



Bliss Bugle

Jan-Mar
2026

Your Connection For All The Latest Happenings

Words from our Leadership

Commander's Corner

Comrades, I hope everyone has a Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas. We hosted the Fall Council with lots of great training. I attended the Navy Ball in October and the Marine Corps Ball in November. We witnessed a great Veterans Day Program and made a visit to the Wakonda Nursing Home celebrating our veterans. One post officer did attend the Bridge Dedication at the Alliance. We had good participation in the Patriots Pen and Voice of Democracy competition. (more information in this issue) Flag presentations were done at several area schools. The honor guard has been busy with several funerals.

We have several programs that need assistance, including Pancake Breakfast and Honor Guard. These are the spotlights of our post. These are our most visible programs to the public. They show our commitment to our community and our fellow veterans. Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

We look forward to 2026, wishing all our member in the Post, Auxiliary and the Cooties a happy and prosperous New Year. Cheers.

Auxiliary President

We have been very busy the last few months assisting the VFW Post with the Americanism Flag folding presentations. This has been presented to SXF elementary schools. We have gone to Terry Redlin, Garfield, Pettigrew, Eugene Field, JFK, LeBeau and St Lambers. With more scheduled throughout the school year.

We have been Honoring our Veterans by attending the VA Centurian Award Ceremonies here in Sioux Falls for Glen Walters, and 6 VFW Members at the Spencer IA ceremony.

We initiated 4 new members at our VFW Auxiliary Members luncheon on October 12 the, 2025. New members initiated were, Michelle Williams, Monica Kranz, Anissa Goehring and Patricia Sultz.

Many "Lawn" Poppys were seen on several lawns throughout the fall. LOOK for them again come Spring!! Thank you Barb Hayes for doing this.

***All Auxiliary members need to be sure to post all of their time, events and donations onto our Department Website. vfwauxsd.org or (link) <https://vfwauxsd.org/di/vfw/v2/default.asp>

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Warm Holiday Wishes for Family and Friends

Greetings from Post Commander Mark Winter and Auxiliary President Deb Felton

We want to take a moment to extend our heartfelt wishes to you and your loved ones. May this Christmas season bring you peace, joy, and wonderful moments shared with family and friends.

As we look forward to the New Year, we hope it brings everyone new opportunities, prosperity, and happiness. May 2026 be a year filled with success, good health, and cherished memories. Let us embrace the coming year with hope and optimism, grateful for the experiences of the past year and looking forward to what lies ahead.



In Loving Memory

Glen Walters, 93, of Sioux Falls, SD, passed away on Tuesday, November 25, 2025,



at Ava's House in Sioux Falls. Funeral services were held at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, December 2, 2025, at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Sioux Falls. Burial took place at the

South Dakota State Veterans Cemetery in Sioux Falls.

On August 14, 1957, Glen was united in marriage to Norma Hoiland in Beaver Creek, Minnesota. To this union, three children were born. Glen worked as a machinist at John Morrell for over 30 years.

Our deepest regards and sympathy for Norma and Glens entire family. Glen will be deeply missed.

Cooties Corner

Comments from the Seam Squirrel Nate Beinigen

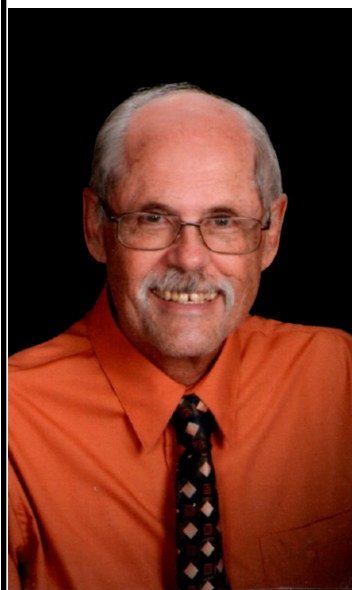
Cooties handed out Treat bags for the residents at the VA Hospital on 10/25.

Halloween Party was held on Friday 10/31 at 2 p.m. at the VA. President Deb Felton assisted and the patients enjoyed a very nice event.

American Legion Auxiliary hosted a Christmas party at the VA on Tuesday December 9th. Roxann Zenobi was chairperson. Roxann received a check from the Cooties in the amount of \$300.00 for Gift Cards for each Veteran attending.

\$280 Cash given to the Cootie Auxiliary from Fred Assam Elementary from their "Hats for Heros" fundraiser. Stocking caps were purchased and donated to Veterans at the Veterans Outreach Center.

COOTIE Chislic-January 18th, March 15th, 3-6pm



Clinton "Dick" Richard Wells, age 83, of Sioux Falls, passed away Monday, December 8, 2025, at the Sioux Falls VA Hospice Cottage, surrounded by his family. His Funeral Service was held on Tuesday, December 16, 2025, at the First United Methodist Church, Sioux Falls. Interment was at the Hills of Rest Cemetery. Dick was born in Sioux Falls to his parents, Ray and Molly Wells, and grew up on the north side of town on West

9th Street.

