

VFW POST 604 NEWS

March 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! I would like to thank all of you who came out to the Post on Saturday, February 12th, to help clean, set up tables and empty boxes so we can continue to get read to open the Post. We had around 14 people show up to help. We still have a lot to do and will probably have another work day soon. Hats off to Bob Lanning for furnishing the food for our lunch: brats, hamburgers, potato salad, cole slaw, baked beans and all the fixin's. Plus he cooked all of it to boot!!!

We are around 90% on our membership and will continue to work hard to increase it to 100%. We only have about 30 people to reinstate to reach our goal. If you know of anyone who hasn't paid their dues, please talk to them and let them know that the Post is almost ready to open and we want them to be a part of our new beginning.

The last permit we need is our alcohol permit and we are scheduled for our hearing on March 2nd at the courthouse in Bloomington. This is to move our permit from our old location on South College to our new location on West Industrial Park Drive. We are also in the process of getting

see Commander's Corner

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Post 604 Ladies Auxiliary

Each year the V.F.W. and Ladies Auxiliary donate hundreds of thousands of dollars to persons needing help and to organizations such as Diabetes Foundation, Make-A-Wish Foundation, and Alzheimer's Association. Since 1987, the V.F.W. Ladies Auxiliary has raised more than \$3,000,000.00 each year to help cancer-stricken members and invest in research. Postdoctoral fellowships research grants are awarded annually throughout the country. V.F.W. and Ladies Auxiliary members call, send letters, and e-mail elected officials, encouraging their support of V.F.W. and Ladies Aux. positions on important legislation.

This month our Auxiliary has donated to the State President's special project - The Heart Health and Research Fund amount of \$500.00.

Some other V.F.W and Ladies Auxiliary projects include:

Operation Uplink - Provides prepaid long-distance telephone cards to deployed military personnel and hospitalized veterans

Adopt -a- Unit - A morale-boosting program sponsorship, where troops are sent food and other reminders of home.

V.A. Medical Center - Each year members volunteer more than 2.3 million hours in Veterans Affairs Medical Centers and other hospitals throughout the country.

VFW Service Officers - assist veterans and current military personnel with problems, such as guaranteeing disability compensation or acquiring well deserved military awards.

Thanks to men and women who have been helping clean and in doing the things that need done to get us open. Don't forget our meeting on the third Tuesday of each month.

Would you like to help with projects? I can give you the information just call me or let someone know. LADIES AUXILIARY meeting at 7pm.Eagles Lodge 3100 S walnut St.

Janet Williams, President VFW Ladies Auxiliary

cable TV hooked up and getting internet installed. We will be sending out a letter to all of our members in the V.F.W., Ladies Auxiliary, and Men's Auxiliary when we have a set date to open so everyone will know the date and time. We are really close to an announcement.

Commander - Joe Hardin

Department of Veterans Affairs benefits with 'less than honorable' discharge?

Military branches characterize the nature of veterans' service and document separation forms accordingly. The Department of Veterans Affairs must deny benefits to individuals with discharges characterized as *Dishonorable* (according to Title 38, United States Code, Section 101), and to accept *Honorable* for all benefits and *General, Under Honorable Conditions* for most. The VA makes its own determination regarding *General, Under Other Than Honorable Conditions* discharges.

If the veteran is pursuing VA benefits, the *General, Under Other Than Honorable Conditions* discharge might be good enough: The veteran's application for any Department of Veterans Affairs benefit forces a VA determination as to whether they consider the claimant's character of service "dishonorable" in nature. The VA advises the veteran of his or her right to provide statements, to a personal hearing, and to representation. If the VA determination is positive, fine. The application is processed and the precedent is set for that veteran for other VA benefits. If not, the VA decision may be appealed. However, more than 180 days absent without leave (AWOL) is a statutory bar to VA benefits. (You can appeal any VA decision, true, but some appeals waste everyone's time.)

Only the military can upgrade the actual discharge. If the period of service ended more than 15 years ago, the veteran must file a Defense Department Form 149, Application for Correction of Military Record. If the service ended less than 15 years ago, DD Form 293, Application for Review of Discharge or Dismissal from the Armed Forces of the United States, is used. The applicant must explain why it is in the interest of justice to excuse failure to apply within the three year prescribed time frame. Most applicants successfully plead they were unaware they should have applied within three years.

Both DD Forms 149 and 293 are simple to complete and include the address to which they should be sent. Both act as a transmittal cover sheet for the real meat of the request that should include the veteran's personal statement, character statements from relatives and/or credible witnesses, and any other supportive document.

