
VFW POST 604 NEWS

WWW.VFW-604.ORG

February 2017

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

To our members, I hope everyone had a great New Year. As we start our year we need to keep focused on keeping our Post one of the best in the state. Everyone has done a great job at the post, and I can't thank you enough. Without your help we would not be where we are today.

We had our anniversary dinner and Patriots Pen awards on the 7th of January, with a follow up awards reception on the 14th of January. For you that didn't make it, you missed a great dinner. Barb Ooley catered our food and it was very good. I want to thank Karen Cain and Dorothy White for all the help pulling this off. We had 24 students that entered the contest thanks to the efforts of Karen Cain.

We have been asked to host the 7th District awards for Patriots Pen and Voice of Democracy at our Post on the 11th of February at 1:00 pm. I hope we have a good turnout so mark your calendar.

As most of you are aware, elections for Post Officers will be held in April so start making your plans to run for a office. We have started our Friday night dinners again so come on out and join us for some great food and fellowship. We have some great cooks and helpers plus the best bartenders on the west side of town. We are always looking for new people with good recipes and are willing to jump in and show us a great dish.

We solved a mystery at the post. Rosalie donated a table cloth for our round table and we were unable to find it, until I talked to the right person. We now have it on the table. Thanks Rosalie for the donation.

A new veteran's memorial is being built at Valhalla Memory Gardens where we have our Memorial Day Service. We at the Post have been involved in this project and will receive recognition for our part. We also received a donation from Valhalla as well. Construction will be done in time for our service on Memorial Day. We still need over 20 members to pay their dues to get us to 100% percent membership. It is everyone's job to help us get there. MEMBERSHIP is what keeps us going.

We do have a Post Trustee Office position open with the passing of Bob Lanning. We could sure use someone to step up and help out. ❖

Commander - Joe Hardin

Post 604 Auxiliary

January is over and February is upon us. SPRING is slowly getting closer. If you haven't been out to the post since November, you have got to come see this ... The Men's and Women's Auxiliaries merged in

December into the VFW Auxiliary. We are getting along like peas in a pod. (Never would have thunk'd it – would you?)

The Post 604 birthday dinner and the Patriot's Pen awards presentations were a hit and so were the other presentations for others that participated. Hope you didn't miss them; the kids did a GREAT job!

February brings back NASCAR... On Sunday February 26th Daytona 500 – TENDERLOIN Sandwiches and fixin's – BEST IN TOWN!!! Come on out and get one! At \$5 it's the best in town for the best price!!! If you don't come, well ... you're really missing out.

The Auxiliary will be doing our fish fry on Friday February 10th – ALL YOU CAN EAT! Then we're doing something new, on Friday February 24th – Fried Chicken dinner. The folks in the kitchen are sure to whip up a fantastic meal.

Best wishes to those who are ill – Get well soon.

May God bless our troops, near and far. God bless America. ❖

Dorothy White
President VFW Auxiliary
812.345.9025

TAPS

Benjamin Steven Powell

Ben was a Life Member of VFW Post 604 and an Army National Guard veteran of both Bosnia and Afghanistan.

"With each passing day, things will become easier. This is to let you know that there is tremendous support behind you today." Felix will be missed by all the men and women of VFW Post 604.



OPEN 12:00 - Victory

OPEN 12:00 - Victory

Come to the Post - The **Post 604 Pit Crew** will be here!!!
WATCH THE RACE... Tenderloin Sandwich with fixin's and
dessert - Full Bar - GREAT fun

Renewing Membership

Your continued membership is important to us. The V.F.W. and its Auxiliary are the life-blood of our post. If you know of someone desiring to join our ranks please do not hesitate to contact one of our officers.

If you did not receive a 2017 annual renewal notice, please contact one of your club officers for assistance.



Commander Joe Hardin and Chairwoman Karen Cain with this year's Post 604 Patriot's Pen essay winners Josephine K. Sparks and Lucia C. Walker.

NASCAR SUNDAY IS BACK!!!

But before we get to that, you need to know about our **1st Friday of the Month Dinner Special** which happens on **Feb. 3rd** and we are bringing back an old favorite—**All You Can Eat Home-Made Potato Soup and Super Salad Bar**—you know the soup is good but this salad bar will have much more to offer than just salad and cheese. And the price is right at only **\$6.00**. Serving starts at 6:00 p.m. And we are sure Desserts will be in the offering!!

