



# The Star



Issue #104

"We Speak Their Names"

Spring 2022

## A Brush With Destiny

By Ginger Rutledge Gregory



Above: PVT Robert Lee Rutledge, of Stewart County, Georgia, killed in action Oct. 29, 1944. Private Rutledge left behind two children, Ginger and Robert Leron (Bubba).

My mother, Marguerite Cannington, and my father, Robert Lee Rutledge, were married on December 25, 1937. They were both born and reared in Stewart County, Georgia, not far from the county seat of Lumpkin, GA. I was born on September 18, 1939 and my brother, Robert Leron Rutledge was born on May 16, 1941. My parents bought a small farm and built a house of their dreams.

Although it was small, it was perfect for our little family. My dad had a man to farm his land while he held a job in town at the C.P. Trotman Company. In addition, my dad was a member of the Georgia National Guard. They were as happy as could be until one day early in 1944, when he received a draft notice to report to Atlanta, Georgia.

World War II was raging in Europe and he was drafted as a replacement soldier at the age of 27. In March 1944, my dad, along with five other young local men, were supposed to board a bus to take them to Atlanta, Georgia to be inducted into the Army. They were notified that all the buses in the area were on strike and would not be coming to pick them up. Regardless, they were expected to report to Atlanta on time for their induction.

Somehow, Mr. Earl Carter (former President Jimmy Carter's father) heard about this. The Carters, who were peanut farmers, as were my grandparents, lived in Plains, Georgia, 26 miles away. Mr. Earl Carter drove to Lumpkin to pick up the young men. He personally drove them to Americus, Georgia to catch the bus to Atlanta. From Atlanta, Georgia, my dad and his buddies were sent to Ft. Meade, Maryland. My father remarked he had never seen so many men together in all of his life.

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# President's Message

by Walt Linne

What a wonderful AWON "Honor and Remember" National Conference we had in New Orleans, Louisiana!

The "Honor and Remember" conference was astounding! The National WWII Museum was the perfect setting to interact with our AWON siblings! An enjoyable time was had by all! Also, the staff of both the National WWII Museum and the Higgins Hotel were superb in every way. Outstanding job, everyone!

There were 62 conferees (32 AWON members and 30 guests) and a surprise visit by Rosie-the-Riveter (Marge Harding, spouse of member Rolla Harding). New Orleans was the most wonderful place to host the 30th-plus-one year anniversary celebration of AWON because it is the site of the National WWII Museum and right across the street is the Higgins Hotel. The ambiance of the hotel and museum had me half expecting our Dads to come walking in at any time.

I want to give a special thanks to everyone who pitched in both near and far to put this conference on the map - Gloria Layne, Judi Kramer, Jeanne Rhinehart, Millie and Jim Cavanaugh, Rik Peirson, Bonnie Hellums, Kristin Holmes, Penny LeGrand, Barbara Kelly, Chris Fabri, Avelina Fenstermacher, William Fenstermacher, Jim Anthony, Kristen Curtis, Stephanie Kaila, Matthew Thomas and Rick Wisner, the grandchildren who read their grandfathers' names at the memorial service, and all who lugged chairs and tables around from time to time. Thanks to all for a job well done.

There is so much to tell you about the conference - the presenters, the orphan interviews, the young Gold Star wives we met with, the museum tours, the memorial service, the formal reception, the hospitality room, the business meeting, the banquet, and the Victory Belles! This news will be carried over and discussed in much greater detail in our Summer STAR. However, there are several items I need to present at this time:

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...Brush With Destiny, from front page



Above: Robert Lee Rutledge and his son, Robert Leron Rutledge (Bubba), in a mutual salute, 1944

According to his letters, induction into the Army was a long and tedious process. It took several days for the men to be assigned to different Army bases throughout the United States. He had to wear the clothes that he wore from home several days before an army uniform was issued to him. He had to mail the clothes that he wore back home again. His uniform and shoes were way too big, but he had to tolerate it until they could be altered.

From Ft. Meade, my dad was sent to Ft. McClellan, Alabama, which is only 150 miles from Lumpkin, Georgia. Our family was very happy about that. My mother, grandmother, my dad's brother Uncle Jay, my brother and I loaded up in our 1939 Chevrolet and went to visit. We were often accompanied by our two young cousins, so my brother and I would have someone to play with. We had to sleep in the

car because the few motels near Ft. McClellan had no vacancies. I asked my mother later in life how she had managed it all, and she told me we would do anything and tolerate anything to get to see my daddy for just a few hours.

My dad received only 17 weeks of training at Ft. McClellan before he was shipped out to Europe in September 1944 as a replacement soldier.

My dad wrote my mother a letter or a post card everyday from the day he left home to report to duty until the day he was fighting in a brutal attack by two Nazi divisions in Holland. He never finished that letter. It was in his belongings sent home after his death. It was dated October 19, 1944, my mother's 25th birthday.

In the early 1990's my dad's brother, Uncle Jay, gave my brother and me a large duffle bag full of letters written by my daddy to my mother and letters from her and my grandparents written to him. My mother and grandmother had saved

Below: The author's parents - Robert Rutledge and his wife Marguerite Cannington Rutledge, enjoying each other's company at Ft. McClellan, Alabama, 1944



Destiny, Continued page 4



...Destiny, from page 3

them. When my mother remarried in 1948, she left the letters with my paternal grandmother.

When I got to the bottom of the bag of letters, I found a letter that Daddy had written to me on my 5th birthday explaining to me why he couldn't be with me on that day. Here is what he wrote:

*"My Darling Baby,  
What sweet memories I have today. It carries me back 5 years ago. We thought we were happy as could be until God sent you down to us. You'll never know how proud I am of you. I've always, since that day, done everything possible for your benefit.*

*I never dreamed of being away from you as I am now. You are too young to understand it now but you will later. It's all for your benefit. You came into a free world and I want you to finish in one.*

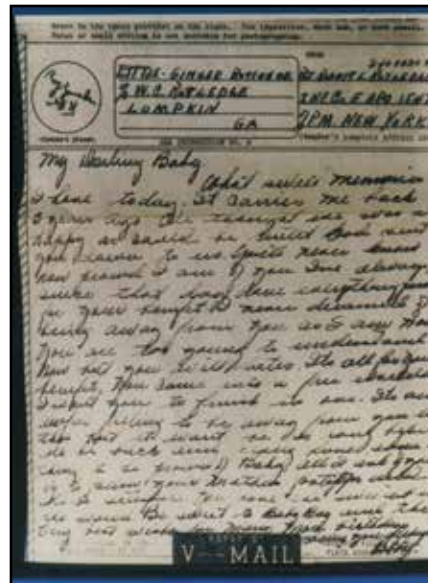
*It's awful having to be away from you like this but it won't be so long before I'll be back and have something to be proud of. Baby, all I ask of you is to follow in your mother's footsteps and I'll be satisfied. You are the sweetest in the world. Be sweet to our Baby Boy and the Very Best wishes for many more birthdays.*

*Loving you always,  
Daddy"*

Needless to say, that of all the many, many letters in that bag, that one in particular is just priceless to me. The birthday letter really touches my heart and I will always treasure it.

