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# 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.ORG](http://WWW.VFW-604.ORG)

March 2015

## Commander's Corner

Greetings! As February comes to an end, we all hope that the cold weather will end with it. Even with the cold weather, we had a great turnout for our Friday night food specials and NASCAR Sunday. I want to thank everyone for chipping in and making our Post a fun place for people to come and enjoy being with friends.

We have some special events coming up in the near future. Our Elections will be coming up in April so start thinking about if you would like to be nominated for an office or have someone in mind that you would like to nominate. The more you get involved the better our Post becomes. We are working on our Memorial Day Service that we hold at Valhalla Memory Gardens. Each year we try to add to our program to make sure that we never forget why we need to remember those who gave so much for our country.

As most of you know, we are an all volunteer Post. It is a great feeling to see how many people step up and help to make our veterans and families have a great place to come and feel welcome. Our Texas Hold em is still going strong so if you like to play come on out and join us.

I am looking forward to seeing and talking to you soon.

**Joe Hardin, Commander**

## Post 604 Men's Auxiliary

First and foremost, thank you to everyone for your kind words, thoughts, and prayers. Doctor said I was very lucky to be here. (I thought this would be like rebuilding a carburetor.) Get R Done, Come home like a new person, not quite that way.....I am getting better day by day, but I am not new yet. Yesterday (Feb 10th) the doctor said I have about 3 more months for everything to go back in its place. Ok enough about me, but again thank you for all your prayers.

How about this group - Men's Auxiliary - they stepped up and prepared food, served food, done dishes, cleaned kitchen, also came in on Thursday night to open the kitchen for the poker players. As you know, we (they) will be doing All-U-Can Eat fish fry on the 2nd Friday of each month and our huge tenderloins on NASCAR Sunday (March 29th). Can't thank them enough, they are the best!!

Congrats to Matt Heldman for playing and winning in the commander's drawing and John Martin for winning the jackpot in the Stars and Stripes game (oops hope John told Julie and I didn't let the cat out of the bag - told you John I could be bought....)!!

Don't forget the special dinners each Friday night. Serving starts at 6:00pm until gone or 9:00pm whichever comes first. Come get u-self some!!

**Thanks**

**Tim Haney, President  
Men's Auxiliary VFW Post 604**

## Post 604 Ladies Auxiliary

Ladies,

This month we had no meeting due to bad weather and then a lot of illness. Unfortunately since I broke my ankle the canteen downstairs has been closed though I hope to soon have it up and running.

Dorothy White and Liz Blackwell went to the Spring conference. Again Liz won the 2<sup>nd</sup> prize in the Poppy hat contest. Congratulation Liz.

The club is still doing good. We are having good crowds on Friday nights. Don't forget we are open Monday afternoons from 12 noon til 10:00pm – with big hot dogs and the fixins. I am also opening at 2PM on Fridays. Come on in---see you next month. God Bless Our Veterans.

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



Do you recognize this lady? A familiar , friendly, energetic face around the post.

## SPRING STARTS THIS MONTH!!!

Or at least that is what we see on the calendar—so lets hope so anyway. Now for our 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the Month Dinner Special—this month we will feature Meatloaf with Mashed Potatoes and Corn—Biscuit--Desserts and as always the cost will be a whopping \$5.00 and it is Home Made-not frozen in a box and then called home-made--but you guys knew that!! Serving starts at 6:00 pm till we run out!!

NASCAR Sunday will be on March 29<sup>th</sup> with the Mens Aux. gearing up with their Great Big Ole Tenderloin Sandwiches. Post opens at Noon and closes somewhere around 6:00 p.m. Its more than just a hand made sandwich—it's a meal--for only \$5.00!!

Maybe we will have some good weather for our 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the Month STEAK NIGHT (20th)!! 8 oz. Ribeye with Baked Potato and Salad and Dessert all for just \$10. This meal would easily cost \$11 and change--minimum anywhere else but here at your VFW Post 604!--That's right—just \$10. Texas Hold-em Tournament every Thurday, starts at 7:00 p.m. and SUNDAY—Mar 1<sup>st</sup>-- Texas-Hold-em Cash game--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/Post will not be open.

Now before we go we would like to mention that the Post was very nicely decorated for Valentines Day and we would like to say Thank-You to Dorothy White and helpers—see!! You volunteers are GREAT

