

Department of Missouri VFW Auxiliary
Buddy® Poppy/ National Home
January/ February 2025-2026

Branda Young
1221 Schuchart Rd
Union, MO 63084
(636)234-1055
brandayoung.d9p@gmail.com

As we begin the new year, let us follow the yellow brick road toward renewed dedication to the mission of the “Buddy®” Poppy and VFW National Home. Just as Dorothy and her friends discovered courage, heart, and wisdom along their journey, we too can find new ways to share the meaning of the “Buddy®” Poppy and the hope offered by the VFW National Home.

While the cold winter months may keep us indoors, this is the perfect time to plan ahead for spring. Think of it as gathering your companions — like the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Lion — each bringing their own strengths to the cause. Together, we can prepare fundraisers, organize “Buddy®” Poppy distributions, and build partnerships with schools, churches, and civic groups.



The “Buddy®” Poppy is our ruby slipper: small but powerful, carrying the story of sacrifice and remembrance wherever it goes. Each poppy reminds us of the courage of Veterans and the love we hold for their families. The VFW National Home, meanwhile, is our Emerald City — a place of hope, healing, and community for military families who need support.

Seasonal Adventures on the Road Ahead

- **January – Winter Conference of Administration “Buddy®” Poppy Contest:** Plan a cozy get-together to chase away the chill. Use the time to make tray favors for Veterans and prepare creative entries for the Winter Conference of Administration “Buddy®” Poppy Contest. This is a wonderful way to start the year with fellowship, creativity, and service.

✦ **Bonus Activity:** Complete the “Buddy®” Poppy crossword puzzle (available on the website) and return it to my email by **January 30th, 2026**. Each completed entry will be entered into a drawing to win a special National Home item from me.

Fundraiser Idea: Have you ever seen a store display little papers with an organization’s logo, where donors write their names and the papers are hung up to show support? Why not do the same with a **“Buddy®” Poppy design**. Provide the store with printed poppy

papers, and each time someone donates, they write their name on one to hang up. It's a simple, visible way to raise money for the Auxiliary (or whichever cause the fundraiser supports), while spreading awareness of the "Buddy®" Poppy mission.

- **February – National Salute to Veteran Patients & Valentine's Day:** Share "Buddy®" Poppies as tokens of love and gratitude. Create Valentine cards adorned with "Buddy®" Poppies to deliver to Veteran patients, spreading joy and remembrance.
- **Spring Planning:** Like planting poppies in the fields of Oz, organize spring "Buddy®" Poppy distributions that bloom across your community. Pair each "Buddy®" Poppy with a short message explaining its meaning, ensuring every recipient understands the story behind the flower.
- **April – Month of the Military Child:** Celebrate the bravery of military children — the true "heroes behind the curtain." Plan an event that teaches local youth about the VFW National Home. Ideas include:
 - A storytelling session where children learn about military families, framed as an Oz-style adventure of resilience.
 - Art or essay contests themed around "There's No Place Like Home," connecting the National Home's mission to the famous Oz phrase.
 - Youth-led "Buddy®" Poppy distributions, giving kids a chance to walk their own yellow brick road of service and remembrance.

Celebrating Our Achievements

Thank you to everyone that has reported! As of November 30th, 2025, **828 Missouri VFW Auxiliary members along with 1,307 youth have spent 2,557 hours and \$23,968.14 distributing 29,902 "Buddy®" Poppies.** Your dedication is inspiring, and every "Buddy®" Poppy shared is a step along our yellow brick road of remembrance and service. **Keep those reports coming!**



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