



Department of South Dakota Scout of the Year



Scout of the year, Cooper Rey. Cooper has been vigorously working on his Eagle Scout project. His project focuses on documenting locations of graves of Veterans who have passed on.

Since the inception of Coopers project, it has become the project of other Scouts across the nation. Cooper has had visitors from other states and teaches other scouts how to start and conduct the project. Cooper is providing a priceless service to families across South Dakota.

The outcome of this project is far from over. Cooper will soon be moving into his adult life, but we hope he will keep this project in the forefront and pass it down to other scouts across this state.

With a debt of heart felt gratitude, we thank Cooper Rey for bringing this honorable effort into the eyes of our communities. Thank You Cooper Rey.

2026 Department Convention In The Books

Special attendees at the 96th Department of South Dakota Convention included such dignitaries as Senate Majority Leader John Thune and Senator Mike Rounds. Both gave updates to future benefits being debated in the Senate that will bring improved benefits for veterans in South Dakota and across the Nation.

Seldom do we get both Senators at a state convention at the same time.

Other speakers were Sarah Ekert from the Sioux Falls VA and Aaron Pollard from the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs.



**Senator
Mike Rounds**



**Senate Leader
John Thune**

Post 628 Member Representation



President Deb Felton Receives Outstanding President Award



Post 628 Auxiliary Representation



**Ryan Killion
Post Commander**

Greetings, fellow comrades. My name is Ryan Killion and I have been elected as your commander for the coming year. I'm excited and honored to have the chance to lead this great post into the future. As we look toward the future of post 628 we need to take a serious look at what needs to be done to survive. Like most commanders I believe that we need to work on membership, not only getting the renewals but getting new members. One thing that all veteran organizations are currently struggling with is getting the younger generation. To do this we have to change the way we do business. So, with that throughout the next year we will be hosting some activities that are geared towards getting that younger generation. Next to survive we need members to be active in the post. We have great programs in the VFW, but these programs cannot function without members leading the way with them. I also hope that with the new activities members can find something to get involved with the post. So I challenge all members to get active with the post and help with a pancake breakfast, honor guard, color guard or look at helping with a program.

**Deb Felton
Auxiliary President**

Welcome to the new year in the VFW Auxiliary, 2026-2027

Our #628 Auxiliary came home from the State Convention in Mitchell with multiple awards and recognition.

Thank you to all who worked and contributed to making this possible! It takes the Team to make this happen.

We are busy preparing for the new year. Lots of planning to make this another momentous year. This month our meeting is July 1, 7pm in the Armory. Let us continue exceeding our membership numbers.

Monthly "Work Night" is scheduled for July 13 project is undetermined currently. Text will be sent to members when the project for the evening is decided.

The VA has sent us a list of items that they need. If you would like to donate any of these items, please bring them to the Armory, 1700 W Russell or contact me directly at 605-359-2091 and I will arrange to have them picked up.

Sweatpants and shorts—Size Med and large (NO drawstrings), Deodorant, toilet paper, paper towels. Gift cards for barbershop—Sport Clips and Walmart. Gift cards for restaurants/activities: Zoo passes, baseball games, bowling, Dave & Busters.

Looking forward to another wonderful year!!

Happy fourth of July!

Thank you,

In Honor



Inputs for the August newsletter are due to the office by July 20.
Email to Office@vfw628.org. Articles, and announcements are welcome.

Lincoln High Marine JROTC Awards



Several Awards were given to the Lincoln High School MC JROTC on April 24 at Lincoln High School. Congratulations to all the recipients. Special shout out to Master Sergeant Jason Kurkierwicz for leading and guiding these young men a woman. They are our future leaders. Congratulations to the entire Lincoln High School Marine Corps JROTC Program. HOORAH!



Adults \$8, Children under 12, \$2
Serving from 8:30 am thru noon
July 19, 2026

Pancake Breakfast

Each month, Pancake revenues are dedicated to our youth programs. This includes Voice of Democracy and Patriot Pen Scholarships. They also benefit Scouting programs for boys and girls.

The month of July pancake breakfast will be supported by Guardians of the Children, a organization of motorcycle enthusiast who advocate for and empower children who have survived abuse. Operating through local chapters to provide emotional support, court accompaniment and protection to child victims.

Post 628 Day of Service

The VFW Day of Service highlights how veterans continue to serve across America. There are all kinds of ways to take part in your community.

Post 628 Day of Service was held at Mt Pleasant Cemetery. The team mowed and trimmed around headstones in preparation for the upcoming Memorial Day on May 25, 2026. The four team members were Commander Mark Winter, Incoming Commander Ryan Killion, Executive Committee Member Randy Johnson and Adjutant Butch Haugen





Fresh Lamb Chislic

July 19, 2026

Serving from 3 pm thru 6 pm

\$10 for chislic, ad fries \$12

Seam Squirrel

Our next meeting will be held Wednesday, July 8, 2026, in our normal location. Chislic night on July 19, 2026, from 3 pm to 6 pm. Please see our ad. Join us on August 12, 2026, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the VA for the 24th Annual Show and Shine Car Show. Motorcycles are welcome, and food trucks will be on site. Bring the family to enjoy classic and custom vehicles in a fun, family-friendly setting.