When I retired in 2001, I began a search to learn more of my dad's journey in WWII. I found a WWII website where I shared my memories and the birthday letter that my father wrote to me. Little did I know what would come next!

In early 2005, my husband and I were about to take a nap after lunch one day. The phone rang and my husband John answered it. John thought it was a telemarketer! I could hear the man on



Left and below:  
The treasured letter that Robert Rutledge wrote his daughter Ginger on her 5th birthday. This letter eventually came to the attention of President George W. Bush, who used the letter in a speech he gave in 2005, for the 60th anniversary of VE Day.



the phone saying "Please, Mr. Gregory, may we speak to your wife?" John laughingly handed the receiver to me saying, "They don't want to talk with me, they want to talk to you." I almost didn't answer, but because it's not my nature to be rude, even to telemarketers, I took the phone.

The man identified himself as being from the White House! He told me that President George W. Bush was going to the US Military Cemetery in Margraten, Holland, where my father was buried, on May 5, 2005, to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of VE Day in Europe. To my great surprise, the caller informed me that the President had read my father's letter and it touched his heart. He wanted to use it in his speech at the ceremony that day and needed my permission to use it.

I wanted to be sure that his call was legitimate, so I asked him to give me a few days and call me back. I e-mailed Wesley Johnston, the son of a man who had served alongside my father in the 7th ARMD Division.

...Continued from previous page

Wesley had helped me with finding many things pertaining to my dad's journey in the war. He e-mailed me back the next day to tell me it was a legitimate call. He verified that the caller was indeed employed at the White House, and urged me to give permission for the President to use my letter.

Sure enough, the man at the White House called me back in a few days and the rest is history. President Bush did use my birthday letter in his speech that aired all over the world. The wonderful Dutch people, my friends, Martien & Ellemien Salden, who have adopted my dad's grave in Holland recorded the speech and sent me a DVD of it. It really touched my heart. President Bush sent my brother & me a letter and a signed copy of his speech.

How amazed would my father have been in 1944, to hear that the father of our future 39th President of the United States, Jimmy Carter, was driving him from Lumpkin, Georgia to Americus, Georgia to catch a bus to be inducted in the United States Army. He certainly never dreamed that his letter to me on my 5th birthday would be used in his speech by our 43rd President, George W. Bush, at the US Military Cemetery in Margraten, Holland where my dad, Pvt. Robert L. Rutledge, is resting in Plot D, Row 7, Grave 21.

I had always dreamed of going to my dad's resting place. In May, 2015, I finally made it. I want to thank fellow AWON Margraten siblings, Adrian Leist Caldwell and Gerry Conway Morenski for encouraging me to make this trip to Holland at the age of 75.

I will be 83 years old on my next birthday, September 18, 2022, and I have never forgotten my daddy, nor did my brother Robert Leron Rutledge, until he passed away in 2006. I never will forget him and the ultimate sacrifice that he made for his country and his family. I want to keep his memory alive as long as I live.



Above: Author Ginger Rutledge Gregory at her father's gravesite, Netherlands American Cemetery, Margraten. Below: Ginger and Bubba's father Private Robert Lee Rutledge, resting alongside his fallen comrades.



The new MeWe ListServ



Be Sure to Follow AWON on Social Media!!! It's the best way to keep in touch with your AWON siblings nowadays! And check out our explainer about how to join MeWe on Pages 8-9!

# A Short History of New Orleans in WWII

by Kristin Holmes

*This article was originally written for the "Honor and Remember" Conference in New Orleans. It was cut in order to save space for other things, so we're sharing it here! Whether you were able to attend the conference or not, it's undeniable that the City of New Orleans played a very important role in the Allied Victory.*

*Below: A Higgins Boat heads into action*



From alligators, Bourbon Street, and creole to voodoo, yellow fever, and Zydeco, the City of New Orleans is a history buff's dream come true. It only makes sense that the National World War II Museum, brainchild of famed historian and author Steven Ambrose, who lived and worked in the city, is located in New Orleans. During the history-rich World War II era, the industries centered around the war effort in New Orleans became critical to American victory. To this day, the city still hosts large numbers of veterans' reunions and conventions of military organizations - more than any other city in the US.

New Orleans boomed during the war years. The city's location at the mouth of the Mississippi River allowed for materials and finished goods to move freely and easily both across the nation and across the seas. Dozens, if not hundreds

of factories were built at a rapid pace. Jobs, which had been scarce in the Big Easy during the Great Depression, were easy to come by for skilled and unskilled workers alike. The city achieved full employment during the war years, and personal savings amongst citizens skyrocketed as salaries reached heights never before seen. Outsiders came to the city in record numbers, as servicemen were stationed at Camp Leroy Johnson, the Algiers Naval Base, Jackson Barracks, Camp Plaquemine, or the Naval Reserve Aviation base, one of the largest flight-training centers in the nation.

Still more fighting men spent some down time in New Orleans while traveling from one duty station to another. Then as now, New Orleans was a tourist mecca. The city welcomed the troops with open arms, feeding them, entertaining them, and making sure that they had plenty to drink. Tax revenues from the sale of beer more than doubled between 1942-1944, and patriotic barkeeps didn't even raise their prices! Dances were held every night of the week (except Sunday!) and the city fathers took every opportunity to hold a parade.

