VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.
John M. Bliss Post 628

BLISS BUGLE

Still serving our Veterans and the Community

October 2026

Veterans Stand Down

Veterans Helping Veterans

During times of war, exhausted combat units required time to rest and recover, units were moved from the battlefields to a place of security and safety. At these base camp areas, troops were able to take care of personal hygiene, get clean uniforms, enjoy warm meals, receive medical and dental care. Mail was also distributed. It was a time to enjoy camaraderie and creat new friendships.

Stand Down today refers to grassroots, community-based programs, designed to help the nation's estimated 107,000 homeless veterans. Homeless veterans are brought together in a single location for one to three days and are provided access community resources needed to begin addressing their individual problems and rebuild their lives. In the military, Stand Down afforded battle-weary soldiers the opportunity to renew their spirit, health and overall sense of well-being. Today's Stand Down affords the same opportunity to homeless veterans.



The Stand Down held at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance saw 150 needy veterans over a three-hour period. Sack lunches and a biscuit and gravy breakfast were prepared by Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 628 and Auxiliary.



Hundreds of homeless veterans are provided with a broad range of necessities including food, clothing, medical, legal, job and most importantly, companionship and camaraderie. It is a time for the community to connect with the homeless veteran population and address this crisis that affects each and every town, city and state in this country. The hand up -- not a handout -- philosophy of Stand Down is carried out through the work of hundreds of volunteers and organizations throughout the nation.

In recent years, mental health has been a big issue. Approximately, 22 to 26 veterans commit suicide on a daily basis. This is a great opportunity to connect with those veterans that are living in a dangerous state of mind. It is here at the Stand Down that these veterans can be met with up close and personal. It is a prime opportunity for the entire community, veteran and nonveteran to rally around these men and women that have seen and lived unthinkable moments.

Veterans at Higher Risk of Suicide

Veterans represent roughly 7% of the U.S. adult population but account for nearly 14% of all adult suicides, facing a 50% to 60% higher risk than non-veterans.

Key demographic vulnerabilities include:

- Young Veterans (Ages 18–34): Experience the highest rate, exceeding 47 per 100,000.
- Female Veterans: Face a suicide rate 90% to 110% higher than non-veteran women.
- Older Veterans (Ages 55+): Account for about 60% of total veteran suicide deaths annually due to population volume.

Critical risk factors involve a lack of contact with Veterans Health Administration or other mental healthcare professional. If you or a veteran you know is in crisis, call or text 988 and Press 1, or text 838255 for free, confidential support 24/7.

Ryan Killion
Post Commander

Comrades,

Yet another month has gone by. Before we know it, the snow will be here. At your last meeting, we had the pleasure of a visit from our State Commander Rick Vanden Hoek. He discussed his goals for this term which focused on uniting the various veteran organizations and of course recruiting. He also issued Post 628 a challenge to regain that title. As we are no longer the largest post in the state, Rapid City is ahead of us by a couple hundred members. To do this, I need each member of Post 628 to get out and talk to their neighbors, people, at church, friends, etc. and recruit one person. That is all that must be done to regain and retain our membership.

The pancake breakfast continues to improve in numbers, but the same handful of members continue to work it. With the number of members in this post, we should have plenty of help, unfortunately we do not. Three hours a month. 7AM to 10 AM or from 10 AM through 1 PM. Set-up and Clean-up. It is only once a month. We are serving our community and our fellow veterans. Let us be present and let them know we are there doing our part.

Deb Felton
Auxiliary President

Next meeting is Nov 4th, 7pm in the Armory. Everyone Welcome.

LEFSE MAKING--- November 7th. 9am-2pm at St. Therese Church, 901 N Tahoe Trail. Work night is scheduled for Mon, NOV 9th, 6 p.m. at the Armory, we will be doing bags. If you would like to bake; Sunday NOV 15th, at the Alliance, the VFW Auxiliary will host a Bake Sales at VFW PANCAKES. COOKIE Trays, we need bakers to help with Cookie Trays. If you would like to help with this, reach out to me (605) 359-2091 or just come and purchase our Christmas treats!!

Your District 1 Meeting. Beresford Public Library, Sunday November 1, 2026.

