



THE LEGION POST

OTIS SAMPSON POST 59 STOUGHTON, WI
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VOLUME 14 ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2012

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



Holiday Greetings,

Wow – soon it will be 2012. Are you ready to turn the calendar?

A reminder to all regarding our Post raffle: tickets are going fast and you have until January 24 to purchase. The next Post dinner will be the drawing. The money prizes are super and the remainder will go toward the building fund. Tickets are available at the Post lounge, and from Post officers, Auxiliary, SAL, or Legion

Riders. Support American Legion Post 59!

Sorry about not having the New Year's Prime Rib Dinner this year. Help is busy with many other projects now at the Post. The addition is coming along. All the drywall work is nearly done and painting is next on the list. Any suggestions for furnishings would be great, so let us know.

Membership Chairman, Dennis Rodenkirch, stated our dues collection is lagging a bit. The Post is willing to help out if you are having a problem with paying. We want our entire membership to remain and we welcome new members. We need to be 100% paid up as soon as possible. Thanks in

advance!

Come to the Legion and celebrate New Year's Eve with us and enjoy some good music and company. The Ladies Auxiliary (article by Linda below) has the details.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year! Drive safely in your holiday traveling.

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



Christmas Greetings,

Talk about wonderful winter so far except for those who like winter sports. I guess we all did when we were younger. I hope everyone has been good this year or Santa will pass you by.

It seems it is impossible to keep the hall clean with all the construction going on. Keep selling those raffle tickets, so we can complete this project. Just think of all the room we will have when it is finished and we hope the Legion will be booming better than ever.

I would like to thank everyone who has been working so hard at the Friday Night Fish Fries. We have several children, grandchildren, and adults helping out in the kitchen and serving. It has been quite a task for me to find workers each week. Starting in January, each group of the Legion Family will take their turns at finding help for their week. We have fun working together so come and volunteer three hours of your time to help out. We need to keep paying those bills to keep our Post running smoothly and also to be able to help our cause which is

to "help support our Veterans and Community".

We will not have a Prime Rib Dinner on New Year's Eve. We are having music from 8:00 pm – 1:00 am. Early eve (6:00 pm) people can order BBQ's, French fries, or pizza. Later in the evening we will furnish snacks, champagne, and party favors. We would like a good turn out from our members, so come out and help us celebrate the New Year!

The Auxiliary has donated \$200 to the Quilting by the River sewing group. This year they distributed 53 quilts on Veteran's Day to the VA Hospital. They have set a goal of 60 for 2012. How terrific is that??? You are wonderful hard-working ladies! Thank you from the American Legion and Auxiliary!

We would also like to thank Mary and Traci Lloyd for doing all the Christmas shopping for the three families the Post sponsored in the Host a Family Program. The Auxiliary donated \$175 to this program. Job well done!

There will be no Auxiliary meeting in January.

Have a Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year!

Linda Swangstu
Auxiliary President

CALENDER OF EVENTS

December 31 - Northern Lights

8:00 pm – 1:00 am

January 15 - Legion Breakfast – 7:00 am

January 24 - Legion Dinner - 6:30 pm

Event Pricing

Post Dinner: 6:30 pm \$11.00

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



In the News

Mary Lloyd has been confirmed as the Vice Chairman of the 2011-2012 American Legion National Distinguished Guests Committee. Her term runs from October 12, 2011 to October 18, 2012. Mary was nominated by NEC Man David Gough. Congratulations to Mary!

The new address for the National Personnel Records Center is:

National Personnel Records Center
1 Archives Drive
St Louis MO 63138-1002

The improved on-line request process should be used to request copies of your military records INSTEAD of Standard Form 180 at
<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>. If you don't want to use the Internet, you should use Standard Form 180. The link to the form is:
<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html>.

CHAPLAINS CORNER

WE CELEBRATE THE MAGI SEARCH
FOR CHRIST IN BETHLEHEM
LED BY A STAR AND DEVOTED FAITH
THEY WERE SENT BY GOD TO HIM

WITHOUT FEAR, THEY TRAVELED ON
UNTIL THERE QUEST WAS DONE
WITH JOY, RESPECT, AND HONOR,
THEY OFFERED GIFTS TO CHRIST, GOD'S
SON.

WE ALSO HAVE A DUTY
TO FOLLOW IN THAT QUEST
AND SEARCH FOR GOD IN ALL WE DO
HE WILL HELP US DO OUR BEST.

BE NOT AFRAID TO LIVE YOUR FAITH
GOD WILL LEAD THE WAY.
FOR AS YOU PURSUE AND FOLLOW HIM
PEACE AND JOY WILL FILL YOUR DAY.

