

VFW POST 604 NEWS

August 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.

- Rededication Ceremony -

Commander Hardin, Congressman Todd Young, and State Commander Chuck Simons with Joseph Hardin



Commander's Corner

I would like to thank everyone who attended our grand re-opening on July 10th. It was a very busy day. My gratitude to all of the members that worked so hard to make it a success. It would be a long list to name all the volunteers that spent many hours preparing the food, setting up our tents, getting our sound system ready, decorating our dining room, setting up tables, face painting for the kids, working behind the bar, taking care of the trash, helping with the parking, etc. The list goes on and on. It is a good feeling to know that members really do care about VFW Post 604.

I would like to give a special thanks to the U.S. Army for all the help they gave us. With new members like Jerry Hayes Jr. and Joshua Hudson (and their families) we can't help but be a success.

Thank you Congressman Todd Young, Indiana VFW State Commander Chuck Simons, the Monroe County Veterans Honor Guard, and the Bloomfield American Legion Color Guard for participating in our program.

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Commander's Corner

Post 604 Ladies Auxiliary

The Grand opening was a very rewarding day for all the volunteers who worked so hard to get it done. There was so many helpers that I can not remember all your names, but without your help, the Post couldn't be up and going today. A big Thanks to everyone!

It's time to pay your dues. We have had several address changes turned in. Thanks for letting us know so you can get your news letter and stay in touch.

Bingo participation is down, so come out and play so we can continue to make donations to meaningful organizations.

Thursday : Doors open at 5.30pm, with Early Bird's starting at 6.30pm and regular games at 7.00pm.

Saturday : Doors open at 2:30pm, Early Birds at 3.30pm and regular games start at 4.00pm.

For \$21.00 you can play every game and you can choose if you want more papers. Still playing at the Eagles Lodge at 3100 S. Walnut St. Phone number for bingo is 876-3676, 322-2677, 336-6447 or 322-4455 These are Joyce & Janet's numbers.

Some of our donations go the VFW National Home for Children, serving the families of veterans by providing a safe place for growth and development. As their web site tells it "The National Home is a multi- faceted facility created to care for the development, social and spiritual needs of children and families of the VFW. Services are also available for children of active-duty military personnel." The facility is not an orphanage but a neighborhood of custom homes, service buildings and recreational land administered by highly devoted staff and fully integrated into its surrounding community. The home accepts no government funding, but receives its help from the dedicated members of the VFW and Ladies Auxiliary, as well as other outside organizations who can tell the Home is a special place.

Keep all our Service men, women, and families in your prayers.

Janet Williams, President VFW Ladies Auxiliary

Kicking the Dept of Veterans Affairs While It's Down (*We have no choice. It may never stand up again.*)

Even though I last was a Department of Veterans Affairs employee in 1979 and still have a few friends there who have not retired - Even though I'm finally now rated for every compensable service connected disability I ever claimed - Even though every new Director of the VA promises to improve the accuracy and speed of adjudicating claims - Even though every new VA scandal results in a newer "our first priority will be [fill in the blank]" statements for Congress and the media - Even though the VA's mission statements always sound so good - Even though millions and millions of additional dollars have been spent and thousands of new employees hired, "trained", and are on the job . . . you know, even I have run out of patience. The VA compensation and pension adjudication systems have been so bad for so long there really aren't any valid excuses any longer. They've all been used and all have been used up. Lincoln tasked the Nation ". . . to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan . . ." through his second inaugural address a month before he was assassinated. I don't think Abe would be too happy to see how the veterans he cared for so much are being treated these days. It's hurtful, stupid, and too often tragic.

(Please note: None of these comments apply to the VA medical care system – the "good half" of the VA.)

Allegedly, the VA did away with supervisors and went to a "we are all team members and buddies here" concept with Team Leaders who did not have full supervisory authority at least ten years ago. (I say "allegedly" because the VA is NOT transparent as to their internal organization or procedures. Most of my internal VA information is from very unofficial conversations with VA employees.) Fix: go back to clear chains of command with supervisory accountability and authority.

Evidently, the VA quantified performance standards are "how many cases can I get off my desk today" – which led to the infamous "top sheeting" practice: the VA employee commonly only looks at the top sheet in the veteran's file. The information the VA employee requests from the claimant by official letter is often already in the folder, but he or she did not spend the time to look. Similarly, veterans have had to appeal denials of service connection claims for Agent Orange presumptive conditions, such as prostate cancer, where the denials were based on no evidence of service in Vietnam – while the vet's DD 214 showed Viet service AND the VA had ALREADY rated him service connected for another Agent Orange presumptive condition, such as diabetes type II. After months of waiting for a personal hearing, unreimbursed travel to the hearing, and spending a day of his or her life, the hearing officer will often open the folder, see what happened, and agree with the claimant. No apology, of course. Just a few seconds saved by the first VA employee so he or she could move on quicker to the next case resulting in MANY hours, even days, of additional staff time lost to the VA and many months of delay for the veteran claimant.

