
VFW POST 604 NEWS

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.

WWW.VFW-604.NET

June 2014

Commander's Corner

Comrades',

This will be the last time I write you as your commander. This year has really gone by fast. Before assuming the office of commander a wise person told me that the year would go by fast and boy was he ever right. I consider it an honor and privilege to have served as commander to a great bunch of guys and gals that make up Post 604. I thank you for your support and encouragement you have shown me this past year. I would be amiss if I failed to thank not only the members of Post 604 but also a big thank you to the Ladies and Men's Auxiliary. This post has come a long way this year and it was not through my efforts but rather through the very commendable efforts on your part. I am confident that through your efforts this post will grow even greater as you support the incoming officers.

For those of you that were unable to attend the memorial service at Val Halla memorial gardens on Memorial Day I wish you could have been there. It was a very well organized and appropriate service honoring our veterans. Joe Hardin is to be commended for his hard work and dedication that resulted in the success of the Memorial service.

I'll close this article with the introduction of the 2014-2015 elected Post officers. They are: commander, Joe Hardin; Sr. Vice Commander, Toby Oltman; Jr. Vice Commander, John Martin; Quartermaster, Bill Evans; Chaplin, Jim Arnold; 3 Yr Trustee, Bob Lanning; and 3 Yr House Committee, Barney White.

**For God and Country
Bob Lanning, Commander**

Post 604 Men's Auxiliary

The deck party went over quite well and so did our NASCAR "Tenderloin Sunday". Again we owe our girls a big Thank You for the side dishes and desserts. Our next NASCAR event is June 15th – Quicken Loans 400 at Michigan Speedway. We will open at noon – serve from 1pm until end of race. "Make sure to mark your calendar". Menu: Huge Breaded (double dipped) Tenderloins with chips and whatever our girls think up for sides and desserts. You can be assured it will be Scrumptious. All for \$5.00.

The Texas Hold-Em on Thursdays is doing quite well also. We've been getting new players every week (still growing). This Thursday night group is having a blast. They like our tournament and side game so well they have asked for extra play time. So starting June 1st and the first Sunday of each month we will have a "cash" game. This event will start at 1pm and run until 8pm+. Doors will open at noon for registration. Make sure you mark these dates down, The 1st Sunday of each month *Cash* game.

I don't want to keep repeating myself, But I'm going to anyway. Every Thursday night Tournaments and Side game plus the 1st Sunday of each month "Cash game only".

OH! Julie prepares food on Thursdays + the kitchen is open also, a good variety to choose from.

Tim Haney, President Men's Auxiliary

Post 604 Ladies Auxiliary

Ladies,

First of all I would like to thank the ladies (Debi, Sandi, Dorothy, and Mary Ellen) for being at the 7th district Meeting. I couldn't have done it without you. Your support means a lot to me. We had a great meeting and a good meal afterwards with lots of desserts. As for the monthly meeting we only had six members there. We could only get five officers installed. I understand some ladies do not want to come to the meetings due to the length. Well, my answer to this is just give me a chance to get going and I assure the meetings will get shorter. I'm doing the best I can to get everything going right for us. I know I can't do it overnight.

On the 27th of June we (The Ladies Auxiliary) will be having a spaghetti dinner with garlic toast, salad, and desserts. Ladies are requested to bring a dessert. And I (Julie) would appreciate any help in the kitchen. Sarah Dennison helped on the 23rd of May and it helped me so much.

We had a good open house for the deck. The National commander and his wife were here with a lot of other VFW dignitaries. The Men's auxiliary did a fine job with the spaghetti dinner. And of course it was topped off with wonderful desserts the ladies provided.

The fact is that if you are not coming to the club, you are missing out on a lot of fun and a lot of good food. Hope to see you there soon!!!!

**Julia Curtis, President
VFW Ladies Auxiliary
Phone (812) 822-0028**

Senior Vice Commander

Fellow Comrades:

Summer is finally getting here at last. Really glad to see it happen, the older I get the more I look forward to it. At least I'm retired and don't have to worry too much about getting out in the cold like I used to not too many years ago.

We had a really great District 7 meeting last Sunday. We had a big crowd, good food, and just a great time altogether. Thanks Dennis for the squirrel, we appreciate you doing that for us. It was the first I had eaten for I don't know how many years and was really good.

We also had elections at the Post last Tuesday night to elect Officers of the Post for the coming year. Pretty much the same people, just different jobs held by them. I'm sure it will work out well for everyone.

