



Veterans Honor Internment

A FINAL TRIBUTE

The Veterans Honor Internment Program is composed of volunteer veterans who handcraft each vessel with respect in honor of their fellow veterans.

The vessels, both caskets and urns, are quality-built with a beautiful finish, fitted with a handmade liner. Caskets are fitted with a two-piece lid allowing for open or closed viewing. The urns are crafted using high-quality materials and come in several shapes.

Project Manager Roger VanNort explains, “Founder Paul Redfield conceived this program in 1999. His vision was to provide honorable and dignified burial vessels for fellow veterans and their spouses.” VanNort added, “It was also for all veterans from South Dakota to have a dignified burial vessel regardless of their financial circumstances.”

The program started in the Black Hills. In 2007, Richard Schwanke brought the program to Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 628 in Sioux Falls. In 2014, the program had less than 5 volunteers. In 2018, the program had built its 100th casket and urn. Today, the volunteer program has built over 1900 caskets and urns.

VanNort also expressed that it is a goal to keep as many caskets and urns on hand as possible. A second goal is to keep close to fifty caskets and urns pre-positioned in locations across the state of South Dakota. From Sioux Falls to Spearfish and from Sisseton to Yankton. We have a van and two trailers to transport the finished caskets and urns around the state. . Today, there are five hundred caskets preorder.

Gary Campbell, a Vietnam veteran, is mostly responsible for building the urns. Urns are made from wood like Hickory, Black Walnut, and Cherry, as well as various other woods. Urns come in a standard size and a double urn. In 2025, Campbell built 126 urns, and so far in 2026, he has built eighty-four urns. Most tops and bottoms are cut by Kayle Decker using a precision CNC machine.

Ron Abraham, a program volunteer, stated, “VHI is a worthwhile program and is an honor to be a part of it. Involved in the program for 5 years, “we really see the families and their appreciation for what we do”. In this, program everybody gets a casket; nobody is turned away,” said Abraham.

Donations fund all major expenses include fuel and insurance for the van and trailers, as well as the facility’s annual rent of \$18,000. The program is a South Dakota-registered nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation supported entirely by generous, tax-deductible donations, which help ensure its continued availability.

Eligibility for a casket or an urn: you must be an active or former member of the active military, National Guard, or selected Reserve. You must have an honorable discharge and a copy of the veteran's DD-214 (Discharge papers). The veteran must also be a resident of South Dakota.

For more information, you can visit www.Veterans-Honored.org.



Ryan Killion
Post Commander

Hello brothers, and sisters. It has been a great summer with some new events. Now that we are heading towards colder weather, let us look after one another and make sure we have what we need. We begin October right away with a joint dinner event with the Legion Post 15. This event is to help build unity and cooperation between our organizations. Commander Mark Parsley of Legion Post 15 and myself are trying to work together and unite in the hope we bring more strength together as a team. October 16-18 is Big 10 Conference. I am hoping that we can get a few members to attend. Then 17 October is the Navy Ball held at Best Western Ramkota Hotel. Please see the flyer in this newsletter for more details. Pancake breakfast and Cooties chislic will be on 18 October and let us not forget the VFW Auxiliary Bake sale that same morning. Get your sweet tooth fixed. There will also be some great LEFSE. Delicious. The end of quarter Trustees report needs to be reviewed and signed by all our trustees. Until November, have a great month.

Deb Felton
Auxiliary President

The next meeting is October 7 at 7pm in the Armory. Hope to see you there.
Work nights is Monday, October 12, at 6 p.m. at the Armory. We will assemble AMERICANISM bags.
Auxiliary Member Appreciation Luncheon and New Member Initiation: October 11, 2026, at 1 p.m. Please send RSVP to Deb by text or phone at (605) 359-2091.
If you enjoy cooking, the Auxiliary prepares meals, freezes them in individual servings, and delivers them to the Veteran Outreach Center for Homeless Veterans to take home. If you would like to help, please let us know. If you enjoy baking, the VFW Auxiliary or Cootie Auxiliary will host a bake sale at the pancake breakfast on Sunday, October 18. Baked goods are always appreciated, and we would love for you to share your baking talents—or simply stop by to purchase a treat!
· If you enjoy supporting young people, the Auxiliary offers the Illustrating America and 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art contests, the Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest, and Continuing Education scholarships. Details are available at vfwauxiliary.org or contact us and we will send you more information.
Lefse making: October 17 and November 14, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Museum, west of the Armory.
District 1 Meeting: Sunday, November 1, 2026, at Beresford public library.
These are some of our upcoming events. Everyone has a talent that can benefit the Auxiliary. If you would like to help—or have an idea for reaching veterans, supporting veteran families, or serving children—please contact us.

