

## THE HISTORY OF GRIFFITH'S TANK

In the early part of 1958, I saw an article in the Indianapolis Star newspaper from the Indiana Attorney General's office announcing that the Indiana National Guard had twelve surplus army tanks they were going to sell to the public. To cover expenses of deactivating the tank, they would charge a nominal fee of \$200.

As a charter member of the VFW Post #9982, I immediately got a money order for \$200 in the name of the Griffith VFW Post #9982 and mailed it to the Attorney General's office. About a week later the money order was returned stating that no fraternal club, service organization or any business could purchase a tank. Purchase could only be made by a government agency.

I quickly purchased a new money order at the Gary National bank, Griffith branch, in the name of the Town of Griffith and sent a new request back to the Attorney General's office hoping that I was not too late to get a tank. I also told Leo Welch, the town clerk-treasurer, what I had done. He said he would back me up and hoped that we would be lucky to get one of the twelve tanks. I also suggested to Leo that if we did receive a tank, Central Park would be a good location for it.

After about three weeks, the news came that we were one of the lucky towns to receive a tank. We were told that sometime in the next sixty to ninety days the town could pick it up in Indianapolis.

The town contacted Vic Kirsh of Red Top Trucking for a low-boy tractor-trailer to pick up the tank. Red Top provided the truck and tractor-trailer and the driver at no cost to the town. The Griffith Police Department sent two police cars to escort the tractor-trailer back to Griffith. Leo Welch rode with the chief of police, William Kussmaul, in case any legal papers had to be signed. (Actually, I believe Leo was more excited than I was that the town was receiving this tank.) Raleigh Sell helped choose the exact spot to place the tank. Members from the VFW, American Legion, and the Lion's Club provided the help to prepare and pour the base for the tank to rest on. Melvin Eaton was very instrumental in restoring, sanding and painting the tank.

Over the years the tank has been maintained by the Parks and Recreation employees of the Town of Griffith and other town volunteers. There have been several generations of Griffith youngsters who have enjoyed playing on this monument and hopefully, they understand what part a tank like this has played in our country's freedom. It stands in the appropriate place next to Griffith's War Memorial.

Margaret and I believe this tank is a great landmark for our town. Thank you for letting us tell this story to the people of Griffith.

Milford and Margaret Christenson

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