

Department of Missouri VFW Auxiliary
Buddy Poppy/ National Home
Program Book 2025-2026

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**"Poppies are the silent poets of the garden, whispering stories of
resilience and remembrance."**

The “Buddy”® Poppy is a powerful symbol of remembrance and sacrifice. Since World War I, the red poppy has honored fallen soldiers, inspired by the famous poem *In Flanders Fields*. The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) adopted it as their official memorial flower, ensuring that its meaning endures. The “Buddy”® Poppy program also supports Veterans in need, helping fund medical care and rehabilitation. It serves as a reminder that their sacrifices should never be forgotten.

The phrase **“Honor the dead by helping the living”** is at the heart of the “Buddy”® Poppy tradition. It emphasizes the importance of supporting Veterans, their families, and those who continue to serve, ensuring that their legacy lives on through meaningful action. By wearing a poppy, donating, or participating in events, people continue this tradition of remembrance and aid.

How to Order

- ✓ Contact your VFW Post to order Poppies. If you have any problems ordering, please contact me.
- ✓ Request the order form from your Department Headquarters. Be sure to allow plenty of time (8-12 weeks) for delivery before 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.
- ✓ Each “Buddy”® Poppy purchased by a Department for distribution contributes to the following:
 - One cent goes to the VFW National Home.
 - One cent goes to the VFW National Headquarters Veterans Service Fund
 - One and a half cents go to the Department Veterans Service Fund

Types of Poppies

- ✓ There are two versions of the “Buddy”® Poppy.
 - Traditional artificial flower
 - Tin tab
- ✓ Anniversary “Buddy”® Poppy - Special traditional artificial flower
Poppies are available to VFW Posts celebrating their 25th, 50th, 75th and 100th anniversaries.
 - 25th Anniversary - Silver
 - 50th Anniversary - Gold
 - 75th Anniversary - Diamond (iridescent)



- 100th Anniversary - VFW Posts currently in their 100th anniversary can order any color and as many as they need.

Distribution Tips

- ✓ Contact your city/town clerk's office to see if a permit is required for your distribution event.
- ✓ Look for high traffic areas.
- ✓ Get permission from your desired distribution location(s). Ask store manager/owner's permission before promoting your distribution event.
- ✓ Make sure Auxiliary members know when and where the distribution event will take place.
- ✓ Contact your local radio station or paper to share information about your distribution event and/or share on social media.
- ✓ Ask local youth groups for their assistance.
- ✓ Have Poppy distributors wear Auxiliary (or VFW) branded clothing to promote the Auxiliary and VFW while also helping the public to connect the distribution event to the organization.
- ✓ Encourage your volunteers to SMILE and be enthusiastic.
- ✓ Use the "Buddy"® Poppy Chairman's Manual to educate distributors. Remind your volunteers that they are distributing the Poppies in hopes of receiving a donation **NOT** selling them.
- ✓ All proceeds from Poppy drives are to be placed in the Relief Fund.
- ✓ Think outside the box! There are many creative ways to distribute the "Buddy"® Poppy including event centerpieces, parades, posters, window displays, wreaths and more.

NEVER refuse someone a "Buddy"® Poppy because they are unable to donate.

"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 Contest

✓ **Fall Contest**

At this year's **Fall Council of Administration** meeting, we're taking our **"Buddy"® Poppy Hat Parade** down the **Yellow Brick Road**—a path paved with remembrance, creativity, and honor! As we march forward, each step on our golden path celebrates the resilience and sacrifice of our Veterans. Let your hat shine like a beacon of courage, adorned with "Buddy"® Poppies that tell a story as timeless as Dorothy's journey to the Emerald City. So, gather your poppies, design something truly magical, and walk with pride—because on this Yellow Brick Road, every hat is a tribute, and every step brings us closer to a celebration of service and sacrifice. **There's no place like honoring our heroes!**



- Make sure you have at least one Poppy in its original form with tag on the hat.
- An envelope with:
 - On the outside:
 - Youth or Adult
 - On the inside:
 - Auxiliary number
 - District number
 - Number of members
 - Number of Poppies used
 - Number of hours spent making the hat
- **DO NOT add anything to your hat that will identify who made it.**

✓ **Winter Contest**

At this year's **Winter Council of Administration** meeting, we're embracing the season of giving with a “Buddy”® **Poppy Tray Favor Contest!** These heartfelt creations, designed with holiday cheer, will serve as small yet powerful tokens of appreciation for our beloved Veterans. After the meeting, we will distribute them to **Veterans Homes**, ensuring that every tray carries a message of gratitude and remembrance. Whether adorned with festive colors, winter magic, or symbols of service, your tray favors will brighten the spirits of those who have given so much. So gather your “Buddy”® Poppies, let the holiday inspiration flow, and craft a tray favor that spreads warmth, joy, and appreciation this season!

- Make sure you have at least one Poppy in its original form with tag on the tray favor.
- An envelope with:
 - On the outside:
 - Youth or Adult
 - On the inside:
 - Auxiliary number
 - District number
 - Number of members
 - Number of Poppies used
 - Number of hours spent making the tray favor
- **DO NOT add anything to your hat that will identify who made it.**

✓ **Official National “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.

Awards

✓ Department

“The Poppy Valor” Award – Most outstanding activity and/or event with their VFW Post to educate their community about the VFW Buddy Poppy

- **First Place** - \$20 and a citation goes to one Auxiliary in each of the 4 Program Divisions.
- **Second Place** – A citation goes to one Auxiliary in each of the 4 Program Divisions.

