



## Buddy Poppy

Among all the flowers that evoke the memories and emotions of war is the red poppy, which became associated with war after the publication of a poem written by Col. John McCrae of Canada. The poem, "In Flanders Field," describes blowing red fields among the battleground of the fallen.

For more than 75 years, the VFW's Buddy Poppy program has raised millions of dollars in support of veterans' welfare and the well being of their dependents.

The VFW conducted its first poppy distribution before Memorial Day in 1922, becoming the first veterans' organization to organize a nationwide distribution. The poppy soon was adopted as the official memorial flower of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

It was during the 1923 encampment that the VFW decided that VFW Buddy Poppies be assembled by disabled and needy veterans who would be paid for their work to provide them with some form of financial assistance. The plan was formally adopted during the VFW's 1923 encampment. The next year, disabled veterans at the Buddy Poppy factory in Pittsburgh assembled VFW Buddy Poppies. The designation "Buddy Poppy" was adopted at that time.

In February 1924, the VFW registered the name "Buddy Poppy" with the U.S. Patent Office. A certificate was issued on May 20, 1924, granting the VFW all trademark rights in the name of Buddy under the classification of artificial flowers. The VFW has made that trademark a guarantee that all poppies bearing that name and the VFW label are genuine products of the work of disabled and needy veterans. No other organization, firm or individual can legally use the name "Buddy" Poppy.

Today, VFW Buddy Poppies are still assembled by disabled and needy veterans in VA Hospitals.

The minimal assessment (cost of Buddy Poppies) to VFW units provides compensation to the veterans who assemble the poppies, provides financial assistance in maintaining state and national veterans' rehabilitation and service programs and partially supports the VFW National Home for orphans and widows of our nation's veterans.

## In Flanders Field

*by John McCrae*

In Flanders Fields the poppies blow,  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky,  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly,  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.  
We are the dead.  
Short days ago,  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved and now we lie,  
In Flanders Fields.  
Take up our quarrel with the foe  
To you, from failing hands, we throw,  
The torch, be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us, who die,  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow,  
In Flanders Fields.