars* conducted it’s initial Poppy distribution before Memorial Day in 1922, making them the first Veteran’s organization to organize a nationwide distribution of the little red flower, that symbolizes the blood shed by American Service Members. It is a symbol that we are forever grateful and will never forget their sacrifices. The initial campaign used Poppies assembled in France, but the shipping time was long. So, at the *VFW’s* 1923 encampment it was decided that the little cloth flowers would be assembled here in the US by disabled, hospitalized and needy Veterans, who would be compensated for their work. The Poppies would then be shipped to *VFW* members for distribution in their communities.

In February of 1924 the *VFW* registered the name “Buddy” Poppy with the US patent office and a certificate granting the *VFW* all trademark right was issued on May 20, 1924. No other organization, firm, or individual may use the name “Buddy” Poppy. These memorial flowers are still assembled by Veterans in five locations in the US. The flowers are never sold, but donations are accepted, with proceeds going to provide financial assistance in maintaining State and National Veteran’s Service programs and partially supporting the *VFW National Home for* *Children.*

**Ordering**

* Poppies may be ordered by contacting your *VFW* Department Headquarters and the request should be made 8 to 12 weeks before they are needed. This program requires a purchase be made by each Auxiliary every new membership year.
* Brochures, “Buddy” Poppy distribution supplies, and promotional items can be purchased from the VFW Store at *vfwstore.org* or calling 1-833-VFW-VETS.

**Distribution Tips**

* Contact your city/town clerk’s office to see whether or not a permit is required at the location you would like to hold your distribution event.
* Acquire permission from store manager, property owner, or other business prior to your event.
* Share information of your location on websites, social media, newspapers, fliers, etc.
* Ask for assistance from youth groups, faith-based organizations, scouts, or JROTC.
* Ask your Post members to join you.
* Ask volunteers to wear VFW or VFW Auxiliary branded clothing to promote the organization and connect the flower distribution to it.
* Remind volunteers that they are NOT SELLING but are DISTRIBUTING the “Buddy” Poppies for a donation. **Honor the dead by helping the living.** Never refuse someone a flower because they are unable to donate. A “Buddy” Poppy honors veterans and everyone should be able to do so.

**National and Department “Buddy” Poppy Display Contest**

Takes place on Department level at Convention and displays are judged in three categories

1. **Public Promotion of Poppy Campaign**

Window, booth, parade, poster displays, campaign promotions, etc**.**

1. **Memorial or Inspirational Displays**

Wreaths, memorial tablets or plaques, patriotic or devotional themes**.**

1. **Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies**

Post Home displays, table centerpieces, corsages.

Winning displays are sent on to National for judging at National Convention.

**RESPECT…HONOR…REMEMBER**

**VFW National Home for Children**

The ***VFW National Home for Children*** is a place where Military Veterans and their families can get a fresh start by living rent free for up to four years and have access to case management services, life skills training, tutor and other educational services as well as other recreational and community services needed to aid the healing process. It provides a safe and peaceful environment for the entire Veteran’s family.

The humble beginnings of the ***VFW National Home for Children***can be traced to a 23-year-old Michigan woman Amy Ross who in 1922 made it her mission and legacy to help find jobs for thousands of unemployed Veterans in her home city of Detroit. News of Ms. Ross’ efforts reached millionaire cattleman Corey Spencer, who gifted her 472 acres of land near Eaton Rapids, Michigan. On January 7, 1925 the *VFW National Home* was founded, helping to honor the pledge of **“honor the dead by helping the living.”** The home welcomed it’s first family, a widow with six children that Spring, into an old, framed farmhouse. The home has since grown into a vast sprawling campus of tree lined streets with playgrounds, parks, childcare facilities, community center, multiple family-oriented facilities, a guest lodge, chapel, administrative offices and forty-two single family homes. All of the homes are named for the states that sponsor them, after a sponsor, or after an organization. Department of Pennsylvania VFW sponsors Cottage #3. The majority of contributions used for funding are from the VFW and VFW Auxiliary. National Home is forever evolving to meet the changing needs of Veterans and Military families to better assist them with reintegration, post-traumatic stress, high unemployment, rehabilitation from battlefield injuries, emotional wounds, financial stress, or fractured family relationships, among other issues that can affect a parent serving our country and his family or her family. In accepting a family to the program, it is asked that they must be committed to making changes in their lives. To remain at National Home, they must demonstrate consistent progress toward family goals. In partnership with them the home is dedicated to helping each family succeed in reaching their full potential.

If your Auxiliary or individual member knows of a family who may need assistance encourage them to:

* Call the Helpline at 1-800-313-4200
* Email [help@vfwnationalhome.org](mailto:help@vfwnationalhome.org)
* Visit vfwnationalhome.org/help

The way that the VFW Auxiliary supports the National Home is through donations to the ***Health and Happiness Fund***. 25 cents per member is a required obligation to be considered participating in this program. The fund supports the following:

* Christmas and Graduation gifts
* Maintenance of Auxiliary sponsored buildings including emergency repairs and needed renovations.

**Donate through MALTA:**

* Individuals can log in and make a donation for themselves.
* Treasurers can log in under DUTIES and make a donation for their Auxiliary.

**Donate by mail:**

* Send a check earmarked **Health and Happiness** to

VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters

Attn: Health and Happiness Donations

406 W. 34th Street, 10th Floor, Kansas City, MO 64111

**Become a Life-Member:**

VFW and VFW Auxiliary Members are encouraged to become life members of National Home. Life members may vote for Trustees who represent their National Home District, and approve any changes to the bylaws and articles of incorporation. An Auxiliary may purchase a life membership and will receive one vote as well.

