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# VFW POST 604 NEWS

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[WWW.VFW-604.NET](http://WWW.VFW-604.NET)

December 2013

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## 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

November sure flew by fast, mainly because it was a very busy month. To start the month the care package program got under way. On the first and second of November the post set up and manned a collection point for Buddy Poppy donations and care package items at the Walmart store. Many turned out to help with the program. Thanks go to Jo Vernon for preparing the Buddy Poppies to be handed out at Walmart. My sincere thanks go to Bill Evans, Joe Hardin, Roy Smith, Brian Stewart and his wife Danielle, Justin Stewart, Jordon Stewart, Joshua Stewart, Jessica Stewart, Jennifer Stewart, Joy Stewart, and Debbie Deckard. I apologize if I missed anyone. A little over \$800.00 was collected for Poppies and 475 pounds of care package items were collected. All items were boxed up and mailed to the troops in Afghanistan.

Now about the deck. After much discussion at the November meeting a vote was taken to determine the fate of the deck project. As a result of the vote, the deck will be built. From the bids received, a contractor was selected and a meeting set up with the contractor to start construction of the deck. We have the building permit and all is go.

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Lets not forget our troops serving away from home and their families. ❖

**Commander – Bob Lanning**

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### Post 604 Ladies Auxiliary

Hope everyone had a HAPPY Thanksgiving.

In July Of 2013 we started asking for officers to help with our Post's Ladies Auxiliary, and each month since. As I will be resigning from office at the end of December 2013. So far, three ladies have indicated they are willing to help out – two into elected offices and one for appointed office. At our December 17<sup>th</sup> 2013 meeting we

*See Ladies Page 2*

### Post 604 Men's Auxiliary

The Ghosts – Goblins & Weird Ones should be gone by now, the Turkey has already been served up, and most of us are starting on our Christmas lists. Yep, it is just a few weeks away. Time for the fat-man in the red & white suit to call on us. As he double checks his list, maybe we should check ours too. Make sure somewhere my name appears (Ha Ha) -or- maybe that's Ho! Ho! All joking aside, I hope each and every one of you had a Happy & Joyful Thanksgiving and have a VERY Merry Christmas.

Now to business, we still have a few people who have not paid their 2014 dues. Please come in and take care of this as soon as possible. The VFW Headquarters is requiring a \$10.00 increase beginning on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2014, but if you pay now your dues will remain the same. After January 1, we will have no choice but to charge the extra.

The Men's Auxiliary put on a special feed each month, either for NASCAR or Colts Football. We kinda need more help. It's been the same 5 or 6 men the whole year. We are working very hard to support the post. We also have the same 5 or 6 gals bringing in the desserts. Some of our members (Post, Men's Aux., and Ladies Aux.) have yet to come to our new Post building. WHY?

One Sunday per month, the Men's Auxiliary prepares a super meal. On the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of each month Kathy Haney prepares a FANTASTIC Dinner. There are three weeks left each month for someone else to host a dinner.

Monday's are pretty special up here too!, Deb & Dot (twins) pole dance (Hee Hee) Come out and see us at Post 604! ❖

**Tim Haney, President VFW Men's Auxiliary**



Ladies from page 1

will be having nominations and elections for all vacant offices. We will have to send for a Warrant to install the new officers. We will then have an Officer's Meeting to decide on the good of the Ladies Auxiliary Post 604 organization. I have also asked for a trainer to come and help our new officers learn their new roles and to learn what they can do to continue to help.

***This year's entries for Patriot's Pen are:***

**Julihannah P Cruz**, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade at Edgewood Middle School

**Andrew R Baxter**, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade at Bachelor Middle School

**Jaylon Bland**, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade at Edgewood Middle School

***This year's entry for Voice of Democracy:***

**David N Wigington**, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade at Edgewood High School in Ellettsville.

I have tried my best over the last six months to get this in place. I have truly enjoyed helping the Auxiliary in all its functions since I have been a member

**Janet Williams, President VFW Ladies Auxiliary**

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**Veteran's Day Coloring Contest Winners Announced**



Caleb Webb, 1<sup>st</sup> Place in the Post's Flag coloring contest, is presented with monetary gift by Ladies Aux. President Janet Williams and Commander Bob Lanning. Second place was awarded to Grace Mullis and third place to Daphanie Ehrmann.

