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# VFW POST 604 NEWS

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February 2011

## 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

Hi Everyone! It's time for me to update all of you on what has been going on at the Post. There has been some very positive things going on in the last few weeks. A few of the things that have happened are:

- ✓ handicap ramp is completed
- ✓ plumbing for the bar and kitchen is finished
- ✓ ice machine is producing ice
- ✓ walk-in cooler is ready
- ✓ dishwasher is hooked up
- ✓ all equipment in the kitchen (stove, grill, grease trap, deep fryers) is ready to turn on

Our bar area is really looking good. Leonard Heldman, John Martin, and Bob Lanning have been hanging mirrors and signs, and our sinks and coolers are working. Our popcorn machine has been scrubbed clean and is ready to go. The bases of our dining tables have been cleaned, painted and are ready to set up.

We have had some things donated to the Post from Cook, Inc. Thanks to Mark Dammer, Diane Richardson, and Ed Mauritsen for six (6) computers and a double-door stainless steel refrigerator. Some of our exit and

*see Commander's Corner*

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## Post 604 Ladies Auxiliary

Happy new year everyone. Hope it find's all well.

We have had to close bingo several days this past month as the holidays fell on our bingo days, snow was also a reason. It's a new year and we hope for better day's a head.

Donations in the amount of \$1000.00 went to Disabled Veterans and the National Home for Children this past month to help children and their families. Thanks to our faithful bingo players who make this possible.

To have an effective, strong, strategic, and well planned membership program, we need to keep all lines of communication open between the V.F.W. and Ladies Auxiliary in order to function together as a team and sustain an organized working relationship that produces great results. If we accomplish this and tell our story, we will have no problem increasing our strength in numbers or serving the mission and programs of our organization.

We will be able to fill the needs of all veterans especially our most recent eligible veterans and their families. If we believe in ourselves-then it will encourage others to believe in us, and they will want to be come an active part of this great organization-The Ladies Auxiliary V.F.W.

Military men and women serving today in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world are also making huge sacrifices, We need to honor and remember both past and present veterans for their bravery and love for this country. Each one of them has made a change in their lives a sacrifice, so that we can have all the rights that we take for granted. No matter where or how they serve, they have made a sacrifice that will in some way change their lives forever, for that we should be eternally grateful, and they should always be remembered. Our freedom has never been, and never will be, free.

Be sure to pay your dues and keep all in our prayers. 'till next time

**Janet Williams, President VFW Ladies Auxiliary**

emergency lights have been installed and we are in the process of finishing the rest of them. I know that I have forgot some things and have not mentioned all who have been involved, but I do want to thank everyone that has been helping. Be sure and read our request for volunteers and please respond. We need the help.

**Commander - Joe Hardin**

## Check that VA Rating!

The ultimate responsibility for the accuracy of veterans' service disability ratings [the subject of this article], or pension claims, or educational benefits, is born by the veterans themselves. To remain ignorant, maybe complain but do nothing, does not help and very often hurts the accurate allocation of veteran benefits.

Clarence served on the heavy cruiser USS Baltimore during that vessel's WWII bombardment of several Pacific islands. His duty station was directly below one of the big gun turrets. He also was near impacts from incoming rounds from Japanese shore batteries. To put it mildly, Clarence, and each of the other sailors on board, was not in compliance with current OSHA regulations for hearing protection. Clarence received his initial service connected disability rating from the Department of Veterans Affairs: 10% disability for 'tinnitus', and 0% for hearing loss.

Now understand, a "zero" percent service connected disability rating from the VA is not a denial. It is a formal acknowledgement from the VA that the specific medical disability was confirmed as "service connected", an important determination which opens the door to free-of-charge, and higher priority VA medical care for that disability, and 124 free semester hours at Indiana state supported universities for children [of disabled wartime veterans] among other benefits. However, a "0%" rating does not support [with very few exceptions, such as tuberculosis in remission] any monetary compensation. So Clarence, whose hearing ability was down roughly 90 decibels from normal in each ear, was awarded a little over \$100 per month for the ringing in his ears [considered a separate condition by the VA], but absolutely nothing for being nearly as hearing impaired as the proverbial post. He was grateful for the 10% for tinnitus but could not understand how a veteran with his profound severity of hearing loss could be rated at "zero percent" for that disability.