Any individual or organization not associated with the VFW can also support the National Home by becoming an Associate Life member. These members do not receive voting privileges.

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 pin. Visit ***vfwnationalhome.org/membership*** for more information, an application, or to purchase a life membership.

**Other ways to give:**

Tribute Bricks are available to purchase, donation to at Tribute Park and Fundraisers are other ways you can support National Home. I encourage everyone to visit their website at: ***vfwnationalhome.org***

There is much more information and education about the National Home than this program explanation can give. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at my contact information at the top of the first program page. Let us keep in mind that **“HANDS THAT SERVE, HEARTS THAT CARE”** should guide us always. And to forever ***“RESPECT…HONOR…REMEMBER”*** those who sacrificed so much so that we may have the freedoms we enjoy each day.

**National Awards for Auxiliaries**

1. Most outstanding event that demonstrated how the Poppy and the VFW National Home for Children impact each other.

* Citation to every Auxiliary that hosts an activity and/or event that exhibited and/or explained how the Poppy and the VFW National Home for Children impact each other. Criteria and entry form (required) available at vfwauxiliary.org/resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department "Buddy" Poppy & VFW National Home for Children Chairman by March 31, 2023. Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from National Headquarters.
* Citation and $25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences with the most outstanding activity and/or event that shows how the Poppy and the VFW National Home for Children impact each other. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2023 National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.

2. Most outstanding community education about the "Buddy" Poppy & VFW National Home for Children.

* Citation to every Auxiliary that hosts an activity and/or event that educates the community about the Poppy & VFW National Home for Children. Criteria and entry form (required) available at vfwauxiliary.org/resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department "Buddy"' Poppy & VFW National Home Chairman by March 31, 2023. Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from National Headquarters.
* Citation and $25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences that hosts the most outstanding activity and/ or event that educates the community about the "Buddy" Poppy & VFW National Home for Children Program. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2023 National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.
* Citation to each Auxiliary that contributes a gift of 25 cents or more per member to the Health & Happiness Fund based on June 30, 2022, membership statistics. Citation will be mailed directly to the Auxiliary from National Headquarters.

**Department Awards for Auxiliaries**

1. Citation to the Auxiliary in each membership division who has the best promotion of the “Buddy” Poppy through distribution and education within their Post or Community. (Must submit a description and/or photos to the Department Chairman.)
2. Citation to the Auxiliary in each membership division that has the best promotion of the “Buddy” Poppy combined with another VFW Auxiliary program. Criteria and entry form (required) available at *vfw.org/resources* and must be submitted with year-end reports.
3. Citation to the first, second, and third place winners in each category for the “Buddy” Poppy display contest at Department Convention.
4. Citation to the Auxiliary in each membership division that hosted or co-hosted with their Post, the most “Buddy” Poppy distribution drives within the Post or community.
5. Citation to the Auxiliary in each membership division who has the best promotion of the National Home for Children at an event**. All entries will be considered and must be submitted with year-end reports.**
6. Citation to the Auxiliary in each membership division who purchases the most Life Memberships for the National Home for Children.

1. Citation to the Auxiliary overall who submits the most amount of donation monies to the National Home **Health and Happiness Fund.**  (Must submit copy of check or copy of receipt from MALTA.)
2. Citation to any Auxiliary or District who hosts or attends a **Pop-Up Event.** (Must submit a description and/or photos.)
3. Lastly, in conjunction with the National Ambassador’s Program, a citation to the Auxiliary in each membership division that hosts an event reflecting how the “Buddy” Poppy and National Home for Children impact each other. (See National Awards Page)

**Watch your General Orders for Pop-Up Events and Promotions.**

**ALL OBLIGATIONS INCLUDING AUDITS, BONDS, DELEGATE FEES, PLEDGES, SUPPLIES, ETC. TO NATIONAL, DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS AND DISTRICT MUST BE MET FOR YOUR AUXILIARY/DISTRICT PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMEN TO QUALIFY FOR AWARDS.**

“**Buddy” Poppy & VFW National Home for Children**

2022-2023 Year-End Report

Carolyn J. Paccio, Department Chairman

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570-396-1538 / [cpaccio29@gmail.com](mailto:cpaccio29@gmail.com)

Reporting Period: April 1, 2022 through March 31, 2023

Your District President must receive this report by April 7, 2023

Retain one (1) copy for your Auxiliary records.

**“Buddy” Poppy**

1. Did your Auxiliary utilize any of the “Buddy” Poppy material/resources available on the National VFW Auxiliary website? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
2. How many “Buddy” Poppy drives did your Auxiliary hold with your VFW Post? \_\_\_\_\_\_ Without your VFW Post? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of combined “Buddy” Poppies that were distributed. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Did your Auxiliary participate in the VFW “Buddy” Poppy Display Contest? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

**VFW National Home for Children**

1. Did your Auxiliary utilize any of the VFW National Home for Children material/resources available on the National VFW Auxiliary website? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
2. Did your Auxiliary promote the VFW National Home for Children? Yes\_\_\_ No \_\_\_
3. Did your Auxiliary promote the VFW National Home for Children Helpline? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
4. Did your Auxiliary purchase at least one VFW National Home for Children Life Membership? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
5. Did your Auxiliary purchase at least one VFW National Home for Children Tribute Brick? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
6. Did your Auxiliary donate 25 cents per member to the Health and Happiness Fund? \_\_\_\_\_ How much was donated? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Did your Auxiliary hold an event or attend one from the Pop-Up promotions in General Orders? If so, which one(s)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Auxiliary President: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Auxiliary Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Auxiliary Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Aux#\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ District #\_\_\_\_\_\_

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