

BUDDY POPPIES ARE Important

BUDDY POPPY

Since 1922, the Buddy Poppy has been an integral part of the VFW community. As VFW's official memorial flower, the Poppy represents the blood shed by American service members. It reiterates that VFW 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 WWI.

In 1922, VFW conducted a campaign and got Poppies from France. Members soon discovered it took too long to get the flowers in from France and they came up with a better idea. Disabled, hospitalized and aging veterans could make the paper flowers and ship them out to the members for distribution.

And so it was known, for veterans in VA hospitals and domiciliaries and in state veterans homes, every day would be VFW Buddy Poppy Day. These men and women assemble the Poppies, tie them in bunches of 10 and pack them in boxes of 500, 1,000 or 2,000 for shipment to the Posts and Ladies Auxiliaries.

VFW pays the disabled veteran for the work. In most cases, this extra money provides additional income for the worker to pay for the little luxuries, which make hospital life more tolerable.

Furthermore, Poppy assembly is often used as a therapy program to provide exercise for fingers and hands crippled by wounds, disease and the effects of old age.

Another reason Poppies are so important is because all proceeds from distribution are used for veterans welfare or for the well being of their needy dependents and the orphans of veterans.

More than 1,300 children of veterans have been, or are being cared for in the VFW National Home in Eaton Rapids, Mich., thanks to a portion of Poppy funds.

As your Post's Buddy Poppy Chairman, you need to build enthusiasm for this program. Reiterate to your fellow members the two-fold importance of Poppies. It's truly all about veterans helping veterans and living up to VFW's motto of "Honor the Dead by Helping the Living."



Top: Canadian Col. John McCrae, author of "In Flanders Fields." Right: A disabled veteran assembling Buddy Poppies. Bottom: A National Home Buddy Poppy child.

Recognition is Important Too!

It is only human nature to desire and appreciate recognition for a job well done. A word of praise often means more than any kind of financial reward—especially if it is done publicly. It is in recognition of these truths that special citation awards are made available through the VFW Department Headquarters or Buddy Poppy Chairman. Check with them to determine the rules in effect in your Department. Don't overlook the faithful Post or Auxiliary member who goes on the streets each year to distribute Buddy Poppies. Recognize their efforts at Post or Ladies Auxiliary meetings.