



THE LEGION POST



OTIS SAMPSON POST 59 STOUGHTON WI

POST WEBSITE: POST59.ORG

POST PHONE 608-205-9090

APRIL 2011

VOLUME 13 ISSUE 4

Commanders Report

2009-2010 OFFICERS

Post Commander

Sonny Swangstu

1st Vice Commander

Mike Griggs

2nd Vice Commander

Richard (Reb) Breyman

3rd Vice Commander

Wendell Ott

Adjutant

Dennis Rodenkirch

Finance

Don Helmke

Chaplain

Monte Whitford 873-4020

Historian

Odean Teigen

Sgt at Arms

Ken Schieldt

Service Officer

Bob Lloyd

Judge Advocate

Terry McArdle



Greetings,

Old man winter can go down the road anytime now! We need heat for or aching bones.

Here is a note from Pat Nowlin:

On Feb. 28th, the Memorial Day Planning Committee had its first meeting at the VFW. A good turnout was present. We went down the list of duties and many jobs were filled. Our next meeting will be held on March 28th at 6:30 at the VFW. There are still many details to work out and slots to fill, so please attend. If you have any questions or suggestions, please call Pat @ 873-3107 or

Sonny at 873-9428.

We need help. The Post parking lot is a real mess. The winter has really taken a toll on the black top. We definitely need to do something with it. I had a bid last year from a couple of paving companies that ranged from 35 to 50 thousand dollars to do the whole thing. Ouch!! Any ideas for fundraising would be greatly appreciated. So, I am counting on everyone to put their heads together and come up with some good ideas.

On a positive note, the Friday night fish fry seems to be booming. Thanks to the SAL boys, Auxiliary and Hospital gals for all their hard work. This also is helping the bar business in a big way. The meat raffles are a lot of fun also and the meat is excellent from Bill's Foods in Oregon.

I am looking for email addresses and birthday dates. I want to start putting dates in the newsletter for birthdays and on the bulletin boards

at the Post. Emails would be good so I can let you folks know more about what is going on at the Post. My email address is hemi-rt@charter.net. We also now have a huge bulletin board in the front hallway. Check out the postings when you walk through. As you know, we also have one in the back hallway. We are trying to keep the windows from being taped, as it is hard to clean off.

This month's dinner is stuffed pork chops and all the trimmings. Our attendance has been down this winter. Hopefully it will pick up as the weather straightens out.

Thank you,

Commander Sonny

Auxiliary News

Auxiliary

President

Linda Swangstu

1st Vice President

Lisa Olson

Secretary

Lynn Robertson

Treasurer

Rita Sperry

Chaplain

Marlene Bierman

Sgt at Arms

Mary Copley



Hello,

Well, the first robin has been sighted and what a wonderful sign of spring! Our spirits will be lifted tremendously when we can enjoy warm weather again and get outside and flex our muscles with yard work and gardening. The snowbirds will be coming back to Stoughton and we will have our American Legion going in full swing again.

Everyone is invited to the VFW for their Auxiliary's 80th birthday on March 26. Cocktails from 5 – 6:00 and dinner at 6:00. Cost is \$8.50. Please RSVP to 873-9042 or 877-1554. Come and celebrate for this milestone.

The onions sales are going good. Please place your orders by April 5th. We can now get 5# bags for \$6.00 as well as the 10# bags for \$10.00. We are hoping they will arrive early May. Everyone will be notified of the pickup date and hopefully we can get an ad in the Great Dane also.

Remember our Legion District #3 potluck and birthday on March 31st at our Post. Please bring a dish to pass and dinner will be served at 6:00. Denise Rohan will be present at this time. She is running for State Commander and is in the 3rd District (our District)

March is Community Service Month. You can make a difference in your community by volunteering a few hours or make a monetary donation to projects or activities. If we all work together, we can make a big difference in our community as well as providing a variety of service to veterans, their families and the youth of our community. The "Power of One" can make a difference.

Culvers in Stoughton are always helping with great fundraisers. On March 30th they will be benefiting for Project Lifesaver Program. This program provides transmitters to families who have loved ones that are at risk of wandering with cognitive disorders such as Alzheimer's or Autism. Have a lunch or night out and support this cause.