✓ National

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



The **VFW National Home** in Michigan is more than just a place—it’s a guiding light for military and veteran families, much like the **Emerald City** was a beacon of hope for Dorothy and her companions on their journey through Oz. Just as Dorothy, the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Lion sought courage, wisdom, heart, and home, families at the National Home find **stability, support, and healing** through education, counseling, and a nurturing community. The winding paths through the Home’s beautiful grounds may not be paved with yellow bricks, but they lead to new beginnings, reminding us that resilience and hope can overcome life’s storms. And just as Glinda told Dorothy that she had the power to find home all along, the National Home empowers families to reclaim their future—with a little help from those who care.

The VFW National Community

The **VFW National Home** in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting **military, veterans, and their families**. Established in **1925**, it was founded on the belief that America should care for the families of those who served. The National Home provides **housing, education, daycare, recreation, and case management** to help families build a stable and healthy future.

The campus features **42 single-family homes, a gym, library, computer and science labs, daycare center, playgrounds, fishing pond, and hiking trails**. Families facing challenges such as **reintegration, post-traumatic stress, unemployment, and battlefield injuries** can find refuge and support here.

The **VFW National Home** provides housing and support for **military and veteran families** facing challenges. To be eligible, applicants must meet one of the following criteria:

- **Currently serving** in the military, including those on unaccompanied tours or deployments

- **Honorably discharged veterans**, including Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve members
- **Surviving spouses** of veterans with dependent children
- **Parents or guardians** who are single or married and have dependent children
- **Families with a connection to the VFW or Auxiliary**, meaning the applicant has a parent who is a member in good standing

The National Home offers a **three-phase program** designed to help families achieve stability, including **education, job training, and veteran transition support**. The campus is supported by **donations and volunteer efforts**, with opportunities for individuals and groups to contribute through monetary gifts or special projects.

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



National Home Bus Trip

This **October 24-26, 2025**, we’re embarking on a magical journey down the **Yellow Brick Road** to the **VFW National Home**! Along the way, we’ll celebrate the spirit of **supporting Veterans and their families**, bringing honor, remembrance, and community together. But that’s not all—get ready for a **spooktacular Halloween party**, filled with festive fun and heartfelt camaraderie. Just like Dorothy and her friends discovered courage, heart, and wisdom, we’ll travel with purpose, ensuring our veterans **and their families** feel the appreciation they deserve. So, gather your **friends**, put on your best costume, and join us for an unforgettable trip where service and celebration go hand in hand!



Health and Happiness Fund

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

✓ To Donate Online In Malta

- Auxiliary/District/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” icon.
 - Click on “Make a Gift” blue box.



- Choose program and enter amount.
- Click on “I hereby agree to the terms and conditions of purpose”.
- 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.)

- Self (On Behalf of Individual Person)
 - 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 and Happiness to:
 VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters
 Attn: Health and Happiness Donations
 406 W. 34th Street, 10th Floor
 Kansas City, MO 64111



VFW National Home Life Membership and Associate Life Membership

The VFW National Home has two types of memberships that offer another way to support the National Home.

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 Support

There are many ways to offer support to the **VFW National Home**, ensuring that military and veteran families receive the care and stability they deserve. Becoming a **Home Front Hero**, purchasing a **Tribute Brick or Centennial Garden Brick**, or selecting an item for the **Tribute Park** are all meaningful ways to create lasting tributes. Gifts from your **IRA, stocks, or securities** can also help sustain the Home’s mission, while purchasing items from the **Amazon Wish List** directly benefits those in need. Even simple acts like **wearing VFW National Home apparel** and distributing **promotional materials** help raise awareness and ensure more people recognize the vital role the National Home plays. No matter the form, every act of support makes a meaningful difference!



VFW Auxiliary Sponsorship

The **VFW Auxiliary** has played a pivotal role in the **VFW National Home** since its inception, standing as **vocal supporters, fundraisers, and dedicated volunteers**. As the Auxiliary's **first continuing program**, the National Home has long been a cornerstone of their mission to support **military and veteran families**. In **1927**, the Auxiliary solidified this commitment by appointing its **first official National Home Chairman**, ensuring structured, ongoing efforts to uplift and sustain this vital community.

Over the years, the Auxiliary has supported numerous projects that have helped shape and improve the National Home's services. These include the original **Hospital**, now the **Health and Education Center**, providing essential care and resources to residents. The **Margaret A. Armstrong Guest Lodge and Memory Chapel** offers a space for reflection and remembrance, honoring the sacrifices of veterans and their families. The **Early Education Center** fosters learning and growth for young children, ensuring they receive the support they need. Additionally, the **"Home Life" building**, now the **Community Center**, serves as a hub of activity with a **gym, auditorium, kitchen, elevator, and additional office space**, helping families build connections and participate in enriching programs. Most recently, the **National Home's new Welcome Center** ensures that every arriving family is greeted with warmth, guidance, and the promise of a supportive community.

Through these efforts, the Auxiliary continues to make a lasting impact, ensuring the National Home remains a beacon of hope and stability. Let me know if you'd like any further refinements or additions!

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



Awards

✓ **Department**

“There’s No Place Like National Home” Award – Most outstanding activity and/or event that creates awareness and education about the National Home to the community.

- **First Place** - \$20 and a citation goes to one Auxiliary in each of the 4 Program Divisions.
- **Second Place** – A citation goes to one Auxiliary in each of the 4 Program Divisions.

✓ **National**

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.

**“Be the Reason a Veteran Smiles Today” as we stand together “From Sea to Shining Sea
Honoring Veterans – Who Keep Us Free.”**