– To our young Patriots –

**Way to Go!**

## ITS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER!!

**2014 THAT IS.** But first we need to take care of this month. So the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month is on Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> and our **1<sup>st</sup> FRIDAY OF THE MONTH DINNER SPECIAL** will feature a Bowl of Chili with a Patty Melt (fresh made-not frozen hockey puck)—all for just **\$5.00**. We kinda figured you have had enough turkey or ham for awhile, so come out and listen to the Monroe County Ramblers—enjoy a Patty Melt and Chili and most important have some fun!!

Our **SUNDAY** opening this month will be on the 15<sup>th</sup> with not only NFL Football but Ham & Beans too—w/cornbread & fixin's & you know we always have desserts. All you can eat for just \$4.00. The Post will **OPEN** at Noon—close about 6:00 p.m. These Sunday openings have been a lot of fun—come join us!!

Okay, Holiday schedule—here we go! Christmas Eve (24<sup>th</sup>) falls on a Tuesday so we will be **OPEN** from 4:00 pm till 8:00 pm, 'cause Santa Claus is coming to town!! We will have snacks for you to munch on also. Then come Christmas Day—the Post will be **CLOSED**. Then we get to the 31<sup>st</sup> (Tuesday) New Years Eve—well heck yes we are going to be **OPEN** at 4:00 pm and close at ?????? This year we are going to try having a Pizza Smorgasbord, several different types and shapes maybe!! No reservations needed, No cost to you---Yes you are right Post 604 is not a big or fancy venue for celebrating the New Year but you know Post 604 is unique in one way—it is **"YOUR" POST 604**--so make plans to come out and celebrate New Years with us----mighty fine people!!!

The House Committee would like to wish all of our Active Military Personnel, Veterans and their families (where ever they might be this year) a Very Merry Christmas & Happy New Year. The Post will be closed New Years Day.

**House Committee**

P.S. Get your dues paid this month before the increase goes into effect in 2014.

# Laurens B. Strain – VFW Post 604

December 2013

	Closed	Open 1200 - 2200	Open 1600 - 2200	Open 1600 - 2200	Open 1600 - 2200	Open 1600 - 2200	Open 1000 - 2200
	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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**Come on Out and Join the FUN!!!!**

**Open Noon – 1800**

Meetings  
V.F.W. – 1800  
Men's Aux – 1800  
Ladies Aux – 1800

**Open 16:00 – 20:00**

Free - Hors d'oeuvres

**Open 1600 Until Who Knows? Free Pizza Smorgasbord Help bring in the New Year!!!**



(\* For Vet-to-Vet Held at IVY Tech, 200 Daniels Way room A118 – Check website <http://www.vetovetblomington.com/> to confirm location)  
Telephone Number (812) 339-2375

Raffle License # 131244

## Why Are We Not Surprised

Thanks to John Martin who provided the below summary of the CBO report.

*Last week the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released a report titled: Options For Reducing The Deficit – 2014 to 2023. Contained in this report are recommendations that would impact Veterans Benefits, Defense Spending and Military Retiree Benefits.*

- *Elimination of concurrent receipt [of military retirement] pay and disability compensation for disabled veterans*
- *Narrow eligibility for Veterans disability compensation by excluding certain disabilities unrelated to military duties*
- *Restrict VA's individual unemployability benefits to disabled Veterans who are younger than the full retirement age for Social Security*
- *Introduce minimum out of pocket requirements under TRICARE for Life*
- *Modify TRICARE enrollment fees and cost sharing for working age military retirees*
- *End enrollment in VA medical care for Veterans in Priority Group 7 and 8*

Of these proposals, I'm not all that opposed to withdrawing VA medical care for vets in priority group 8, but I am opposed (with a qualifier) to withdrawing medical benefits from vets in priority group 7.