Please remember all volunteer hours need to be reported to Linda Swangstu by March 31st. I want to take this time to thank everyone for giving your precious time for helping out at the Post, the Auxiliary and Community.

Thank you

Linda Swangstu

President of the Auxiliary

CALENDER OF EVENTS

MARCH 2011

Mar 20- Legion Breakfast 7 - Noon

Mar 22- Legion Dinner 6:30pm

Mar 31- Dane County meeting @ 6:30pm
Stoughton. Potluck Legion Birthday.

THE PASTOR'S CAT

This particular story just made me laugh. Every time I think about it, the vision of that poor cat just amuses me to no end. Hope the story leaves a bright spot in your day. Whoever said the Creator doesn't have a sense of humor?

Dwight Nelson recently told a true story about the pastor of his church. He had a kitten that climbed up a tree in his backyard and then was afraid to come down. The pastor coaxed, offered warm milk, etc.

The kitty would not come down. The tree was not sturdy enough to climb, so the pastor decided that if he tied a rope to his car and pulled it until the tree bent down, he could then reach up and get the kitten.

That's what he did, all the while checking his progress in the car. He then figured if he went just a little bit further, the tree would be bent sufficiently for him to reach the kitten. But as he moved the car a little further forward, the rope broke.

The tree went 'boing!' and the kitten instantly sailed through the air – out of sight.

The pastor felt terrible. He walked all over the neighborhood asking people if they'd seen a little kitten. No. Nobody had seen a stray kitten. So he prayed, 'Lord, I just commit this kitten to your keeping,' and went on about his business.

A few days later he was at the grocery store, and met one of his church members. He happened to look into her shopping cart and was amazed to see cat food. This woman was a cat hater and everyone knew it, so he asked her, 'Why are you buying cat food when you hate cats so much?' She replied, 'You won't believe this,' and then told him how her little girl had been begging her for a cat, but she kept refusing. Then a few days before, the child had begged again, so the Mom finally told her little girl, 'Well, if God gives you a cat, I'll let you keep it.' She told the pastor, 'I watched my child go out in the yard, get on her knees, and ask God for a cat. And really, Pastor, you won't believe this, but I saw it with my own eyes. A kitten suddenly came flying out of the blue sky, with its paws outspread, and landed right in front of her.'

Never underestimate the Power of God and His unique sense of humor. Anyone can count the seeds in an apple; but only God can count the apples in a seed.

GIVE ME A SENSE OF HUMOR, LORD
GIVE ME THE GRACE TO SEE A JOKE
TO GET SOME HUMOR OUT OF LIFE
AND PASS IT ON TO OTHER FOLKS
AMEN!

APRIL-2011

Apr-5 Junior Meeting @ 7:00 pm

Apr-8 Fish Fry Waunakee (last one of the year)

Apr-9 Breakfast Post 501 Madison 8-noon

Apr-11 Post and Aux meeting 7:00 pm

Apr-15 Fish fry Post 481 Westport

Apr-17 Post breakfast (for BGS) 7am-12

Apr-26 Post dinner 6:30 pm

Apr-28 Dane county meeting @ Post 481 Westport

Apr-30 3rd District Spring meeting in Monticello Post
256 @ 8:00 am

Spring Conference Notes

We will start out Fri. evening at 7 p.m. at the Chalet Landhaus with Harold doing Face book. I have a block of rooms there for \$99.00, which includes a full breakfast buffet (not continental). Call 800-944-1716 and tell them you're with Legion. Deadline for reservations is April 13th. Second, and a little cheaper option, is Swiss Aire Motel which ranges from \$69-\$99 per night. Call 608-527-2138. Both are in New Glarus and it's as close as you get to Monticello for hotels.

Sat. registration is from 8 – 9 and will cost \$5.00; rolls and coffee will be provided. Training on Sat will be Russ Hanseter doing leadership; also I plan on doing a class on Legion history and etiquette. Everything else is the same i.e.; we will end with post everlasting so remind everyone to get started on their deceased members list. Encourage people to attend the March 22nd Dec for that will be our final meeting before the conference.