Strategically, New Orleans was even more important than it was culturally. Authorities and citizens alike feared airstrikes coming from both the Pacific or the Atlantic. While this never came to pass, during 1942 and 1943, there were several ships sunk by German submarines off the mouth of the Mississippi River. Lights from the Louisiana shore illuminated oil tankers, making them easy targets for U-Boats. Eventually a blackout for all coastal towns along the Gulf of Mexico was ordered and the sinkings ceased.

...Continued from prev. page

But of all the wartime events that transpired in New Orleans, it is the contribution of Higgins Industries that looms in importance. New Orleans was home to a small boat company owned by entrepreneur Andrew Higgins. Higgins had made his name designing and producing a collection of amphibious boats that were used in logging, fishing, and in military applications, building motorboats and tugs for the US Coast Guard. In order to win WWII, the US military knew that developing tactics and equipment to launch amphibious landings in a variety of conditions would be critical. Getting men and equipment from ships to land regardless of the presence of harbors, which were heavily guarded, was paramount to a successful invasion.

Bridging the gap between land and water was what Andrew Higgins knew best. His LCV(P) boats (Land Craft, Vehicle, Personnel) were based on his experience building boats to be used in murky swamps and treacherous bayous. When his first design proved too dangerous to disembarking soldiers, he altered his design based on an open-back Japanese boat, the Daihatsu, used against Allied forces in China.

The Higgins Boats outperformed those built by the Navy's Bureau of Construction and Repair, and the Marine Corps seized upon it. Higgins Industries won huge government contracts, and what had been a small shipbuilding business expanded dramatically. In 1938, Higgins operated one boatyard with less than 75 employees. By 1944, Higgins Industries employed over 20,000 people in seven locations, eventually building over 23,000 Higgins Boats in addition to PT boats and several other military crafts. The Higgins workforce was known to be loyal and hardworking. Additionally, Higgins was the first company in New Orleans to be racially integrated, employing people from all walks of

life, and all employees were paid equal wages according to their job rating, not dependent on their skin color, gender, or beliefs.

Higgins boats were used in every major American amphibious operation in Europe and the Pacific - most famously D-Day, in which the LCV(P) boats carrying 36 soldiers each were critically important. Higgins Industries also produced a larger version - LCM (Landing Craft, Mechanized) - designed to offload heavy equipment like tanks onto beaches.

Andrew Higgins and those who worked under him at Higgins Industries were so important to the war effort that Adolf Hitler was said to have once referred to him resentfully as the "New Noah". For his part, even as long as twenty years after the war, President and former General Dwight Eisenhower steadfastly believed that Higgins "won the war for us." Ike explained, "Without the Higgins Boats, we could never have landed on an open beach. Had Higgins not designed and then built in such quantities the LCV(P), the whole strategy of the war would have been different, and probably not successful."

In a Thanksgiving address in 1944, Eisenhower declared, "Let's thank God for Higgins Industries." It is surely fitting that AWON is holding their 30th anniversary conference at the Higgins Hotel and Convention center. If you'd like to see a Higgins Boat yourself, the National World War II Museum has a reproduction of a Higgins LCV(P) in its Louisiana Memorial Pavillion, built from original plans by volunteers - several of whom worked for Higgins Industries during WWII. While at one point the museum also offered rides on a PT-305 built by Higgins Industries, sadly the boat had to be removed from the water for protection from the elements, and plans are in the works to put the ship on display hopefully in the very near future.





# MeWe FAQ

One of the best ways for AWON members to keep in touch with the organization is via Social Media.

Here are some FAQs - or "Frequently Asked Questions" - about the AWON MeWe site and instructions about how to join compiled by our MeWe guru Lorin McCleary.

## What is MeWe?

MeWe is a social networking site similar in concept to Facebook. Users can post articles including text, graphics and photographs, chat with the group, chat privately with other members, respond to the posts of others, and search previous posts.

## How does MeWe differ from Facebook?

MeWe protects the privacy of its users. Unlike Facebook, MeWe does not compile data on its users based on the user's Internet searches or articles a user reads on Facebook or elsewhere on the internet. Facebook compiles this user data which it then sells to advertisers and others for their targeted marketing purposes. MeWe does not do this. Your data is not for sale with MeWe and your privacy is protected.

## Why was the AWON MeWe site launched?

AWON, in cooperation with the West Point Alumni Association, has offered the AWON ListServer email sharing service for many years. The ListServer format has many limitations: it is text-based; photos and graphics cannot be posted; there is no search function; there is no group or individual chat; and no opportunity to react to posts or comment in a thread. After evaluating many competing products, the AWON Board voted to discontinue the AWON ListServer effective March 1, 2021 and adopt the AWON MeWe site as an alternative.

## What does it cost to join MeWe?

There is no cost to join MeWe as a basic member. A premium membership is offered but you can decline that to join if you don't want those extra services. You will also be asked if you want to upload your contact list to MeWe. You can decline that also if you don't want to do so.

## Does the AWON MeWe site compete with the AWON Facebook site?

No, the MeWe site is a replacement for the Listserver which is being discontinued. The AWON Facebook page will continue unchanged into the future. If you like the AWON Facebook page and are comfortable with Facebook's handling of user privacy, by all means, please continue to participate on the AWON Facebook page.

## Can I join both the AWON Facebook page and the AWON MeWe page?

Yes, absolutely, you can. There is very often different content on both sites on the same day.

## What are the key features of the AWON MeWe page?

The AWON MeWe page has a focus on the history of WWII and on honoring and remembering our AWON fathers. A list of the AWON fathers who died on that specific day, including their military unit and the location of their death, is posted daily. Where possible, historical articles relating to the fighting in which they died or other historical WWII information is posted. Father tributes are encouraged. Members are encouraged to post any information relating to the history of WWII and the honoring of our AWON fathers.

## How do I join the AWON MeWe site?

It is very easy to join the AWON MeWe site and it works in two steps just like it did when you joined Facebook and then signed up for the AWON page.

**Step 1** is to join MeWe at this link: <https://mewe.com/>

**Step 2** is to sign up for the AWON MeWe page. Once you have joined MeWe, simply enter AWON in the search bar on the top right of the screen and select Group from the results. Select AWON and you will go to our AWON page. Or use this handy link: <https://mewe.com/join/awon-americanwwiiorphansnetwork> Request to join, then answer two simple questions: "Are you a WWII orphan?" and "Are you a member of AWON?" After that, your request to join will be approved. AWON membership is not required, but it is encouraged.