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

Donald L. Heiliger
Colonel, USAF, (ret.)
 (Part 3)

Cheryl and wedding

Don had pretty well decided to stay in the military and was informed that he would get his choice of assignments and would also receive his first promotion (to Lt. Colonel) in the normal way. He asked for education and after several months recuperating, he was sent to Washington, D.C. to obtain a Master's degree at George Washington University in Latin American Studies (International Relations) on his way to an attaché assignment, yet to be chosen. In the mean time, Don met Cheryl and the two were engaged by the end of summer 1973 with a wedding date set for December 22, in Madison. Cheryl was also working on her Master's degree in Communicative Disorders, so they began their first two years of marriage, both at George Washington University earning their respective master degrees.

Meanwhile, Don applied for an attaché assignment in South America. The USAF selected the pair for Uruguay. They both had to attend additional language training in Spanish at the Foreign Service Institute of the State Department in Washington. Cheryl already had a minor in Spanish from her earlier degrees and Don had improved his Spanish, learned in Hanoi from other POWs. They arrived on station in Montevideo, Uruguay at the beginning of 1976. Don was now a Lt. Colonel. The two spent 2½ years successfully as the attaché in Montevideo. Due to changes in office staffing in Santiago, Chile, they were selected to move across the Andes to Santiago. Their Spanish was quite good by now and so they fit in very well in Chile.

Back to the USA and on to Israel

In late 1979, Don was asked by the Vice Chief-of-Staff of the USAF to come to the Pentagon and accept a position as the Chief of International Affairs. So, the two reluctantly left friends in Chile and set up home in their Capitol Hill townhouse in Washington, D.C. Cheryl was pregnant during the move and left Chile a couple of weeks ahead of Don and young Donald (Jr.) was born four days before Don left Chile. In the meantime Don had made Colonel and managed the International Affairs office for two years. After two years, Don was asked to be the Director of Defense Intelligence and to accept a third attaché position, this time to Israel. Don and Cheryl arrived in Tel Aviv, Israel in August 1982. The Heiliger's spent three years in Tel Aviv as the Defense and Air Attaché—the senior ranking U.S. military representative to Israel. After three years in Israel, with Cheryl, Don, Jr. and nine-month old twins Dan and Dave—who were

born in Israel—Don decided to retire and the family returned to Washington, D.C. for the retirement ceremony ending 30 years in the USAF.

Retirement and civilian life

The Heiliger's set up home in their townhouse of nearly 15 years on Capitol Hill. Don worked for an industrial marketing firm for 2 ½ years. Then they decided to move the family back to Wisconsin to "raise the boys". They purchased a 42-acre farmette in Dunkirk, outside of Stoughton, in 1992. Don entered local politics. He ran for and was elected Dane County District 35 Supervisor, a position he held for 12 years. During his supervisor years, he served as Chairman of the Public Protection and Judiciary Committee for six years and on Personnel and Finance for two years. He served for 10 years as a trustee to Madison Area Technical College (MATC). He also served for 14 years as a trustee to the Dunkirk Dam Lake District.

During this time, Don was also elected to four terms as Town Clerk of Dunkirk, working until 2000. In 2003, he was again appointed Clerk to fill a vacancy in the township, leaving that post in April 2005.

In 2005, Don was elected as a trustee to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, headquarters in Mankato, MN. Don is currently serving his second three-year term.

The three boys (Donald, Jr., Daniel, and David) all obtained their bachelor degrees at the UW in Madison. Don, Jr. earned a degree in industrial engineering and has worked with Accenture, Inc. living in New York City with his wife, Shannon. Dan and Dave both obtained a master degree in accounting and are employed by local accounting firms as CPA's—Dan as an auditor and Dave as a tax specialist. Cheryl retired from teaching at Western Koshkonong Lutheran School and continues to serve as a full-time organist for Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Madison. Don is a senior pilot with over 1,000 flying hours as a pilot and more than 2,000 hours as a navigator

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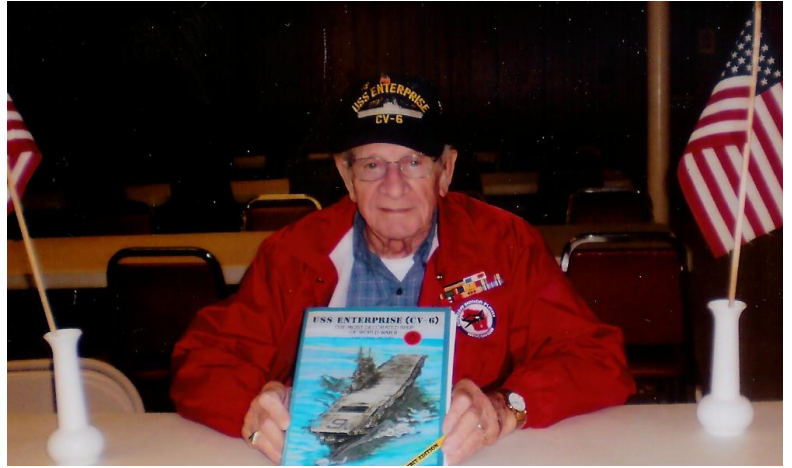
Membership Report

