

# Buddy Poppy History

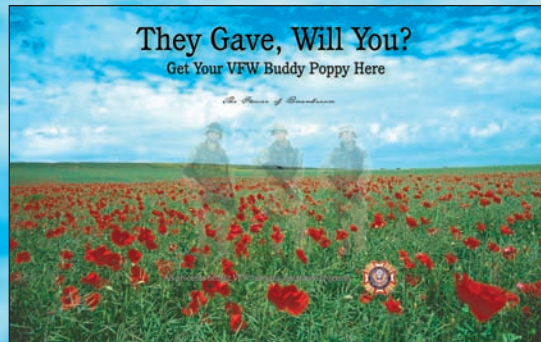
Since 1922, the Buddy Poppy has been an integral part of the VFW community. As VFW's official memorial flower, the Poppy represents the blood shed by American service members. It reiterates that VFW will not forget their sacrifices.

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.

Today, disabled veterans assemble Poppies and VFW pays them for their work. In most cases, this extra money provides additional income for the worker to pay for the little luxuries that make hospital life more tolerable.

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 for Children in Eaton Rapids, Mich., thanks to a portion of Poppy funds.



To order an 8½ x 11 version of this poster, please call Emblem and Supply at (816) 968-1192.

Or, if you'd like a larger poster, please contact:  
National Buddy Poppy Department  
VFW National Headquarters  
406 West 34th Street  
Kansas City, MO 64111  
(816) 968-1148  
e-mail: nclifton@vfw.org

# Plan a Successful Buddy Poppy Campaign



*The Flower of Remembrance*

They Gave, Will You?



## Plan to Succeed

There are two critical components to conducting a successful campaign: **planning and enthusiasm**. Planning ensures nothing will be left to chance and there will be plenty of Poppies for distribution. And the more enthusiasm you demonstrate, the greater your chances are of inspiring others to help make this year's campaign a true success.

Here are some important things to consider when preparing for your Buddy Poppy distribution:

- Identify potential volunteers within your Post and Ladies Auxiliary and gather them together for an informational meeting explaining the purpose of the Buddy Poppy campaign.
- Plan on each volunteer distributing 200 Poppies. It sounds like a lot, but with the right placement in the community, 200 will go fast.
- Choose distribution dates. Memorial Day is always a popular time, but you can distribute this memorial flower throughout the year.
- Request from your Department headquarters an order form to purchase your Poppies.
- Multiply the number of volunteers by 200 and that's approximately how many Poppies you should order. Be sure to place your order at least three months before your first distribution date.
- Stake out key distribution venues in advance. Choose high traffic areas and determine the number of workers you need to cover the locations. Ideal locations include storefronts, office or factory entrances and recreational areas.
- Make sure you get permission from the business owners before setting up shop.

- Photocopy the Buddy Poppy flyer found in your Post's VFW Programs Chairmen's Guide (or order one from VFW Supply) and post it around town in key areas such as post offices, coffee shops or gas stations. It will let people know when and where they can get a Buddy Poppy.
- If your town newspaper has a community calendar section, be sure to let the editor know about two weeks in advance that you'd like to place your Poppy announcement in the calendar. Send a news release to let the media know about your campaign.
- Encourage your volunteers to smile and be enthusiastic during the distribution. If they appear friendly, it will project a good image for VFW. Furthermore, make sure they wear their VFW caps.
- Remind your volunteers that they are not "selling" Buddy Poppies, but "distributing" them with the hope of getting donations.

If you follow these simple steps, your Buddy Poppy campaign is sure to be a success.

## Alternate Distribution

Many factors lead to poor Buddy Poppy distributions. Perhaps you live in a bustling city like Chicago or New York where folks aren't as eager to stop on the streets. Or maybe you live in a town with only 600 people and you'd be lucky to hand out 200 Poppies in a week. Or perhaps your members are primarily older or in failing health and can't be out distributing.

If any of these sound familiar, perhaps you should work with the Ladies Auxiliary or try a different approach to handing out the Poppies and raising funds for needy veterans.

Below is a list of alternative methods for distributing Buddy Poppies:

- Sell coat hanger wreaths made out of Poppies. Use a child-sized wire coat hanger and bend it into a circle. Straighten the hook to make a ground stake. Wind the stems of about 50 Poppies around the wire to complete your wreath. Popular around Memorial Day.
- Make a "Wall of Remembrance" at your Post. Patrons can request a Poppy in honor of a loved one who has died. Their name gets placed on the wall with a Poppy hanging next to it. Honorees' names can be typed on note cards with the Poppies stapled to them.
- Use Poppies to make table centerpieces that can be raffled off at Post suppers.
- Contact another civic organization in your community and ask if you can give a small presentation on the Buddy Poppy. Be sure to have plenty with you, as you'll likely get several "takers."
- Set up a booth at county fairs, public forums and school events.

Let your imagination and that of your volunteers guide you in distributing these beautiful red flowers.

Start planning early — organize your team and contact possible merchant distribution points.