



THE LEGION POST

Quarterly Newsletter

OTIS SAMPSON POST 59

803 North Page Street - STOUGHTON, WI



POST WEB SITE: www.post59.us



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August/September/October
2021

SONNY SWANGSTU RETIRES AS COMMANDER OF AMERICAN LEGION POST 59

After thirteen years as Commander of American Legion Post 59, Sonny Swangstu has retired from the leadership post. The 81-year-old Air Force veteran has held the position since taking over from past commander, Bill Redepenning, in 2008.



Michael Currie takes the reigns as Sonny Swangstu retires

Archie Christensen, also an Air Force veteran, and long-time membership chairman of Post 59, says, "Sonny's actions, as commander, have given our post many improvements that will have a lasting effect on the posts future".

After graduating from Stoughton High School, Sonny signed a contract to play professional baseball as a pitcher with the Washington Senators. After an arm injury cut short his professional baseball career, he joined the United States Air Force where he served for four years, mostly in the country of Libya. Upon his return, he joined American Legion Post 59 where he has been a steady influence on membership and growth.

Sonny took over as commander of Post 59, which currently has a membership of 376, shortly after the Post had purchased the present home at 803 North Page Street. As not only the leader, but also the worker, the 48-year American Legion member hit the ground running. The first major project he took on was remodeling the building and tearing up the floor to install an up-to-date drainage system. His latest project, finished on July 18 of this year, was complete remodeling of the kitchen pantry, including the installation of new shelving and cupboards. In between, he worked continuously making improvements not only to the physical plant, but also to the services rendered by the post to the Stoughton community.

Other major projects: Sonny singlehandedly built the new, enlarged, more efficient bar. He was responsible for getting the outdoor Tiki bar built, the garage addition, improvements to the bathrooms, front and back entryways, the smoker addition, and the cooler area. He helped organize the Sons of American Legion. He was responsible for purchasing the van which is used by the Post 59 Funeral Honor Guard, of which Sonny is an active member.

Of all the things to feel good about, Sonny says, "the building of the Stoughton Area Veterans Memorial Park was the project I feel best about". When the veteran's memorial park committee was formed, Sonny approached Oscar and Shirley Linnerud about purchasing land for the memorial. A few weeks later, the Linneruds donated the three acres upon which the memorial now stands. Sonny then served on the construction committee from 2014 and is still on that committee. He was recognized for his efforts by being named Stoughton Area Volunteer of The Year in 2017.

Next on the "feel good" list, Sonny says, "Being elected as commander for 13 years by my fellow comrades, and bettering the post, in general. The Post is a good, safe place to gather; we have gained membership, and we are free of debt".

Lastly, Sonny wishes to thank all those fellow veterans and community members who have helped him and the Post.

Jim Oler, ex-marine, and current Post 59 finance officer for the past eleven years, sums it up. "Sonny accomplished a lot as our commander, not as a delegator, but as a hands-on type of person. He will be dearly missed. Enjoy your retirement, my friend".

Submitted By: Bud Erickson

Commander's Report



Greetings everyone,

I hope everyone is doing well!! Hopefully, we are getting back to some kind of normalcy, and it keeps on going.

I wanted to introduce myself to all of you as your new Post 59 Commander. First of all, I want to thank Commander Sonny for his 13 years as Post Commander and his many accomplishments. I also want to thank everyone who supported me for this position and continues to support the important mission of our Post.

A little bit about me, I was born and raised in Madison graduating from Central High School in 1967. In January 1968 I enlisted in the US Navy and went to Great Lakes Naval Training Center for Boot Camp. Upon completion I was assigned to the Destroyer Escort USS Parle and later assigned to Treasure Island Naval Base in San Francisco. Later that year I volunteered for duty in Vietnam and was then sent to several bases for additional training prior to shipping out. I arrived in DaNang Vietnam in May of 1969 and was assigned to River Security and Taskforce Clearwater patrolling the Perfume River based at Tan My, just south of the city of Hue. After our base was closed down in early 1970, I was reassigned to Small Craft Repair Facility in DaNang. I returned home in June 1970.

CONTINUED>>>>

Upon returning to Madison, I attended Madison Area Technical College and graduated with an Associate Degree in Commercial and Graphic Art.

I worked for 30 years for the State of Wisconsin retiring in 2011.

