

# CABIN CLIPS

May, 2023

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## NEWS FLASH!

In order to better serve our combat wounded veterans and families, we have expanded our scope to include combat wounded veterans from any post September 11, 2001 military operation. Please help us spread the word!

## DID YOU KNOW?

Because of the generosity of many local donors, churches and other organizations, we have a great supply of books, games, toys and puzzles to keep our families involved and promote the togetherness and healing so desperately needed. That is our mission.





## DID YOU KNOW?

We provide hiking sticks, binoculars, backpacks and coolers so that our families can get out and explore the many places available here in the Black Hills. We even have volunteers ready and willing to take these families out for a simple walk or to explore a cave or a mine. These are sites we take for granted but our families are simply “blown away” by the beauty, accessibility and grandeur of our beautiful Black Hills.

## DID YOU KNOW?

It takes a whole TEAM and more, maybe even a VILLAGE, to get ready for each family to enjoy their respite here at Operation Black Hills Cabin.

- First, the veterans have to apply. The application is on the **WEBSITE** and is just a click away.
- Their application and supporting documentation then goes to the **SELECTION COMMITTEE** for review to verify eligibility.
- Personal **REFERENCES** are called.
- **WEEKS** are assigned and **VISITS** to specific attractions are scheduled.
- All participating businesses have been contacted by the **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE** to create the coupons for each family to enjoy during their week.
- The **CLEANING CREW** has done their magic and the clean cabin awaits.
- **FOOD AND SNACKS** have been purchased and stocked ready for the hungry and weary travelers to arrive.
- Grass has been cut, weeds pulled and the Healing Hike has been raked. The **MAINTENANCE CREW** has also put out the benches, swing, hammock and raised the appropriate branch of service flag.
- A dedicated local gardener has brought in **FLOWER POTS** and a bouquet of **FRESH CUT FLOWERS** from Jenny’s Floral and the Custer VFW await our visitors.

- The antlers provided by Claw Antler Hide have been carefully hidden for the **SCAVENGER HUNT** for the kiddos.
- The **GIFT BAG** is stocked with many items from local donors and serves as a “Welcome to our Area” surprise.
- Finally, the family arrives and they are greeted by the **CHECK-IN COMMITTEE** who explains and gives them all the coupons from various restaurants and attractions that they use during their week. Tears flow as they receive their transportation reimbursement Visa card made possible by all our generous donors and grants.
- During their week, a member of the **HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE** visits and leaves a home-baked treat for the family to enjoy.
- The quilt guild arrives to present a once-in-a-lifetime **QUILT OF VALOR**. Tears flow again and pictures are taken.
- The family uses their coupons to enjoy the **BUSINESSES** and **ATTRACTIONS** during their week.
- The week draws to a close and it is often a time of regret since all of the fun and memories made have come to an end with a long trip home ahead.
- The **CHECK-OUT COMMITTEE** hears about all the activities and fun had and conducts a critique of the whole process, the good and the bad.
- The **CLEANING COMMITTEE, MAINTENANCE CREW AND THE REST OF THE COMMITTEES** enter again to prepare for the new family arriving the next day.

**So as you can see, our “village” involves many great people who devote several hours to help us at OBHC accomplish our mission. You will never experience the extreme satisfaction and pride that comes from your involvement with OBHC until you have encountered these families. You will hear their stories, their heartbreaks, and their tremendous gratitude for the amazing week they have just experienced and the quality time and family reconnection they have made. It will warm your heart. This reminds me of a story adapted from “Some Folks Feel the Rain...Others Just Get Wet” by James W. Moore.**

A Man was lost while driving through the country. As he tried to read a map, he accidentally drove off the road into a ditch. Though he wasn't injured, his car was stuck deep in the mud. So the man walked to a nearby farm to ask for help. “Warwick can get you out of that ditch,” said the farmer, pointing to an old mule standing in a field. The man looked at the haggardly mule and looked at the farmer who just stood there repeating, “Yep, old Warwick can do the job.” The man figured he had nothing to lose. The two men and Warwick made their way back to the ditch. The farmer hitched the mule to the car. With a snap of the reins he shouted, “Pull, Fred! Pull, Jack! Pull, Ted! Pull, Warwick!” And the mule pulled the car from the ditch with very little effort. The man was amazed. He thanked the farmer, patted the mule and asked, “Why did you call out all of those other names before you called Warwick? The farmer grinned and said, “Old Warwick is just about blind. As long as he believes he's part of a team, he doesn't mind pulling.”

Join our team and help us pull! We welcome any new business or recreational activity or anyone interested in being involved in any capacity to help us accomplish our mission, spread the word and highlight our wonderful town and area that we are so lucky to call home. Give us a call at 605-517-1830 or email us at [operationblackhillscabin@gmail.com](mailto:operationblackhillscabin@gmail.com).

## WATCH FOR IT!

**One of our new Board members, Colonel Deborah Hanagan, US Army (retired) has written and submitted an article highlighting Operation Black Hills Cabin for the National VFW Magazine. They have accepted the article and it will be printed in their August issue. In addition, her articles have been published in the Hoover Digest and the American Thinker. We are so happy to have Deb on our Board and here is a short sample of her writing expertise:**

### Small Town with a Big Heart

In these chaotic, economically difficult times, when the news seems filled with negative stories about violence, divisiveness, and social decay, it's a relief to find something positive and uplifting. It turns out charity and compassion are still alive in small town America. For the last decade, combat wounded veterans and their families have been offered a week-long therapeutic respite, in the beautiful Black Hills of South Dakota, to decompress and reconnect with each other. In fact, the non-profit that offers the retreat, Operation Black Hills Cabin, isn't your typical non-profit. What makes it unique is that it embodies the effort of the entire town of Custer, SD and the surrounding communities. It is entirely run by volunteers and donations and it encompasses a 1,200 square foot, handicap accessible, fully-furnished cabin that can sleep two adults and up to six children, with a fully stocked kitchen and laundry. Volunteers not only clean and maintain the cabin and cut the grass, they also built a healing hike around the one acre property that is leased from the City of Custer for \$1 a year. The local business community enthusiastically pitches in with coupons to local restaurants and attractions. To qualify, a veteran has to be a minimum of 30% combat injured from any post-September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 military operation. Warrior Transition Unit members are also eligible. The cabin operates from Memorial Day to the end of September and can support 17 families a year, but qualified veterans can apply at any time. The application and further information are available at: [www.operationblackhillscabin.org](http://www.operationblackhillscabin.org). So far 139 families from 36 states have stayed at the cabin and the veterans and their families ask over and over again why the people and businesses of Custer are so kind. The simple answer is: it's a way to say thank you to the veterans and their families and to show them our country's gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

**Thank you, Deb for your service and your help at OBHC!**