



VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

Bliss Bugle



Words from the Commander Mark Winter

Fellow Comrades,

Spring will be here by the time you get this newsletter. We cancelled the Pancake Breakfast and Chislic Feed in March to promote Vehicle Driver Safety Awareness of no travel during blizzard conditions; Mother Nature still has a say.

We held nominations for Officer Positions at the March Membership Meeting. We will continue with nominations at the April Membership Meeting, followed by the Elections for Officers and installation. We would appreciate membership participation. Do not worry about your nomination for a position you do not desire, you reserve the right to decline the nomination, and you can meet the nominated people.

The VFW District meeting scheduled for Sunday, April 26th at 2:00 pm in Alcester.

The fourth of July Parade held Saturday, July fourth at 10am. It is our intent to have a flatbed trailer with chairs for veterans to ride in during the parade. If you would like to ride on the trailer or walk and hand out candy along the route, please inform the VFW Office so they can organize who will ride and who will walk. There is limited space on the trailer for those who wish to ride.

Mark Winter, Commander

VFW Auxiliary President Deb Felton

This month our meeting is April 1st. We have met our membership numbers but would love to see that number increase to 110%. Look around you to see if you know any others that are eligible to join us. Since we have some new members, please invite anyone you signed up to join you at the meeting.

We will be having our monthly “work night” on April 13th. Keep collecting those plastic bags, we will do another “Mat” making night. We dropped off five more mats at the VOC earlier in Feb. They are so grateful.

April 11th from 9-2pm will be the “Stand Up for Women Veterans” event at Our Saviors Lutheran Church. If you know a Female Veteran that has not signed up for this event, please encourage them to do so.

April 18th from 1-3pm is the annual VA “Baby Shower”. If you know a veteran family that is expecting a baby soon and have not signed up for this event have them, contact Volunteer Services at the VA.

April 26th 1-3pm is the District 1 meeting in Alcester. Lunch at 1pm, meeting at 2pm.

Thank you,
Deb Felton

In this April 2026 issue

Page 1- Commander's Comments, Auxiliary President Comments, What's on the inside

Page 2- Pancakes, Upcoming Events, Loyalty Day

Page 3- New Business, Good of the Order, Up for Discussion, In Honor, Baby Shower

Page 4- Auxiliary Bake Sale, Centurion

Awards, VOC Donations

Page 5- Cooties Chislic, Seam Squirrel Words, Activities and Fun

Page 6- New VA Program, Special Speaker, Keni Thomas (Tentatively) Army Ranger & Nashville Recording Artist

Page 7- Concerts and Events

Page 8- Last Minute, State Convention, Points of Contact



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Pancake

Breakfast

8:30-12 noon

April 19, 2026

\$8 Adults—\$2 Children 10 and under

This event supports our local veterans and Community Service Projects

John M Bliss Post 628 and Auxiliary thank you for your support



**BRANDON'S
60TH ANNUAL
LOYALTY DAY PARADE
SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2026
PARADE STARTS AT 1:00PM
A DIAMOND SALUTE TO AMERICA!**

VFW PROUDLY SPONSORED BY
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS. THE BRANDON VFW THREE RIVERS POST #4726
AND VFW AUXILIARY POST #4726



Welcome to New Post 628 Members

Cory Turner	Jerry Stevens
John Overwise	Darrell Prouty

Upcoming Events

April

- April 1-Post/Aux Meeting
- April 1-District 1 Meeting, Alcester 2PM
- April 19-Pancake Breakfast
8:30-Noon
- April 19 - Auxiliary Bake Sale 8:30-Noon
- April 19-Cooties Chislic 3-6PM
- April 27-Past Presidents Meeting 9:30am

May

- April 29-Post Exec Comm Meting 7PM
- May 6-Post/Aux Meeting
- May 10-Mothers Day
- May 16-Armed Forces Day
- May 17-Pancake Breakfast 8:30-Noon
- May 17- Cooties Bake Sale 8:30-Noon
- May 17-Cooties Chislic 3-6PM
- May 25-Memorial Day
- May 27-Executive Meeting 7PM

June

- June 3-Post/Auxiliary Meeting
- June 10-Cooties and Auxiliary Meeting
- June 11-14-The Wall that Heals, Replica Vietnam Wall, Brookings
- June 14-Flag Day
- June 21-Pancake Breakfast, 8:30AM-Noon
- June 21-Auxiliary Bake Sale
- June 21-Fathers Day
- June 22 - Past Presidents Meeting 9:30 am



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New Business

2026-2027 Elections

- District 1 Meeting to be held in Alcester at 500 Dakota Street, 2PM.
- VFW Post 628 Day service will assist Mount Pleasant Cemetery with a day of clean-up, May 16, before Memorial Day.
- Final Nominations, elections and installations for commander and staff for the 2026-2027 year will occur at the April 1 Post meeting.
- Memorial Day Services at the Alliance, May 25th at 9am.
- Memorial Day service at the State Cemetery at noon on the 25th of May.