The VA abandoned a Henry Ford-type, assembly line, functionally designed organization in which, for example, compensation claims were routed to experts in processing compensation claims, to a "every VA professional employee can do everything so we can pay them more money and keep them" organization. The former functional organizations are among the most efficient and effective in the history of the world. Employees become very good at what they specialize in and gain experience in, or they transfer [or are transferred] to an area in which they can become very good. The latter "one-stop shopping, every employee can do everything" organizations are doomed to inefficiency and ineffectiveness by two very big factors: 1) Some people are good at

processing numbers, some are good at meeting and dealing with people. Seldom are people good at both. The good number cruncher people are usually not good at their turn at answering the toll-free calls. Their answers are too often insufficient or outright wrong. You get the idea. Project this built-in conflict across all the VA functions and all employee aptitude sets. 2) You can never sufficiently train and give applied specialty guidance to every employee for every function. There are not enough hours in the day or month or year or decade. If you could, the trained-for-everything employee would be out of date on function 1 long before the training cycle returned to that function again. If you had good instructors or good training materials or good procedures, which you don't. Did you notice how little paid direct time was left for actually serving the veterans? Oh, the retention objective for the new organization? The higher paid employees become so frustrated their attrition rate is at least as high as for employees in the old, effective organization. AND, more of your taxpayer dollars are spent for worse results!

Quality control and case management: Much is made of the VA's perpetual problem of a partial paper-based system and partial computer-based system. Big deal. Your favorite federal agency and mine, the Internal Revenue Service, had a half-paper and half-computer based processing system which worked fine THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO! Similar to our organizational comments above, Tax Auditors (number crunchers) did individual and small business tax audits, Revenue Agents with accounting degrees did corporation audits, Revenue Officers (people meeters and dealers - I was one!) collected from those who owed and chose not to pay when they could. Again, you get the idea. Now, back to quality control: Each function within the Examination division in each district (Indiana is one district) had a Review Staff which randomly sampled audits before they were sent out. Review Staff was filled by rotational assignments of the best employees in each function. When Review Staff found an error, which they really tried to do, they sent the case back to the originating examiner to fix. When the examiner had a few cases returned on the same issue, that examiner was in trouble and was retrained or fired. Honest. Also, training and sampling were adjusted according to review staff findings. Worked great. Made the IRS look, well, maybe not good, but more professional AND much less time was lost in appeals. Case management? At each step of processing the work time used on each case was charged to that case. If auditor Jones was using more than the normal time on an individual taxpayer case, he could explain why to his boss – a boss who had been an auditor herself in the past and who could understand and approve or disapprove the increase. If auditor Smith screwed up and the case slipped by Review Staff and got out and resulted in an appeal, a bunch of time would be charged to that case and it would stick out like a sore thumb in the workload data – crying out for "don't do this again" training or other correction. If a Review Staff employee screwed up, same thing. Damn, wouldn't you like to see the VA do this Review Staff thing?

Stupid Stop-Gap Measures Which Sound Good – like, "Tiger Teams!" I'm not kidding. Real Tiger Teams are small groups of very good employees who are pulled from their regular jobs to attack a short-term, special problem then get back to their real work. Fancy, whiz-bang management tool. The VA used what they called Tiger Teams to work backlogs of cases. They took some good employees away from their regular work alright, which meant that more backlogs were created in their regular jobs, and assigned them to work regular backlog cases for some other Regional Office which was further behind than

Kicking the VA Dept.

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Thanks also to the VFW officers from around the State that joined in. We had three past 7th District Commanders in attendance. Thanks to our new 7th District Commander Jerome Givens, and wish him well in his leadership this year.

Thank you members, Ladies Aux and Men's Aux. Without you it would never have happened. A very special thanks to Paul Baker and his wife for donating the flag pole and raising the flag. Last, but not least, to Papa's Junior Quartermaster Joseph Hardin for leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commander - Joe Hardin



Mr. & Mrs. Paul Baker Raising the Colors



Ed Mautitson's Contributions are Recognized by the Post



Thank You to these vendors for their generous donations in support of our Rededication

Renewing Membership

Your continued membership is important to us. The V.F.W. and its Auxiliaries 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.