Clarence did not give up. He did his research on what didn't seem right, found an answer, and informed the VA. Here's how he did it, and how, generally speaking, you can for yourself or for a disabled veteran you know.

The VA "Schedule for Rating Disabilities" is contained in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for Title 38, United States Code. The IU School of Law library has [and many other libraries have] sets of the CFRs. However, the best and easiest way to read the rating regulations is on a

personal computer or through public internet access such as through the Monroe County Library. Do your Web search for "Veterans Affairs Schedule for Rating Disabilities", or go directly to

[http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx\\_00/38cfrv1\\_00.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_00/38cfrv1_00.html)

to see a "contents" of the Veterans Affairs regulations on how to rate disabilities, a sort of a "how-to" required reading list for VA employees who rate disability claims. In Clarence's example, he next went to

[http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx\\_00/38cfr4\\_00.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_00/38cfr4_00.html)

which is Chapter 1, Part 4 – the actual Schedule for Rating Disabilities. At that point he had the option of selecting either a text-only version or an Adobe Acrobat version [the Adobe ".pdf" files include illustrations and charts] of the section(s) which apply to any disability listed. Sections 4.85, 4.86, and 4.87 apply to hearing loss. (Clarence learned from an audiologist how to read and understand his hearing tests. You might want to have a medical dictionary nearby when reading some of these regulations.)

Do you know what he found? The only way Clarence's profound hearing loss could have been rated at 0% was through application of the rating chart for average, or less severe, hearing loss. Right in the regulation Clarence found an "except when this, do that" section which applied to him! Quoting from Sec. 4.86(a), titled "Exceptional patterns of hearing impairment":

"When the puretone threshold at each of the four specified frequencies (1000, 2000, 3000, and 4000 Hertz) is 55 decibels or more, the rating specialist will . ." [The section goes on to describe the remainder of the special rating process for veterans with severe hearing loss.]

Clarence politely called this information to the attention of the Department of Veterans' Affairs regional office in Indianapolis. They agreed with him. He is now rated 30% service connected disabled for hearing loss to go along with the 10% for tinnitus. There is no miracle ending to this story. Clarence can't hear any better these days, although he does have some great (Swiss-made-and-very-expensive-paid-for-by-Uncle-Sam) hearing aids. The hearing he lost while honorably serving the United States in combat is gone for good. He does have the satisfaction of knowing his disability is properly recognized by the United States government, and that he personally assisted that proper recognition.

If Clarence, like so many service connected disabled veterans, had unquestioningly accepted the initial VA decision his hearing loss would have remained rated at 0% for the rest of his life. The VA has neither the time nor the staffing to do follow up ratings as veterans grow older. The burden remains, as stated earlier, on the Veterans to look out for themselves – and for friends to help them do so.

About that getting older business – a 10% rating done on a twenty-two year old veteran for a bad knee might be just a little out of date when he or she is sixty-five. Again, the VA does not do any follow up. If time has worsened the pain,

*see VA Rating*

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lessened the range of motion, or otherwise increased the severity of any service connected disability, the veteran has the right to request a reevaluation of his or her percentage rating. All they need to do is write a letter to the VA at 575 North Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis, IN 46204; include their VA file number; describe why they think their disability is worse, request a reevaluation, express a willingness to report for an examination, and SIGN AND MAIL THE LETTER.

I would highly recommend one more thing. Double-check the VA rating.

