



THE LEGION POST

OTIS SAMPSON POST 59 STOUGHTON, WI
POST WEB SITE: POST59.ORG POST PHONE: 608.205.9090



VOLUME 13 ISSUE 11

NOVEMBER 2011

Commander's Report

2011-2012 OFFICERS

- Commander**
Sonny Swangstu
- 1st Vice Commander**
Steve Grady
- 2nd Vice Commander**
Larry Ambrose
- 3rd Vice Commander**
John Christopherson
- Service Officer**
Dan Call
- Sgt. at Arms**
Ken Schieldt
- Finance Officer**
Don Helmke
- Historian**
Odean Teigen
- Adjutant**
Dennis Rodenkirch
- Judge Advocate**
Terry McCardle
- Chaplain**
Monte Whitford



Greetings,

I would like to welcome Albert Showers from Evansville who has transferred to Post #59. We are glad to have you.

By the time you get this newsletter, we will have the Post addition closed in. Thanks to all my good little Elves. These men are Al Phelps, Lyman Hawkinson, Reb Breyman, Monte, Whitford, Vik Malling, Ken Stelzer, Dennis Rodenkirch, Bob Larson, John Drogsvold, Dick Budden, Jim Griffin and Ray Dzielcol. I hope I haven't left anyone out, if I have I apologize. The Post appreciates all you do and I thank you!

Our neighbor, Gary Smithback was nice enough to allow us to go through his property to install our new sewer lateral. Without his permission, we would have had a BIG problem.

We also have another very special member among us in our Post. Bob Everson, the excavator contractor who did the digging for the sewer and did the job for a very very reasonable price. In fact at half of what it should have been. Thank him when you see him!

Steve Grady has come up with a raffle plan and I concur. We are going to need a few more dollars for our addition project and rather than ask the membership for a donation, we thought a raffle would be more appropriate. It is a little pricey, but the prizes are real good and there will only be 200 tickets sold at \$50 each. Anything over 60 tickets would go for the building. If 200 are sold, \$7,000

would go to the building fund. Each officer would get ten tickets to sell and we would sell also at the breakfast and dinner. Payout will be 1st \$1,750, 2nd \$600, 3rd \$300, 4th \$225, 5th \$125. We would hope to have the drawing in December. What a Christmas present! We also would like to sell the tickets to all Post members first. If this one works out, we may try another one in the spring in order to finish the addition.

We would also like to start a Euchre tournament at the Legion on a Wednesday afternoon if there is enough interest. Just let one of the officers know if you are interested. If enough interest, it would start in November.

Thank you,
Commander Sonny

Auxiliary

- President**
Linda Swangstu
873-9428
- Vice President**
Karen Whitford
873-4020
- Secretary**
Lisa Olson – 873-8924
- Treasurer**
Lynn Robertson
873-4889
- Chaplain**
Marlene Bierman
873-7397
- Sgt. at Arms**
Mary Copley
873-5804
- Historian**
Kathy Teigen
873-7518
- Membership**
Lisa Olson – 873-8924
- Junior Leader**
Jona Chat – 622-4574

Auxiliary News



Hello American Legion Family,

Where did October go? Soon the North winds will be blowing BURRRR!!!!

The Women's Auxiliary has been working very hard this year and here is a list of our contributions to date We have dispersed our Poppy Fund Monies to the following: Madison VA Hospital \$500, Children & Youth Emergency Fund \$400, Veterans Emergency Assistance Fund \$200, Caravilla House – Janesville (Homeless) \$200, Heart & Lung Pillows \$140, King Day (King Veteran's Home) dinner - \$80, Camo Quilt Project \$120, Homeless Women Vets \$200, Camp American Legion \$200 – towards bedding, United Women Vets Conference \$50, Dane County AL Stand Down for Homeless Vets \$100.

In addition the Auxiliary has given the Post \$500 for the walk-in cooler for our new addition as well as \$250 to the Funeral Committee We are hosting a Stoughton family for the holidays with a recommendation of \$175 We will either shop or make a cash donation We have also donated \$400 for "Support Military Families".