If you like to cook.... The Auxiliary has been making meals and freezing them in individual servings, delivering them to the Veteran Outreach Center for the Homeless Veterans. Please let us know if you can help, as we now have food donated to us.

This is just part of the events we have going on. Everyone has a special gift or talent that will benefit the Auxiliary. If you would like to step up and assist the auxiliary, please let us know. Do you have an idea that will help us reach Veterans, Veteran families, or their children? Let us know!!

In Honor



Post

LeVerne Theilman 98 10/1/2026

Auxiliary

None this Month

COOTIES AND COOTIES AUXILIARY

Honorary Degree of the VFW

YourWe are always looking for new members. If you are a VFW or VFW Auxiliary member, you are automatically eligible to become a Cootie. (No shots required!!) We meet once a month, on the 2nd Wednesday of every month, at the Alliance. Please reach out to one of us at our regular VFW/Auxiliary Meeting. Join this FUN BUNCH of Characters. The Veterans love seeing us come to visit.

Cooties went to the VA Hospital in our CLOWN or HALLOWEEN costume on Oct 24th, 12pm. We handed out snacks to the patients. We are making plans to visit local hospitals and nursing homes. We will visit veterans there.

Pork Raffle will be held NOV 15th, 2026. If you bought a raffle ticket you could be our big winner!!



Military Order of the Cootie Auxiliary

"Keep'em Smiling in Beds of White"



Cooties Auxiliary Bake Sale

8:30 am- Noon
November 15, 2026

Fresh homemade
bake goods and **LEFSA** will be
available for purchase

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

The VFW Auxiliary thanks you
for your support





VFW and Legion Joint Dinner

What a great showing for the first combined American Legion/VFW supper!!! It was a great time… we only heard good comments!! Nearly 150 members of both organizations were in attendance. Commanders from the VFW and Legion led this charge to bring the units together and work together for the greater good of both organizations and to bring more awareness to the public about the common mission...Veterans.

Great job Commander Mark and Commander Ryan (and President Deb for decorating!!)!! And thanks to The Alliance for once again a place that Veterans can call home!!!

Auxiliaty Flag Raffle



What a great day celebrating our members and initiating our newest member Sara
A great luncheon and time visiting!!
Sara displayed the Flag she made with the 50 state quarters in order they became a state.
She will be donating this to the auxiliary to raffle 250 tickets in honor of 250 years!! All money raised will go to our relief fund to serve Veterans.





Purchase your Pancake tickets in Advance

You can now purchase your pancake breakfast in advance. Click this link and follow the instructions. Pancake Breakfast. Fast, convenient and no hassling with cash. Enjoy your breakfast. It is that simple.
You can also visit vfw628.org on the Pancake Breakfast banner and purchase your spots.

Fresh Oysters

Oysters in the Shell or Not

Half Gallon	VS	Quart
Extra Small - $60		Extra Small - $30
Small - $55		Small - $28
Medium - $50		Medium - $27
Oyster in the Shell		$16 per dozen
Order by November 10		Deliver after November 19
To order Call		605-338-0869

Order before November 10,

Delivery will be after November 19

Upcoming Post Events

November

November 1 - Daylight Savings Time Ends
November 1 - District Meeting - Beresford 1 pm
November 3 - Election Day
November 4 - Post/Auxiliary Meeting 7 pm
November 7 - Marine Corps Ball
November 10 - Chamber Mixer - LocationTBA
November 11 - SDDVA Bridge Dedication
November 11 - Veterans Day Program The Alliance
November 11 - POST CLOSED
November 12 - A Night With Heros at The Alliance
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 Location TBA
December 9– Cooties and Auxiliary Meeting 7 pm
December 12 - Day County Coyote Hunt
December 19 - VA CLC Christmas with the Cooties
December 20– Pancake Breakfast 8:30 am
December 20 - Auxiliary Bake Sale 8:30 am
December 20 - Cooties Chislic 3-6 pm
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