In Honor



Post
None this Month

Auxiliary
None this Month



Fresh Lamb Chislic

October 18, 2026

Serving from 3 pm thru 6 pm

\$10 for chislic, ad fries \$12

Military Order of the Cootie Auxiliary

"Keep'em Smiling in Beds of White"



VFW Auxiliary Bake Sale

8:30 am- Noon

October 18, 2026

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

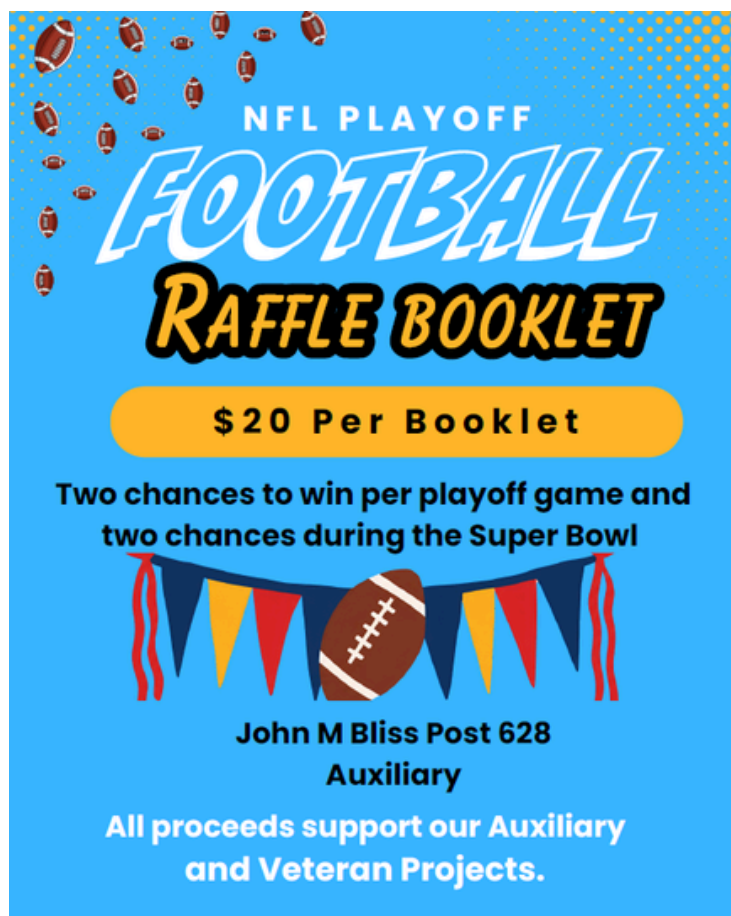
Supporting our hero's and their families
during their
time of need

The VFW Auxiliary thanks you for your
support



Congratulations to Wanda Mix, VFW George Dokken Post 2118 & Auxiliary and Kay Stevenson, VFW Auxiliary John M Bliss Post 628 for being recognized by the VA Hospital for their volunteer hours. Kay has volunteered over 500 hours and Wanda has volunteered over 1,750 hours at the VA hospital.

Pictured with Kay and Wanda is Crystal Reimers, VFW Auxiliary Three Rivers Post 4726. Crystal works in CDCE at the VA



NFL PLAYOFF
FOOTBALL
RAFFLE BOOKLET

\$20 Per Booklet

Two chances to win per playoff game and
 two chances during the Super Bowl



John M Bliss Post 628
Auxiliary

All proceeds support our Auxiliary
 and Veteran Projects.