Please keep volunteering your time for our important organization (The American Legion) We need many hands

to accomplish our goals We have a wonderful breakfast, fish fry, hall for many useful, fun, and money making functions The same volunteers are getting tired We need more cleaners weekly Do we have some couples to work together that are retired? Do we need to hire a janitor? This will cost money It is up to all the members to keep this from happening Our kitchen needs more attention such as keeping the floor clean and scrubbing the sides of the fryers and stoves This is a man's job as they have more muscle power Right????

With winter coming we are in need of more containers for funeral lunch leftovers It seems the cold weather brings on the loss of more loved ones If you have some in your cupboards you're not using, send them to the Post (clean) Dish clothes and towels we can always use They get bleached so much and it is hard on them

Thank you to Larry Johnson for providing us with a corn shock and some pumpkins Hope you like my window display and table center pieces also The Post and Auxiliary shared in the cost.

Thank you to all the volunteers!

Linda Swangstu
Auxiliary President

CALENDER OF EVENTS

- October 29 - 8:00 pm – midnight
Northern Lights (Halloween Party)
costume not required – prize for best costume
- November 5 - Special Olympics
Spaghetti Dinner - 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm
- November 5 - Quilt Show
8:30 am – 2:00 pm
- November 8 - Junior Meeting - 7:00 pm
- November 11 - Veterans Day
- November 12 - 7:00 pm – 11:00 pm
Christie-B Band
- November 13 - Performing Arts Pancake
Breakfast
- November 14 - Auxiliary Meeting
7:00 pm
- November 15 - Legion Dinner - 6:30 pm
- November 17 - 7:00 pm – 11:00 pm
Northern Lights Band (50th Anniversary
for Monte & Karen Whitford)
- November 20 - Breakfast – Legion
7:00 am – 11:00 am
- November 24 - Thanksgiving
- November 26 - 7:00 pm – 11:00 pm
Rotation Band

Event Pricing

Post Dinner: 6:30 pm \$11.00

Breakfast: 7:00-11:30 am
\$7.00 adults, \$4.00 children

50th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Please join us as we celebrate the 50th
Wedding Anniversary of
Monte and Karen Whitford

November 19, 2011
Open House 4-11 pm
Dinner 5 pm
Dance with the Northern Lights 7-11 pm

Veterans Quilt Display

The 2011 Veterans Quilt Display presented by Quilting by the River Friends will be Saturday, November 5, at the Post from 10 am-1 pm. Come and see nearly 50 patriotic themed quilts that will be distributed to patients at the Madison VA Hospital on Veterans Day as they have been since 2004. There is no admission fee, but if so inclined, donations are gratefully accepted to further this most enjoyable project.

Post 59 has generously donated its facilities the third Wednesday of the month to facilitate the pin basting and sewing of the quilts. Our group very much appreciates this courtesy.

More information:
Contact Gretchen Walters
873-7627.

CHAPLAINS CORNER

A teacher was quizzing her Sunday school class to see if they understood what a person needs to do to get to heaven.

She asked her class. "If I sold my house and car and all my furniture and gave all my money to the church, would that get me into Heaven?"

The class unanimously responded, "NO!"

She then asked them. "If I cleaned the church everyday, mowed the church lawn, and cleaned the sidewalks and parking lot would that get me into Heaven?"

Again the children responded with a resounding, "NO!"

The teacher asked, "Well what if I was kind to animals, loved my husband, and gave presents to all the children, would that get me into Heaven?"

Once again the children answered, "NO!"

The teacher with pride now believing that the children had truly understood what one must do to get to Heaven asked, "So then how can I get into Heaven?"

A five-year old boy confidently shouted, "You gotta be dead."

Praise the Lord!

If you know of anyone who is hospitalized, or in need please contact Monte at 873-4020.