The 19-year-old who went AWOL to see his dying mother and later accepted a *General, Under Other Than Honorable Conditions* discharge due to fear of court-

martial should certainly include his statement, witnesses' statements, and her death certificate. AWOL due to a military miss-diagnosis of injury or illness calls for including independent medical diagnosis and treatment records. Fully deserved less-than-honorable discharges may still be upgraded on the basis of "young and ignorant then" followed by "now older, wiser, and now contributing to society". These cases usually include current character statements from local law enforcement agencies, clergy, and employers.

All the above is technically true to the best of my knowledge, BUT I've learned over the years that the Board for Correction of Military Records is notorious for usually sustaining the discharges originally assigned by the branches of service – sort of, like, there's a "good old boys" club operating to somehow protect the military.

Back to the VA side: A Bloomington veteran now has a 2010 United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims decision in his favor vacating a Board of Veterans Appeals March 2009 denial of VA benefits based on his *General, Under Other Than Honorable Conditions* discharge. Great, so far. However, the USCAVC also remanded the case back to the BVA to give them another chance to come up with evidence to support their original denial. The Court's decision to vacate the BVA decision was based on the BVA's lack of supporting evidence. Now I know the BVA is not going to come up with any evidence that the local veteran accepted his other than honorable discharge "to escape trial by general court martial" (as stated in Chapter 38 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 3.12(d)(1) cited by both the VA Regional Office and the BVA denials), because there was no general court martial convened, nor had there been a UCMJ Article 32 investigation conducted as prerequisite to a general court martial, nor had there been a waiver of an Article 32 investigation filed, nor would it make any stinking sense to discharge a PFC through a general court martial when a special court martial could have discharged him at MUCH less expense to the Army. Basically, it looks like the VA was just trying to [insert nasty verb here] this veteran – and who knows how many others – by misapplication of the reg. Let's hope the BVA gives up in light of the USCAVC decision and requires the Indy VA Regional Office to process the vet's claim for compensation. I'll let you know how this case turns out. It's at 6½ years and counting now since the date of his original claim for compensation.

If the VA determination is ultimately positive for a veteran, that's more ammunition to submit as supporting evidence on the military side request to upgrade. If the military upgrades the discharge, the veteran can send the upgraded discharge to the VA.

So, are Department of Veterans Affairs benefits available with a less than honorable discharge? The definite answer is "Maybe!"

John Tilford - Post Service Officer

Post 604 Men's Auxiliary

Rebuild

Here's something we need to do in order to get ready for the official re-opening of the Post: work on increasing membership. There's just no reason to wait for the doors to open before we start filling the membership rolls once again.

The Men's Auxiliary had more than 60 paid members when the Post was located downtown. However, very few guys kept their memberships current after the Post was closed. It's time to rebuild our ranks and get back into the business of being an effective organization that supports our veterans.

We'll soon be sending renewal postcards to former members and invite them back into the fold. But much time has elapsed since we were downtown and there should be plenty of opportunity for us to interest and recruit brand new members, too. We'd like you to help us find others who would like to join - and I'm not referring just to the Men's Auxiliary. The entire organization will benefit if you help us recruit members for the VFW itself, the Ladies Auxiliary or the Men's Auxiliary. It's not unusual for one new member to bring a spouse or children into the organization, as well.

Men's Auxiliary dues remain the same as before: \$25.00

Mike Pipher – President VFW Men's Auxiliary

Putting on the finishing touches

More than a dozen folks representing all the branches of the VFW family tree were on hand Saturday, February 12, 2011 for a concentrated work session inside the new Post home. Those who turned out could see first-hand just how close we are to getting the doors open and beginning to operate for real.

Although we didn't finish all of the pesky little detail work that's needed, we put a serious dent in the task list and anyone who walks in the doors right now can see just how

see Finishing Touches

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Post & Auxiliary Elections

Annual Office elections for V.F.W. Post 604, Ladies Auxiliary, and Men's Auxiliary are upcoming. Nominations from, Nominees submitted, and voting is limited to members in good standing. Offices as follows:

V.F.W. Post 604 Offices

Nominations: Open March 15 2011- Close April 19, 2011

Open Voting: April 19th 2011 meeting after nominations close

- ☐ Commander
- ☐ Sr. Vice Commander
- ☐ Jr. Vice Commander
- ☐ Quartermaster
- ☐ Chaplin
- ☐ Judge Advocate
- ☐ Surgeon
- ☐ 3-Year Trustee
- ☐ 3-Year House Committee