In 1993, my wife Kimberly and I decided to move to Stoughton and built our home. We raised two children, Lauren and Kevin and have two beautiful granddaughters. I joined the American Legion in 2011 and also hold a lifetime membership in the Stoughton VFW. I'm honored to also be a member of Post 59's Honor Guard. I'm a member of Vietnam Veterans of America and Mobile Riverine Force Association.

I look forward to serving the members and customers of Post 59 and I'm excited to work together to serve our veterans and our community as well.

In the next few months we will be working to bring back our monthly breakfast and dinners and plan on August for our Breakfast to start and to have our monthly dinners to begin in September. Don't forget that our Tiki Bar is now open with limited hours, so come on down relax and have a beverage.

**Michael Currie
Commander - Post 59**

Contact Information for Post 59

Post 59 Email:
alpost59@gmail.com

Michael Currie – Commander
PH: (608) 712-6747
Email: Michaelcurrie@charter.net

Bob Lloyd – Legion Membership
PH: (608) 873-5926
CELL: (608) 219-3086 messages or texts
Email: Lloyd2364@sbcglobal.net

Jim Oler – Finance Officer
PH: (608) 347-4407
Email: oller8888@gmail.com

Amy Hermes – ALA President
PH: (608) 516-8720
Email:
AHermes@stoughtonhealth.com

Bob Hocking – SAL Commander
PH: (608) 206-6980
Email: sonsofthelegion59@gmail.com
Email: bobghocking@gmail.com

Dean Stenjem – Newsletter Editor
PH: (608) 516-0071
Email: 59legionpost@gmail.com
Email: deanstenjem@charter.net

Hall Rentals

Hall Rentals are back at Post 59

For More Information please contact Sherry Leick @ post59hallrental@gmail.com or go to our website @ Post 59-Otis Sampson American Legion Stoughton/Hall Rental Information



Auxiliary News Unit 59



Greetings all~

I am honored and thrilled to be the incoming President for the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 59. I want to thank Cathy Rigdon for her leadership and mentorship over the past five years and I hope I can continue to add to the many accomplishments she has been able to achieve!

Our Executive Committee met in June to begin discussing events and projects for the upcoming year. Our Executive Committee members are Dawn Clark, Randi Hanson, Lisa Olson, Anna Paul, Sherry Leick, Donna Strandlie, Cathy Rigdon and myself.

Our Chaplain, Anna Paul, shared exciting news with the Executive Committee. Her grandson, Garrett Clark, received one of The American Legion's Americanism and Government Scholarships. Garrett is a sophomore attending Green Lake High School which is in District 6.

On July 15th we were honored to join with our Post Honor Guard once again in the raising and lowering the flags at the Dane County Fair.

During August & September we will be hosting a Diaper Shower! The Madison Veteran's Administration at the VA Hospital is looking for diaper donations to support veterans and their newborn babies. We will be collecting diapers in size one & newborn and also baby wipes. (No blankets are being accepted at this time.) Watch for our collection container in the hall. We hope you will be able to help us out.

On Saturday, September 18th our Unit is hosting an "ALA IN THE KNOW" Conference at our Post 59. It is an honor to have been selected as one of six Posts in Wisconsin to host this event. Auxiliary members from all around the state will be attending. Space is limited, so if you are interested in attending and learning more about the ALA, please contact us very soon and we will get you registered. **CONTINUED>>>>>>**



AUXILIARY UNIT 59 MEMBERSHIP AWARD



Our Auxiliary received the 2021 Membership Award "TRAVELING TEA SERVICE" at the Third District Spring Conference in April. We received this award for having achieved the greatest percentage of membership increase between November of the current membership year and the same time of the previous year. We will proudly display this beautiful tea service in our cabinet in the hall for the next year. There are 47 other auxiliaries in the Third District and our unit is the third largest. We were also able to reach 94% of our membership goal this year with 141 members renewing and adding 3 new members during Covid!

The 2022 Dues Renewal process has now begun. With your help we will continue to grow as we serve our veterans, support our Post and our community.

- Dawn Clark & Lisa Olson

Auxiliary News- Continued

Our 8th Annual Chicken & Biscuit Dinner has been scheduled for Saturday, October 23rd. Save the date!