Donald L. Heiliger **Colonel, USAF, (ret.)**

Pre-1966

Don Heiliger was born Jan. 16, 1937 in Madison, WI. He graduated from East High School and attended the University of WI, graduating in 1958 with a degree in Business Administration (Accounting). Through AFROTC, he received his commission as a second lieutenant and entered the USAF in September 1958 and went to navigator training. After teaching and flying as a navigator, he applied for pilot training and was sent to Webb AFB, TX in 1964. As he had done as a navigator, he graduated number one in his class and was sent for F-105 training at Nellis AFB, NV. From there he was assigned to Yokota AB Japan.



1966-67 and shoot down

In spring 1966, in a single seat F-105 (F-1050), Don flew TDY out of Taklhia, Thailand earning 31 combat missions over North Vietnam and Laos. Then he returned to his home base in Japan (Yokota AB) to continue his normal duty, much of it sitting nuclear alert in Osan AB, Korea. In April 1963, Don was selected to return to Thailand, at Korat AB, to fly in the two-seated F-105 (F-105F) with Major Ben Pollard in the back seat. Don and Ben flew 11 missions in April and May and on May 15, while flying at night to attack a railroad marshalling yard northeast of Kep Airfield, North Vietnam, their aircraft flying a special low level attack (about 1,000 feet altitude), was hit presumably by ground fire. The fire was in the engine area and creeping forward. Don began a climb to gain altitude while observing the fire. At about 18,000 feet, Ben called from the back seat (about 33 inches behind Don) that the fire was in his cockpit and that he would have to eject. In an instant, Ben was gone leaving Don alone and still climbed for more altitude. The aircraft reached about

25,000 feet when the fire reached the radar console in Don's cockpit. There were only two options—burn up or get out. Don raised the ejection handles (which armed the ejection system). Then he squeezed the ejection handles and the canopy immediately blew off the aircraft; 0.3 seconds later the seat blew out of the aircraft (with Don on it) and 0.1 seconds later the lap belt in the seat blew off (due to the explosive e charge in the belt) which pushed the seat away from Don and left him floating in the air. Although the parachute would automatically deploy at 14,500 feet or below, Don didn't wait and pulled the rip cord immediately after ejection deploying the parachute. Don got a "good" chute and awaited the ride down (about 1,000 feet per minute). He deployed the emergency equipment kit, which dangled below Don. There was no moon and thus was very dark. Don could see the basic ground/sky relationship and knew that he would be landing in the jungle of Vietnam. Before crashing through the trees, he crossed his legs awaiting the impact. The emergency kit went through the trees and caught up in one set of trees. The parachute caught in another tree. Don was in the middle of this "hammock". After losing feeling in one leg, Don decided it would be better to hang in just the parachute until dawn (you don't fool around in trees at night) and used a knife to cut the dangling emergency kit cord. At that time the parachute gave away and Don came crashing down into the jungle. Luckily, Don was only about 15 feet off the ground (lucky, inasmuch as the trees in the area grow as tall as 200 feet or more). The only injuries Don could feel initially were bruised or broken ribs. Otherwise, he felt in good shape and crawled to a "safe" area awaiting the dawn. When light broke, he could see he was alone and climbed, crawled, and stumbled up the mountain on which he had landed to gain better observation. He was alone. He carried some candy bars and baby bottles of water, a .38 revolver with about 50 rounds of ammo, 250 feet of let-down rope to help get out of tall trees (now not needed), two two-way radios, and some maps. Don wasn't exactly sure where he had landed but he knew that to reach the Gulf of Tonkin he would need to head east. And that was his plan. Don figured he could cross mountains in daylight and rest at night. He guessed it was about 50-70 miles from this area of the jungle to the coast and the Gulf of Tonkin where he knew the U.S. Navy had many ships at anchor. The important part was that he knew there no attempt at rescue from where he was now. No US pilot had ever been rescued this far north and besides, it was foggy that day. Don spent most of the day watching a small village at the bottom of the mountain on which he had landed—little activity. Regularly (15 and 45 minutes after each hour); he tried contacting, by the radio, but to no avail.