As of December 10, we stand at 92% have renewed their dues. If you haven't paid your dues by the end of December, you will be considered late. Please renewal today if you haven't.

We have 10 new members who have transferred in from either the State holding post AD-2930 or other posts. Welcome to all of them!

Orland Elvekrog
Paul Rodgers
Bernald Hron
William Ray
Paul Splitter
Philip Peterson
Donald Dobeck
Donald Gruenberg
John Jay

Thanks,
Dennis Rodenkirch



HERMAN W. THEILER



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Sunday: 11:30 am – 6 pm or later

Wednesday Ladies Night

\$.50 off any Ladies drinks



HERMAN W. THEILER

Herman Theiler was born in New Glarus, WI on March 13, 1923. He received his early education in New Glarus and graduated from New Glarus High School in 1941.

After his graduation from High School, he enrolled in a course of avionics, (the beginning of his vocational training.) After completion Herman was sent to Seattle, WA where he was involved with building B-17 aircraft. Herman and four of his buddies were engaged in the building of these, but Herman's was the only one that registered with the King County Draft Board in Seattle. He was employed soon after registering by Boeing Aircraft and shortly after he was drafted. However, he was granted 14 deferments before he was drafted out of Seattle in April at the age of 20.

One hundred draftees were inducted at this time and only four were accepted into the U.S. Navy. He was sent to Boot Camp Farragut, ID at the Naval Training Station (NTS) where he spent four months in training. He entered boot camp as a Seaman Apprentice and after four months of training he advanced to Seaman 1st class.

He was then shipped to the Bremerton Navy Yards in Washington State and was told he would be assigned to the USS *Enterprise* CV-6 that became the most decorated ship of World War II. Some facts concerning the USS *Enterprise* were that 873 men lost their life; the ship was attacked various times by organized Kamikaze suicide attacks, and as a result of damage from these attacks, it was necessary for the *Enterprise* to retire for temporary repairs. In spite of these extensive damages, the *Enterprise* was back in action in a few short weeks. The final record of the *Enterprise* in the Pacific was 911 Japanese planes shot down by the ship's guns and planes, 71 enemy ships sunk by her pilots, another 102 ships damaged or probably sunk, and vast damage to enemy shore installations. The enemy had damaged the ship 16 times with hits and near misses causing structural damage. The Japanese claimed it sunk on six different occasions. Actually, the ship had never been inoperative while accumulating 18 of possible 22 combat stars for carriers in the Pacific Theatre. The *Enterprise* had steamed more than 275,000 miles in pursuit of our foe and had recorded some 54,000 plane landings. Is it any wonder why she required the title of "The more decorated ship of World War II"?

Herman's first assignment on the *Enterprise* was on the hanger deck. He was assigned to "mess duty" for several months where he made 3rd Class and soon was promoted to Master of Arms, 3rd Class Petty Officer. He was assigned to keep order in the chow lines.

After serving in this capacity for some time, he was

sent back to the hanger deck and put on the Plane Handling Crew. Here he was responsible for helping to get aircraft ready for takeoff. There was room for 50 planes on the ship and the planes were to be inspected, gotten into shape, and lined up for takeoff. Some never came back. When the planes did come back damaged, too damaged to repair, parts were taken off that could be salvaged and the remaining parts went overboard. There were three different kinds of planes on the *Enterprise*: fighter planes, torpedo planes, dive bombers.

The Navy crew members were allowed to leave the ship only a day at a time, very infrequently. While serving on the ship, no registered combat injuries were recorded, although there were close calls during some of the attacks.

Herman completed the Navy Training Course in March 1945 aboard the *Enterprise*. His highest rank during this time in the service was Aviation Machinist Mate, Propeller Mechanic, 2nd Class Ammo. Herman served almost three years and was stationed on the ship for most of that time. The *Enterprise* was involved in 20 battles and Herman was in 13 from April 1943 to fall 1945.