I did hear quite a few comments regarding our new deck at the District Meeting. Needless to say, I didn't hear any negative ones. Hopefully it will get some really good use this summer and through the fall months

**William (Bill) Evans, Sr. Vice Commander
Membership Chairman**

NOT SLOWING DOWN THIS MONTH !!!

Well a lot of things went on here at the Post last month and believe us it was busy but it was also fun and we had a great group of volunteers who pitched in to make everything go as smooth as silk!!! **THANKS** to all!!!!

Our **1st Friday Night Dinner Special** this month will be on **June 6th** and we are going to be serving **Beef Stroganoff with Green Beans & Brown County Biscuits for \$5.00!!** Serving will start at 6:00 p.m. and go until we run out.

NASCAR Sunday this month will be **June 15th** so check out the Men's news article for the particulars for this event. We did discuss this date with the Men's Auxiliary as it is Father's Day but when everything was said & done we figured—hey, some places play Bingo on Father's Day so why not **NASCAR** and those **Gigantic Hand-Dipped Breaded Tenderloin Sandwiches. Yep!! Still \$5.00 plus extra stuff!!!**

Texas Hold-em every **Thursday** night is going strong—starts at **7:00 p.m.** But we are going to add something **NEW** to this. Starting **June 1st** (1st Sunday of the month) we will be having a **Texas-Hold-em Cash** game. Some people don't like to play tournament style and only play cash games. So here is your chance—we start playing at 1:00 p.m. and go till 8:00 p.m. Food & beverages will be available downstairs for the cash game however the Canteen will not be open. Our plan is to have this Cash Game every **1st Sunday** of the month---so if you like to play-- here it is!!!! Start when you want and stop when you want—**Cash!!-Cash!!-Cash!!**

HOUSE COMMITTEE

Laurens B. Strain – VFW Post 604

June 2014

Closed Sunday	Open 1200 - 2200 Monday	Open 1600 - 2200 Tuesday	Open 1600 - 2200 Wednesday	Open 1600 - 2200 Thursday	Open 1600 - 2200 Friday	Open 1000 - 2200 Saturday
1  Cash Game Starts at 1pm	2	3	4	5  Starts at 7pm * Vet to Vet – 1900	6 Friday Night Special Beef Stroganoff and green beans \$5.00 Lunch - Post open at noon D-Day Allied invasion (1944) Commander's Drawing 1900	7
8	9 HOT DOG MONDAY Open @ Noon	10	11	12  Starts at 7pm * Vet to Vet – 1900	13 Serving Dinner 1800 – 2100 Lunch - Post open at noon Commander's Drawing 1900	14  Flag Day U.S. Army founded (1775)
15 NASCAR Sunday 15 Post opens at Noon  Father's Day	16 HOT DOG MONDAY Open @ Noon	17 Meetings V.F.W. – 1800 Election of Officers Men's Aux – 1800 Ladies Aux – 1800	18 State Convention	19 State Convention  Starts at 7pm * Vet to Vet – 1900	20 Serving Dinner 1800 - 2100 State Convention Lunch - Post open at noon Commander's Drawing 1900	21 State Convention Post Officers elect 2014-2015 assume duties Summer Begins
22 State Convention Pledge of Allegiance recognized by congress – (1942) GI Bill signed into law – (1944)	23 HOT DOG MONDAY Open @ Noon	24	25 Korean War began (1950)	26  Starts at 7pm * Vet to Vet – 1900	27 Friday Night Special Ladies Aux. Lunch - Post open at noon Commander's Drawing 1900	28
29	30 HOT DOG MONDAY Open @ Noon Post-9/11 GI Bill signed into law (2008)					

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

Telephone Number (812) 339-2375

Charity Game Night License # 133056

Raffle License # 127960

When Shinseki's Gone, What Then?

Editorial in the 26 May issue of Army Times: Time for Shinseki to step down at VA. Time magazine, 2 June issue, Joe Klein's column: Shinseki (Still) Must Go. MSNBC (online) 23 May, More Democrats call for VA Secretary Shinseki to resign. Fox News (online) 22 May, [House Majority Whip] Kevin McCarthy calls on Eric Shinseki to resign. It appears that Congress and the media have decided what needs to happen to fix the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Eric Shinseki, while Chief of Staff of the Army, had the guts to tell Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld that going into Iraq without sufficient troops to secure the country after the invasion was a mistake. Shinseki was eased out as a result. Shinseki lost the front of one foot to a land mine in Vietnam. All the usual indicators point to a capable administrator, a wounded soldier, a decent man. Perhaps too decent, too gentlemanly.