Continued on page 6

Membership Report

As of Oct 11, we stand at 69% have renewed their dues. If you haven't paid your dues, please do so by the end of this month to meet our goal of 100% by November 11.

Thanks,
Dennis Rodenkirch

\$100 Membership Incentive

It's not the cost of being a member, but the price you paid to be eligible to be one.

Because we have a goal to have our membership at 100% by Veteran's Day, we have decided to add a little incentive to those members who pay their dues by November 10th. Each member who pays their dues by November 10th will have their name put into a drawing that will be held on November 11th (Veteran's Day) for \$100!

There are so many benefits to being a member of the American Legion. Discounts on hotel stays, rental cars, and prescription and eye care to name a few. But locally, we assist veterans in need, support homeless veterans, support the food pantry, and hold Memorial Day and Veterans Day events to make sure that people remember the sacrifices made by our friends and families.

Together we can reach our goal. Please pay your dues now. Don't make us write you, call you, or visit you. We have so many great things we need to focus on, such as our new addition, Badger Boys State program, County Government Days, and last rights for our fallen veterans.

Send in your \$35 dollars today and earn a chance to win \$100. Even if you don't, your money will be put to good use now, rather than later.

Mary Lloyd
Membership Team member

STOUGHTON FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS

AUXILIARY Community Service Project

Since last fall the Auxiliary has been collecting for the Stoughton Food Pantry. This is an on-going year-round Auxiliary project, not just a one-time food drive. The collection basket is by the front door. Last month we delivered 29 pounds of food. Thank you to all who have so generously donated. The Stoughton Food Pantry is fully funded by donations and no tax dollars are used to purchase supplies. It is a valuable resource for needy families of our area, and many benefit from your donations.

All non-perishable food items are needed, however there are some items that the Food Pantry does not purchase and are very much needed such as: toilet paper, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shaving cream, bar soap. Also: Hamburger Helper, rice mixes, Sloppy Joe mix, pasta, taco kits, cake and cookie mixes, oatmeal and cereal.

Please help us to continue to help those in our own community who are in need. Bring a few items each time you come to the Post for a dinner, a breakfast or meeting.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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Sunday: 11:30 am – 6 pm or later

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BIRTHDAY
BALL



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TRADITIONAL CEREMONY 1900 (7:00PM)
DINNER AND DANCE FOLLOWING

TICKETS: \$30.00 EACH PAYABLE TO FOUR LAKES DET. MCL
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MAIL TO:

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P.O Box 14315
Madison, WI 53708-0315

Orders must be received no
later than November 1, 2011

Phone order: Doug Manthe
608-516-6179

Email request:
doug.manthe@charter.net

Capture

Late in the afternoon Don heard movement from below. There were about 45-50 armed villagers working their way up the mountain. They carried various weapons—spears, knives, pistols, and light rifles. Don hid further into the rocks, trying to hide deeper. Finally a head popped up over a nearby rock, spotted Don and shouted. Don had to decide whether to fight it out or surrender. Although he had 50 or so rounds of ammo, it appeared futile to fight it out. He broke his .38 so that it could not be used, elected to surrender and was taken captive. He was loosely tied. Everything he had was taken including his flight suit. He was marched down the mountain toward the little village he had been watching. Then they removed his boots, so all he had on was his white underwear and socks. They put him in a small house at a table with an older, what appeared to be, important person. Everyone so far had been non-uniformed with no apparent rank. The gentleman had a “pointee-talkee” book allowing Don and the person to “communicate” by pointing to various items in the book. Don was given tea and some rice. He was also given cigarettes to smoke and although Don was not a smoker, he began at that moment to smoke. He was also offered a pipe in which the Vietnamese stuffed some form of tobacco. The Vietnamese then lit the pipe and in one breath, inhaled the entire contents of the pipe causing Don to cough. The Vietnamese laughed at Don’s inept procedures. The person crudely inquired as to any injuries Don might have. Don pointed at his ribs and knee area (which were hurting from the fall from the trees the night before). They brought in a nurse-type of person who put iodine on those areas and a light bandage (obviously with little medical relief).