**John Tilford - Post Service Officer**

## Chaplain's Corner

Members, because of several factors our hospital committee has NO hospital list. Please do everything in your power to help us get a complete list of comrades and auxiliary members that are in hospitals and nursing homes. We also need to increase our service to veterans that are not (currently) members. Please do one of the following:

- 1) Physically give me the name of a comrade/veteran that is hospitalized.
- 2) Call the post (339-2375) and leave the information on the answering machine.
- 3) Call me at 812-797-4654 (during the day you will often get my voice mail if I'm substitute teaching).

Thank you in advance, in service to fellow veterans.

**Roy M. Smith - Chaplain**

## Vet to Vet

Vet to Vet is peer-to-peer support to veterans of all eras, including those who are now returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. It is essential for Veterans to be able to safely, and confidentially, talk about issues such as PTSD, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, family issues, bipolar disorder, and many other disorders and reoccurring illnesses. The importance of the Vet to Vet peer support is that these Veterans will trust and talk to a fellow Veteran in most cases before they will a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or VA doctor. Peers offer each other an understanding that comes from having experienced a similar situation or problem. Vet to Vet is endorsed by the VA and the facilitators are trained by the VA.

Vet to Vet Bloomington meets every Monday 7pm at the Ivy Tech main Campus 200 Daniels Way room A118.

The Bloomington Peer Facilitators are Terri Lynn Languell, John Martin, Cathi Johnson, and in training Peter Garretson

See <http://www.vetovetbloomington.com/> for information.

## Post Operations

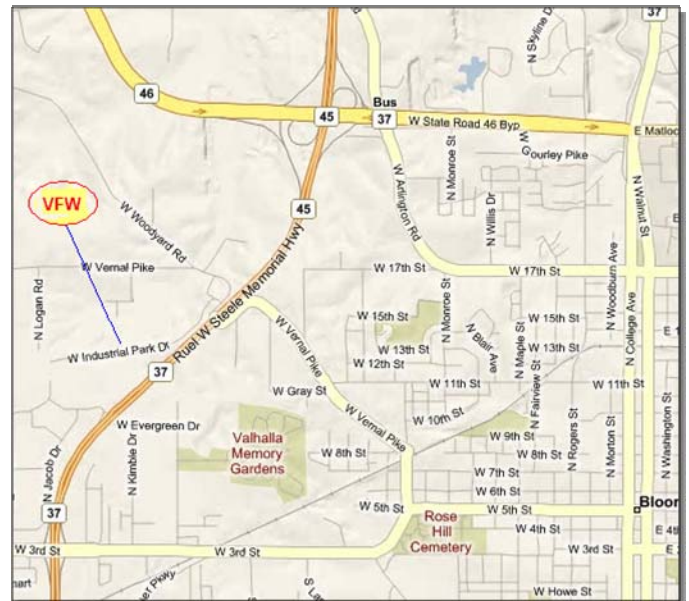
VFW Post operations and the operations of the Post's Men's and Ladies Auxiliaries are the business of the respective organizations. Generally, the specifics of the three organizations are not shared outside their membership. If you have interest in your organization's operations and you are a member in good standing, you are encouraged to attend these meetings.

Monthly meetings of the three groups have a common business structure. Member participation is important as introducing meeting agenda items and participating in discussion is not restricted to just elected and appointed officers. Protocol at each meeting is similar in theme and contains discussion in the following areas:

- Review of membership applications
- Review of previous months expenses
- Voting on future expenditures
- Service Officer report
- New business
- Discussion for the good of the order
- Discussion relating to members in distress

All organizations meet on the third Tuesday of each month. In February this will be on the 15th. Until the occupancy permits are in place at our new post, meetings for the VFW and Men's Auxiliary are being held at American Legion Post 18 on West 3rd Street and the Ladies are meeting at the Eagles on South Walnut. If you wish to attend the meeting, but are lacking transportation, contact one of your officers and they will assist you. Phone numbers are listed on page 4.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22, 2010 - The Department of Defense announced today that the deadline for eligible service members, veterans and their beneficiaries to apply for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay has been extended to March 4, 2011. The last deadline was Dec. 21, 2010.



