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# VFW POST 604 NEWS

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January 2011

## V.F.W. Mission Statement

The purpose of this corporation (VFW) shall be fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable, and educational; to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members; to assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their widows and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States of America, and fidelity to its institutions of American freedom, and to preserve and defend the United States from all her enemies, whomsoever.

## Commander's Corner

Hello! As this year comes to an end, I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in getting our Post ready to open. It has been very difficult getting to where we are today, but a group of very special and dedicated people have pulled together to make things happen. We have faced many problems, but we have managed to overcome them and keep moving forward.

Even without having the Post open, we have been doing the business of the VFW. We have participated in many functions in our community to let people know we are still here and ready to help Veterans. As we have mentioned in previous newsletters, our members have helped with programs such as the Hoosier Honor Flight, Memorial Day services, Veterans Day ceremonies, Military Support Group, Honor Tree, Honor Guard, Vet to Vet program and POW/MIA programs. Our Service Officer has answered questions and guided people in the right direction to get help. Our Ladies Aux. has worked hard and continued to make multiple donations to organizations in our community.

I would like to thank the group of people that have helped us to prepare and mail out our newsletter: Janet Williams, Joyce Grubb, Wilma Hays, Patty Pate, Dorothy & Lowell Elliott, Mark & Debi Dammer, and others.

I also want to thank all of our members for staying with us. Thank you for continuing to pay your dues, because without members we would not be Post 604. This new year will be a GREAT one. For those who have not paid your dues, please do so.

**Commander - Joe Hardin**



## Post 604 Ladies Auxiliary

Merry Christmas to everyone. This year has passed fast. I can't believe this is first newsletter of 2011. We are nearing the end of this long tunnel the Post has been traveling through for two years. What a good feeling it is. Through the prayers, blood, sweat & tears, thanks to all the volunteers who have made this possible.

This month Post 604 & Ladies Aux. made donations of:

- ❖ \$600.00 to Salvation Army for the Mitton Tree and gifts / food baskets.
- ❖ Ten lap blankets donated to nursing homes.
- ❖ Socks, shirts, pants, and hats (valued at \$735.00) donated to homeless veterans.
- ❖ \$57.85 to the Police & Sheriff's office to pay Care package postage (sent to overseas service members).
- ❖ Prepared and donated 40 fruit sacks for the children's Christmas party at the Eagles Lodge.
- ❖ People helping people - Several members made phone calls made visits to nursing homes & hospitals.

What do you see as the key to integrating the interest needs of the younger generation of members and their families? As you think of an answer, we all need to remember this is an organization of volunteers. We get involved and stay involved because of our love of our veterans and our organization. Older members must open their minds and hearts and make the younger veterans feel welcome and needed. We should accept and embrace their fresh, new and creative ideas and support them in those endeavors. However, the younger generation must also be willing to accept the mission of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and over 100 years of traditions. They must appreciate the older generations of veterans who fought for the same American way of life freedom.

Probably because it's Christmas, but Bingo participation has been down, **so come play**. Please pay your dues by the end of December. Keep all in our prayers.

**Janet Williams, President VFW Ladies Auxiliary**

## Post 604 Men's Auxiliary

The doors will open, the lights will be turned on and we'll all begin enjoying our new Post home soon. Because of the new facility, we're likely to begin picking up new members, so now is a pretty good time to give some serious thought to the kinds of activities we'll be undertaking as members of the Men's Auxiliary of Post 604.

As a member of the VFW Men's Auxiliary, American Legion's and AMVETS' Sons organizations. It has given me a unique perspective on the similarities and differences of the three groups. One common thread between them, though, is our steadfast conviction to support the work of our parent organizations, the core of which is the support of veterans. Nothing could be more central to our existence than a desire to conduct activities that will benefit veterans, near and far.

An example of that is something my oldest son and I were doing this past weekend. One of those other organizations I belong to has a long-standing tradition of conducting Bingo parties for residents of the Indiana Veterans Home (IVH) at West Lafayette. We spent the better part of a Saturday helping make that party special for the men and women who live at the IVH. But that's just one activity up there. Posts around the state conduct picnics and special events at the home. Recently on a Saturday, I saw a friend from Crawfordsville who was there with his wife and son delivering Christmas presents to vets who used to live in their community, but now live at the IVH.

Of course, that's just one of a million ideas. How about getting a group together next Christmas and go caroling in nearby nursing homes where we know there are veterans? How about getting a group of guys together to do a project or two that would benefit the local VA center, or maybe do something for the Roudebush VA hospital in Indianapolis? Why not target a few veterans here in the community and do something nice for them, like work on their house or yard if they're unable to do it themselves? What if we raised some money and took some veterans to a ballgame this summer?

The sky's the limit when it comes to these kinds of ideas, so put on your thinking cap, conjure up a few ideas and share them with me. If we're going to say we're an organization dedicated to serving the needs of our veterans, we should show some evidence of that from time to time.

**Mike Pipher – President VFW Men's Auxiliary**

### From the VFW Post 604 Service Officer

I wish there was more to say about the progress of the Post 604 legislative initiative to grant Space Available travel privileges to 100%, permanent and total, service connected disabled veterans. We ain't there yet, BUT progress is being made. Commander Joe Hardin pushed this legislative proposal up through the Indiana VFW chain, and they pushed to the National. National VFW has sent the idea to several Congressmen. An aide to one emailed to ask if we wanted the Congressman to vote in favor of or to introduce the proposal? We replied, "Introduce!" I'd say it's too late for this proposal to be voted on this year. [For example,

*"Post 604 Service Officer*

*continued*

Senator Begich of Alaska has already introduced a bill to extend Space A to gray area reservists and surviving spouses of retired military members.] However, I have seen absolutely no objections from any of the members of Congress contacted. Now, I'm not necessarily in the "loop", but the basic idea seems like – as one of the National VFW staff said – a "no-brainer". Meaning, "We should have done this decades ago." Stay tuned.

