

‘We Live in a Very Generous Community’

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Since its inception more than 75 years ago, members of VFW Post 8872 in Port Sanilac, Michigan, remain devout volunteers and distributors of the "Buddy"® Poppy.

Every year in May, Post 8872 members pilgrimage across Port Sanilac and several nearby communities in the eastern part of the state, spreading the gospel of the Buddy Poppy through weekend drives that help raise money for veterans.

“We try to get as many members as we can to help,” Post 8872 Commander Roger Bobby said. “We cover three nearby communities as well as Port Sanilac. We cover an intersection in each town, as well as store fronts.”

The eight members of Post 8872 that participated this year collected donations in exchange for the renowned Buddy Poppy between Thursday and Saturday, often times weathering temperatures grazing the mid-30s in the early morning hours.

The result, however, led to considerable donations.

“We did quite well in donations,” Bobby said. “Several years ago, our Buddy Poppy Chairman Jeff Lyall started sending a request to each member for a donation along with our spring newsletter. He also sends a request to local businesses. The response to both is always good.”

Through Lyall’s connections and network of participating businesses, the Post raised thousands of dollars in this year’s Buddy Poppy drive.

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Lyll, who served as Post commander for seven years and has been a part of the event for more than 35, developed a system that Bobby inherited as commander for the Buddy Poppy drives.

Still heavily involved as Post adjutant and chairman of the event, Lyll is tasked with ordering the poppies in advance and contacting town officials to ask for permission to work the intersections. He also contacts businesses to ask for permission to send Post members to stand outside and collect donations from customers entering or leaving the premises.

“Jeff has to set up a schedule for all members who are going to help, monitoring the drive during the two or three days,” Bobby said. “He puts a lot into it. His work and that of the members is very patriotic, and the reason it’s always been a success.”

The proceeds of the event each year go towards the Post’s Relief Fund, which provides assistance for those needing a hand up, according to Lyll.

“The Poppy funds raised are placed into the Post Relief Fund and can only be used to aid sick and needy veterans and their families, as well as to honor and remember our deceased veterans,” Lyll added. “Folks have been extremely thankful for the aid we have given over the years. We live in a very generous community.”