

VFW POST 604 NEWS

WWW.VFW-604.ORG

August 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

As I complete my first month as Commander and write my second column, let me thank everyone who has helped.

The first shout-out goes to Comrade Leonard and the members who help him run the canteen. The canteen's continued smooth operation puts forth a great image for the Post and funds the community service projects of the Post.

The next area for praise is the Friday night dinners. The Auxiliary has continued to do a great fish dinner (second Friday) and a variety dinner (fourth Friday). The third Friday steak dinner is a success because of Comrade George and Comrade Barney stepping in to take the place of Past Commander Joe.

I would like to have a greater level of involvement by the Post with both "Patriot's Pen" and "Voice of Democracy". Auxiliary Member Karen is heading up the effort but she can use help. It will be especially helpful to push for school involvement if you have a child or grandchild in a given school. Please get with Karen if you have the ability to contact a school for these programs.

Yours in true Comradeship. ❖

Commander – Roy Smith



VFW Auxiliary

This month has flown by. Weather has been pretty warm and August will be pretty much the same. It's cool at the post, so come on out and enjoy! Good meals on Friday evenings and friendship a plenty.

We are in need of a few good volunteers, especially on Thursday evenings. It takes two people to have things run really smoothly. 3 to 4 hours of your time – once a month would be GREAT, more is WONDERFUL. Experience is not necessary – we'll get you going. Post member or Auxiliary member – all are welcome! If you are willing to help out, please contact Commander Roy Smith, or House Committee members Barney White, George Kristoff, or Deb Helton. The bartender can get you set up with contact information, or leave your name, phone number, and interest with the bartender and we'll get back with you. We all will greatly appreciate it. Our future success is rooted in volunteerism... Your help will contribute to our continued success.

August Dates to Remember;

August 12th – 8:00 AM - School of Instruction – Marriott East in Indy.

August 13th – Noon – Tenderloin Sunday

August 15th – Auxiliary Meeting 6:00 PM

August 25th – Chicken Breast Dinner w/ mashed pot. & mixed Veg.

To those who've lost a loved one, our condolences go out to you. To those who are ill, our get well wishes for a speedy recovery. To those in the military, may God Bless you – God Bless America. ❖

Dorothy J White
President - VFW Auxiliary
812-345-9025

Any questions? Please feel free to call me. I will do my best to resolve it.

“This Case is Still Pending”

-or-

“Don’t Bother with Logic”

The Vietnam-era veteran died over three years ago. His widow’s claim for service-connected death benefits was denied quickly. She’s been waiting for more than two years for a hearing with a traveling member of the Board of Veterans Appeals. Wish us luck.

I met Nathan before he died. He was wearing an adult diaper and nothing else. Some of his toes were missing as a result of diabetes. He had severe ischemic heart problems. Either the heart or diabetes conditions could have killed him at any time. The VA considers both as Agent Orange presumptive disabilities. Nathan’s DD-214 showed a Vietnam Service Medal. I’d filled out an application for service connected compensation for Nathan’s signature. He sat up in his hospital-style bed to sign the form but had to rest between his first and last name. It was obvious that the real beneficiary of any VA service connection decision would be his widow and not Nathan.

Nathan did not live to see the VA compensation denial letter. He had served on an Army base in Thailand and not in Vietnam and therefore was not automatically considered by the VA as having been exposed to Agent Orange. Nathan had mentioned to his wife – who married him years after he was discharged – and to me that his journey to Thailand included a several day layover in Vietnam but he could not, in his condition, remember where nor any specifics through which to research where.

Now anyone with any sense and knowledge of Southeast Asia during the Vietnam war knows that any US military base in that part of the world which was surrounded by jungle and existed for more than a few months had herbicides sprayed around the perimeter to kill the foliage to avoid providing cover for attackers and interfere with the defender’s fields of fire. But whereas the VA has presumed Agent Orange exposure since 1999 for any veteran who can prove even one day on the ground (and for “brown water” sailors added later) in Vietnam during that war, they avoid acknowledging its use in the surrounding countries. The VA preferred terminology outside Vietnam is “herbicide exposure”.