Our Unit's membership is currently 143 strong and growing. We have 129 Senior Members and 14 Juniors. On August 13th, our member Terry King will be celebrating her 100th birthday!! Terry has been a member of the American Legion Auxiliary in Stoughton for 67 years since 1955. She was the Treasurer of our Unit for many years. Terry along with many other Stoughton women over the past 100 years have paved the way for us to continue to serve our veterans, military, and their families.

Amy Hermes – Unit 59 President



**Sons of the American
Legion Report**

Squadron 59



Congratulations to Michael Currie on being elected Commander of American Legion Post 59 and to Amy Hermes as Auxiliary President. I look forward to working alongside to achieve our common goals. Thank you does not seem to be enough to express our gratitude to Sonny and Cathy.

The more things change, the more they stay the same. That seems to be the case after our recent officer's election for The Sons of the American Legion, Squadron 59. Seven of eight positions remained the same, with the only change being the addition of Rob York as the Squadron Historian. Rob has taken on a lot of extra duties at the Post as of late and we are happy to have him working with us as an officer. The remaining line up consists of Dean Stenjem as 1st Vice Commander, Dean has also taken on a full list of extra responsibilities at the Post, and I am extremely grateful that he still has time to assist in the SAL. Dick Budden was voted in and returns as 2nd Vice Commander. Dick has been battling health issues, but we are looking forward to getting him back soon. Bob Crofoot returns as Sgt. at Arms. Bob has been highly active and a big help through the times we have been able to participate in any of the programs we have been involved with. Jim Oler maintains his position as Finance officer. I don't know how Jim does it, his energy level is admirable. He keeps going, and going, and going. Jim is a true professional. Roger Strandlie maintains his position as Adjutant, I do not know where we would be without Roger, he is a key member of squadron 59 and I don't believe I've ever heard him say no to ours or the Posts requests for help. "Dan the Man" Blomgren returns as Chaplain and Dan is a valuable team player whom I have personally counted on numerous times to get through a project.

CONTINUED>>>>>

Legion Membership News

As one membership year closes, another begins. Our post finished the 2021 membership year renewing 339 out of 374 total members for 90.64%.

While it's not too late to pay the 2021 membership dues if you have not already, it simply won't count toward our posts total count before state Convention.

The American Legion is marching onward to the 2022 membership year.

According to our roster our new membership total for this year will be 359.

My goal is to always reach 100% of the 359 total. But I need your help to accomplish that.

Please renew your membership now while it is fresh on your mind. Then you won't have to think of it later. Once you procrastinate it never stops.

Remember, you can always renew online at www.wilegion.org, click on "renew online", enter your name and ID# and pay with a credit card. That simple.

Submitted by:

Bob Lloyd

Post Membership Chairman

**Sons of the American
Legion Report- CONTINUED**

With a great group of guys like these fine gentlemen it is easy to see how I was re-elected as Commander of SAL Squadron 59. Along with the many volunteers that assist us when needed, they make me look pretty darn good and I appreciate them all.

We are saddened by the loss suffered by two members of our SAL Family. The sudden and unexpected deaths of Al Metzler's wife Cinnamon, and Bob Crofoot's partner Pam has left us all with an empty feeling. Please know that we are here to help if needed.

Bob Hocking – Commander SAL Squadron 59

CHAPLAINS' CORNER

Dear Lord, we ask for you to lead us in prayer for our nation: we ask that you help us to turn away from all that interferes with our unity and peace; away from contentious words and ways that lead us to divisions and polarization; to turn away from disrespect and indignity toward others; to turn away from devaluing others who are not like us, and for all ethnicities and races in America to come together as one, living in peace and unity together. May this prayer help us to be united as your people. Prayer brings people together. Prayer builds bridges between opposing persons and even political parties. Prayer brings unity. Together, we pray in unison for the safety and security of our nation in Jesus's name. Amen

Ed Nowicki
Post 59 Chaplain

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 line.