Just for Laughs

A little girl was sitting on her grandfather's lap as he read her a bedtime story. From time to time, she would take her eyes off the book and reach up to touch his wrinkled cheek. She was alternately stroking her own cheek, then his again. Finally she spoke up, Grandpa, did God make you? Yes, sweetheart' he answered, God make me a long time ago. Oh she paused, Grandpa, did God make me too? Yes indeed, honey, he said, God made you just a little while ago. Feeling their respective faces again, she observed, God's getting better at it, isn't he?

CHAPLAINS CORNER

SEEDS OF FAITH

Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a tiny seed that grew into a big tree. I have always liked this comparison because I have a garden, and for me, that takes a lot of faith.

Sometimes I plant seeds that are really, really tiny. I put on my reading glasses, open the seed packet, pour the seeds into my hand, and squint. "Plant the seeds six inches apart" says the seed packet. I can't even see them! How do I know if they are six inches apart as I drop a pinch on the ground? Most seeds are sort of dirt-colored and once they hit the dirt, I can't see them at all. "Cover the seeds with a quarter-inch of soil," says the packet. I scatter topsoil and just hope that where the topsoil hits the seeds it is quarter-inch thick because, honestly, I cannot see the seeds anymore. Not at all.

It takes faith for me to believe that the seeds I have planted will grow into fine plants. I trust, that God will grow increased faith in me, though I can't see that either. It takes hope to have faith.

Jesus when we pray "Your kingdom come," we pray that it comes to us, increase our faith. Amen

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

LEGION HALL AVAILABLE FOR RENTALS

The word is getting out regarding our hall rental. We are open for funeral luncheons, birthday parties, wedding receptions, family and class reunions, holiday parties, and anniversaries. We do have a portable dance floor as well. Book your dates now before our calendar gets full. We have a wonderful kitchen and bar. We can hold approximately 150 people in our dining area. For more information, contact **Linda Swangstu** at **608-873-9428** or **608-577-7428**.

Swangstu at **608-873-9428** or **608-577-7428**.

PICK AND SAVE ADVANTAGE CARD

There have been some questions about the transfer of the American Legion account number from the old card to the new Roundy's Reward card. When you get your new (Black Card) it might be advisable to check at the service desk and confirm that our account number has been transferred to the new card. The account number for the legion is 026625. This will insure that 1% of your purchases will be credited to the legion.

If you are not already a participant in this plan, please sign up. Just go to the service desk and show them your card. The legion appreciates your help and it doesn't cost you anything. Remember our account number is 026625.

STOUGHTON FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS

A NEW AUXILIARY Community Service Project

Beginning this month the Auxiliary will start collecting for the Stoughton Food Pantry. We will have a collection container at the Post and welcome all donations. The pantry is fully funded by donations. No tax dollars are used to purchase supplies. The need this year is greater than ever before. Just since February the number of people using the Food Pantry in Stoughton has almost doubled!

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

So please help us to help those in our own community who are in need by bringing in a few items each time you come to the Post for a dinner, a breakfast, a meeting or a drink in the lounge. If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Olson at 873-8924 or Linda Swangstu at 873-9428.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

2nd Annual
Vidalia
Onion Sale



Sponsored by American Legion
Post 59 Stoughton

10 lbs. for \$10.00
or 5 lbs. for \$6.00

Orders must be in by April 5th
Shipment/arrival expected in early May

To place your order, please contact:

Mary Curran	873-9463 or 513-8443
Evelyn Kahl	873-6852
Bob Lloyd	875-5926 or
Linda Swangstu	873-9428

Or stop by the Legion

Order early! Thank you for your support!