Nathan did leave his widow some late 1960s little Kodak color prints showing jungle and Thai workers. He had written “Cow Pong” regarding a village near his base on the back of one print. I searched Google Earth, hoping for overhead imagery showing an abandoned or repurposed facility still – after all these years – with a perimeter nearly bare of vegetation. No luck. I searched the internet for any phonetic spelling similar to Cow Pong. Found a meat dish in

Thai restaurants but no village. One missionary listing of hundreds of Thai villages did have some names which could have sounded like Cow Pong to Nathan’s Hoosier ear, such as Khau Phong. The list included latitude and longitude for each. None of the similar names’ locations showed any nearby former military posts when input into Google Earth, at least none with the reduced foliage perimeter with which I wanted to impress the Board of Veterans Appeals veterans law judge at the widow’s hearing.

I emailed Army reunion groups for units which served in Thailand at the same time as Nathan. Responses but no luck. I inquired with the National Records Center. Nothing. Inquired with what is now Air Mobility Command about what routes were used for troop transport to Thailand in the late 1960s. Any with layover in Vietnam? Information not available. Air Force archives, still no luck.

One of the veterans organization magazines recently had a review of a book supposedly listing every known base, installation, facility, whatever used by the US during the Vietnam War. The Monroe County Public Library got it for me when I asked (around \$80!). Interesting reading, found my old areas, learned a lot about the war, but no Cow Pong sounding base in Thailand.

I placed “looking for anyone with knowledge of” adds in the VFW and American Legion magazines. Had some responses, fellow veterans who had served in Thailand wanted to help, got some good advice, but no Cow Pong smoking gun.

A Facebook friend was traveling in Cambodia. Her guide was familiar with Thailand. I asked him if he knew anything about Cow Pong. He thought he knew the village and gave me how-to-get-there directions which were too vague to follow. That avenue remains open and I’ll try him again before the hearing.

Going over the case file for the umpteenth time I noticed that our friend Nathan’s DD-214 showed quite a bit – like sixty stinking days worth – of “bad time”. All occurred while in Thailand. I have no idea what he did to earn his, but I do know what soldiers and Marines did around their compounds when they were serving bad time. They cleared the perimeter. When the plants were dead due to the herbicides someone had to cut them down or break them off, gather them, pile them to be burned, and tend the fires. Nobody volunteered for that work. In every case that I found where the VA made a herbicide exposure based service connected disability rating decision for veterans who served on the ground in Thailand the veteran had – in one way or another – documented frequent or long term work on the perimeter of their installation. Sentries have a relatively easy time.

Continued on page 5

Laurens B. Strain – VFW Post 604

August 2017

August 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
		<p style="font-size: 2em;">1</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">2</p>	 <p style="font-size: 1.2em;">3</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">Starts at 7pm</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">* Vet to Vet – 1800</p>	 <p style="font-size: 1.2em;">4</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">6PM - Cube Steak / Mushroom Gravy & Mashed Potato with Corn \$7.00</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Commander's Drawing 1900</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">5</p>
<p style="font-size: 2em;">6</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">7</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">HOT DOG MONDAY</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Open @ Noon</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">8</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">9</p>	 <p style="font-size: 1.2em;">10</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">Starts at 7pm</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">* Vet to Vet – 1800</p>	 <p style="font-size: 1.2em;">11</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">6PM - Auxiliary Fish Dinner \$7.00 – All you can eat!</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Commander's Drawing 1900</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">12</p>
<p style="font-size: 1.5em; writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">TENDERLOINS</p>  <p style="font-size: 1.2em;">13</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">OPEN NOON</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">NASCAR!</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">14</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">HOT DOG MONDAY</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Open @ Noon</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">15</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">Meetings</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">V.F.W. – 1800 V.F.W. Aux – 1800</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">16</p>	 <p style="font-size: 1.2em;">17</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">Starts at 7pm</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">* Vet to Vet – 1800</p>	 <p style="font-size: 1.2em;">18</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">6PM - STEAK Night 10oz Rib eye – \$11.00!</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Commander's Drawing 1900</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">19</p>
<p style="font-size: 2em;">20</p>	 <p style="font-size: 1.2em;">21</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">HOT DOG MONDAY</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Open @ Noon</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">22</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">23</p>	 <p style="font-size: 1.2em;">24</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">Starts at 7pm</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">* Vet to Vet – 1800</p>	 <p style="font-size: 1.2em;">25</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">6PM - BBQ Chicken Breast, Mashed Potato Dinner \$7.00</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Commander's Drawing 1900</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">26</p>
<p style="font-size: 2em;">27</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">28</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">HOT DOG MONDAY</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Open @ Noon</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">29</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em;">30</p>	 <p style="font-size: 1.2em;">31</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">Starts at 7pm</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">* Vet to Vet – 1800</p>		

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

Telephone Number (812) 339-2375

Charity Game Night License # 144211

Raffle License # 1414210

TAPS

Clinton Herbert Strong

Clint was a Korean War Veteran and a Life Member of VFW Post 604.