## Will I get spammed once I join MeWe?

No, you will not get spammed. MeWe does not sell its membership list to others. Your privacy is protected.



**See you on MeWe!**





In addition to being a great way to keep in touch, Lorin McCleary has really gone above and beyond the call of duty to make MeWe an amazing resource for AWON members! AWON Fathers are honored every day of the year, and you can find lots of very informative articles about the war years shared there too - for your information, or to share with others.

Here is just a sampling of the posts you can see every day on MeWe!

<p>Lorin McCleary Owner • AWON - American WWII Orphans Network 6 days ago</p> <p><b>Honoring AWON fathers who died on this day- March 30</b></p> <p><b>1943</b> PFC Wilbert J Alexander 168th Inf Reg 34th Div MIA, Tunisia, North Africa</p> <p><b>1944</b> CPT George F Frederick 12th Air Liaison Party 5th AAF Pitylu, Admiralty Islands 1LT James Howard Hines 394th BS 5th BG MIA, Pacific CPL Raymond Fernandez Kercheval 141st Fld Arty BTN 1st BN Battery B Anzio, Italy SGT Peter Francis O'Grady 20th SQ 2nd BG AAF Sofia, Bulgaria</p> <p><b>1945</b> SSGT John David O'Sullivan 513rd PIR 17th ABN Div Germany 2LT Kenneth C Lobdell 99th BG B-29 AAF Tinian, Marianas Islands 2LT Ernest A Matthews 728th BS 452nd BG (H) Manchester, England PFC Irvin B Hill 2nd Ranger BTN Germany PFC Clarence James Flynn 137th Inf, Co I Bottrop, Germany CPL John Thomas Piani 33rd Armored Regt., 3rd Armored Div. Germany</p> <p><b>In Their Memory</b></p>	<p>Lorin McCleary Owner • AWON - American WWII Orphans Network 15 days ago / edited</p> <p><b>Cornelia Fort</b> is likely a person with whom you are not familiar, but she has a role in WWII history. She was an accomplished pilot and flight instructor who happened, by coincidence, to be the <b>first person to sight and be attacked by the incoming Japanese fighters at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941</b>. She also was also the <b>first woman in the WAFS (Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron, the precursor to the WASPs) to die in the line of duty</b>.</p> <p><a href="#">Show More</a></p>  <p>Cornelia Fort - Wikipedia <a href="en.wikipedia.org">en.wikipedia.org</a></p>
<p>Lorin McCleary Owner • AWON - American WWII Orphans Network 2 days ago</p> <p><b>Okinawa- the Battle of Kakazu Ridge, from the National WWII Museum.</b> <a href="https://www.nationalww2museum.org/wwer/articles/okinawa-invasion-kakazu-ridge">https://www.nationalww2museum.org/wwer/articles/okinawa-invasion-kakazu-ridge</a></p>  <p><b>The Invasion of Okinawa: Meatgrinder at Kakazu Ridge   The National WWII Museum   New Orleans</b></p> <p>As the American advance pushed further south, it ran headlong into fortified Japanese positions and heavily defended caves near Kakazu Ridge, the first defense perimeter in what would be called the Shuri Line. The rapid advance and relatively light American casualties resulted in so far on Okinawa ended.</p> <p><a href="http://www.nationalww2museum.org">www.nationalww2museum.org</a></p>	<p>Lorin McCleary Owner • AWON - American WWII Orphans Network 2 months ago</p> <p><b>Honoring AWON fathers who died on this day- February 20</b></p> <p><b>1944</b> SSGT Roy Ernest Welch 579th BS 392nd BG (H) 827th ASS Kent, England Baron Brodine 7th AF Brisbane, Australia</p> <p><b>1945</b> TSGT Morgan Vincent Desmond 86th Mtn Inf Reg 10th Mtn Div Riva Ridge, Italy CPL Jesse S Leighton Jr 26th Marines 5th Marine Div 1st Bn Iwo Jima PFC Howard Ellsworth Merryman 1252nd Eng Com BN Luxembourg PFC Russell Howard Stone 302nd Inf 94th Div 3rd BN Co M Thionville, France PFC Howard Ellsworth Merryman 1252nd Eng Com BN Luxembourg PFC Ralph Clayton Fisk Army Pacific Area SGT Francis E Burtnett 9th Inf Reg 2nd Inf Div Co E Bronsfield, Germany Luther Boutelle Pulmer III 28th Reg Marines 5th Div Iwo Jima SSGT August Arthur Alegi 275th Inf 70th Div Co A Lixing, France CPL Jesse S Leighton Jr 26th Marines 5th Marine Div 1st Bn Iwo Jima</p> <p><b>In Their Memory</b></p>

### The Star Guidelines for Submitting Material

We want to tell your story and your family's story. We accept submissions both electronically and via US mail. If you have an article or picture and aren't sure how to submit it, that's ok. Message *The Star* and we will work with you.

Please keep text reasonable in length. 500-1000 words or 1 page is a good guideline, but we publish longer pieces too. Preference is given to material written by, for, and about AWON members and families.

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Lorin McCleary Owner  
• AWON - American WWII Orphans Network  
6 days ago



**PT-305 Turns 73 on March 28, 2016 | The National WWII Museum Blog**  
In shipyard traditions, a ship's 75th birthday on the dock is festive. The vessel's foundation, is laid on March 28, 1941, for vessel PT-305 came into existence and began her life at the City Park Plant of Higgins Industries in New Orleans with the laying of the keel. Launched just two months later on May 11.

[www.nww2m.com](http://www.nww2m.com)

**MeWe**

### AWON Members -

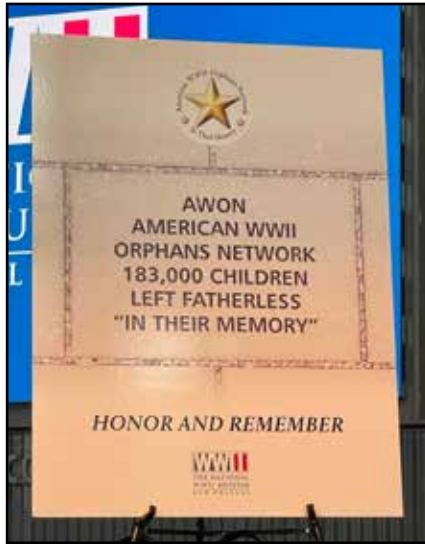
Is your father buried in a national cemetery? Check out the Veterans Legacy Memorial (VLM)! VLM is an online memorial space managed by the National Cemetery Administration (NCA). NCA manages over 150 national cemeteries to honor our Nation's veterans, and memorializes more than 3.7 million veterans interred in those cemeteries in a digital memorial, providing a VLM profile page for each veteran, to which personal touches like photos and tributes can be added.