Nominated for Office:

Commander; Ryan Killion, Don Kranz
 Sr Vice Commander: Tadd Goehring
 Jr Vice Commander: **Open**
 Quartermaster: Jim McQuisten
 Trustee 3yr: Nathan Beiningen
 Executive Comm: Randy Kirkvold
 Investment Comm: Rich Schwanke

Make your voices heard for the final round on nominations and elections.

Good Of The Order

In Honor

Post

Mark Heisey- 65, Marine
 Christopher Thesenvitz - 40, SDANG

Auxiliary

None in the past month



Please contact the Post Auxiliary, if you would like to donate or volunteer at the VA Baby Shower by Friday April 10.

Baby Shower

HONORING VETERANS

APRIL 18, 2026

FROM 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

SIoux FALLS VA HEALTH CARE

2501 W. 22ND STREET

SIoux FALLS, SD 57105

We are requesting gender neutral items for our guests.

We have an Amazon Baby Shower Registry at

<https://www.amazon.com/baby-reg/voluntary-servicesiouxfalls>

All items must be in new condition. We are not able to take homemade blankets at this time. Light snacks will be provided to our guests. We plan for parents to meet other new parents, providers and have fun!

The following items are being requested:

Sleeper Sets, Receiving Blankets, Travel size bath kits, Bath towels/wash cloths, Thermometers, Nail clippers, Bottle brushes, Home safety kits, Teethers, Developmental toys, Diapers size 1-4 and Wipes, Play Mats, Bouncer/Rocker chair, Portable highchair, Wrap/Carrier, Bath tub/chair.

*Boppy pillow, *Swing, *Pack-N-Play, *Stroller System

****Large items to be given as raffle or game prizes. All other options please reach out to CDCE.****

All donations must be delivered by Friday April 10th unless prior arrangement's have been made with CDCE. If you would like to Volunteer at the event or if you have any questions please reach out to either Erin Arnebeck or Crystal Reimers

Erin.Arnebeck@va.gov or Crystal.Reimers@va.gov

Inputs for the May newsletter are due to the office by April 20.

Email to Office@vfw628.org. Articles, and announcements are welcome.



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Centenarian Award

What a special day!! President Deb and Treasurer Kim traveled to Dakota Dunes for the presentation of the Centenarian Award to Robert Irwin (100) and Robert Ensrud (95) sent from Secretary of Veterans Affairs Douglas Collins.. Presentation was made by Sara Ackert, Director, Royal C Johnson VA Hospital.



Mr. Irwin lost his medals in the floods. Jeff Wendling from the VA contacted Senator Rounds and Mr. Irwin's medals were replaced and placed in a shadow box put together by JMB Auxiliary members Roxann Z and Kim V.

It was an amazing day celebrating the birthdays of these Veterans!



Auxiliary Bake Sale

8:30 AM– Noon

April 19, 2026

Fresh home made bake goods

Supporting our hero's and their families
during their time of need.

The Auxiliary thank you for your support



VOC Donations

Another successful drop-off to fill the freezer and cupboards at the VOC.. casseroles, soups, cookies, kitchen utensils, personal hygiene products!! Its a blessing to gift them and to be so appreciated when they see us come!!



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Honoring Our Veterans



April 19, 2026 3PM-6PM

\$10 for Chislic

\$12 Chislic/Fries

Support our VFW Post 628 by coming by and enjoying Chislic with us.

Military Order of the Cootie Auxiliary

“Keep ‘em Smiling in Beds of White”

Military Order of the Cootie (MOC) where your service will make other veterans smile, and good deeds come with a side of fun—because who says you can't serve veterans and have a blast doing it?

We primarily visit veterans in the local Veterans hospitals. Being a positive and enlightening group in support of our veterans going some of their toughest times.

Founded in 1920 and comprised of officers and leadership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, While supporting the VFW, we do our best to add some humor. This applies to the veterans we visit.

This is part of our mission, to bring a smile to veterans in our hospitals. One of the best rewards is putting a smile on someone's face.

Seam Squirrel

Another month has gone by. With warmer weather coming soon and the heat will become extreme as it will every year. Start now at visiting neighbors and fellow comrades and make sure everyone is in cool air and drinking plenty of water.

Our regular meeting will be April 8 at 7pm. We will look at any upcoming visits to the CLCs and visit all those in need.