He was drafted into the army in 1964 and trained at Fort Leonard wood, Missouri. He was sent to Vietnam and stationed in Qui Nhon for nine months. Dick was a member of the American Legion and a lifetime member of VFW Post 628. He was Commander for two years in the Brandon Post. Dick will be deeply missed. Prayers for Diana and the entire family.

From 3-6 PM Every 3rd Sunday

South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance

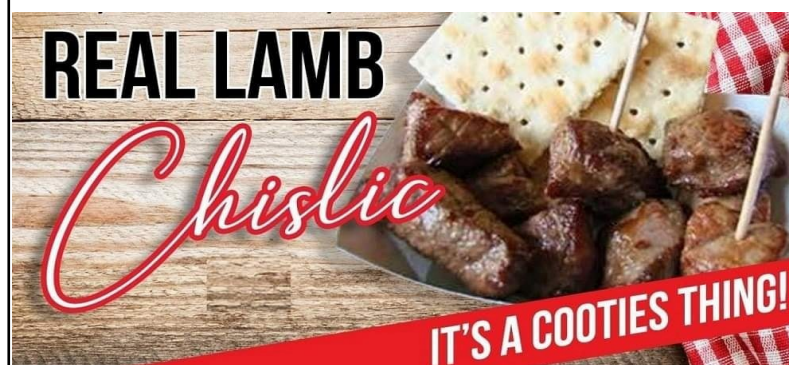
1600 W Russell Street

\$8 Per Person

\$9 For Chislic and Fries

We are open to the Public

*Come join us with your Friends
and Family*



Happy Birthday Doug Starr



Congratulations Doug Starr for reaching 100 years. Doug's official birthday was November 15, 2025. Doug is an active member of Post 628 and attends meetings regularly. We salute you Doug. We appreciate all that you do.

Post Membership

Over the years, we know our membership has declined. Most of this decline is through natural attrition. Ten years ago, Post 628 membership was in the vicinity of 2000 members. Today, we see those numbers close to 800.

For us to achieve a 100% level, we need 24 more members. Let's Enlist 30 more members to our post How do we renew, reinstate or get new members? This is a situation that needs to be resolved and we need you help and ideas on how we can rebuild those numbers. Membership falls on the shoulders of the Post Sr. Vice Commander.

It will be the next commanders duty to rally our membership and develop a plan to get those numbers up. Many ideas are out there. We need you to speak up and join in to accomplishing the goal of 100+% and to build those numbers each year.

What do we need to attract new members, get them involved and keep them as members, preferably as life members. Your assistance is very important to this issue and Post 628.

If you know anyone serving in our local National Guard or either the Navy or Army Reserve centers and ask them to join our ranks.

Remembering our Brothers and Sisters

POST:

James Wainscoat - Army
Richard Anderson -Navy
Willis Hoff - Army
Marlyn Vietor - Army

James Lovett - Army
Alan Irish - Marine

Auxiliary:

Doris Kono
Gladys Daniels
Ruth Maloy
Gayle Lambert

Future Events

January

Jan 1-Tom and Jerrys
Jan 7-Post/Auxiliary Meeting
Jan 18-Pancakes and Bake Sale
Jan 19- Martin Luther King Day
Jan 24- Chili Cook Off/Oyster Feed—More information to follow

No One Does More For Veterans

February

Feb 4-Post/Auxiliary meeting
Feb 14-Valentines Day
Feb 15-Pancakes and Bake Sale
Feb 15-Post Birthday Party
(Members Only Event)
Feb16-Presidents Day
Feb 18-Ash Wednesday
Feb 22-1st Sunday of Lent

March

Mar 4-Post/Auxiliary Meeting
Mar 4-Post Election Nominations
Mar 9- Auxiliary Work Night
Mar 15-Pancakes and Bake Sale
Mar 17-St Patrick's Day
Mar 21-Stand-Up for Woman Veterans

Bliss Bugle

Special Visitor



Recent visit from Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, Clint Romesha. Sergeant Romesha spoke of his time in one of the most dangerous locations in Afghanistan.

Former Staff Sgt. Clinton L. Romesha (pronounced Row-ma-shay) was born in Lake City, California. Romesha enlisted in the Army in September 1999, as an M1 armor crewman. After completion of training at Fort Knox, Kentucky, he was assigned as a tank gunner with B Company, 1-63rd Armor, in Vilseck, Germany. He was also included an operational deployment to Kosovo.

After Germany, he was assigned as a gunner/assistant tank commander with A Company, 2-72nd Armor, Camp Casey, Korea. Following Korea, deployed to Iraq, he was assigned as a section leader with 3-61st Cavalry, Fort Carson, Colo. There he completed the Long Range Reconnaissance Course, Advanced Leader Course and Air Assault Training.