About 5 pm two uniformed officers arrived with a small contingent of soldiers (the first military people Don had seen). Outside the house in which Don had been held, a small group of villagers (from his village and several others) had formed. They formed a large circle and they took Don from the house in which he had been held and put him in the center of the circle of about 400-500 villagers. The senior military person carried a battery-operated bullhorn. There apparently wasn’t any electricity in the village. The senior officer used the bullhorn to stir up the crowd and they became agitated. Those in the crowd started yelling and screaming at Don and Don became worried as to their crowd-control. The sound rose to fever pitch, but then a particular message quieted everyone to a whisper. Those closest to Don, some 15-20 little old ladies, looked at Don and then crossed themselves. The women had few teeth; most likely because of the beetle-nut they chewed. Don was concerned that he was in a Christian village. About half of Vietnam had become Christian during the French occupation in the prior 100 years or so. He thought that crossing themselves was like giving the last rites.

Arrival in Hanoi; Goodbye Ben

Later that evening, they arrived in Hanoi at Hoa Loa prison (the “Hanoi Hilton”). The guards separated Ben and Don

and put them in different cells. Don didn’t see Ben for nearly five years until they moved into rooms next to each other in 1972. However, Don monitored Ben’s whereabouts and his condition through camp communication.

The guards put Don into a room by himself in a part of the Hanoi Hilton the Americans referred to as “Little Vegas.” An English-speaking North Vietnamese officer and some guards were present. The officer asked Don questions in English and he answered with the required “name, rank, serial number and date of birth” as required by the Geneva Convention. Of course that did not satisfy the officer and after a short time, the guards started to work him over with hitting, etc. They tied his arms tightly behind his back pulling the shoulders together until they touched. They put screw-cuffs on his wrists and tightened the screws cutting off circulation. They put u-bolts around each ankle and long iron bar through the u-bolts which cut the circulation to the legs and ankles, all while they kept asking questions about Don’s unit, aircraft, etc. The guards kept hitting him, the pain was immense and after a while—not sure of exact time—they removed the “irons.” When his answers to the questions were still the same, they put the “hardware” back on and started in again. Over and over this went on. Don is not sure if he passed out during the process but at some point he surely did. The military had taught that if tortured, try to “lie, cheat, steal—anything to get rid of the pain, which he eventually did. That was OK for a while until they would catch him in a lie and then they would put the irons back on. Eventually Don says he must have given them enough misinformation, because they stopped the torture.

The next day was filled with more questioning—mostly about his family background, parents, their address, etc. Some “irons” were used but not as bad as the first night. They moved Don into a smaller cell of the “zoo” in a building Americans called the “office” with two cellmates—Bill Baugh and John Dramesi. Both were USAF captains. Bill had been shot down in December 1966 and John in April 1967. Don lived with them for the next year. The room was small (about 8x10 feet), had three raised wooden frames on which each put a small rice “mat”. They were given a mosquito net and a blanket for winter use or to use as a mattress in the hot summer (about nine months each year).

They were given a large can for use as a toilet and were allowed to empty it outside of their cell each day. Normally the three were allowed outside the cell once a day to bathe with cold water from a well inside the courtyard. Otherwise they were confined to their cell 24 hours a day. They could talk or whisper quietly. Although all three were USAF Captains, John was the senior of the three and Don the junior.

To be continued next issue

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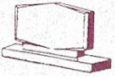
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THE LEGION POST

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November 15, 6:30 PM

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VISIT THE POST WEBSITE AT POST59.ORG Post e-mail [AmericanLegionPost59@ TDS.net](mailto:AmericanLegionPost59@TDS.net)
Editors Cliff Maerz and Tim Carter: C_Maerz@msn.com