Ok let's get to racing with our **NASCAR SUNDAY** which is brought to you by the VFW Auxiliary and their **Great Big Ole Tenderloin Sandwiches**. — **Feb 26th** is the date-----Daytona is the venue---**\$5.00** is the cost. Come out and support them and get a super great meal to boot!! Post opens at Noon and closes somewhere around 6:00 p.m. Also the **Auxiliary Fish Dinner** on the **2nd Friday** of the month (**Feb 10th**)-all you can eat!!

Steak Night is extremely popular and well worth the money, the **3rd Friday of the Month--STEAK NIGHT (17th)!!** 8 oz. Ribeye with Baked Potato and Salad and Dessert all for just **\$11**. Yep! That's right—just **\$11**. Then the **4th Friday of the Month (24th)** presents **The Auxiliary** so check out their news article for that menu.















Texas Hold-em Tournament every **Thursday**, starts at **7:00 p.m.**

Spring may be on the way but our tasty and affordable Friday Night Dinners are already here—so come out and enjoy!! ❖

House Committee

Laurens B. Strain – VFW Post 604

February 2017

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	2  Starts at 7pm * Vet to Vet – 1800	3 Serving Dinner 1800 - 2000  Commander's Drawing 1900	4
5	6 HOT DOG MONDAY Open @ Noon	7	8	9  Starts at 7pm * Vet to Vet – 1800	10 Serving Dinner 1800 - 2000  Commander's Drawing 1900	11  1:00 PM - 7 th District Awards Presentation at VFW Post 604
12	13 HOT DOG MONDAY Open @ Noon		15	16  Starts at 7pm * Vet to Vet – 1800	17 Serving Dinner 1800 - 2000  Commander's Drawing 1900	18
19	20 HOT DOG MONDAY Open @ Noon	21 Meetings V.F.W. – 1800 Men's Aux – 1800 Ladies Aux – 1800	22	23  Starts at 7pm * Vet to Vet – 1800	24 Serving Dinner 1800 - 2000  Commander's Drawing 1900	25
26  Open at NOON	27 HOT DOG MONDAY Open @ Noon	28				

(* 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 # 141029

Raffle License # 141031



More Patriot's Pen



Our program would not be possible without the support of the educators guiding their students in expressing these important concepts through essay. We salute all who participated.

Batchelor Middle School

Teacher Marcia Davis supporting students Kennedy Chastain, Hailey Kuykendall, Hailey Landis, Hope Patterson, and Eli Van Pelt.

Bloomington Christian Schoolhouse

Teachers Linda Scaggs and Jody Killingsworth supporting students Grace Bailey, Josh Bailey, Elissa Chasteen, Eliana Connell, Colin Jackson, and Samuel Spaetti.

Jackson Creek Middle School

Principal David Pillar, Teachers Linda Scott, Paul Quinby and Bill Wallace, supporting students Josie Elkes, Kenzie Elkes, Ella Vanderkoff, Darby Fitzsimmons, Josephine Sparks, and Lucia Walker.

Lighthouse Christian Academy

Teachers Glenn Gero and Greg Baugh, supporting students Luke Fritz and James Mahoney.

Pinnacle School

Teacher Nicole Brehm supporting students Hunter Deaton, Nicholas Mullin, Rebecca Strunk, Axle Watson, and Luke Wilson.



Too Many Appeals

On 15 September 2016 the US House of Representatives passed legislation to reform the Department of Veterans Affairs appeal process. (Following excerpt is from <http://www.military.com/daily-news/2016/09/15/house-passes-legislation-to-reform-va-change-appeals-process.html>):

“The American Legion organized a call to action . . . in support of reforming the disability appeals process, though the organization didn't advocate for one bill over the other [Senate or House]. At the gathering, a handful of lawmakers stressed the current process was ‘outdated,’ ‘over-complicated’ and ‘broken.’

According to the latest data from the VA, more than 450,000 appeals are pending, and veterans are waiting an average of three years to hear a decision.

If the process were to remain unchanged, the number of pending claims would jump to 2.17 million by 2027, the VA estimated. At that time, veterans would wait an average of 10 years to hear a decision on their appeals, said Rep. Dina Titus, D-Nevada.

‘As VA continues to make progress aimed at ensuring that the best interests of veterans are the center of its focus, reforming the current appeals reform is yet another strong step in this direction,’ the VA said in a statement earlier this week.