Romesha deployed twice to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and once to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. At the time of the deadly attack on Combat Outpost Keating, Kamdesh District, Afghanistan, on Oct. 3, 2009, Staff Sgt. Romesha was assigned as a section leader for Bravo Troop, 3-61st Cavalry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

In addition to the Medal of Honor, Romesha's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal (with two oak leaf clusters), Army Achievement Medal (with four Oak Leaf Clusters), Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Kosovo Campaign Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal (with two bronze service stars), Iraq Campaign Medal (with three bronze service stars), Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon (with numeral two device), Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon (with numeral five device), NATO Medal (with bronze service star), the Valorous Unit Award, Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Combat Action Badge and the Air Assault Badge.

1700 W. Russell Street
Sioux Falls SD
57106
605-336-8092



Pancake Breakfast

All you can eat.

3rd Sunday of each month

Adults-\$8

Children 10 & under-\$3

Future Pancake Breakfast

January 18

February 15

March 15



Big day October 14, 2025. Celebrating our new members and the seasoned members!! We appreciate every member we have. An amazing luncheon hosted by President Deb food donated by Don and Jennifer Kranz, President Deb Felton and Kim Vennard.



Happy Birthday Ethel Christensen

What an amazing afternoon celebrating the 90th birthday of Past President Ethel Christensen. It was a packed venue and we missed some of the auxiliary members that were there.

Pictured are JM Bliss Auxiliary members: Past Pres Diana Wells, Past Pres Kim Vennard, Past Pres Betty Hahn, Shari Sorenson, Past Pres Mary Kirkvold, President Deb Felton and seated is the birthday girl, Past Pres Ethel Christensen!!



Cooties Donate to Giving Tree

Veterans and students from South East Technical paid a visit to Cooties Pup Tent one for a special Christmas donation. Destiny Wallace-McClintock and Megan Wallace-McClintock representing Giving Tree received several donated items from the Cooties and will distribute them to needy families.

We really appreciate Megan and Destiny reaching out to those in our community during this time of year.

It was a great night decorating the Post/Auxiliary Christmas Tree at The Alliance!!! Looking very festive with everyone's trees going up!!! Tree decorators are (L to R) Auxiliary President Deb Felton, Chelsie Williams, Michelle Williams Barb Hays, Roxanne Wengler, Patty Sultz, Nancy Renner. The tree is uniquely with a star backed with tail feather of a South Dakota Pheasant



Many local Veterans can not get out to Veterans Day festivities; so we brought it to them.

Commander Mark and President Deb, along with many members visited Heritage Manor in Wakonda to present a program. Each Veteran received a Certificate of Appreciation, Post Challenge coin, and hand drawn cards from local Girl Scouts. The Wakonda American Legion Auxiliary presented each of the Veterans with a bag of treats and gifts.

What a great gift when two different organizations can work together and remember what our mission is.... The Veterans !!

628 Post Member Dick Wells is a resident of Heritage Manor and his family (all auxiliary members) showed up to participate and support Dick.

Big Sioux Cooties... in conjunction with Fred Assam Elementary School was able to deliver 240 winter hats, 14 dozen pairs of socks, turkey dinners and individual packages of brownies and cake to the Veteran Outreach Center.

Fred Asaam Elementary had a Hats for Heroes event!! They should be SO PROUD of what the did!!



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, more than 26,400 ninth through 12th grade students from across the country enter to win their share of more than \$1.4 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.

This year's topic is *"How Are You Showing Patriotism and Support for Our Country?"*.



First Place recipient is Rebekah Kiessel. Rebekah is from Sioux Falls.

Second Place recipient is Veronika Hurst. (not pictured) is from Plankinton.

Congratulations to both of our 2025 Voice of Democracy winners

Each year, the Veterans of Foreign Wars selects elementary, middle, and high school teachers to participate in the Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher program.



Teacher nominations are received at VFW Post 628 where they are reviewed and teacher of the year is selected and recognized for their contributions to our area students.

The 2025-2026 Teacher of the Year is Paige Wright. Paige teaches at Harrisburg South Middle School. She is a graduate of University of South Dakota. Paige was recently a Special

Guest speaker at the event, Ed Rising at USD. Paige was also selected as Teacher of the Year for the Department of South Dakota VFW.

This year's Patriots Pen written essay competition presented our judges with some very creative thoughts. The theme this year is *"How Are You Showing Patriotism and Support for Our Country?"*

Each year, more than 60,600 students in sixth through eighth grades enter the VFW's **Patriot's Pen®** annual youth essay contest for a chance to win their share of nearly \$1 million in state and national awards.

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.



First Place Recipient is Brooklyn Hewit from Harrisburg



Second Place recipient is Elenor Drown. Elenor is from Sioux Falls. .

Third Place Recipient is Brandon Thomas (not pictured) from Harrisburg.

Congratulations to everyone participating in our Patriots Pen Essay Contest.