Find out more by visiting their homepage at: [www.va.gov/remember](http://www.va.gov/remember)

Photos from our  
30th Anniversary AWON Conference  
"Honor and Remember"  
The Higgins Hotel and the  
National WWII Museum  
New Orleans, Louisiana, May 4-8, 2022







Thanks to Gail Brown, Ginger Gregory, and Kathy Paskey for sharing these wonderful pictures! Hope you had a great time! We will be featuring more pictures and all the news from the "Honor and Remember" Conference in the Summer edition of *The Star*!



***AWON Board Member Bob Holliday & AWON members Rondy Elliot, Rik Peirson, Marilyn Rustand-Lieurance, and the late Susan Hadler, have been working tirelessly to get the flower program at the ABMC reinstated. AWON has recently sent a letter in support of their efforts, which you can read on the opposite page. Here's the backstory:***

Shortly prior to Memorial Day in 2015, the ABMC, with no input from families who were to be affected, announced that the ABMC Floral Fund Program would no longer be administered by them.

For over seventy years, the ABMC Floral Fund Program gave assistance to families of the fallen who wished to decorate the grave of their loved one lying in a cemetery overseas. This was especially appreciated by families of WWI and WWII troops, as not all bodies were returned for burial on American soil, and families cannot just hop in the family car to visit our loved ones' grave.

Under the Floral Program, to request the placement of flowers, the family filled out a form, requested when they wished to lay a floral decoration, sent a check for a flat fee, and the ABMC took it from there. Local ABMC staff members ordered from florists nearby, who delivered a floral arrangement to the fallen hero's place of rest.

Then cemetery staff took a photo of the flowers on the grave and sent this picture to the family. Since the program was altered in 2015, the ABMC will still take a picture of floral arrangements, but they no longer help with the ordering process. Families were informed that it was up to them to order flowers via phone or online, with only a list of florists posted on a website to assist.

In other words, our own government relinquished this sacred duty, turning grieving families over to FTD and the Internet.

Complicating something that was once simple brought with it challenges. Not only did families encounter language barriers, but prices increased radically. There were now added taxes and delivery fees, and the conversion from foreign monies to dollars became an issue. Far too often the flowers did not get to their destination or were delivered on the wrong dates. Placing hardships of any kind onto grieving families of fallen heroes is shameful no matter how one looks at it; surely it is appropriate that an entity of our government, the land for which the soldier died, should act as a liaison. The ABMC was, in fact, that entity, but it is our liaison no longer. For decades, the ABMC had in its mission statement, that they would assist the families of the fallen - a sentiment that they removed from their mission statement just after ending the Floral Fund Program.

Shortly after the abolition of the Floral Fund Program, a small, informal committee of AWONers formed to try to right this terrible wrong. At personal expense, we traveled to Washington on several occasions, meeting with the Administrators of the ABMC, and with several senators, including Senators Joni Ernst, Tom Cotton, Lindsay Graham and Chuck Grassley. While all the senators we've spoken with have expressed support for this cause, the representatives of the ABMC have not. They appear steadfast in their determination not to reinstate the Floral Fund Program. Regardless, we will not give up on this. Not now, not ever, until the ABMC reconnects with its original motto:

*"Time Will Not Dim the Glory of Their Deeds."*



# American WWII Orphans Network

[www.awon.org](http://www.awon.org)

Open Date:

The American Battle Monuments Commission  
2300 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 500  
Arlington, VA 22201

To the Leadership and Commissioners of the ABMC:

We, the children and grandchildren of America's fallen from World War II, especially of the fallen who remain overseas, revere and have always revered the American Battle Monuments Commission for its efforts, over many years, to remember and to help us honor our fathers and loved ones.

You literally represent the only touch ~ between the fallen ~ our fathers and loved ones who gave their lives for our country in World Wars I and II ~ and the Gold Star families they left behind.

While ALL our families deeply appreciate your efforts ~ ongoing personal help in ordering and delivering flowers for individual remembrance of our fathers and loved ones should continue to be one of them.

This is about far more than flowers. It is about a value assumption that we feel was quietly and wrongly made by a bureaucracy whose Commissioners, well-meaning as they may be, remember NO fathers or loved ones overseas. But who nevertheless perpetrated this assumption on those who do.

Those who do, it was assumed ~ would simply accept a total and sudden abandonment of help in providing personal, floral remembrances. It was a purely administrative determination that in January of 2015, General Tommy Franks, who well understands personal loss, called it "... an abominable example of bureaucratic insensitivity" ~ in so quietly abandoning the Flower Program.

Significant additional layers of communication, language barriers, immediately higher costs, currency exchanges, rare payments by standard Credit Card and overseas time zone administration will result in fewer personal remembrances ~ a clear dimming of the glory that we have all signed on to avoid.

We ask that you simply do what everyone knows is right ~ to restore, support, and actively promote a permanent Flower Program. Restoring our vision of the ABMC as our heroes. Additional references for our request may be found at: <https://www.awon.org/references>

In Their Memory –

Walt Linne ~ for  
The Executive Committee, representing the AWON Board and Membership

5745 Lee Road, Indianapolis, IN 46216 • USA • [President@awon.org](mailto:President@awon.org) • [www.awon.org](http://www.awon.org)

# HUGE CONGRATS!!



To our 2022 Winners  
of AWON's  
Colonel Jack O. Forgy  
Distinguished Service  
Awards!