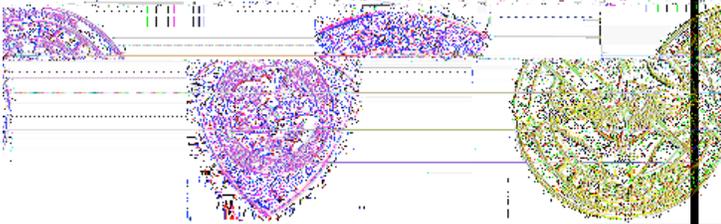
MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!
Wednesday March 30, 2011
10:30 AM to 10:00 PM

Culver's of Stoughton will be donating 10% of their profit during the above date and time to Friends of Project Lifesaver.

Project Lifesaver is a program used by the Dane County Sheriff's Office. The mission of Project Lifesaver is to use state of the art technology in assisting those who care for victims of Alzheimer's and other related neurological disorders and victims who become lost. These victims include the elderly and young children in our community who are afflicted with Down syndrome and Autism. Trained Dane County Deputies fit program participants with wristbands that emit an automatic tracking signal every second, 24-hours a day. If anyone fitted with the wristband should become lost or wander, deputies can utilize specialized tracking equipment to help find the lost child or adult. Friends of Project Lifesaver is a non-profit entity established to fund the program.



PLEASE join us on Wednesday March 30th. This is a great way to support Project Lifesaver and the best part for you is you get to enjoy great food and custard!! Pass the word along to your family and friends.



Canada sends its naval forces to aid the US in Afghanistan.



National Commanders Jimmie Foster's Incentive Program

I Am a Part of the "Lucky 7" Pin

Our National Commander will award his National Commander pin to any Legion family member who signs up at least two new members and renews 5 current members into The American Legion.

A "New Member" is defined as any eligible person joining the 2011 membership year who was not member of The American Legion during the 2010 membership year.

The program ends on June 30, 2011 so lets see how many of our post members can get this pin. A list of renewal names will be available at the next monthly post meeting.

Any questions contact,
 Dennis Rodenkirch
 608-438-8768
 rc0295@yahoo.com

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Veterans Corner

LENNIE SWINGEN

NAVY

1945-1946

By Evelyn Kahl



"Lennie" as he is known to all Stoughtonites was born August 7, 1916 in Stoughton WI. He attended school in Stoughton and graduated from high school in 1935 and immediately started working full time at the Courier Hub Publisher in Stoughton. He worked their part time during his last year in high school. He also had a paper route, which he delivered daily after school.

After working at the Courier Hub for quite some time, Lennie tried to enlist into the Air Corps, but he didn't pass the entrance exam. Later he was given the chance at the exam again, but he was drafted before that happened.

He entered the service in March 1945 at the age of 25 and served his country during WWII for one year when he was discharged at Great Lakes in April 1946. He was discharged at the rank of Seaman 2nd Class. He had earned the WWII Medal and the South Pacific Area Award.

After his discharge, he immediately began working for the Courier Hub again and continued there until 1955. He worked there for 20 years. He applied and was hired at the Straus Printing Office in Madison. He retired from there in 1983. Lennie married his wife, June in 1941 and they had one daughter, Lynn.

Lennie has been a Life Member of the American Legion for 64 years and a Life Member of the VFW Post 328 for 6 yrs.

Lennie was very good at writing letters and stories. Not only did he write the story for the newsletter, but wrote 256 letters home during his year in service.

The follow is an account of Lennie's experiences taken from a diary in which he daily recorded his memories while serving time in the Navy. His story begins with:

Dear Readers: by Leonard Swingen

I keep telling Evelyn Kahl that my time in the service was more or less uneventful, but she is a very persistent lady so be prepared to be bored to death.

Before I go any further I want to give a great big thank you to all the ladies, men and school children who gave us service men and ladies treats like candy, fruits and other goodies when our troop train stopped in their area. On the way to Seattle, WA, we stopped occasionally to get out and stretch our legs. This "thank you" is to all of you wherever you are. But now I'm ahead of my story of time in the service, so let's go back and start at the beginning.

I kept a diary from my first day in service to my discharge day; I can refer to it for continuity. I was one of seven brothers serving in World War II and now belong to both the VFW and American Legion.