Annual membership renewal forms are mailed to each V.F.W. and Auxiliary member. Dues shall be forwarded per the directions contained in the notice received by the member with the renewal form. If you do not receive a renewal notice, please contact the Post 604 Quartermaster or one of your club officers for assistance. ❖

Canteen Buzz

Well the House Committee hopes that everyone enjoyed the VFW Post 604 Grand Re-Opening. The turn-out was great and it was nice to see a lot of familiar faces - now granted it was HOT both inside and outside, but the food, drinks and activities were just superb. We are sure that Joyce Grubb had a good time because she won the raffle for the 32" Flat Screen TV - congratulations Joyce.

Now we didn't just up and stop running the canteen after that Sunday - we went ahead and kept our beer specials going for the remainder of the month. However - Sadly - fiscal reality has returned and we must move our beer prices back up to \$2.00 beginning Aug. 1st.

Now don't **STOP** reading yet, because on August 19th (Friday) we will be having Karaoke Night brought to you by Scott Ealls from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. or later if we have a bunch of crooners. So let's spice this up some by making it an **OPEN HOUSE** - you can bring your talented friends and neighbors along with you! You want more don't you? →hmmm←, we figured as much so lets have a beer & drink special to go along with the entertainment. "Beer for \$1.50 - well drinks for \$1.75". We also plan on having finger foods available at a nominal cost. Quite honestly it is hard to tell what else we will dream up for that evening - August 19th— So mark it on your calendar / enter the date and time in your phone or I-Pod and come on out, enjoy the Post, see some friends, and just plain ole have a good time.

By the way, we do have flags (USA, Service Branch, & POW/MIA) available at the Post, so keep us in mind next time you need one. Naturally we are still looking for volunteers to help bartend and help in the kitchen- (Opening for lunch is our goal).

-HEY- if nothing else just come on out and enjoy/support your Post—that's **VFW POST 604**

House Committee

the Regional Office of the Tigers. In other words, spread the backlog around. I know of one local veteran who was being paid her 20% compensation OK by the Indy Regional Office via direct deposit under her eight digit VA claim number. She filed a claim for another disability. Cleveland Regional Office Tiger Team got it. They started paying her 30% by paper check under her Social Security Number. Guess who got over paid by thousands through no fault of her own? Guess how much trouble it was for the VA and for the veteran and for the Monroe County VSO to get things straightened out? Thank you so much, Tigers! But their "cases closed" performance data looked really good. As a reward, they got to work on their own increased backlogs when they got back to their regular assignments.

Remember those "Fixing [fill in the blank] will be our first priority!" VA statements after they are caught screwing up? It would be funny except for the stupidity – the VA has a new "first priority!" about every six months. Flash for the VA – every time you elevate one problem to the top of your "priority list" (which is doubtful, but let's play the game), all the other problems go one notch down. They get less attention and resources, and, like, you know, they get sick and they bite you. There is no end to the "first priority!" game. How about you determine what you have to do, rank them, and do those things the best way you can with the resources you have? There's nothing wrong with being criticized for problems in X if you have determined that X is less important than Y and you did well in Y because you properly allocated resources and did the best you could in X given the overall resources you had. I know that sounds hard to understand. It's called making hard decisions. Managers are supposed to do that.

"Regionalization" (also known as centralization): The VA takes basic compensation and pension claims and sends them to designated regional offices for parts of the United States. The Milwaukee RO is an example of a central processing regional office for pension claims originating in Indiana. I say "example" because the VA will change the designated central regional office at unpredictable times so that no one involved gets comfortable or familiar with the arrangement. Again, the most observable result is balancing out the backlog which accomplishes zilch. In effect, the best regional offices are punished instead of the worst being fixed. There are two more curses of this practice: 1) Say Ellettsville widow Gertz [fake name, real case] wants a personal hearing in conjunction with her appeal of a Milwaukee denial? The lady who just lost her husband, and the VA has just denied her service connected death claim, now gets to fund her own way to Milwaukee? We demanded a hearing in Indy. We'll see what happens. Even if it's granted, the Indy people are not familiar with her case and will have to learn it from scratch. 2) Milwaukee employees are not familiar with Indiana crooks. There are firms, as we discussed in an earlier newsletter, which encourage gullible veterans to file fraudulent pension claims, e.g., "Get you're A&A now! Fill out our special forms! Have a doctor say you must have your medications administered!" Indianapolis VA employees were about to get a handle on these firms when the Indiana pension cases were routed to Milwaukee. Milwaukee VA employees don't know beans about Indiana crooks, and probably have no reason to care. Again, your taxpayer dollars down the tubes AND, in those instances where the fraudulent claims are officially discovered, guess who is "left holding the [overpayment debt] bag"? The gullible veterans who signed the claims and were improperly paid the benefits!