January

January 1- Happy New Years, Post Closed
January 3- District Meeting - Sioux Falls - 1pm
January 6- Post and Auxiliary Meeting - 7 pm
January 13- Cooties and Auxiliary Meeting - 7 pm
January 15- C7 Board Meeting - Noon
January 17- Pancake Breakfast - 8:30 am - 12 pm
January 17- Cooties Bake Sale - 8:30 through Noon
January 17- Cooties Chislic - 3 pm through 6 pm
January 18- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
January 23- Chili Cookoff and Oyster Stew
January 25- Past Presidents Meeting - 9:30 am
January 27- Post Executive Meeting - 7 pm

February

February 2 - VFW Riders Meeting
February 3 - Post and Auxiliary Meeting 7 pm
February 6 - Chili cookoff and Oyster Feed TBD
February 9 - Chamber Mixer 4-6 pm
February 10 - Cooties and Auxiliary Meeting 7 pm
February 14 - Valentines Day
February 15 - Presidents Day
February 20 - Articles due for Bliss Bugle
February 21 - Pancake Breakfast 8:30 am
February 21 - Post Auxiliary Bake Sale 8:30 am
February 21 - Post Birthday Party 106 Years TDB
February 22 - Past Presidents Meeting TBD
February 24 - Past Presidents Meeting
February 25 - Quarterly Audit Report Due

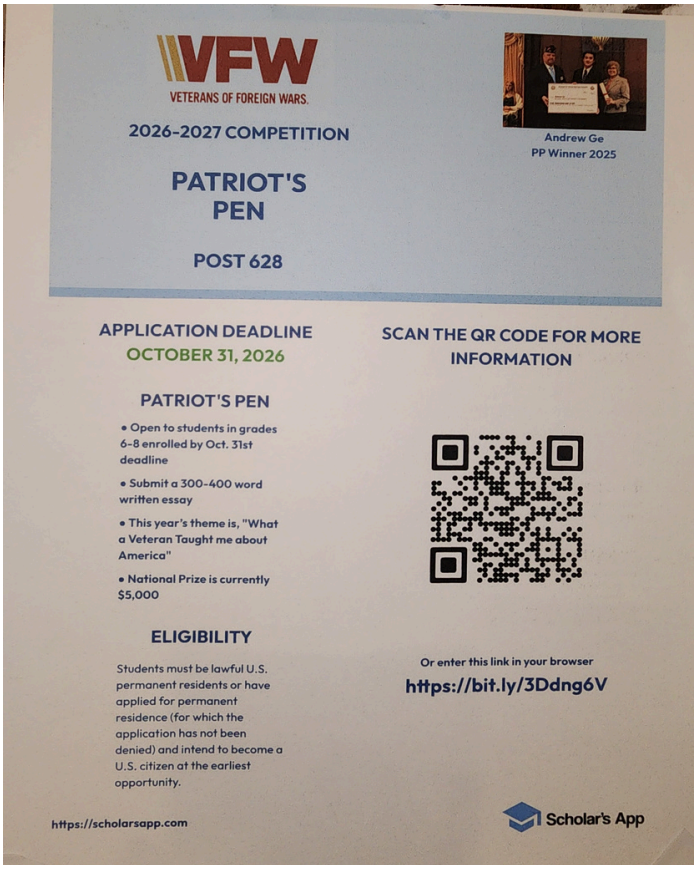
March

March 2 - VFW Riders Meeting TBD
March 3 - Post and Auxiliary Meeting 7 pm
March 9 - Chamber Mixer 4 pm
March 10 - Cooties and Auxiliary Meeting 7 pm
March 14 - Daylight Savings Time Starts
March 17 - St Patrick's Day
March 20 - Articles Due for Bliss Bugle
March 21 - Pancake Breakfast 8:30 am
March 21 - Cooties Bake Sale 8:30 am
March 21 - Cooties Chislic 3 pm
March 22 - Past Presidents Meeting

April

April 4 - District 1 Meeting- 1Pm in Canton
April 6 - VFW Riders Meeting-7 pm Brandon Post
April 7 - Post and Auxiliary Meeting - 7 pm
April 13 - Chamber Mixer - Location TBA
April 14 - Cooties and Auxiliary Meeting - 7 pm
April 15 - Federal Taxes Due - Don't be late
April 18 - Pancake Breakfast - 8:30 am - 12 pm