# Laurens B. Strain - VFW Post 604

February 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 <small>* Vet to Vet - 1900</small>	8	9	10 <small>Bingo (Eagles) - 1730</small>	11	12 <small>Post Field Day 0900-1400  Bingo (Eagles) - 1430</small>
13	14 <small>* Vet to Vet - 1900</small>	15 <small>Men's Aux Mtg - 1800 (American Legion)  Ladies Aux Mtg - 1900 (Eagles)  V.F.W. Mtg - 1900 (American Legion)</small>	16	17 <small>Bingo (Eagles) - 1730</small>	18	19 <small>Bingo (Eagles) - 1430</small>
20	21  <small>President's Day  * Vet to Vet - 1900</small>	22	23	24 <small>Bingo (Eagles) - 1730</small>	25	26 <small>Bingo (Eagles) - 1430</small>
27	28 <small>* Vet to Vet - 1900</small>					

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

Telephone Numbers

Post 604 - Canteen (812) 339-2375

**PPT License # 122238**

**Raffle License # 122237**

**Bingo License # 121844**

### Post Officers

VFW Post 604			Men's Auxiliary to VFW Post 604			Ladies Auxiliary to VFW Post 604		
Commander	Joe Hardin	(812) 334-8479	President	Mike Pipher	(812) 334-0748	President	E. Janet Williams	(812) 876-3676
Senior Vice Commander	Tony Halliday	(812) 369-0866	Senior Vice President	Joe Crawford	(812) 330-1343	Senior Vice President	Millie Briles	(812) 336-8409
Junior Vice Commander	Bill Halliday	(812) 360-4862	Junior Vice President	Mark Sink	(812) 336-4566	Junior Vice President	Mary Figg	(812) 876-4971
Quartermaster	Mark Dammer	(812) 824-3367	Treasurer	Mike Griffith	(812) 349-2563	Treasurer	Patty Pate	(812) 339-6045
Adjutant	Bob Lanning	(812) 327-7953	Secretary	Mike Griffith	(812) 349-2563	Secretary	Kathy Hardin	(812) 334-8479
Chaplin	Roy Smith	(317) 797-4654	Chaplin	Eric Sink	(812) 336-4566	Chaplin	Joyce Grubb	(812) 336-6447
Service Officer	John Tilford	(812) 336-5574				Patriotic Instructor	Wilma Hays	(812) 332-5329
1 Year House Committee	John Martin	(812) 339-1113						
2 Year House Committee	Vacant							
3 Year House Committee	Leonard L Heldman	(812) 361-9129						

## Post 604 Social Committee

An idea was recently brought to my attention that I feel has great potential to increase awareness of the VFW cause, both within the membership of our three organizations and within the community at large, that could only further improve the moral of our membership in general and our image to others.

I wish only to outline the idea here, see how much interest there is, and have our members discuss the idea and the interest generated by this article at our next meetings.

### Social Committee:

**Composition:** Not less than one member from each of the VFW, Men's Aux, and Ladies Aux to meet collectively not less than quarterly.

**Responsibility:** 1. Conceive and coordinate Post activities like parties, picnics, egg hunts, and etc.  
2. Establish and maintain contact with all members of the VFW and its auxiliaries.  
3. Increase Post visibility in the community and solicit new membership.

**Scope:** The committee members will report back to their respective membership in areas where a vote by the membership is required. The committee itself has no authority outside these membership votes.

This is only a solicitation at this point to see how much interest there is for something like this in our Post. The exact composition, responsibility, and scope would need to be decided in respective member meetings. If you think you would be interested in being a participant in this please contact either Janet Williams – Ladies Aux. President, Mike Pipher – President Men's Aux., or Joe Hardin – Commander VFW Post 604 prior to our February 15<sup>th</sup> meetings.