Priority Group 8 veterans 1) have a decent income, 2) don't have any service connected disability or none rated over 0%, or 3) are 'grandfathered' from an earlier eligibility era when the VA was trying to get all the vets they could enrolled to support expansion of the VA medical budget. Some vets disagree, but I never considered I'd be entitled to health care for life just for one enlistment.

Priority Group 7 veterans have incomes below the geographic means test income thresholds and agree to pay the applicable copayment for medical services. My objection is exactly that - these are low income vets who are still paying the copays. Maybe the VA loses a little money on them, but not much. I would not be opposed to withdrawing their VA medical care eligibility if the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was permitted to add these low income vets – estimated at around a half-million nationally – to Medicaid as was intended. Right now, Indiana and 20 other state governments are not expanding Medicaid. Kentucky, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan and 23 others are. One advantage of Medicaid compared to VA for these low income vets is that Medicaid medical care is more widely available and therefore more accessible to isolated vets than VA clinics. Think of the low income vets in Davis or Martin counties, for example.

I'm not too sure about how I feel about not allowing vets over their Social Security retirement age to apply for 100% compensation via Individual Unemployability (IU). The

## *Not Surprised (Cont.)*

rationale for this benefit is that the 60% (with one disabling event at least 40%) or 70% (no matter how he or she got to 70%) service connected vets may be prevented from gainful employment because of their service connected disabilities. The IU benefit has to be adjudicated individually considering the claimant's physical and mental condition, education, training, and vocational experience. The authors of this cost saving proposal are concerned that the VA takes IU applications (and approves many) from vets in their late 60s, 70s and 80s who would probably not be employed anyway. On the other hand, in the 1970s there were a bunch of anti-age discrimination law suits settled by removing age restrictions on federal benefits. There's probably some room for compromise here – maybe by consideration of other income. (Confusing this anti-IU proposal is that another CBO report summary describes not allowing IU benefits until after retirement age – exactly the opposite of the report John found. John's source makes more sense.) I'm certainly in favor of IU for working age disabled veterans, and I don't see a legal (or ethical) way to deny IU to those over their retirement age.

The proposals I definitely oppose are -

- Elimination of concurrent receipt [of military retirement] pay and disability compensation for disabled veterans  
There is no logical or ethical basis for the below-50% offset on concurrent receipt still in effect. Retirement is paid for years of faithful service; compensation is paid for being service connected disabled. Retirees/disabled vets who are being denied any amount of one of these benefits because of receipt of the other are being screwed no matter how you look at it. The trend toward full concurrent receipt has existed since at least the 1980s. Sure, it costs money, but any kind of offset between compensation and retirement benefits never should have existed to begin with.

- Narrow eligibility for Veterans disability compensation by excluding certain disabilities unrelated to military duties

This cost saving idea comes up (or very similar ideas come up) every few years and never works. At one time the VA even had two compensation tables, one for combat-related disabilities and one for non-combat related. Didn't last very long. If Joe had his leg run over by an armored personnel carrier before he could be inserted into combat, which is that? The ultimate resolution of this question has always boiled down to "You were declared healthy and whole when you entered active duty. If you are disabled when you get out, you are entitled to compensation." The current 'spin' of 'disabilities unrelated to military duties' might apply to some internal medical problems that might have

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## *Not Surprised from page 4*

developed in the vet due to age. Sounds logical, but I call this the "Alternative Universe" argument: Bob, my high school friend, was in Vietnam the same time I was. His duties exposed him to much more agent orange than did mine. Bob has diabetes type 2, neuropathy, and some other service connected problems. Maybe he would have had these disabilities when they began in his 50s had he never been a Marine in Vietnam. But that Bob who never enlisted lives in a hypothetical alternative universe. We live in this universe, the real one. We have to deal in realities, not hypotheticals. In this universe, Bob was young and healthy, enlisted, served honorably in a very nasty place, and now is 70% disabled. Most of his disabilities have been statistically correlated with exposure to dioxin and other poisons in Vietnam.