Upcoming Cooties Events

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

- Cooties will be going to the VA Hospital in our CLOWN or maybe just a HALLOWEEN costume on Oct 24th, 1-2pm. We will have snacks to hand out to the patients.
- We will be making plans to also visit local hospitals/Nursing homes and find veterans there.
- Pork Raffle (OCT 2026 drawing) If you bought a raffle ticket you could be our big winner!!



VFW
 VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

Remember!
THE 3RD SUNDAY
of
 EACH MONTH IS
PANCAKE
BREAKFAST
AND
Bake Sale



PLEASE SUPPORT OUR EFFORTS BY:

-  **COMING TO ENJOY BREAKFAST**
-  **VOLUNTEERING YOUR TIME**
-  **BRINGING YOUR FRIENDS & FAMILY**

Supporting Veterans
ONE BREAKFAST AT A TIME!

VFW Auxiliary and Legion Auxiliary Joint Donations

John M Bliss Post 628 Auxiliary along with Post 15 American Legion Auxiliary made a trip to the Veterans Outreach center on Thursday. We delivered 5 pairs of boots and shoes, 11 shirts, 10 fleece blankets, 9 vests and coats jeans and insulated pants.. 628 Auxiliary also delivered 60 meals consisting on tuna casserole, spaghetti, goulash, egg bake, scalloped potatoes and ham, lasagna and chili. Along with jello, deviled eggs and corn bread. The freezer was just about empty when we got there... but we gave them something for their weekend stomachs!!



Mark Your Calendars



JOIN US FOR A

Joint Supper

American Legion & VFW
are sponsoring a joint supper

★ **October 1** ★

The Alliance

Social Hour ★ 5:00 PM
Meal & Karaoke ★ Following

★
RSVP to the VFW 605-338-0869
by Sept 18

Donation Bar

Auxiliary Members are asked to bring a dessert.





NAVY LEAGUE
SOUTH DAKOTA COUNCIL

Navy

BALL

— AMERICA 250 —

HONORING OUR PAST.
CELEBRATING OUR PRESENT.
INSPIRING OUR FUTURE.



SATURDAY
OCTOBER 17TH, 2026

SOCIAL HOUR
5:00 PM
DINNER
6:00 PM



BEST WESTERN
RAMKOTA HOTEL

3200 W. MAPLE ST.
SIOUX FALLS, SD



MILITARY ATTIRE
DINNER DRESS

CIVILIAN ATTIRE
SEMI-FORMAL



★ **PURCHASE TICKETS ONLINE** ★

<https://navyleague-sodak.org/event/navy-ball/>



QUESTIONS?
president@navyleague-sodak.org



605-728-9401

Upcoming Post Events

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 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 - Location TBA
 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 through Noon
 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

