



Bliss Bugle



Words from the Commander Mark Winter

Fellow Comrades,

Things have slowed down a little bit, but not for long. We had our VFW 105th Birthday Dinner and Program on Mar 15, in place of the Cooties Chislic Feed. We tried a new Caterer, Creekside Meats from Hartford. Heard a multiple of comments of how good the Smoked Tri-tips and Chicken Supreme (chicken breast with bacon) were, and haven't heard of any complaints.

There was an unplanned Micheal J. Fitzmaurice Statue discussion that was moved to the Executive Board. A reminder that nominations for officers will start at the March meeting, with elections taking place at the April meeting and installation of new officers.

May is approaching with Loyalty Day, Day of Service, and Memorial Day Program. We can always use additional volunteers for our Pancake Breakfast, the third Sunday of each month.

Join us March 5th for a appreciation gathering sponsored by The Alliance. Come see the new spread and their new menu. Great food deals and some live music from Don McKenna. All happening at Club Lobo from 6-8 PM.

VFW Auxiliary President Deb Felton

This month our meeting is March 4th. I think we have nearly met or exceeded 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. I know we have a few new members. If you signed someone up, ask them to come with you to the meeting.

We will be having our monthly “work night” on March 9th. We will be working on our gift bags for the “Stand Up for Women Veterans” event, to be held April 11th. So far, I have individual lotions, hand sanitizers (non-alcoholic), and Life Saver mint candy.

Keep collecting those plastic bags, we will do another “Mat” making night possibly as our April work night. We dropped off 5 more mats at the VOC earlier in Feb. They are so grateful.

Hope everyone that came to the Post 628 Birthday party had a great time, food was delicious and many gift cards were donated and given as door prizes. Thank you to Randa Heller, Kim Vennard and Butch Haugan for contacting businesses and getting those donations.

Congratulations to Kay Stephenson, our 2026 VFW 628 Auxiliary Member/Volunteer of the year.

Welcome to New Post 628 Members

Kerri Lautenschlager-Army– Desert Storm

Aaron Wilson-Navy-Gulf War

John Overwise-Navy- Imminent Danger

Volunteers

This summer there will be many activities hosted by the Post as a whole. Please step up and volunteer for some of the projects. Let us fill that pipeline and put Post 628 at the apex of area Veteran organizations.

In this March 2026 issue

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Pancake

Breakfast

8:30-12 noon

March 15

\$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

Are you a Camper ?

Eligible applicants must submit their application digitally and upload required verification documents directly to their Go Outdoors South Dakota profile, ensuring the lifetime park entrance license and 50% camping discount are correctly applied to future reservations.

Applicants must:

- Be a **South Dakota resident.**
- Upload documentation showing either:
 - o A “K” award or letter from the Veterans Administration indicating **100% total service-connected disability, or**
 - o Documentation verifying **Prisoner of War (POW)** status.

<https://reservations.gooutdoorsouthdakota.com>

Approved applicants receive a **lifetime park entrance**

Youth Programs

As summer approaches, many of our school age kids are out and participating in various summer programs. Post 628 is a strong supporter of these programs in various ways.

As we support these programs, we search for volunteers to assist in the programs. Some of those programs include:

- Youth Football

- JROTC at Lincoln, Roosevelt and Washington
- Scouting programs
- Civil Air Patrol
- EMBE
- Voice of Democracy Scholarship Programs
- Patriots Pen Scholarship Programs

If you would like to volunteer, assist or sponsor any of these programs, call 605-338-0869 or email: office@vfw628.org.

Upcoming Events

March

- March 4-Post/Aux Meeting
- Mar 8-Daylight Savings Time Begins
- Mar 15-Pancake Breakfast & Cooties Bake Sale 8:30am-Noon
- Mar 15-Cooties Chislic 3-6PM
- Mar 17-St Patrick's Day
- Mar 25-Executive Comm Meeting

Mar 30-Past Presidents Meeting

April

- April 1-Post/Aux Meeting
- April 19-Pancake Breakfast & Auxiliary Bake Sale 8:30-Noon
- April 19-Cooties Chislic 3-6PM

May

- May 6-Post/Aux Meeting
- May 10-Mothers Day

May 16-Armed Forces Day

- May 17-Pancake Breakfast & Auxiliary Bake Sale 8:30-noon
- May 17-Cooties Chislic 3-6PM
- May 25-Memorial Day
- May 27-Executive Meeting 7PM





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New Business

Up For Discussion

Some Budget Items that must be ironed out in the March meeting

- Washington High and Lincoln JROTC funds
- Possible summer picnic on or about August 8. This will be put up for discussion at the next post meeting
- Possible special speaker and concert in August or September
- Budget must be finalized and approved at the March meeting.