So, what else can we talk about? How about a WWII Marine veteran of Guadalcanal who lives here in Bloomington? I'll not give his name, but his situation serves to teach us a lesson: make sure that Department of Veterans Affairs benefits are **correct**. This veteran is drawing \$376 compensation per month and has been for decades. Looking at the compensation charts available at <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Rates/comp01.htm> and see he's considered 30% service connected disabled. No problem, right? Well, no, there turned out to be several problems. First, \$376 is for a single vet. This vet and his wife were married in 1947. The compensation rate for a 30% disabled vet and spouse is \$421. The VA added additional compensation for dependents to 30% vets around 1976. Second, his 30% is for hearing loss [20%] and tinnitus [ringing in the ears, 10%]. Our vet was in the artillery. He also has had a chronic fungus infection of his left foot since Guadalcanal in 1942. The Navy corpsman said to keep his feet clean and dry. 'Obviously a joke. These Marines were soaked in water and mud in the jungle for months without a break. His wife treated his foot as best she could for decades. He's getting treatment from the VA hospital in Indianapolis on a regular basis. Doctors have written letters to "The VA" on his behalf regarding his fungus infection. Who knows where the letters went. No current VA rating for this disability. Lastly, his wife has dialysis three times a week, has a severe heart problem, severe osteoarthritis, and has had some serious strokes. The VA can pay an additional \$40 per month with the 30% veteran's compensation if his spouse is considered to require the "Aid and Attendance" of others due to medical problems.

So, we've sent a copy of the 1947 marriage license and a completed and signed VA Form 21-686c to add his wife as a dependent to his award. We've asked to make that change as retroactive as possible based on a review of the claim folder. That's in the works. We've formally claimed the fungus infection as a disability and sent a letter from the wife stating he's had the infection the entire time of their marriage, AND we've politely asked the VA regional office [right hand] to know what the VA hospital [left hand] is doing for the vet's infection. 'Another item in the works. The A&A status for the wife? The wife and the vet do not want to pursue. Their choice. Correcting two out of a possible three [no guarantee the A&A would have been granted] ain't bad.

What is bad is that no one checked on this Guadalcanal Marine to see that he was drawing what he should have been. He'll probably be rated at least 40% and a 40% vet with spouse is \$601 per month compensation. These people are low-income, never ask for help. The burden is on us, the younger vets, to look out for them.

**John Tilford - Post Service Officer**

# Laurens B. Strain – VFW Post 604

January 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 <b>NEW YEARS DAY</b>
2	3 * Vet to Vet – 1900	4	5	6 Bingo (Eagles) - 1730	7	8 Bingo (Eagles) - 1430
9	10 * Vet to Vet – 1900	11	12	13 Bingo (Eagles) - 1730	14	15 Bingo (Eagles) - 1430
16	17 Martin Luther King Day  * Vet to Vet – 1900	18 Men's Aux Mtg – 1800 (American Legion)  Ladies Aux Mtg - 1900 (Eagles)  V.F.W. Mtg – 1900 (American Legion)	19	20 Bingo (Eagles) - 1730	21	22 Bingo (Eagles) - 1430
23	24 * Vet to Vet – 1900	25	26	27	28	29
30	31 * Vet to Vet – 1900			Bingo (Eagles) - 1730		Bingo (Eagles) - 1430

(\* For Vet-to-Vet Held at IVY Tech, 200 Daniels Way room A118 – Check website <http://www.vetovetbloomington.com/> to confirm location)

Telephone Numbers  
Post 604 – Canteen (812) 339-2375

**PPT License # 122238**  
**Raffle License # 122237**

**Bingo License # 121844**

## Post Officers

VFW Post 604			Men's Auxiliary to VFW Post 604			Ladies Auxiliary to VFW Post 604		
Commander	Joe Hardin	(812) 334-8479	President	Mike Pipher	(812) 334-0748	President	E. Janet Williams	(812) 876-3676
Senior Vice Commander	Tony Halliday	(812) 369-0866	Senior Vice President	Joe Crawford	(812) 330-1343	Senior Vice President	Millie Briles	(812) 336-8409
Junior Vice Commander	Bill Halliday	(812) 360-4862	Junior Vice President	Mark Sink	(812) 336-4566	Junior Vice President	Mary Figg	(812) 876-4971
Quartermaster	Mark Dammer	(812) 824-3367	Treasurer	Mike Griffith	(812) 349-2563	Treasurer	Patty Pate	(812) 339-6045
Adjutant	Bob Lanning	(812) 327-7953	Secretary	Mike Griffith	(812) 349-2563	Secretary	Kathy Hardin	(812) 334-8479
Chaplin	Roy Smith	(317) 626-9829	Chaplin	Eric Sink	(812) 336-4566	Chaplin	Joyce Grubb	(812) 336-6447
Service Officer	John Tilford	(812) 336-5574				Patriotic Instructor	Wilma Hays	(812) 332-5329
1 Year House Committee	John Martin	(812) 339-1113						
2 Year House Committee	Tom Vernon	(812) 332-1250						
3 Year House Committee	Leonard L Heldman	(812) 361-9129						

Laurens B. Strain V.F.W. Post 604  
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PERMIT No. 205

*"Oldest Post in the State"*

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



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