Cooties Auxiliary next Bake sale will be held May 17 from 8:30 thru noon. Don't forget Cooties Chislic will be that afternoon from 3-6pm. Let's get our friends and neighbors at the door for both events. We will see you in a few days.

Nathan Beinegan

Deb Felton

Seam Squirrel

Cooties Aux. President

New Fun Activity Pickle Ball

These sessions are Monday nights from 6-7:30 and Saturday and Thursday from 10 - 11:30. Veterans also receive a 10% discount on their four annual membership options and 5% off Pro Shop items.

The Jar, located at 3701 S. Western Ave.

Check out the sign-up here: <https://www.offer-thejar.com>





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WHERE IS AMBIENT AI SCRIBE AVAILABLE?

Currently, ambient AI scribe is available in a select number of VA Medical Centers and clinics.

Ask your provider how ambient AI scribe can help VA focus on what matters most – your health.

*We're excited to use ambient AI scribe so your provider can focus more time on **YOU**. When your provider spends less time typing, you receive more personalized and compassionate care.*



SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK



SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW TO WATCH THE VIDEO



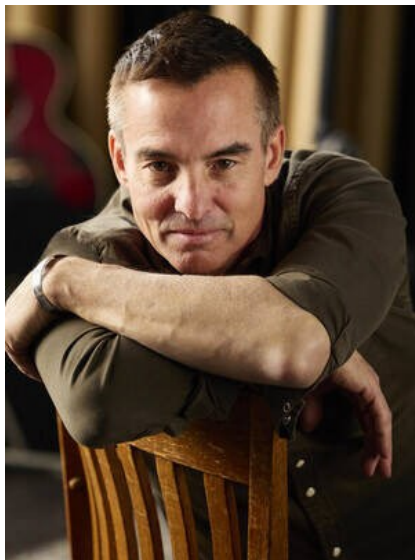
Ambient AI Scribe

Keeping the Focus on **You**, Not on the Computer



Special Guest Speaker

Kenji Thomas



Kenji Thomas is a combat veteran of the 3rd Ranger Battalion who fought in the Battle of Mogadishu which was recounted in the highly successful book and movie

“Blackhawk Down”. 19 Americans died and 78 were wounded.

Kenji got out of the Army to pursue a successful country music career. He is an Emmy winning

producer, a best selling author and the founder of the Downrange Advanced Leadership school. As an entertainer, Kenji has been recognized by Congress and the White House for his dedicated work on behalf of our veterans and military families. Kenji now travels globally as a motivational speaker. His message of servant leadership and teamwork inspires and challenges us to become the kind of leader others want to follow.

Kenji is very proud to be a national spokesperson for the Special Operations Warrior Foundation and Project One Vet, working hard with veterans to successfully navigate their VA benefits. Kenji Thomas is a graduate of the University of Florida, a 2025 Ranger Hall of Fame Inductee and a recipient of the Bronze Star for Valor.

If approved at the April 1 Post Meeting, this may turn into a concert by Kenji the next night. Possible dates are August 14 and 15, 2026.



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FREE CHILDCARE and lactation room available



- Peer-to-Peer Workshops
- FREE Lunch
- Large Group Activities
- Door Prizes
- Resource Connection Booths

SSG FOX SUICIDE PREVENTION GRANT PROGRAM

A Wellness Retreat for
Women Veterans and Military Partners

Saturday

April 11, 2026 from 9am-2pm
Our Savior's Lutheran Church
Sioux Falls

909 W. 33rd St.



Contact Information:
Erin Nosal
Erin.Nosal@sdvets.org
605-910-4045



<https://www.sdvets.org/event-details/women-vetsconnect-retreat>

★ LIVE IN CONCERT ★

ZWARTE

FEATURING: BOB ZWARTE

SPECIAL GUEST

FRIDAY · APRIL 10 · 7PM DOORS

SIoux FALLS **JUDD HOOS**
THE ALLIANCE **JESSIE G.**

DUELING PIANOS



APRIL 18TH

JUST DUET!

@THE ALLIANCE

Don't miss out, get your table or suite today!

Ticket Options:
Full Experience: Dinner & Show
Here for the Fun: Show Only

Tickets available online
or through QR code

Use your phone camera to scan QR code

<https://www.southdakotaalliance.org/tickets.php>



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Firearms classes at the range in the Alliance.
Call 605-271-7808 for more information.

John M. Bliss VFW Post 628



REMINDER!! If you are moving, please call our office at 338-0869 and let us know your new address! Thanks!!

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Last Minute

South Dakota VFW & Auxiliary

96th Annual Convention

June 11-14, 2026 — Mitchell, SD

Martin Christensen, VFW SD Department Commander

Sue Jones, SD Department Auxiliary President