One of Herman's most memorable experiences included a Kamikaze attack by a Japanese pilot. The No.1 elevator was hit. Herman was lying on the deck right next to the elevator. The only thing between Herman and the elevator was a 1" thick steel wall. Shrapnel was flying nearby, but Herman was missed. However, two seamen died: one was hit by shrapnel and the other was hit in the head by a falling drinking fountain.

Herman reserved the following medals: Asiatic Pacific Area Campaign Medal – 11 stars, American Area Campaign Medal, Philippine Liberation Medal – 2 stars, World War II Victory Medal, President Unit Citation, Combat Action Ribbon, Navy Unit Commendation, and Philippine President Unit Citation.

Herman was discharged from the U.S. Navy in Bremerton, WA on February 10, 1946 and returned to New Glarus, his hometown. He went to work as a mechanic at the Chevrolet garage in New Glarus. He later was employed at a floor covering business in Stoughton and then became a salesman for Seybold's Floor Covering in Madison, retiring in 1988.

In 1946 he married Pauline Horner. They have two children, Paul living in Oklahoma and Cathy who works at the Stoughton Clinic.

Herman has lived in Stoughton for 63 years. He is a member of the American Legion and, since 1994, a Life Member of the VFW. He is proud to have served his country and also proud to have served on the USS *Enterprise*.

(Herman's picture is on previous page.)

Continued from page 3

His military decorations and awards include:

Silver Star with one oak leaf cluster; the two are for Vietnam. The first was for an air raid over North Vietnam, single-aircraft in April 1967, very heavy anti-aircraft fire. The second Silver Star was awarded for gallantry May 29, 1969.

Legion of Merit with one oak leaf cluster; The first Legion of Merit was awarded for time as a POW in N. Vietnam from May 1967-May 1970. The second Legion of Merit was awarded for work as the Chief of International Affairs in the Office of the Vice-Chief of Staff, USAF from Aug. 1979-Aug. 1981.

Defense Superior Service Medal; awarded for Don's role as the Defense and Air Attaché in Tel Aviv from July 1982-Aug. 1985.

Defense Meritorious Service Medal; awarded in Sept. 1979 for service from Jan. 76 to July 78.

Air Medals with two oak leaf clusters; were awarded for flying combat missions over N. Vietnam 1966 and 1967.

Air Force Commendation Medal; awarded for meritorious achievement in performance of highly classified duties as a POW.

Purple Heart with one oak leaf cluster; first was awarded for wounds Don received on May 15, 1967, the day of shoot down. The second for wounds incurred as a result of a hostile foreign force during the time period of May 15, 1967 to Feb. 18, 1973.

Prison of War Medal; awarded after repatriation in 1973 for the nearly six years as a POW in N. Vietnam.

Vietnam Service Medal with eight service stars; awarded for all the various years/campaigns in Vietnam (1966-73).

1978 received **Chilean pilot wings** when he was Attaché to Chile.

Also in 1978, received **Uruguayan pilot wings** when he was Air Attaché to Uruguay.

Don is a Distinguished Graduate of both pilot and navigator training. Both he and his wife Cheryl, speak fluent Spanish and fair Hebrew.

Don is a life member of the following organizations:

NAM-POW's, Inc.

American Ex-Prisoners of War (former Commander of the local Badger Chapter)

The Military Order of the Purple Heart (former Commander of Chapter 165)

Veteran of Foreign Wars

Disabled American Veterans

Am-Vets

WI Vietnam Veterans

Red River Valley Fighter Pilot's Association

He is also a long-time member of the American Legion

and the Military Officer's Association of America. He has worked with several Stoughton area charitable projects including helping to raise funds for Stoughton Hospital's capital campaign: "A Cornerstone of Community Health." Don was an original member of the Mandt Park Community Center steering committee that built a combination ice rink and community center and later served on its board of director until mid-1997. From 2001 to 2005, he served as chairman of the Boundary Agreement Committee of the Town of Dunkirk attempting to work out a boundary agreement between the township and the city of Stoughton.

Don states, "I don't consider the six years I spent as a POW wasted. I think it has helped make the rest of my life much more meaningful."

Submitted by Evelyn Kahl

Author's note: Don is very proud to have served his country during a difficult time in America's history. Don does not regret his 30 years spent in the USAF. May God Bless You! Thank you for sharing your interesting story and being here to tell about it.



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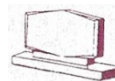
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Come Join Us for Dinner



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HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 2012 MEMBERSHIP DUES?

Bone-in Ham with Scalloped Potatoes
January 24, 6:30 PM

DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES THE 8TH OF EACH MONTH

VISIT THE POST WEBSITE AT POST59.ORG Post e-mail [AmericanLegionPost59@ TDS.net](mailto:AmericanLegionPost59@TDS.net)
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