**Joe Hardin – Commander**

### Warning to All Veterans!!!

An organization called Veterans Affairs Services (VAS) is providing benefit and general information on the VA and generating personal information on veterans. This organization is NOT affiliated with the VA in any way. VAS may be gaining access to military personnel through their close resemblance to the VA name and seal.

VFW National Legal Council has asked that information about this group and their lack of affiliation or endorsement by the VA to provide any services be circulated to all veterans.

If you have any examples of VAS acts that violate chapter 59 of Title 38, or you just feel wrong about an encounter, please contact one of our officers and they will get the word to the Staff Attorney at VA.



## Free Tax Consultation & E-Filing

Military OneSource is pleased to announce that beginning Monday, January 17, 2011, Military One Source will once again provide free tax consultation and free on-line tax filing services to military service members and their families during the tax season. As in previous years, participants will have free online access to the H&R Block At Home Basic tax product.

A brief overview of the program:

- ⇒ Participants must register for Military OneSource and log on to the site for access to the H&R Block At Home Basic product. A separate logon for the H&R Block At Home site is required.
- ⇒ Those eligible for the program are active duty, Guard and Reserve (regardless of activation status), spouses and dependent children (authorized in DEERS), family members handling the affairs of a deployed service member, and severely injured service members or family members handling their affairs.
- ⇒ Participants will have free access to the H&R Block At Home Basic product. Those with more complicated returns may incur charges if they upgrade to the H&R Block At Home Premium product.
- ⇒ Participants can file up to three state resident returns for each federal return that they file with the H&R Block At Home Basic product.
- ⇒ Participants can speak with a Military OneSource Tax Consultant if they have tax related questions, or need assistance using the H&R Block At Home Basic product.

Provided by the Department of Defense at no cost to active duty, Guard and Reserve (regardless of activation status), and their families. For more information see <http://www.militaryonesource.com/> or call toll free 800-342-9647.

## VFW Basketball Tournament

Clay City VFW Post 6606 is sponsoring a basketball tournament to be held on April 2, 2011 at Clay City High School, located about 1/2 way between Bloomington & Terre Haute. The tournament is open to VFW, VFW Ladies Auxiliary, and Men's Auxiliary members. If you are interested in representing Post 604, please notify Commander Joe Hardin, President Janet Williams, or President Mike Pipher by our Feb 15th meetings.

If enough interest is indicated, those interested shall be contacted to make arrangements and submit required team fees for each team. Teams are limited to 12 players, but more than one team may be entered. See officer list on page 4 for contact information.

## Trustee & House Committee Officer Election

VFW Post 604 - 3 Year Trustee Ed Hendrix and 2 Year House Committee member Tom Vernon have tendered their resignation from these important elected officer positions. To fill these vacancies, nominations will be received and voted on during the monthly VFW Post 604 meeting scheduled for 7:00PM February 15, 2011 at American Legion Post 18 in Bloomington, IN.

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

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE PAID  
BLOOMINGTON IN 47401  
PERMIT No. 205

*"Oldest Post in the State"*

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Phone: (812)-339-2375

# VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT

Okay folks, were down to the last push. Construction is nearing completion and it's time to unpack the boxes, have stuff set up on display, clean and stow dishes, and well whatever else needs to be done to put the finishing touches on our new post.

It has been a long time coming, but to get it done in a timely manner we need your help!

Needed are twenty or so volunteers to help get the work done. We also need inputs from everyone to help steer our post into the future, the intent is a post that is even more family oriented and catering to our younger members.

On Saturday, February 12, 2011 the post is sponsoring a "Post Field Day". As our Navy veterans know, a Field Day is a maximized work effort to get things organized and cleaned up (ship shape!). Soft drinks and lunch will be provided to support the volunteers who can spare a few hours to get 'er done.

If you can spare a couple of hours and would like to help out, we can surely use your assistance.

To coordinate these efforts, please contact VFW Commander Joe Hardin, Ladies Auxiliary President Janet Williams, or Men's Auxiliary President Mike Pipher if you would like to participate. See page 4 for contact information.