**House Committee**



# Laurens B. Strain – VFW Post 604

March 2015

Closed Sunday	Open 1200 - 2200 Monday	Open 1600 - 2200 Tuesday	Open 1600 - 2200 Wednesday	Open 1600 - 2200 Thursday	Open 1400 - 2200 Friday	Open 1000 - 2200 Saturday
1  Cash Game  Starts at 1pm <b>Asiatic Fleet Memorial Day</b>	2  HOT DOG MONDAY  Open at Noon	3  <b>Star-Spangled Banner Made U.S. National Anthem (1931)</b>	4	5   Starts at 7pm  * Vet to Vet – 1800	6  Serving Dinner 1800-2100  <b>Friday Night Special</b>  Post open at 2pm Commander's Drawing @1900	7
8  <b>Daylight Saving Time Begins (Set Clock Ahead 1 Hour)</b>	9  HOT DOG MONDAY  Open @ Noon	10	11	12   Starts at 7pm <b>Girl Scouts of the USA founded (1912)</b> * Vet to Vet – 1800	13   Last 1/4 Serving Dinner 1800-2100  Post open at 2pm Commander's Drawing @1900	14
13	16  HOT DOG MONDAY  Open @ Noon	17  <b>St. Patrick's Day</b>  Meetings V.F.W. – 1800 Men's Aux – 1800 Ladies Aux – 180	18	19   Starts at 7pm <b>Iraq War Begins (2003)</b> * Vet to Vet – 1800	20   New  Serving Dinner 1800 – 2100 <b>Spring Begins</b> Post open at 2pm Commander's Drawing @1900	21
22	23  HOT DOG MONDAY  Open @ Noon	24  <b>Kosovo Campaign Began (1999)</b>	25	26   Starts at 7pm  * Vet to Vet – 1800	27   1 <sup>st</sup> 1/4 <b>Ladies Aux. DINNER SPECIAL</b>  Post open at 2pm Commander's Drawing @ 1900	28
29  <b>PALM SUNDAY</b> 	30  HOT DOG MONDAY  Open @ Noon	31  <b>Somalia Campaign Ended (1995)</b>				

(\* 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 # **134469**

Raffle License # **134470**

. Tom Vandeventer

Tom Vandeventer died Oct. 23, 2004 in his cabin near Ellijay, Georgia. He gave his life for his country on Sept. 30, 1970 in Vietnam.

You may remember the "Forgotten Hero" article written by David Horn that appeared in The Bloomington *Herald-Times* on December 26, 2000. David described the wounds inflicted on driver Tom and his tank commander John Booth by an improvised explosive device (the term in vogue these days) placed by the Viet Cong. Their M551 Sheridan was destroyed, Tom and John nearly so. Each had saved the other's life before. That day it was John's turn to pull Tom, unconscious, burned, and broken from the flaming wreckage. They were evacuated to separate field hospitals. For 30 years, each thought the other was dead. Tom found John in Oklahoma through information gained at an 11th Armored Cavalry reunion. John provided the documentation needed to obtain proper veterans benefits for Tom, who had battled administrative adjudicators – and other demons – for decades.

After Mr. Horn's article was published, John fell into and out of love with an Indiana woman but continued to live near Bloomington. Tom's 100 percent service connected rating from the Department of Veterans Affairs, albeit based on unemployability, came through in 2001. The 100 percent was declared permanent and was based on his actual disabilities after he appeared, for yet another battle, at a hearing in Indianapolis before a Board of Veterans Appeals veterans' law judge in 2003. The highest honor I have ever had was to "represent" Tom, but he did the work. He educated the BVA representative that day — those of you who knew Tom will know what that means. The frustration with bureaucratic hurdles he expressed echoed his bar fights of the late 1970s. Tom was tenacious and tough enough to operate heavy equipment for a time after the war in spite of his arthritic spine, but he self-medicated with alcohol to numb more than just physical pain.

Parts of the Tom Vandeventer story are miraculous: the Armored Cav decal in the rear window of a pickup truck that led Tom to the reunion; John Booth's having burned all his Vietnam photographs EXCEPT for those showing Tom and the circumstances preceding the explosion; Tom's stopping his excessive drinking (Tom had no problem taking the VA medication for his post traumatic stress disorder — it stopped his nightmares.); and Tom being on a first-name basis with Jesus the last years of his life.

Jesus stood by Tom; some others did; some did not. He always honored his mother, who has always been there for Tom — even during the times he felt he did not deserve that faithfulness. Tom married a younger woman in 2003. She left him earlier this year. John Booth, who abhorred weapons of any kind after the war, became fascinated with guns. After

sharing a meal and sitting together with Tom on Tom's Clear Creek porch one afternoon in 2003, John went home and put a bullet through his brain. Neither John nor Tom could rid themselves of the terrors of war. The miracle of this particular horror was the timing: John could easily have taken his own life years before the reunion with Tom, and never have provided the information critical to Tom's recent compensation and medical care.

War is the gift that keeps on taking. Tom's heart, weakened by years of alcohol and Agent Orange-caused diabetes mellitus type II, gave out and took his life in 2004 just as surely as would have a bullet — or an improvised explosive device — in 1970. He volunteered to help Monroe County veterans, especially those with post traumatic stress disorder, seek and obtain benefits. He never had the chance to do so. He never had the chance to do many of the things we take for granted, we who live pain-free lives, we who did not sit in the driver's seat of a Sheridan that hot, humid morning in 1970. We are the lesser for losing Tom.

McNamara now says that the Vietnam War was a mistake. Johnson sold the war to Congress. Nixon continued it through 1972 to ensure his reelection. I'm not sure, in light of the events of 1975, how that war served the national interests of the United States — how whatever we gained was worth the 58,169 American dead listed on the Wall, the hundreds of thousands disabled, and lives painfully twisted such as Tom's. I envy the World War II veterans who knew then and now that their war was just and absolutely necessary, although I certainly do not envy their hardships. The United States, under the United Nations banner, saved the Republic of Korea. The debate continues regarding what the overall effect will be, beneficial or detrimental, upon the national interests of the United States due to Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The debate is over for Tom. He set the example for dealing with adversity, turning his life around and helping others. I pray we can honor him by only pursuing wars that — if this is possible — merit the sacrifice of such good men and women.

**John Tilford – Service Officer**

### **DISTRICT MEETINGS**

**March 22, 2015-----Post 1111 Mooresville, In**  
**May 17, 2015-----Post 9297 Crane, In**

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