John Tilford - Post Service Officer

The Veterans Home

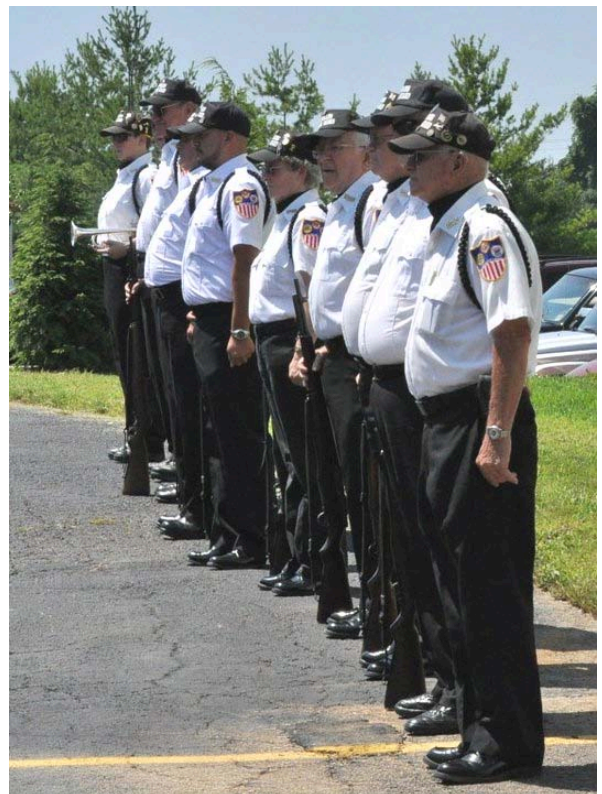
The Indiana Veterans Home in West Lafayette provides nursing and domiciliary care for any Hoosier Veteran with at least one day of wartime service. To qualify you must have been a resident of Indiana for at least three years. The Home is open to both veterans and their spouses.

For more information write to the Home at: Indiana Veterans Home, 3851 N. River Rd., West Lafayette, IN. 47906-3762 or call (765) 463-1502.

County Veterans Service Officers

All counties in the State employ a County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO). These CVSO's are veterans who stand ready to help you with your veteran-related needs. The County Veterans Service Offices have all the forms and other information you may need to obtain service from the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs as well as the forms for requesting State veterans' benefits. The Service Officers will assist you in finding the information and resources you need to solve your service-related problems. They are your liaison for all veteran issues. For contact information see:

<http://www.in.gov/dva/2370.htm>




Rededication - Monroe County Honor Guard

Please call ahead to confirm whether the Post Canteen is open

Laurens B. Strain - VFW Post 604

August 2011

	10:00AM - 10:00PM	10:00AM - 10:00PM	10:00AM - 10:00PM	10:00AM - 10:00PM	10:00AM - 10:00PM	10:00AM - 10:00PM
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 * Vet to Vet - 1900	2	3	4 Bingo (Eagles) - 1730	5	6 Bingo (Eagles) - 1430
7	8 * Vet to Vet - 1900	9	10	11 Bingo (Eagles) - 1730	12	13 Bingo (Eagles) - 1430
14	15 * Vet to Vet - 1900	16 Men's Aux Mtg - 1800 Ladies Aux Mtg - 1900 (Eagles) V.F.W. Mtg - 1800	17	18 Bingo (Eagles) - 1730	19  VFW Karaoke Night 1900 - 2200	20 Bingo (Eagles) - 1430
21	22 * Vet to Vet - 1900	23	24	25 Bingo (Eagles) - 1730	26	27 Bingo (Eagles) - 1430
28	29 * Vet to Vet - 1900	30	31			

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

Telephone Numbers

PPT License # 124405

Bingo License # 121844

Post 604 - Canteen (812) 339-2375

Raffle License # 124404

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	Bill Halliday	(812) 360-4862	Senior Vice President	Joe Crawford	(812) 330-1343	Senior Vice President	Millie Briles	(812) 336-8409
Junior Vice Commander	Ty Briles	(812) 360-6518	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
Chaplain	Roy Smith	(812) 626-9829	Chaplain	Benjamin Hammock	(812) 876-5745	Chaplin	Joyce Grubb	(812) 336-6447
Service Officer	John Tilford	(812) 336-5574				Patriotic Instructor	Wilma Hays	(812) 332-5329
1 Year House Committee	Cathi Johnson	(812) 876-5745						
2 Year House Committee	Leonard L Heldman	(812) 361-9129						
3 Year House Committee	John Martin	(812) 339-1113						

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

VFW Post 604 - Open For Business



Canteen Hours of Operation

Monday through Saturday

10:00 A.M. until 10:00 P.M.

FREE!!!



Volunteers needed to help tend Bar and help in kitchen ---- Call (812) 339-2375 if you can lend a hand.