Many of the lawmakers who attended the news conference said their staffs answered calls every day from veterans who were experiencing long delays, some lasting years, awaiting a final decision on their appeals.”

Your VFW Post 604 Service Officer says, “Not so fast, VA and Congress!”

Overview

The VA toll-free representatives say the current average wait time for an appeal hearing is 576 days. Two of the widows I'm trying to help have each been waiting over two and a half years for their first hearing, and they need the money.

Perhaps you saw the Herald-Times Sunday newspaper with Larry Bruce on the first page. Larry finally won his VA appeal at the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims level. Eleven years and eleven months after his compensation claim was filed in February 2005. We are waiting on his C&P exam and percentage determination now. Larry's wife shared his financial hardship for years after he filed his claim. She passed away two years ago. Retroactive compensation [without interest, by the way] cannot buy back years of financial hardship, nor retroactively ease her stress as she and Larry skimped to pay their mobile home utilities bills.

You may also recall when the VA claimed great success in meeting Shinseki's [unrealistic] goal of a medical appointment within 14 days of a veteran's contacting the VA? While in reality veterans were literally dying after waiting months? Now appellants are dying before receiving their appeal decisions. VA medical centers, pension centers, and regional offices are amazingly successful at reporting ‘good’ data to Central Office.

Managers get bonuses that way. ‘Unless the Central Office wants ‘bad’ data to support getting what they want from Congress. In those situations, the same offices are equally successful at reporting ‘bad’ data. E.g., “If . . . unchanged . . . by 2027, the VA estimated . . . the veterans would wait an average of 10 years to hear a decision on their appeals.” Translated: the VA wants Congress to give them an easy way out from under their self-created appeals backlog, which now stands at more than 425,000.

Veterans Affairs Proposed Changes

VA proposals to change the current appeals process include reducing the levels of appeal a veteran may choose to access. Example: ‘If you choose the Decision Review Officer level, your appeal cannot go higher than the Regional Office level. If you start at the Regional Office level, your appeal cannot go higher than the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) level. (This is my personal interpretation of one option. However, the VA is apparently open to anything that is less burdensome than the current appeals process.) Another proposal is a limit of one appeal per claim. (I believe this means no re-opening(s) based on provision of germane, not previously considered evidence.) Another is the veteran could no longer provide any additional evidence after a designated level of appeal.

Not so Quick

But wait! The present system, as complex as it may be in some cases, has worked for decades to resolve problem cases, set precedents to be followed by initial claims adjudicators and thereby avoid appeals on the same issue, and protect veterans rights. The appeal levels and authorities are established and understood by service organizations, representatives, and the veterans themselves. The current system has established a wealth of ‘case law’ which may be searched online or in law school libraries. A radically modified appeals process might break the chain of interpretive clarifications, or at a minimum render the portions pertaining to appeals procedures and precedents obsolete.

What Were the Most Recent Changes to ‘Fix’ the VA Appeals Process?

The Decision Review Officer (DRO) level of appeal was added in 2001 as an elective option in an effort to ‘streamline’ the appeals process by shortstopping the most easily fixed, straightforward appeals. If it worked, it must not have been much. Different regional offices used the DROs in different ways. Some were actually very helpful and did resolve appeals. Others were used as ‘appeals development officers’ preparatory to higher levels and did not try to resolve cases themselves. The VA Central Office was lacking in implementation guidance to regional offices, oversight control, and standardized training for DROs as shown by a Government Accountability Office study.

Next month, the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims AND a seemingly magic way to drastically cut the number of appeals!

John Tilford – Service Officer

Laurens B. Strain V.F.W. Post 604
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FEBRUARY HAPPENINGS AT POST 604

Friday Dinner Specials – 6-8PM

- Feb 2nd Ham and Potato Soup – All you can eat
- Feb 10th Fried Fish Dinner – All you can eat
- Feb 17th Rib-Eye Steak, Baked Potato, Salad, & Dessert
- Feb 24th Fried Chicken Dinner

Every Monday - open at NOON – ¼ pound hot dogs - \$1.50 ALL DAY – GREAT price

Thursdays – 7PM till Midnight – Texas Hold ‘em Tournament

Sunday Opening February 26th – Daytona 500 – Noon–6PM - Enjoy a tenderloin and watch the race.

FEBRUARY HAPPENINGS AT POST 604
