



## BUDDY POPPY/NATIONAL HOME

April was a busy month with elections and installation of new officers. Are you wearing your Buddy Poppies to meetings and events? Make it a fashion statement. Share a little Buddy Poppy information with your members and keep the excitement alive!

This year your Auxiliaries have participated in Buddy Poppy and National Home events, both big and small. All have been important and show your commitment to the message we have to share. You were challenged to be creative and to “Flood Arizona with Poppies.” Through feedback from all of you it is evident that your efforts were impactful. From individuals who said “I had no idea how important the Buddy Poppy is” to individuals who remembered seeing the Poppies as children, and individuals who had tears in their eyes when they mentioned their veterans. MIT was a great opportunity for you to share your ideas and learn about the program from me and your peers. Our conversations energized me throughout the year.

Next on the agenda: the Buddy Poppy Display contest. Your entry needs to be ready for the VFW/Auxiliary Department of Arizona Convention on June 11-14. The rules have been shared throughout the year in the Department monthly newsletters. Your Auxiliary Presidents have received the 2026 Rules and Entry Form by email. I look forward to seeing your creative and meaningful displays this year. Remember, a minimum of 100 Buddy Poppies must be used, with one Poppy in its original form and color with label attached. Tin Pins may be used as well.

This has been a great year for the VFW National Home. You promoted Awareness and Eligibility of the Home like pros. Your financial support through Life Membership purchases, Tribute Brick purchases, and “Stock the Store” donations is wonderful. Nationally, as of March 31<sup>st</sup>, 497 Centennial Bricks have been purchased and 318 Life Memberships from January 1 to March 31. Our support is included in these numbers.

Some other news from the National Home:

- \* 41 of 43 homes are full with 107 children on campus. Construction on 2 new homes is planned to Begin this summer.
- The retail store equipment is being installed in readiness for the anticipated opening in June 2026.
- The 4-H program kicked off in March. 3 children are showing hogs and 6 are showing bunnies. They are busy naming their animals, and a couple of names chosen are Hamelia Earhart and Gordon Hamsey.

- The RAVE (Regenerative Agriculture and Veteran Education) Program is going strong to train veterans in regenerative farming. They have planted flowers and vegetables in the greenhouse and will have eggs, flowers, and vegetables for sale in their farmstand at harvest time.
- Guitars for Vets (G4V) is a program for vets with service-related trauma and provides a 10-week structured guitar instruction program. Many VFWs and Auxiliaries have donated guitars to this unique cause.

Our National Ambassador, Sandra Jeffries, states in her recent promotion, “We are making history with the Buddy Poppy & National Home Program with the extraordinary effort our members are putting into this cause. Together we can make this a Program Year that will be remembered for a very long time.”

It has been my honor to serve as your Buddy Poppy/National Home Chairman this past year. I have learned a lot from all of you, and I love to see all of your Poppy inspired creations and events. The Department has had a great Program Year and I cannot wait to see your Buddy Poppy Displays in June!

Sincerely,  
Peggy Welch