Good Of The Order

- Nominations for Elections for the 2026-2027 year. We will elect a three year trustee and a new junior vice at a minimum. Anyone who would like to put their name on the ballot for any of the elected positions is highly encouraged to do so.
- Elected positions are: Commander, Sr Vice, Jur Vice, Quartermaster and three trustee.
- Final nominations, election and installation will all happen at the April meeting.
- At the April meeting, the commander will appoint his Adjutant, Chaplin and Service Officer, now called the Benefits Officer
- Buddy Poppy Chairman needed for the next year.
- District 1 meeting in Alcester, April 26 at 2 PM
- We need volunteers to step up for summer events.

In Honor

Post

Richard Breum-Navy

Rudolf Barreth-97-

Auxiliary

Loretta Henning

Lois Van Wyhe

CLUB LOBO
Ally Appreciation
 LIVE MUSIC FROM DON MCKENNA
 March 5th 6-8P.M.
 Military Pendelton Domestic Beer **\$4**
 Select Specialty Drinks
 FEATURING NEW PATRIOT GRILL MENU

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

Email to Office@vfw628.org.

If you have events you would like to get on the calendar, e-mail them to office@vfw628.org immediately. If there is a graphic or poster to include, please attach that in your email.



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National Salute to Veterans Week

We were honored to be invited to the Sioux Falls VA Health Care System for the National Salute to Veterans Week, where a steak and shrimp lunch was served to celebrate the bravery of our nation's heroes currently residing at the VA for hospitalization.



Honored Veterans entering the Veterans Luncheon

Department of SD VFWA sponsored a steak luncheon for the patients of the CLC at Royal C Johnson VA Hospital!! John M Bliss Post 628 Auxiliary decorated and assisted with patient transport and socialization for the lunch.

The patients were greeted with a salute in the hallway lined with representatives from the 628 Honor Guard, Post 15 Honor Guard, Police and Fire Department Honor Guards along with the VFW State Commander Martin Christenson and Legion State Commander Kevin Hempel..

Members of 628 Auxiliary went to the Veterans Outreach Center to deliver 5 dozen doughnuts donated by Flyboy. We ended the day decorating Valentine Cookies for the bake sale on Sunday. A full Friday serving our Veterans.



Honor Guard Commander Diane Diekman Salutes Veterans entering the Luncheon



Randy Johnson (pictured left) salutes honored veterans. Veterans gather to share stories, friendship and a tasty meal sponsored by Department of South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary.



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105 Years

Celebrating Post 628

Modern technology has made it easier to capture and preserve history. At the Post 628 annual celebration on February 15, 2026, members reflected on 105 years of Post 628's legacy. Members of the Post, Auxiliary, and Cooties shared memories and discussed photos from past and present events.



Auxiliary Volunteer of the Year
Kay Stephenson

Since its founding on April 22, 1921, Post 628 has honored generations of members, including WWI charter members who commemorated John Martin Bliss. The annual birthday celebration recognizes the dedication and service of all members, with awards presented to those who exceed expectations. Friendship, memories, and camaraderie define the evening, and the strength of Post 628 is attributed to its devoted membership



Golden Spatula Award
Wil Bolduc

Our members are the best and we recognize their devotion and effort. Thank you to all our membership. You are what makes Post 628 strong.



Past Commander Diane Diekman
and Daughter Amanda

Special Guest John Theel (JT)

Executive Director, South Dakota
Military Heritage Alliance



JOHN M. BLISS

JOHN M. BLISS POST



Past Commanders: L-R, Hosea Bennett (2020-2024), Don Kranz (2024-2025), Diane Diekman (2016-2018), Butch Haugen (2010-2012, 2013-2015)



Past Presidents: Amy Bolduc (2024-2025), Diana Wells, Mary Kirkvold (2009-2010/2017-2018), Betty Hahn (1998-1999), Kim Vennard (2018-2024)



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FREE Tax Return Preparation

The Sioux Falls VA Health Care System is collaborating with Inter-Lakes Community Action Partnership to offer free tax return preparation for Veterans.