"With each passing day, things will become easier. This is to let you know that there is tremendous support behind you today".

Clint will be missed by all the Men and Women of VFW Post 604 and the 7th District. ❖

James C. Arnold, Chaplin
VFW Post 604

Solar Eclipse 21 August 2017

On August 21, 2017, millions of Americans will be able to witness the moon passing between the Earth and Sun in a total eclipse. In a large portion of Kentucky, this event will entirely block all of the sun, briefly turning day into night. Here in Bloomington 94% of the sun will be blocked at its maximum. This solar eclipse will be the first of its kind in the United States in over 38 years. It will be a must-see event. The glasses for solar eclipse viewing that we provide are ISO 12312-2 compliant. The area around Hopkinsville KY is the closest travel distance you'll need to drive to view the total eclipse; however 94% here in Bloomington will be quite a show. Only during the totality of the eclipse, when the moon completely covers all of the sun, is it safe to look directly at the eclipse without protection; in fact then it looks best to the naked eye with an apparent brightness as the Full Moon. However, as soon as the moon begins to move away from the sun, the eclipse glasses must be put back on to look at the sun. It is estimated that nearly 100 million people in the United States will view a portion of the 2017 solar eclipse, making it the most-viewed eclipse ever. You won't want to miss it!

Also, mark your calendar for April 8, 2024 Solar Eclipse which will present Bloomington with a TOTAL eclipse – so hang on to your eye protection!!!



A total solar eclipse is about as bright as the full Moon — and just as safe to look at. But the Sun at any other time is dangerously bright; view it only through special-purpose safe solar filters.

LITTLE TOASTY OUTSIDE BUT THE POST IS COOL!!!!!!

In more ways than temperature wise and our cool volunteers we might add!!!

Come in and enjoy our **1st Friday of the Month Dinner Special (Aug 4th)** where we will be featuring **Cube Steak** cooked in **Mushroom Gravy & Mash Potatoes** with **Corn & Rolls**. Now we give you a knife & fork with the meal, but you only need the knife to put butter on your rolls, you can cut the steak with your fork—so tender!! You already know that of course, so let's make a point of doing this dinner—ok?!?! But of course it just costs **\$7.00!!** And then we have our **Auxiliary Fish Dinner** on the **2nd Friday** of the month (**Aug 11th**)-all you can eat!! And would you believe just **\$7.00??** From there we go to our **3rd Friday of the Month STEAK NIGHT (18th)!!** 10 oz. Ribeye steak with Baked Potato and Salad and Dessert all for just **\$11.00**.

NASCAR SUNDAY on the **13th of Aug** which will be at Michigan. We will **OPEN** at **NOON**, and of course this is being brought to you by **The Auxiliary** and their **Gigantic Hand-Dipped Breaded Tenderloin Sandwiches**. There are always Desserts and extras with these meals. Which includes the **4th Friday of the Month Dinner Special (25th)** cooked up by **The Auxiliary** so check out their article for details.

As you have read elsewhere in the newsletter the **Solar Eclipse** occurs on the **21st of August-Monday** so we are going to have **2 Adult Special Drinks** that day—the **Black-Out & Sun Spot** for **\$1.00** along with any can of soda for **50 cents** to help you ease your way thru the darkness!!!! Don't forget your viewing glasses!!! ❖

House Committee

Some higher ranking and clever claimants have built their successful cases on frequent trips in and out of the base, each time through a gate in the perimeter.

If the veterans law judge considers Nathan's bad time equals work on the perimeter evidence as too conjectural, there are two counters to use: 1) all the claimant is required to do according to VA regulations is show an "as likely as not" degree of certainty, and 2) [Get a ready. The following is long and complex.] I can describe the series of purely conjectural VA hearings around the United States in 1977 after the Vietnam amnesty regarding educational benefits for those who had to convince the VA that had they actually filed for the benefit shortly after separation (whereas they had not because by regulation their BCDs made them ineligible and they would have been told so if they had called the VA counselors) and been turned down and appealed they would have most certainly lost because when they went AWOL to avoid Vietnam their conduct was so horrible that they would have certainly been denied and in 1977 they were only eligible because of the amnesty. (Did you follow all that? I hope the judge has trouble.) The worst offenders were rewarded by a Chapter 34 delimiting date of ten years after they became eligible via the 1977 amnesty, i.e., 1987. The just went AWOL because his mother was dying guy might have been determined as eligible by the VA had he filed in spite of his BCD and was therefore punished by having a delimiting date ten years after he separated from active duty, e.g., 1978 for a separation in 1968. For most of the latter not-so-bad guy situations, applying in 1977 was too late for any real benefit. The really bad guys got the full ten years. Welcome to VA Wacko Conjecture Land.