VFW Ladies Auxiliary Offices

Nominations: Open April 19, 2011

Open Voting: April 19th 2011 meeting after nominations close

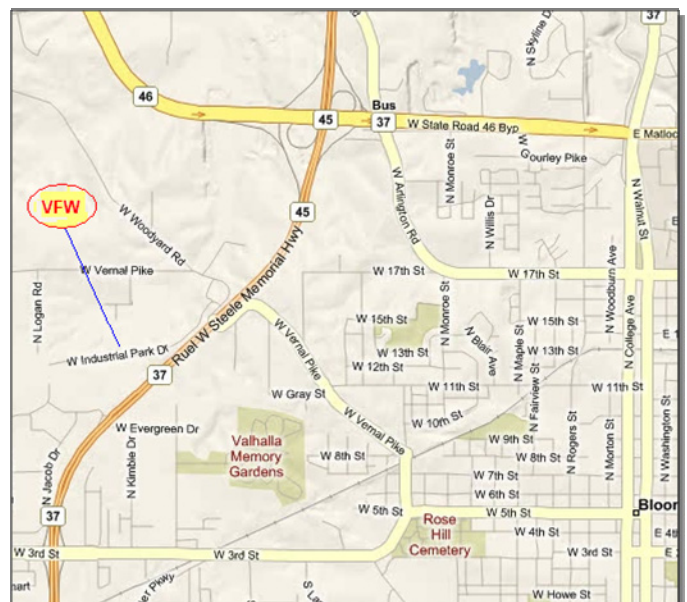
- ☐ President
- ☐ Sr. Vice President
- ☐ Jr. Vice President
- ☐ Treasurer
- ☐ Chaplin
- ☐ Conductress
- ☐ Guard
- ☐ 3-Year Trustee

VFW Men's Auxiliary Offices

Nominations: Open March 15 2011- Close April 19, 2011



Open Voting: April 19th 2011 meeting after nominations close

- ☐ President
- ☐ Sr. Vice President
- ☐ Jr. Vice President
- ☐ Treasurer
- ☐ Secretary
- ☐ Chaplin
- ☐ 3-Year Trustee



Laurens B. Strain – VFW Post 604

MARCH 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	* Vet to Vet – 1900			Bingo (Eagles) - 1730		Bingo (Eagles) - 1430
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	* Vet to Vet – 1900	Men's Aux Mtg – 1800 (American Legion) Ladies Aux Mtg - 1900 (Eagles) V.F.W. Mtg – 1900 (American Legion)		Bingo (Eagles) - 1730		Bingo (Eagles) - 1430
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	* Vet to Vet – 1900			Bingo (Eagles) - 1730		Bingo (Eagles) - 1430
27	28	29	30	31		
	* Vet to Vet – 1900			Bingo (Eagles) - 1730		

(* 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	Cathi Johnson	(812) 876-5745						
3 Year House Committee	Leonard L Heldman	(812) 361-9129						

Finishing Touches *(continued from page 3)*

close this is to becoming reality. The goal is still to get all of the governmental approvals needed and open the doors in March. In order to reach that goal, we need your help. For example, there are still many items that need to be taken out of boxes, cleaned and put in place, especially in the kitchen. Tables and chairs need to be cleaned and put in place. Bathrooms need to be wiped down. Construction dust needs to be cleaned from walls and windows. A couple of floors could be scrubbed.

The best way to attack these final tasks is to gather together a group of four or more people who'd be willing to spend a couple of hours working as a team. If you've got the group and can identify a time when you can work, let us know and we'll arrange to get you in the building. It doesn't matter if it's a weeknight or a weekend, if you gather together a team, we'll get you into the building. All of the cleaning supplies are sitting there waiting for you.

Anybody who has ever pitched in to help complete a large project knows how much pride you derive from helping make it happen. Those who pitch in on this project will always know they had a hand in resurrecting our VFW Post.

Mike Pipher – President VFW Men's Auxiliary

For access to the Post, please contact:

Joe Hardin (812) 334-8479
 Mark Dammer (812) 824-3367
 Lenoard Heldman (812) 361-9129
 Ed Mauritson (812) 332-1518

Field Day in Pictures



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

"Oldest Post in the State"

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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Phone: (812)-339-2375

Electronic Newsletter Delivery

If you would rather receive the VFW Post 604 Newsletter in email verses a paper copy, please send an email to VFW-604@comcast.net with your name, email address, and a short message as to what the email is for. We will add you to the emailing list and send you this newsletter as your first emailing to confirm your request. If you do not get the electronic newsletter, or have trouble viewing it, please feel free to call me after 7:00PM at the number provided in the Officer's listing under the calendar on page 4.

Aside from saving a tree and reducing production costs to the Post, you will likely receive it days earlier as it will be emailed to you when it is sent to the printers.

Mark Dammer - Quartermaster

Please Support Bingo



Conducted by V.F.W. Ladies Auxiliary

Thursday – Sales open 5:30PM – Play starts 6:30PM
Saturday – Sales open 2:30PM – Play starts 3:30PM

Location

(Fraternal Order of Eagles)

**3100 S Walnut St
Bloomington, IN**

Bingo License # 121844