The Star is pleased to report  
the winners of the 2022  
Colonel Jack O. Forgy  
Distinguished Service Awards:

Barry Barr Finch  
Rik Peirson  
Gloria Zuccarella Layne

## AWON 2022 EOM Account Totals as of May 22, 2022

AWON 2022 EOM Account Totals

AWON 2022 EOM Account Totals					
Treasurer Report as of 4/30/2022					
	General (Wreath) (WWII Paver)	Conference	Book Source	Money Market	Comment
JANUARY	\$23,334.51 (\$5,784.27) (\$1,625.00)	\$1,384.50	\$471.27	\$48,073.70	Note: The General Fund includes both (Wreath) and (WWII Paver) deposits.
FEBRUARY	\$24,204.61 (\$5,954.27) (\$1,675.00)	\$2,184.50	\$453.04	\$48,074.48	
MARCH	\$26,357.71 (\$6,326.27) (\$2,330.00)	\$7,034.50	\$448.00	\$48,074.89	
APRIL	\$26,774.76 (\$6,481.27) (\$2,430.00)	\$14,234.50	\$460.84	\$48,075.28	
MAY					
JUNE					



# We DID IT!

AWON  
AMERICAN WWII  
ORPHANS NETWORK  
183,000 CHILDREN  
LEFT FATHERLESS  
"IN THEIR MEMORY"

We're thrilled to report that thanks to your generous donations, AWON successfully met our \$3000 fundraising goal for our Victory Paver at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans! The Paver, commemorating the selfless sacrifice of our Fathers, will be placed in the Colonel Battle Barksdale Parade Ground and Founder's Plaza.

Our paver will be located on the campus mall area leading to the museum's brand new Liberation Pavilion, guaranteeing that AWON's commemorative Victory Paver will be seen and appreciated by hundreds of thousands of Museum guests every year.

Thanks so much to all who contributed, and everyone who made it possible!

First, the New Orleans conferees at the annual business meeting were very anxious regarding where, and WHEN, the next conference will be held. Some members are wondering if it's worth waiting for another two whole years, such a long time especially considering we missed our 2020 conference due to the Coronavirus. A suggestion has been placed on the table to perhaps have a less formal, shorter gathering such as a long weekend, giving us two or three days to socialize with our siblings. One gathering location mentioned was San Antonio, Texas. Please let us know your thoughts...when and where...you would like to have our next orphan meeting. To be continued in the Summer STAR issue...

Secondly, we have the Board of Directors 2023 election coming up. If you are interested or know of someone who would like to run for the position, please contact Robert Meek, Chairman of the Election Committee. For more about this upcoming election, please see page 16. Grandchildren are especially encouraged to apply!

Thirdly, we have met our \$3,000 fundraising goal for the Victory Paver which will be placed on the mall leading to the new Liberation Pavilion at the National WWII Museum. Thanks to all who contributed to this effort.

Finally, congratulations to The Col. Jack O. Forgy Distinguished Service Awards recipients, Barry Barr-Finch, Gloria Zuccarella Layne, and Rik Peirson. Much deserved recognition, for jobs well done!

## Lest We Forget....

In Loving Memory of my Dad, Myer "Mike" Epstein  
KIA 10/5/44 in Overloon, Holland  
Phyllis Epstein Louis

*Declare by June 30, bios and ballots appear in The Summer Issue of **The Star!***

## Candidates Sought for AWON Board

### ***It's election time again!***

All nine seats on the AWON Board of Directors are up for election in 2022. AWON is an organization run entirely by volunteers, and we need your help and participation. If you want to be more active, or have a specific skill set such as accounting, computer technology, writing skills, or can contribute in other ways, please consider standing for election to the Board.

Directors set and follow policy, adopt an annual budget and operating plan, oversee AWON's activities, and plan for the future. Directors typically meet at bi-monthly meetings by phone or online, but at times, monthly meetings are required. The Board is required to hold an in-person meeting in the year an election is not held. Seats are held for two years.

If you're interested in running for the AWON Board of

Directors, contact AWON Nominee Committee Chair Bob Meek by email at [rhmeekjr@gmail.com](mailto:rhmeekjr@gmail.com) or by phone or text at 828 446-2416 by June 30, 2022. Please contact him with questions about the election process or to express your interest in standing for election.

Candidates will be expected to answer a short questionnaire about themselves and their goals for AWON, submit a recent photograph, and sign conflict of interest forms. It is expected that candidate biographies and the election ballot will appear in the Summer edition of *The Star*.

Members in good standing (dues paid for 2022) will have the opportunity to vote. Ballots may be cut out or photocopied from *The Star*, or printed off if you receive the *eStar*.

Mail your ballot to the address marked on your ballot. To submit a valid ballot, the AWON Member's name and address must

appear on the OUTSIDE of the mailing envelope, in order to be crosschecked with a list of members in good standing.

After verification, the ballot will be removed and the envelope discarded, maintaining the secrecy of your ballot. Please do not write your name or address on the ballot.

Instructions on where to mail the ballot will appear on the ballot itself. The results of the election will be announced in the Fall *Star*. The newly-elected Board will be sworn in and hold its first Board meeting early in 2023.

AWON needs your help and support, now more than ever. Please consider running for the Board of Directors.

If that seems like too much, please consider volunteering for AWON in other ways. Many of our Board members started off as volunteers in other arenas before standing for election.

Thank you and good luck!



## We Want YOU, AWON Grandchildren!

**A special call for AWON Grandkids and Great-Grands!**

Moving forward, we would love to see AWON Descendants taking on some leadership roles in AWON! If serving on the AWON Board of Directors is something you or one of your family members might be interested in, don't hesitate - reach out! We welcome all interested AWON Descendants to run for the Board!!!

Please contact Committee Chair Robert Meek to throw your name into the ring by June 30!

As we enter AWON's FOURTH decade, we here at *The Star* want to urge every AWON member, Orphan and Descendant alike, to share with us the story of your family's loss and your personal journey of self-discovery. Don't hesitate - contribute! Our editors will do the work, we just need to hear from YOU! Submit today!

## **AWON Orphan Members and Descendants!**

### **We want to share your family's story!**

### **Please contribute to *The Star* today!**

As the years pass, we will need more and more grandchildren and great-grandchildren to become active, participating AWON members to keep the memories of our Fathers, Grandfathers, and Great-Grandfathers alive and never forgotten. Grandchildren and great-grandchildren also bring their own totally unique perspective to AWON that we would love to share.

Grandkids, great-grandkids, even great-greats, consider joining AWON and be sure to contribute to THE STAR! - we want to hear from you! **Remember -Your stories matter!**

## ***Call for Tributes!***

**Add a Tribute to the AWON Website!** This could be one of the most long-lasting and satisfying ways to remember your Father, Grandfather, Brother, or Uncle. Just be a current AWON Member!