Prepared FREE by IRS VITA certified volunteers.

All returns are e-filed.

February 19 | March 12 | March 30
1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Sioux Falls VA Front Lobby

Book an appointment to guarantee a spot.

605-334-2808 ext. 201

WALK INS ARE WELCOME.



PART OF THE MILES AND LISA BEAGOM CONCERT SERIES

Black Hawk

THE ALLIANCE - MARCH 18

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT ETIX.COM

BLACKHAWKLIVE.COM

THE ALLIANCE

MILITARY APPRECIATION DAY

SUNDAY, MARCH 1



Sanford Pentagon - Sioux Falls, S.D.

Women's Session 11:00 AM | 1:30 PM
Men's Session 4:30 PM | 7:00 PM

NORTHERN SUN INTERCOLLEGIATE CONFERENCE MEN'S & WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

SPECIAL TICKET PRICES

Military Member & One Guest	FREE
Adult Family Members	\$10
Youth Family Members (K-College)	\$5
Kids (5 & under)	FREE

*Must show valid Military ID, Dependent ID, Retired ID, Veteran ID, or DD214

TICKET PRICES ARE VALID FOR BOTH SESSIONS ON SUNDAY & ONLY AVAILABLE AT THE SANFORD PENTAGON BOX OFFICE.



NATIONAL VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY PROGRAM EVENT HOSTED BY



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

WHEN:	10:30 A.M. - 2:00 P.M. FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2026
WHERE:	DAV HEADQUARTERS 1519 W. 51 ST STREET, SIOUX FALLS, SD
10:30 A.M.	KICKOFF CEREMONY - MC MICK NESSEIM
10:45 A.M.	UPDATE ON VA HEALTHCARE - VA DIRECTOR SARA ACKERT
11:00 A.M.	UPDATE ON VA BENEFITS - DIRECTOR SHAWN BOHN
11:15 A.M.	SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS - SECRETARY JEREMIAH SCHNEIDER
11:30 A.M.	COMFORT KEEPERS - OLIVIA HANSON
11:45 A.M.	VIETNAM VETS: STILL COMING HOME BOOK
12:00 P.M.	LUNCH HOSTED BY COMFORT KEEPERS
1:00 P.M.	VIETNAM POW/MIA INFORMATION - DAV NATIONAL CHAIRMAN MARTY PENNOCK
1:10 P.M.	SD STATE VETERANS CEMETERY - DIRECTOR ERIN BROWN
1:20 P.M.	VETERANS HONOR INTERMENT - DIRECTOR ROGER VAN NOORT
1:30 P.M.	VET CENTER
10:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.	MANY DOOR PRIZES

Veterans are welcome to bring their spouse/guest, and are encouraged to bring any service-related memorabilia to display at the event.

ALL ARE WELCOME



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Military Order of the Cootie Auxiliary

“Keep ‘me Smiling in Beds of White”

Seam Squirrel Comments

Listen Up Cooties,

Yeah, it's March and everyone is looking forward to spring.

We have been busy visiting veterans at the VA. On February 8 the Cooties and Aux attended a Super Bowl party at the hospital. Treats and refreshments were provided. We also handed out valentines.

Chislic fundraiser Sunday March 15 from 3pm to 6pm

Scratch Wednesday March 11 7pm at The Alliance Nathan Beiningen

Seam Squirrel

PT#1 Big Sioux Ticks

March 15, 2026 3PM-6PM

\$8 for Chislic

\$9 Chislic/Fries

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

Bring Your Friends

Center for Development and Civic Engagement

Our VA is once again asking for donations of various items for our veterans.

Donations Items needed are:

- Body Lotion
- Body Wash
- Denture Cleaner
- Denture Adhesive
- Deodorant
- Disposable Razors
- Hair Brushes
- Hair Combs
- Nail clippers
- Shampoo

- Shave Cream

Gift cards are also a great item to donate. Some of the most requested are from:

Convenience Stores

- BP Gas
- Casey General Store

Grocery Stores

- Fareway Foods
- HyVee
- Walmart

Restaurants

- Buffalo Wild Wings
- Applebee's
- Subway
- Perkins

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!!

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

1700 W Russell Street
Sioux Falls SD 57104

605-338-0869
vfw628.org