The proposals which might be adjusted (although unpleasantly) to work -

- Introduce minimum out of pocket requirements under TRICARE for Life
- Modify TRICARE enrollment fees and cost sharing for working age military retirees

I could probably afford the deductibles and annual enrollment fees being considered, and would do so to keep TRICARE for Life. Maybe I should so pay to help reduce the deficit. But I was very lucky to get promoted far above my level of competence, therefore have a higher military retirement income than average, have a reduced (early out) civil service retirement and (somewhat reduced) Social Security benefits. There are many military retirees who would have a real problem paying the hundreds of dollars of deductibles and annual fees being considered. Almost 10 years ago, when the DoD was still under Rumsfeld, the Reserve Officers Association (ROA) agreed to support similar proposals – mainly to suck up to Rummie. None of the other military service organizations (Disabled American Veterans, American Legion, Military Officers Association of America, VFW) agreed. These proposals have come up in every Congress for the last decade. So far, every year they fail to be adopted. Members of Congress are afraid of voting against military retirees/veterans. If these proposals ever did pass, I hope the costs would be graduated according to the retiree's or surviving spouse's income.

**John Tilford – Service Officer**

## **Comrades:**

Another month has gone by, and we still have quite a few members yet to pay their 2014 dues. Sorry to keep mentioning this, but as the Membership Chairman I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't. I hope we can get everyone signed up by the end of the December so we will have our 100% by the first of the year. Hopefully this

## *Comrades (Cont.)*

mailing will get out in time so you can also be eligible for the Life Membership drawing we are having for those who have paid their 2014 dues by December 1.

We had very positive results from our Wal-Mart Weekend and I want to say I appreciate everyone who helped with it. We received over \$800 cash, also over 400 lbs. of food to send to the Troops in Afghanistan. We shipped it out this past week to them; hopefully it won't take too long for it to get there. What we had we couldn't ship, aerosol cans, etc. the Ladies Auxiliary is going to take care of and distribute for us. Thank you very much Ladies for helping us with that, we appreciate it.

It was decided by majority vote at our meeting on Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> to go ahead and add the deck onto the building. I feel it is a step in the right direction for the Post, and I feel it will be used to everyone's advantage as time progresses. Hopefully we can start construction on the deck in the near future.

Again, I want to thank the Men's and Women's Auxiliary's for all the good work they do at the Post. They work very well together, and always are coming up with other ideas for the good of the cause.

The Monroe County Ramblers have been at the Post the past two Friday nights. They bring quite a crowd along with them when they come, and I have noticed a few more people staying after the Commander's drawing to listen to them. The people working at the Post have been kept really busy keeping up in the kitchen with the food, etc...

I want also to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. Hopefully the Newsletter will get out in time for this not to be late. If the Newsletter is a bit late, then I hope all of you did have a "Happy Thanksgiving."

**William Evans  
Sr. Vice Commander  
Membership Chairman**

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## **VA Issues Fraud Alert:**

The Department of Veterans Affairs has issued a fraud alert about a marketing scam that is targeting veterans who misdial the VA National Call Center (800-827-1000) or the GI Bill Call Center (888-442-4551) phone numbers. A marketing company created two phone numbers that differ from the real VA numbers by one digit. If a veteran calls the bogus number by accident, the answering party will offer a gift card and try to obtain sensitive personal data, to include credit card information. Please note that the VA will "never" ask for credit card or banking information over the phone. The two bogus numbers are 800-872-1000 and 888-442-4511. Law enforcement officials have been notified. A list of toll-free VA phone numbers is at [https://iris.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/1703](https://iris.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/1703)

Laurens B. Strain V.F.W. Post 604  
2404 W Industrial Park Drive  
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While we celebrate the Holidays, let us remember those men and women who still are standing their post FAR from home!