**Here's How:** 1. Have a look at our website's TRIBUTE section at [www.awon.org](http://www.awon.org) (click "Our Fathers") to see what others have done; 2. Check the web page on "How to prepare a Father Tribute" – (at [www.awon.org/check5.html](http://www.awon.org/check5.html)); then 3. Scan (or have a Kinko's scan) your best picture of your loved one in uniform; 4. Collect your thoughts, memories, and service record of your loved one; 5. Send your JPG-formatted image and between 500 and 1,100 words to our Tribute Stager, Nancy Sue Johnson. Her E-Mail address is . . . [janceysue@gmail.com](mailto:janceysue@gmail.com). If you need her snailmail address, just call Nancy Sue at 406/529-2315.

**Don't let another day go by.** AWON is honored to help you honor your Father or loved one! . . . a Tribute page is yours for the asking.





# Memorial Day Overseas - A Call for Coordinators

By Rik Peirson



Memorial Day is the last Monday in May. But unlike Veterans Day and the 4th of July, the focus of Memorial Day is on honoring and remembering those who gave everything for their country, and for us.

For many of us who remember our fathers and loved ones in cemeteries overseas, more of the natural focus is on the Memorial Day services themselves.

Memorial Day services are held at 26 American overseas cemeteries that hold our War dead, maintained by the ABMC (American Battle Monuments Commission). Sixteen of these hold World War II dead; enclaves of service to the memory of our fallen. This spirit of reverence is evident in the dedication of the Superintendents and Associates, and in their meticulous, detailed care of the grounds.

It is at these hallowed places ~ every one of them holding AWON fathers and loved ones ~ that AWON has maintained the Wreath and Banner program since 2003, thanks to a dedicated crew of Stateside Coordinators and overseas loyalists.

AWON Wreath and Banner was the brainchild of Bernard Achten and Régine Achten-Villers, of Ans, Belgium, and was founded at Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery in 2003 by Régine and Bernard, Sharon Connor, and Rik Peirson.

For a more complete history of the program

(and our thanks to so many who have been involved) ~ follow this story onto the AWON Website using the Connected 'W' icon on the following page.

Memorial Day 2020 was Covid-restricted, with ALL overseas ABMC cemeteries closed to the public. On Memorial Day weekend 2021, however, and with a glimmer of normality on the horizon, the ABMC cemeteries held services, mostly local and private. They may have been without the pomp and circumstance of dignitaries and color guards, but for Memorial Day 2021, these services were NOT without AWON Wreaths and Banners. You can see them at:

<https://www.awon.org/memorial-day-2021>

The magic responsibility of Coordinating an American overseas cemetery holds a different gift for all of us. But it involves managing communications with AWON sons and daughters; building relationships with cemetery Superintendents and Associates, overseas florists, and longtime AWON friends; and coordinating presentations when an AWON Member goes overseas for Memorial Day.

Many wreaths are on display at the overseas American cemeteries, but few are formally presented. And ONLY our AWON Wreaths include the names of men buried there.

Coordinators start by seeking donations among the sons and daughters of each cemetery, so the cost of each cemetery's Wreath and Banner can be shared at a reasonable cost. Bells go off (as it's always a big day) when a Coordinator finds a new member, often representing a NEW remembrance on a Banner. Seven new men were added just this year.

Coordinators also arrange for a Wreath and facilitate the critical marriage of the Banners to the Wreaths with a cover letter that accompanies all Banner sets to clarify what needs to be done at the florist or cemetery.

Coordinators reconcile donations and pay the florist, ending the Memorial Day year by gathering Memorial Day photos (like the one above, taken at Florence American Cemetery) and sending them to Rik Peirson for the Website and to Kristin Holmes for *The Star*.

We still need some help! Several American cemeteries will need Coordination help for 2023, so that all AWON fathers can be remembered. Your help may be needed at cemeteries like Ardennes (in Belgium), to Epinal and Lorraine (in France), and at Florence (in Italy), and possibly others as well.

Our 16 cemeteries with MEGA thanks to all CURRENT Coordinators ~

Ardennes American	★ <b>We need a Coordinator!</b>
Brittany American	Brian Hope
Cambridge American	Jeanne Rhinehart
Epinal American	★ <b>We need a Coordinator!</b>
Florence American	★ <b>We need a Coordinator!</b>
Henri-Chapelle American	Rik Peirson
Lorraine American	★ <b>We need a Coordinator!</b>
Luxembourg American	Sandy MacDuffee
Manila American	Ruthie Joyce
Netherlands American	Gloria Layne
Normandy American	Rondy Elliott
North Africa American	Bonnie Hellums
Rhone American	★ <b>We need a Coordinator!</b>
Sicily-Rome American	Bob Meek
Suresnes American	The Group
Cemetery of the Pacific	Susan Chadd

If becoming a Wreath Coordinator interests you, please call Jeanne Rhinehart (717-697-9608). Or write Rik Peirson (Rik@dayone.com).

Bob Meek, one of our longest-serving Coordinators, puts it this way:

*I've had the honor and privilege of coordinating the AWON wreath for Sicily-Rome since AWON started the program. I have also had the profound experience of visiting my Dad's grave at Sicily-Rome as have several of my family members. I know not all of my AWON siblings have had this chance, so anything I can do to enhance their honoring and remembering their Dads is a small task compared to the sacrifices we all have made not having our Dads. It has been a pleasure getting to know my fellow Sicily-Rome sibs over the years and some tears over those we have lost. Therefore, as long as I am able, I will be honored and consider it a privilege to continue as the Sicily-Rome Coordinator for AWON.*

Rondy Elliott, Coordinator of Normandy American, expressed it like this:

*Doing the Memorial Day wreath Coordination is a rewarding job; one we can do for AWON (which has given US so much) just once a year. It makes us feel very connected with our father, the cemetery in which he lies, and also connects us with others whose dads are in the same place. That's a special kind of camaraderie!*

Gloria Layne, Coordinator of Margraten:

*We visit our Dutch family almost every year . . . either there or them coming here. Over the years, we have made friends and we keep in touch with many people. My daughters and grandsons have visited and have also become friends and have learned about my father and the many other Americans who fought to free people from Hitler's grip. It is one thing to read a book . . . it is another to visit the sites where these heroes walked. It is much like our visit to Auschwitz. We had read books, but when we walked through the camp and saw pictures, shoes, glasses, the ovens . . . we came out with a renewed feeling of thank God for all the men who fought to ensure our freedom.*