We'll discuss a potential Cooties Spaghetti Dinner and HOG Raffle at the next meeting on July 8 at 7 p.m. Please attend and share your input.

Nathan Beinegan	Deb Felton
Seam Squirril	Cooties Aux.
	President

Loyalty Day

The City of Brandon and VFW Post 4762 hosted the 60 Anniversary Loyalty Day Parade. The parade started at 1 pm on 3 May. Commemorating a Diamond Salute to America. Many floats, Highschool bands and fire engines led the parade. Several Community organizations, businesses and churches were represented.

After the parade, many gathered at Post 4762 with friends, family, and comradery. There were some great food trucks available and some cold drinks inside.

Post 628 entered a float with several Post and Auxiliary members on board. The event was one of the best attended in several years. It is said the Brandon Loyalty Day Parade is one of the largest in the United States.

Future Cooties Chislic

August 16, 2026

September 20, 2026

October 18, 2026

November 15, 2026

December 20, 2026

Military Order of the Cootie Auxiliary

"Keep'em Smiling in Beds of White"



Cooties Bake Sale

8:30 am- Noon

July 19, 2026

Fresh homemade
bake goods

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

The Auxiliary thanks you for
your support

Military Order of the Cootie
Pup Tent #1 Big Sioux Ticks

VFW Post 628
1700 W Russell Street
Sioux Falls SD

Keni Thomas

In the summer of 1993, Staff Sergeant Keni Thomas was deployed to Mogadishu Somalia with the 3rd Ranger Battalion as part of an elite special operations package called Task Force Ranger.

On the 3rd of October, Keni and his fellow rangers distinguished themselves in an eighteen hour fire-fight that would later be recounted in the highly successful book and movie "Black Hawk Down". Nineteen Americans gave their lives and 78 were wounded in the worst urban combat seen by US troops since WWII.

Jimmy Yeary

Jimmy Yeary is a highly successful songwriter and his music is all around you. Jimmy Yeary was writing songs long before becoming the lead singer of the Grammy Award winning supergroup SHENANDOAH. Recently, both the CMA and ACM awarded Jimmy Yeary with "Song of the Year" for I Drive Your Truck--the inspiring song he wrote about the father of a fallen soldier and how he continues to remember his son.

Real Stories Real Songs
Two Unforgettable Nights

RED WHITE AND BOOTS

The Alliance
1600 W Russell
Sioux Falls SD

August 14
7:00 pm

August 15
8:00 pm

SCAN THE QR CODE
TO PURCHASE YOUR
TICKETS

**NIGHT ONE
KENI THOMAS**

3RD RANGER BATTALION
COMBAT VETERAN
MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER

**NIGHT TWO
THE BLUE BIRD CAFE
EXPERIENCE WITH JIMMY
YEAR AND FRIENDS**

HEAR THE STORIES
BEHIND THE SONGS

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
CONTACT JOHN M BLISS VFW POST 628
605 338-0869

*Event is hosted by VFW Post 628.
Proceeds benefit local Veterans Support Programs*

2026 Sioux Falls Airshow

July 18-19, 2026



TICKETS: FREE

Upcoming Post Events

July

July 1– Post/Auxiliary Meeting 7 pm
 July 3– POST CLOSED
 July 4– Independence Day/POST CLOSED
 July 8– Cooties/Cooties Aux Meeting
 July 14– Chamber Mixer
 July 18-19– Sioux Falls Air Show
 July 19– Pancake Breakfast 8:30 am
 July 19– Cooties Bake Sale
 July 19– Cooties Chislic 3 pm - 6 pm
 July 21– Chamber Morning Mingle 7:30 am
 July 27– Past Presidents Meeting 9:30 am
 July 29– Post Executive Meeting 7 pm

August

August 5 - Post/Auxiliary Meeting 7 pm
 August 11 - Chamber Mixer
 August 12 - Cooties/Auxiliary Meeting 7 pm
 August 12-- VA Show and Shine 5 pm - 8 pm
 August 14 - Keni Thomas Speech 6 pm
 August 15 - Blue Bird Cafe Experience Featuring Jimmy Yeary and Friends from Nashville
 August 16 - Pancake Breakfast 8:30 am
 August 16– Auxiliary Bake Sale 8:30 am
 August 15 - Cooties Chislic 3-6 pm
 August 24 - Past Presidents 9:30 am
 August 26 - Post Executive Meeting 7 pm

September

September 2 - Post/Auxiliary Meeting
 September 2-7 - South Dakota State Fair
 September 7 - Labor Day - Post closed
 September 18 - Veterans Stand Down
 September 19 - Women of the Armed Forces
 September 20 - Pancake Breakfast 8:30 am
 September 20 - Cooties Chislic 3-6 pm
 September 20 - Auxiliary Bake Sale
 September 28 - Past Presidents Meeting 8:30 am
 September 30 - Post Executive Meeting 7 pm