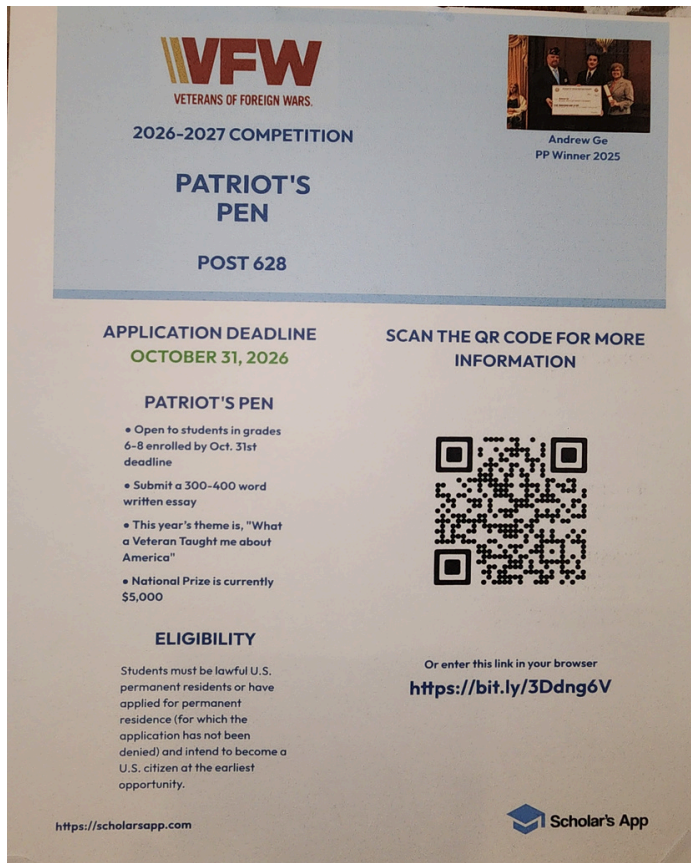
February

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

Good Of The Order



VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

2026-2027 COMPETITION

PATRIOT'S PEN

POST 628

APPLICATION DEADLINE
OCTOBER 31, 2026

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE INFORMATION

PATRIOT'S PEN

- Open to students in grades 6-8 enrolled by Oct. 31st deadline
- Submit a 300-400 word written essay
- This year's theme is, "What a Veteran Taught me about America"
- National Prize is currently \$5,000

ELIGIBILITY

Students must be lawful U.S. permanent residents or have applied for permanent residence (for which the application has not been denied) and intend to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity.

<https://scholarsapp.com>

Or enter this link in your browser
<https://bit.ly/3Ddng6V>

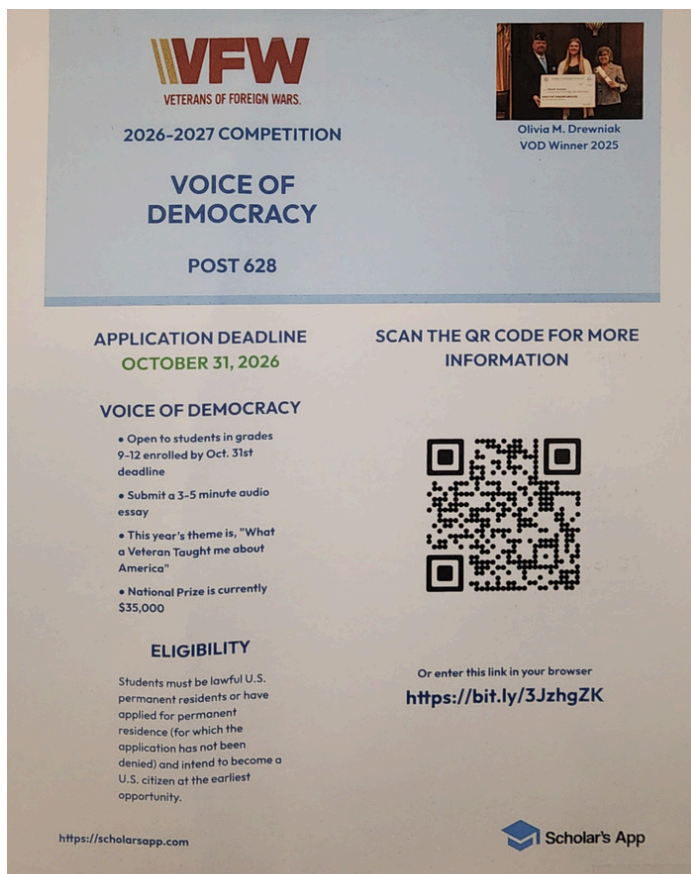
Scholar's App

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.



VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

2026-2027 COMPETITION

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY

POST 628

APPLICATION DEADLINE
OCTOBER 31, 2026

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE INFORMATION

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY

- Open to students in grades 9-12 enrolled by Oct. 31st deadline
- Submit a 3-5 minute audio essay
- This year's theme is, "What a Veteran Taught me about America"
- National Prize is currently \$35,000

ELIGIBILITY

Students must be lawful U.S. permanent residents or have applied for permanent residence (for which the application has not been denied) and intend to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity.

<https://scholarsapp.com>

Or enter this link in your browser
<https://bit.ly/3JzhgZK>

Scholar's App

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.

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.



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
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

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.