On the train leaving Madison to the Milwaukee induction center I met several fellows from the Stoughton area and among them was Orin Kaupanger, Rufus Swerig and Berge and others. Orin Kaupanger and I were sworn into the Navy that very afternoon and boarded the North shore train for the Great Lakes Naval Training Center. After receiving our mothball smelling gear, can you imagine us sleeping on the floor on a thin sleeping bag among a bunch of other recruits? As all service personnel know, that is only the start of forever standing in lines up to

the day of discharge! After ten weeks of Boot Camp training at the Great Lakes Naval Center, we had 9 days leave and those days went awfully fast.

On July 2, 1945 we left Milwaukee on a troop train and arrived at the receiving station in Seattle on July 5th. We got out stretching our legs several times along the way and that is when we received those much-appreciated treats. For meals on the troop train, the kitchen cars were located in the center of the train, so we had to line up and file through the train kitchen, then about-faced and picked up our own meals on the way back. We slept in triple berths.

After spending about 20 days in the receiving station in Seattle where the food was terrific, pork chops the size of a plate; we were transferred to Bremerton, WA. This was the Puget Sound Navy Yard. They would repair large battleships, aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers, L5T and all Navy crafts. After spending about a week there, we moved our gear above the aircraft carrier Bunker Hill. Here again, it was a little difficult to get use to sleeping in such close and compact sleeping quarters. After the workmen finished the repairs on the ship, we went on a shakedown cruise up and down the Puget Sound to check everything out since they had added several new gun pods on the sides of the ships. We also tested our guns. I was a loader on the 20 MM guns.

I have to mention at this time, this was after the Bunker Hill had been hit by two Japanese suicide Kamikaze pilot attacks. Several hundred lives were lost and a lot of damage was done. The ship limped back to Bremerton. The Bunker Hill carried about 80 planes and 60-70 pilots besides the crew on the ship of over three thousand. The planes were Corsair fighter planes. After our shakedown cruise, we went back to the Sound and four planes landed on our flight deck. Our full complement of planes and pilots were picked up later in Alameda, CA.

By a strange coincidence, it was at this time that I met an officer on board the Bunker Hill by the name of Stan Gabert. When Stan went into service, his wife who was Marion Quirt Gabert was working at the Hub Office the same time I was. Her dad was Harold Quirt, publisher of the Hub paper. Stan had been on the ship when it was hit and later opted for land duty. I kept sailing down the coast and enjoying the beautiful sun rising and setting. We were in sight of land all the time and I saw little villages, curls of smoke, ship in the coves and lighthouses. When we picked up our pilot to bring us into port, it was very foggy. We had lookouts on the bow as well as foghorns blasting away.

One incident I won't forget ever was the fairly close call we had there. I was standing in the bow of the ship when another ship appeared to my left side. It was probably 100 yards to the side, but close enough to see that it was a C.V.E. Carrier loaded with TBY planes. That was close enough for me and I would have hated to have been a wartime casualty in friendly territory. No problem as all of the ships had radar. Then a short time later, the Golden Gate Bridge appeared and it looked like it wasn't high enough to clear our superstructure, but there was plenty of room to spare. After that, it cleared up and the sun shone brightly. The tugs then gave us their welcoming blasts. We tied up alongside the USS Saratoga Carrier and the Hornet. After three days of loading supplies and planes, we headed for Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

On the way over, we had gunnery practice and flight operations for four days. Two Corsairs collided in midair. A wing was broken off one of them, so it fell and hit the sea like it hit a brick wall. Obviously, the pilot died. The other plane managed to make a fair landing and was picked up by the destroyer that was with us. He was later transferred onto our ship. The flight operations included two nighttime landings for each plane. There were several wave off's, but most of the landings were pretty good except this plane which caught a cable kind of crossways and it threw the plane against the five inch gun turret. The plane split right in half just ahead of the cockpit. The pilot climbed out by himself unhurt, but was taken

Cont. PG 6

Cont.from 5

to sickbay for a checkup. After some important parts were taken off the plane, it went over the side the next morning. The gun turret had only a few scratches.