October

October 7 Post and Auxiliary Meeting 7 pm
 October 12 - Columbus Day
 October 14 - Cooties and Auxiliary Meeting 7 pm
 October 18 - Pancake Breakfast 8:30 am
 October 18 - Auxiliary Bake Sale 8:30 am
 October 18 - Cooties Chislic 3 pm
 October 26 - Past Presidents Meeting 9 am
 October 28 - Executive Meeting 7 pm

November

November 1 - Daylight Savings Time Ends
 November 3 - Election Day
 November 7 - Marine Corps Ball
 November 11 - SDDVA Bridge Dedication
 November 11 - Veterans Day Program/POST CLOSED
 November 12 - A Night With Heros
 November 15 - Pancake Breakfast 8:30 am
 November 15—Cooties Bake Sale 8:30 am
 November 15 - Cooties Chislic 3 pm
 November 23 - Past Presidents Meeting 9:30 am
 November 25 - Executive Meeting 7 pm
 November 26 - Thanksgiving Day /POST CLOSED

December

December 2- Post and Auxiliary Meeting 7 pm
 December 8– Chamber Mixer 4pm
 December 9– Cooties and Auxiliary Meeting 7 pm
 December 20– Pancake Breakfast 8:30 am
 December 24 & 25 Christmas Holiday POST CLOSED
 December 28– Past Presidents Meeting 9:30 am
 December 30- Post Executive Meeting 7 pm

December 31 - New Years Eve

**Post Closed. Time to Say Good-bye to 2026
 and say Hello to 2027**

Good Of The Order

Military Order of the Cootie

The Military Order of the Cootie of the United States is a non-profit Veterans Service Organization. We are known as the Honorary Degree of the VFW. Our members are comprised of the officers and leadership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Membership in the MOC is recognition of outstanding service to the VFW and its Programs.

The Cooties were founded in New York city on September 17, 1920. The MOC is based on good humor and fun. Cooties have provided social and entertainment programs to the Veterans of Foreign Wars for over 90 years. The VFW National Home for Children, a sprawling campus of homes located in Eaton Rapids, Michigan is the brainchild of the MOC. We firmly believe in caring for the widows and children of our Armed Forces. Our history began with donations to the National Home to build the library, swimming pool, and fire department. A host of other projects were designed to make life fun and educational for the children during their stay at the National Home.

During World War II, the cooties recognized a need to entertain hospitalized troops and veterans during their rehabilitation at Veterans Administration facilities all across America. Our service program is described as a directive to "Keep'em Smiling in Beds of White". Each year the Cooties volunteer thousands of hours to Veterans Affairs Hospitals throughout the United States. This is in addition to the hours of service to the VFW. Our distinctive red hat and unusual uniform allow us to draw attention to the plight of those less fortunate than ourselves. For a small sacrifice, we bring a smile or a laugh at during a difficult time for our heroes. We seek others like us to join and help us help them in their time of stress and anxiety.

Help us help our Brothers and Sisters. Join Today.

Memorial Day Ceremonies

Memorial Day Ceremonies were held at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance on May 25, 2026. The program was led by the Marine Corps League, Detachment 659 of Sioux Falls.



A wreath passed from one representative to the next representing a passage of honor, tradition, and the warrior spirit. It also represents the men and women that gave their lives for the freedoms we have in America. It is through their resolve, perseverance and intestinal fortitude, America remains free. Upon completion of the ceremony, it was suggested that attendees remove a flower from the wreath and place it on the grave of a loved one.



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

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE
PAID
SIOUX FALLS, SD
PERMIT NO 345

1600 W RUSSELL ST
SIOUX FALLS, SD 57104

Office: 605-338-0869
Office email: Office@vfw628.org
Commander: cmd@vfw628.org
Quartermaster: qm@vfw628.org
Post Web Site: VFW628.org
Facebook: [SiouxFallsVFW](https://www.facebook.com/SiouxFallsVFW)
Instagram: [JMBLISS1921](https://www.instagram.com/JMBLISS1921)

State VFW Office: 605-332-7441
State Web Site: vfwsd.org

Rededication of Flag and Pole

The Life Change Church has rededicated a WWII flagpole at Life Change Church on Flag Day, June 14, 2026.

POST OFFICERS 2026-2027

Commander-----Ryan Killion
Senior Vice Commander-----Don Kranz
Junior Vice Commander-----Tadd Goehring
Quartermaster-----Jim McQuisten
Judge Advocate-----Harry Engberg
Surgeon-----Tadd Goehring
Chaplin-----Patrick Morgan
Adjutant-----Butch Haugen
Service Officer-----Richard Schwanke

AUXILIARY OFFICERS 2026-2027

President-----Deb Felton
Sr. Vice President-----Jennifer Kranz
Jr. Vice President-----Patty Suelzt
Secretary-----Beth Honerman
Treasurer-----Kim Vennard
Chaplin-----Diana Wells
Conductor-----Michelle Williams
Guard-----Nancy Renner

Post members of the Americanism Team assisted in the rededication, Barb Hays and Kayle Decker. Tom Rooney, Program Manager at Midwest Communications Emceed the dedication ceremony. Fifteen members of the parish were present

The original placement of the flagpole was at the Army Mechanics Radio School from 1942-1945. The school was formerly located at what is now Veterans Memorial Park.

