

VFW Auxiliary Arizona Poppy Chairman

“In Flanders Fields the poppies blow....”

Hello, I am Raelene Lam, Arizona Poppy Chairman for 2026 / 2027.

The mission for the Arizona VFW Buddy Poppy Program is to help the state of Arizona, recognize, then reflect on the treasure of this small three-part flower known as the Buddy Poppy.

The original Buddy Poppy is the stem, the red silk pedal and the label. This beautiful poppy is recognized as the memorial flower, which its distribution has raised funds for charitable programs on behalf of the needy and disabled veterans, and surviving family members of deceased veterans.

My wish is for AZ VFW Auxiliaries to implement the Buddy Poppy in every event we host. It is important that our community is familiar of the presence and benefits of the Buddy Poppy. The more it is seen by the public, the more opportunities we will be given to share information on the Buddy Poppy Program.

To share information about the Buddy Poppy Program, we need fun, interesting ways to help our membership, volunteers and the public to learn or become re-introduced to special remembrance “Buddy” Poppy.

On my home post level (#9972 Sierra Vista) my first introduction this year to the Buddy Poppy, I have used GPT to create POP art using our membership as the characters, adding short trivia to leave on the tables in the canteen, also in our dining hall. These cards can be traded on the tables.

This brings me to the third goal for this year, which is to share our ideas, the main mission is to distribute the Buddy Poppies. I want to hear and see how you try to make the Buddy Poppies land in the hands of our community. If you have a fabulous idea, even if you haven’t used the plan yet, it is great to share it with our auxiliaries. We need to educate, flood the community with Buddy Poppies and share ideas and experiences (which will make our program stronger).

This year we will be working under the guidance and expectations of our National Buddy Poppy Ambassador, Donna Marie King.

I am looking forward to meeting you on August 14-16, 2026 Member Involvement Training (aka MIT) in Tempe. MIT will give us an opportunity to network and set up techniques to make this another successful year.

The torch: be yours to hold it high.