

## Buddy Poppy-National Home

Thank you to everyone who has contacted me for your interest in the Buddy Poppy® contest! You will be pleased to hear that the information you have been requesting is at the bottom of this blog! Why hide the lead? Because - I am hoping that you will read the rest of this blog first!!

For those of you that attended the Department Convention or tuned in to the Program Chairman conference you will have heard some of this before but I think it's a good place to start and will help explain my choice of Buddy Poppy® Contest Category.

I grew up in England and the Remembrance Poppy is huge there in the lead up to the commemoration of Armistice Day on November 11<sup>th</sup>. Similar to the US, the annual Poppy Appeal is used to raise money for the Armed Forces and their families. In November, it is common to see people wearing poppies around town; newscasters and other TV personalities wearing poppies while broadcasting and major awareness raising events (such as the filling of the moat at the Tower of London with glass poppies). It is uncommon for someone to not know what the Poppy represents.

Since joining the Auxiliary, I have been honored to participate in many Buddy Poppy® drives in my local community. I have been surprised at how many people, especially the younger generation, do not know what the Poppy represents but I have found them eager to learn. I know the level of awareness varies from community to community but I am certain that my community is not the only one where it could be higher.

Therefore, my challenge to you for this year is to be creative and find ways to increase knowledge of the Poppy Campaign in your community. Think about who your audience is, how best to convey what the poppy represents, how it helps Veterans and their families and how it helps to support the VFW National Home.

So....drum roll please.....The Buddy Poppy® Contest this year will be:

Category 1. Public Promotion of Poppy Campaign (Window, booth, parade, poster displays, campaign promotions, etc.) Displays must be designed for public exposure and must bear a message soliciting a donation for and wearing of the VFW Buddy Poppy. At least one Poppy used in the display must be in its original form and color, with label attached.

District winning entries will be due to me by end December and judging will be held before the January C of A.

Cathey Farley our National Buddy Poppy and National Home Ambassador recently provided some additional guidance on this category as Auxiliaries had questions on how to share some types of entries such as window displays and parade entries. The guidance is that you can submit smaller scale items (such as a table sized version of the parade float) or create a frame (to mimic a window for example) for window displays. Just be creative.

In 2023, the National Convention will be in Arizona, within driving distance, so hopefully we will be able to have a few more Dept. of California entries in the National contest. If you need any inspiration, take a look at some of this year's entries posted online at the link below.

<https://www.facebook.com/auxdeptwa/photos/pcb.5243982699016544/5243979665683514>

While we can do Poppy Campaigns all year round, November is typically one of those times when many Posts and Auxiliaries conduct drives so my next blog, will focus on getting ready for those Campaigns. If you have any BPNH suggestions or questions that other Auxiliaries can benefit from, please forward them to me so that I can share the information and ideas.

Until next time!

Helen