Good Of The Order

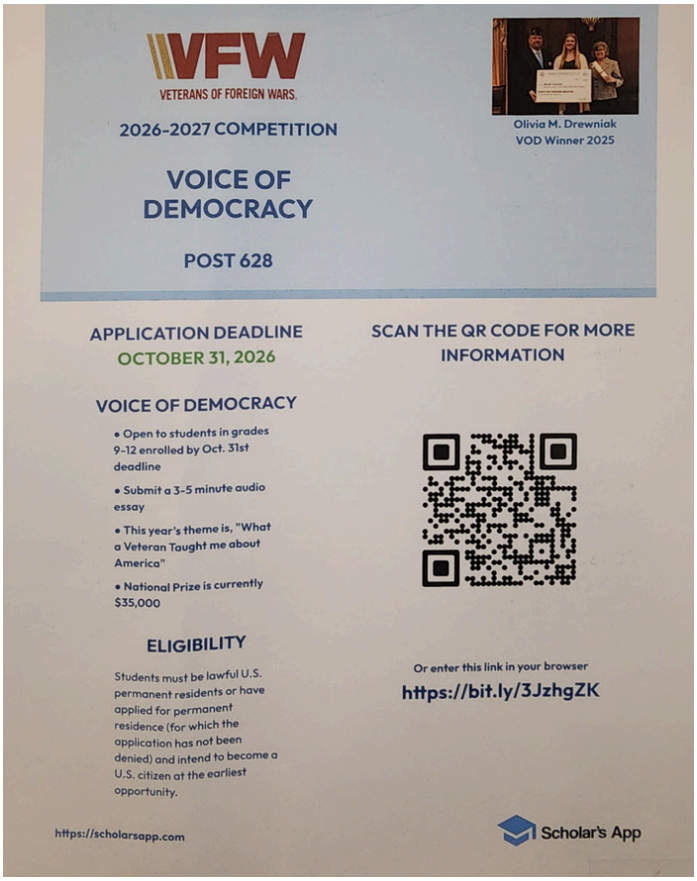


Patriots Pen

Each year more than 132,000 students in grades 6-8 enter the VFW's Patriot's Pen youth essay contest. The national first-place winner wins $5,000 and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. The first-place winner from each state competes for national awards totaling $55,000, with each first-place state winner receiving a minimum of $500 at the national level.

The essay contest encourages young minds to examine America's history, along with their own experiences in modern American society, by drafting a 300- to 400-word essay, expressing their views based on a patriotic theme chosen by the VFW Commander-in-Chief.

Post 628 is your first contact for getting your child signed up. To view the application and take the first step by clicking the QR Code provided.



Voice of Democracy

Established in 1947, our Voice of Democracy® audio-essay program provides high school students with the unique opportunity to express themselves in regard to a democratic and patriotic-themed recorded essay. Each year, nearly 28,000 ninth through 12th grade students from across the country enter to win their share of more than $1.6 million in educational scholarships and incentives awarded through the program.

The national first place winner receives a $35,000 scholarship paid directly to the recipient's American university, college or vocational/technical school. The complete list of other national scholarships range up to $21,000, with the first place winner from each VFW Department (state) winning a scholarship of at least $1,000.

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VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.
John M. Bliss Post 628

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
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Post Web Site: VFW628.org
Facebook: SiouxFallsVFW
Instagram: JMBLISS1921

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

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



Major Richard Star Act
One Signature Away from Key Breakthrough

The push to pass the Major Richard Star Act has reached a critical moment. Discharge Petition No. 22 now has 217 signatures, which is just one short of the 218 needed to help clear a path for the House to consider H.R. 2102 as a standalone bill. The VFW urges advocates to contact their representatives and ask them to take the next step needed to advance this important legislation. Depending on their representative's current position, advocates are asked to thank them for signing the petition and urge continued support for passage, ask cosponsors to sign the petition, or ask those who have taken neither action to cosponsor H.R. 2102 and sign the petition. Thousands of combat-injured veterans have waited long enough for Congress to end the unfair offset that prevents them from receiving both the military retirement pay and VA disability compensation they earned. One more signature gets the petition to 218.