The war was over with the Japanese by the time we got to Pearl Harbor, so after leaving off some of the pilots and personnel plus taking 1500 soldiers back to Seattle, WA. My station was in the 20 MM gun pod just off and along side of the flight deck, so I could see the planes taking off and landing. I could also see when we left land and approached land. It took 6 hours to reach the Puget Sound Straits. They are 90 miles long and it took us 6 hrs to get back to Seattle.

It did not take long to trim the ship crew down to a skeleton crew. My luck ran out as they ran down the alphabet and my name was picked to stay on the ship for two more trips to Guam and Saigon to return service personnel to the States. In the meantime, we went back up the Straits so that the 90 planes could fly off. The workmen proceeded to put in bunks five and six high in the hanger deck so between these bunks and the ship compartment we had room for over 3,000 soldiers a trip. It took 17 days to get to Guam and then on to Saipan another 17 days to get back plus time loading and unloading Navy and soldier personnel and supplies.

One of the trips, we ran into a huge storm. Now the Bunker Hill is a large ship and it takes a big wave to rock the ship, but it was certainly rocking that night! As my luck, it seems is always bad, I drew into boat duty that night. If anyone had fallen overboard that night and would have to put the boat out, there would have been a whole boatload of casualties.

One of my trips back from Guam, I was going to our ships store I walked past a couple of fellows sitting on the ships bunks. I took two steps and then stopped, look back and sure as heck, I know them!! It was Sammy Martin, an aviation mechanic on Guam and originally from Stoughton and Charlie Root who was on tugboat duty in Saigon. He was also from Stoughton. Sammy and I see each other once a month at the VFW for lunch with some old high school graduates and we reminisce about that trip.

Now this memory story has gone on quite long, but blames it onto the persistence of Evelyn Kahl! I will end the article with a quote, not mine – "Being a survivor at war's end was a gift to be treasured."

Thank You

Thank you to everyone for your prayers, cards, letters and phone calls during my stay ay St. Mary's and my recuperation at home. I am making steady progress.

Mange Tusen Tak



Bud Erickson



**Vote Bob Lloyd
Post 59 Commander**

Biography: 18 years in the American Legion Post 59, 2 yrs. Post Finance Officer, 4 yrs. Post Service Officer, instrumental in sending out over 500 care packages to troops, held many Post and committee leadership positions, ie: 2006 State Convention Corporation Secretary, Building Committee Chairman, Fundraising Committee, several years on the Memorial Day Committee, as well as the Post Executive Committee. Held lead positions on the 2005 Tornado Benefit Committee and the Ash Guiles Benefit Committee being the Master of Ceremonies for both events. Started the American Legion Riders chapter in District 3. 2yrs. as the District 3 American Legion Riders Vice President, 2yrs. as the American Legion Riders District 3 President, 2yrs as the American Legion Riders State President. Through these leadership positions I have learned to run effective and informative meetings. Have attended all Post, County, District, and State meetings, conferences and conventions for the last five years.

Goals: I need to be clear on one issue from the beginning of this adventure. I am not running for Post Commander to get that darn Sonny out-a-there. Sonny is a good man and I respect him.

I am running for commander for more personal reasons. I feel I am ready personally to step up and do the job. I would be honored to lead Post 59 into a difficult future. I know with my experience in the American Legion that I have the leadership skills, event planning skills, and management skills to be a great benefit to our Post.

Years ago, Post 59 was the crown jewel of the Wisconsin American Legion. With being homeless for 5 years to buying a building to getting it up and operational, I feel we have lost our focus on the programs and issues of the American Legion. My goal is to get us on the road back to crown jewel status by improving the Post's knowledge of the American Legion and it's programs, improve the Post officers knowledge of their respective positions, and improve the overall communication to the Post membership.

My motto is and has always been- Information is the key to organization.

All of us working together is essential for our success.

There is no such thing as too much information. Too little information can severely limit our success. I will improve that!

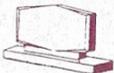
Please support your Post's younger, knowledgeable and talented members. Come down to the Post election meeting on Monday, May 9, 2011 at 7:00 pm and:

Vote Bob Lloyd Post Commander

THE LEGION POST

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