As of today, the bad time evidence is all the widow and I have. Nathan's misconduct, whatever it was, might just pay off. I hope he had a really good time. ❖

John Tilford – Service Officer



From the Adjutant's Desk

The last week of May, it was our honor and pleasure to again place flags on the graves of our departed comrades at some of Monroe County's cemeteries; to observe Memorial Day and to honor their service to our country. We at Post 604 would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the volunteers and members who helped us with placing the flags.

Helping were:

Dewey "Joe" Hardin
Joseph Hardin
Carol Rowan Ozug
Vickie Abbot Ozug
Frank Ozug
Frankie Ozug
Michelle Brown
John and Polly Tilford
Fred Gertz
Debbie Deckard
Darrel and Caitlin McDonald
Linda Lanning
Peter and Charry Chadwick
John Martin
Roy Smith
Yours truly

Things went very smoothly for us this year, and the more volunteers we have ... just makes it that much easier for all of us. If I have missed anyone's name that helped, I apologize for it, but I think the above list was all of them. Again, thank you so much for helping us, it was greatly appreciated. ❖

William Evans
Adjutant, VFW Post 604



Laurens B. Strain V.F.W. Post 604
2404 W Industrial Park Drive
Bloomington, IN 47404-2690

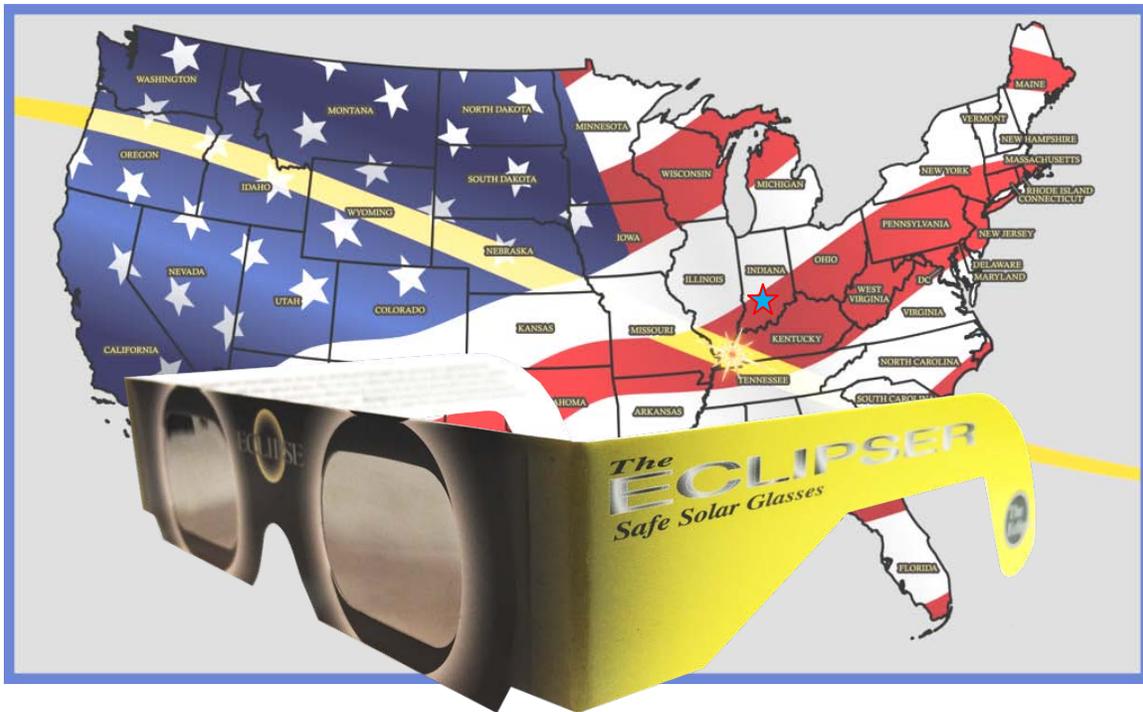
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