The next Newsletter will be out in November 2021. All articles are due no later than October 20th, 2021. If you would like to see anything added or have any comments, please contact Dean Stenjem at 59legionpost@gmail.com

POST 59 EVENTS for this Quarter

August 2nd : Auxiliary Unit 59 Meeting @ 6:00pm

August 4th : [Coast Guard Birthday](#)

August 7th : [Purple Heart Day](#)

August 9th : American Legion Monthly Meeting @ 7:00pm

August 11th : SAL Monthly Meeting @ 7:00pm

August 15th : Legion Breakfast

August 29th : [Marine Forces Reserve Birthday](#)

September 2nd : [VJ \(Victory over Japan\) Day](#)

September 6th : [Labor Day](#)

September 8th : SAL Monthly Meeting @ 7:00pm

September 11th : [Patriot Day](#)

September 13th : American Legion Monthly Meeting @ 7:00pm

September 13th : Auxiliary Unit 59 Meeting @ 6:00pm

September 17th : [POW/MIA Recognition Day](#)

September 18th : ALA "IN THE KNOW" Conference (8:00am – 3:30pm)

September 18th : [Air Force Birthday](#)

September 26th : [Gold Star Mother's & Family's Day](#)

October 4th : **Auxiliary Unit 59 Meeting @ 6:00pm**

October 9th : SAL Fish Boil

October 10th : [Ms. Veteran America Pageant](#)

October 11th : **American Legion Monthly Meeting @ 7:00pm**

October 11th : [Columbus Day](#)

October 13th : [Navy Birthday](#)

October 13th : SAL Monthly Meeting @ 7:00pm

October 23rd : 8th Annual ALA Chicken & Biscuit Dinner (4:00-7:00pm)

October 26th : [National Day of the Deployed](#)

October 31st : [Halloween](#)

Events are subject to change. Please check our website @ www.post59.us or our Facebook page @ www.facebook.com/post59stoughton for any changes to the events listed above.

HISTORIANS' CORNER

Steve Grady – Post 59 Historian

>September 18th, 1947, the US Air Force became a separate entity. Army personnel controlled the Air Force in WWII.

>Do you know the name of the nose of the B29 that dropped the 2nd atomic bomb on Nagasaki? It was named “Bockscar”, and the pilot was Major Chuck Sweeney.

>The battleship Missouri was the last battleship built in the United States. It's largest guns at 16” could launch 2,700-pound armor piercing shell 23 miles in less than 50 seconds.

“Courage is not having the strength to go on; it is going on when you don't have the strength.”

Theodore Roosevelt

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- Friday: **3:00pm - 10:00pm**
- Saturday: **12:00 - 10:00pm**
- Sunday: **12:00-6:00pm**

THANK YOU

A Big Thank You to the following, Larry Johnson for putting together the Post History and volunteer DVDs to kick off the Post fundraising efforts after being closed for 13 months and to those who donated to the cause.

To the patrons who participated in our re-opening raffle and congratulations to the winners. A special thank you to Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Raymond for donating their second prize winnings of \$500 back to the Post.

Thanks to the Auxiliary UNIT 59 for all you do for the Post.

To the Freedom Riders and Thrivent for their continued support and dedication to raising funds to help support our ongoing maintenance costs for the Stoughton Area Veterans Memorial. Thank you to all of you.

Jim Oler, Finance Officer.



To Support:
**The Stoughton Area
Veterans Memorial
Park**

1st Prize: Glock P80 Austrian Military Replica 9mm pistol PLUS 50 rounds of ammunition

2nd Prize: Smith & Wesson Shield 2.0 .380 pistol PLUS 50 rounds of ammunition

TICKETS: \$10.00 each or 3 for \$25.00 (ONLY 750 TICKETS WILL BE SOLD)

Tickets are available at The Legion Bar during normal business hours.

Drawing is September 20th, 2021

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Sgt. At Arms

Randy Robertson

Finance Officer

Jim Oler

Historian

Steve Grady

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Judge Advocate

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Edward Nowicki

2021-2022

UNIT 59 AUXILIARY OFFICERS

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Amy Hermes

Vice President

Dawn Clark

Secretary

Randi Johnson Hanson

Treasurer

Lisa Olson

Chaplain

Anna Paul

Membership

Lisa Olson

Dawn Clark

2021-2022

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1st Vice Commander

Dean Stenjem

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Roger Strandlie

Historian

Rob York

Chaplain

Dan Blomgren

Otis Sampson American
Legion Post 59



Editor: Dean Stenjem
59legionpost@gmail.com

Website:

www.post59.us



DEADLINES FOR QUARTERLY ARTICLES

October 20th (Nov, Dec, Jan Newsletter)

January 20th (Feb, Mar, Apr Newsletter)

April 20th (May, June, July Newsletter)

July 20th (Aug, Sept, Oct Newsletter)