Secretaries of the VA are usually "a very few years and out".

They have forgettable names like Principi, Brown, Gober, West, Nicholson, and Peake to match their forgettable tenures. As Fox News' Peters said, "People are not lining up to be the VA Secretary." The position is more of a millstone than a stepping stone. Inspired leaders who embrace the mission of taking care of veterans and don't care about politics or being offensive if needed, such as Omar Bradley after WWII and Max Cleland after Vietnam, are rare. Ironically, President-elect Obama announced that he would nominate Shinseki to be his Secretary of Veterans Affairs on Pearl Harbor day, 7 December 2008.

During five years as Secretary Shinseki has had to weather criticism regarding the huge backlog in disability claims, most having been predictable and therefore should have been more manageable, as Vietnam veterans aged and as hundreds of thousands of veterans returned from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. He's now being pilloried because of the exposure of medical centers "gaming the reporting system" to look good while patients died waiting for appointments. The regional offices have gamed their productivity and accuracy reports for years. Combining both the adjudicative and medical arenas, remember the 2008 VA medical center internal e-mail guidance to avoid PTSD diagnoses in order to reduce compensation claims. Here's the two cents worth of an Indiana VFW Post 604 Service Officer: You can replace Shinseki – which will happen, of course – and that will result in another fine, highly motivated person being briefed and eventually drug down by the same, second tier staff members in the VA Central Office who have insulated Shinseki from reality for the duration of his tenure. Good generals rely on good staffs. Just as consummate gentleman, academy graduate, professional soldier Colin Powell was betrayed by his faith in subordinates and so contributed to justification for the invasion of Iraq, so has been Shinseki to continue the interests of the VA staff. The VA Central Office 'manages' as did the former Albanian, Romanian, and current North Korean central governments. 'Doesn't work. There's a new "[fill in the blank with problem de jure] will be our first priority!" proclamation every few months. Whack-a-mole management. Orders go out and are not implemented as intended. Even the intentions are based on flawed data, massaged to make regional offices [the get-those-claims-closed-

and-off-my-desk people] and medical centers [get-those-patients-out-of-these-beds people] look good. Bonuses are awarded to smiling executives who feel good about themselves. David Halberstam described exactly the same organizational phenomenon in *The Best and The Brightest*: body counts in Vietnam. Pursuit of actual mission was neglected while troops counted Viet Cong bodies in order for the numbers to be inflated by each higher level through Military Assistance Command, Vietnam to the Secretary of Defense. Mid-level managers quickly determine very what pleases their higher-ups. If it's numbers, that's what will be generated – numbers. The regional offices' 90+% accuracy rates cited by the Central Office are highly inflated. Seventy percent changed on appeal is one indication how much. American Legion studies of regional offices' claims adjudication typically show 30% error rates, with many higher. We've just entered yet another scandal involving medical centers reporting appointment wait time data intentionally distorted. Can't you just hear the first- and second-line managers? "Move those claims off your desk. I don't care about quality, just close them. They can appeal if they don't like the decision. I've got a report to submit!" And on the medical side, "Get those patients an appointment within fourteen days. OK, make it look like they get an appointment within fourteen days. They'll live. I've got a report to submit!"

Most of the media cited in the opening paragraph continue to repeat the same VA excuses. Time's Klein cited ". . . existing, antiquated civil service system . . . zero threat of [poor VA employees] being fired." The author fired federal employees and had those removals sustained by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Merit Systems Protection Board, and Federal District Court. IRS removals are nearly always sustained because of doing the removal actions the right way, just as described in the "existing, antiquated civil service system." The federal Human Resources system is not a VA problem. Lazy, gutless, sycophant middle and upper management is a VA problem.

Another commonly accepted excuse: "The VA is stuck in a half-paper, half-electronic records system." Big deal. The author left the IRS in 1983, over thirty years ago. Do you recall the IRS having any problems in the 1980s with a half-paper, half-electronic records system? A tax return is roughly equivalent to a VA claim in terms of processing. The IRS processed a tax return for every taxpayer in the United States every year and did so to a very high degree of accuracy. It wouldn't be all that hard for VA Central Office analysts to walk over to the IRS National Office and ask how they did it.

What then? What should happen when Shinseki's gone? The VA needs a kick-ass and take names Secretary who places taking care of veterans above working within the existing VA quagmire. Fire and replace the upper level appointees who tolerated subordinate managers gaming the VA reporting system. Fire and replace the subordinate managers who did the gaming. Fire and replace the employees who can't hack it. Don't hold your breath.

John Tilford – Service Officer

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