Rik Peirson, Coordinator of Henri-Chapelle:

*We do it for so MANY reasons. One of mine involves George Zatco, who had corresponded first with Janice Buterbaugh, then met Shirley McKinney at a book signing (first sib he'd ever met). George joined AWON immediately, even as his cancer was progressing. Knowing he probably wouldn't last until the San Antonio conference, he confessed to Shirley that he worried he hadn't been around AWON long enough for us to remember his father. This is when Shirley and I promised George that we'd remember his Dad, SGT George Joseph Zatco on the Memorial Day Banner for Epinal every year we're still alive. Shirley passed in September of 2015, leaving me and all of us to remember George's Dad.*

For Ruthie Joyce, who did a wonderful job for Manila American, it was even simpler:

*I always wanted to do more (for AWON) but didn't really know what. Now I know what!*



This story is continued on the AWON Website - please click the Connected 'W' for more about the Wreath and Banner Program!

## AWON Board of Directors Board Meeting Report - Jan. 23, 2022

Meeting called to order at 6:05 pm EST by President Walt Linne.

Present: Lorin McCleary - LM, Rik Peirson - RP, Walt Linne - WL, Barry Barr-Finch - BF, Judi Kramer - JK, Bob Meek - BM, Barbara George - BG, Gloria Layne - GL, Bob Holliday - BH Star Editor Kristin Holmes - KH. Excused: Ann Mix

Minutes, 10/10/2021 Meeting: BF moved the minutes of the 10/10/2021 meeting be approved. Motion approved.

Introduction of new Board member: WL introduced Bob Holliday - BH - to the Board and thanked him for volunteering for service. BH will be filling the position vacancy left by the passing of Paul Bremmer.

President Report: We have only had 7 registrations for the conference.

Treasurer's Report:

BM: AWON came in under budget on expenses and near forecast on revenue. He has corrected the routing number on our Amazon Smile account so the funds should begin to flow to AWON. He is also working on implementing PayPal for dues Payments and Donations.

Committees: BH: the effort to get ABMC to restore the flower program is still ongoing.

AWON STAR Newsletter: KH: waiting for a decision on the NO meeting before sending the Winter issue to print.

AWON Website RP: 300 visits to the Website including 286 unique visitors this past month. RP: is working to reestablish the memorial page for Jack Forgy. Will soon add Jack Forgy's page to Lest We Forget.

Social Media: AWON Facebook BF: 341 members on FB page. AWON MeWe: LM: We now have 100 participants who have joined the AWON MeWe

page. LM: posts AWON fathers who died on the day of their death and articles relating to WWII events on that day. Encouraging Member participation and posts continues to be a problem.

AWON National Conference: WL: we now have 23 people signed up to attend. The uncertainties of the virus and airline flight cancellations are affecting registration. RP: suggest that we do the meeting virtually and that would be better than cancellation. BG: it would be difficult to put on since many AWON members are not good at technology. KH: she has not had any inquiries concerning ads in the NO conference program. LM: we are better off to have something than another conference cancellation. What that is, he does not know.

WL: the draw is the WWII museum. WL: he will check with the Higgins to see what would happen if we cannot meet our 60 room bookings commitment. WL: will people who intend to attend the conference cancel if we offer a virtual conference? JK: attending the conference physically will be very expensive, \$2500. WL: we have always stayed away from New Orleans in the past due to the cost. BH: feels we should not cancel the conference again. We need to have something.

BM: likes the idea of a virtual conference. LM: has attended 2 virtual conferences and they worked out very well. WL: will talk to the hotel to see what would happen if we have fewer rooms sold than initially thought. BF: thinks we should have help with a virtual conference. WL: how much would this cost and how would we put on a virtual conference. BG: agrees with BF that we need to have professional help putting on a virtual conference. RP: asked LM if the two of them could have a phone conference to discuss possible virtual conference. BH: suggests we talk to the WWII Museum people about holding a virtual conference.

...Minutes, 1-23-2022, continued page 22



## AWON Board of Directors Board Meeting Report - Jan 29, 2022

Special Tele-Meeting called to order at 6:05 pm EST by President Walt Linne.

Present: Lorin McCleary - LM, Rik Peirson - RP, Walt Linne - WL, Barry Barr-Finch - BF, Judi Kramer - JK, Bob Meek - BM, Barbara George - BG, Gloria Layne - GL, Bob Holliday - BH, Star Editor Kristin Holmes - KH. Excused: Ann Mix

AWON National Conference: BM: Thinks we should have the conference and a podcast so that people who are remote can participate in the conference activities and the sharing circles. BF: he agrees with BM and we should go ahead and hold the conference. The hotel should be able to help us with the technology for virtual conference.

BH: it is a tough call due to age of our members. He thinks we should have face to face and also virtual conference. He thinks we should have conferences virtual in the future. BG: she thinks we should have the face-to-face meeting since the Museum is the draw.

RP: he says it is a tough decision. Considering the costs and flight problems, he wants the most members served well and a virtual could do that. It would be best to offer both face-to-face and virtual. We have time since we have until April 1 to make a final decision. If we don't get many more registrations, then we should consider a virtual conference. WL: we can wait a couple of weeks before making a final decision. JK: she has no problem with face to face. She thought the tickets to the museum was a great idea. WL: we can cut the conference down by 1 day.

KH: it is really late to start planning a virtual conference. She is worried that it perhaps is too big a bite at this late date.

GL: I've already registered. GL thinks it would be a disservice to AWON if we don't follow through with the face-to-face meeting. People would lose interest in AWON. If we can stream the presentations, then we could do that but we must proceed with the face to face meeting. Perhaps we should tell people this

will be the last face to face conference? WL: does not want to use the words- last conference.

LM: Have the conference in New Orleans in person, particularly since the hotel will not hold our feet to the fire concerning the room count. He also requests we ask the Hotel why we can't use our Hilton Honors points at conference room rates to book a room. They are marking up the room costs to \$400 per night if you use Hilton Honors points. He thinks it is far too late to start planning virtual activities and he does not favor doing both at this late date. KH: we should send out a Mail Chimp blast concerning the conference. Nothing should be said about virtual conference. She will draft a Mail Chimp blast and circulate it to the Board.

BH: the one thing he would hate to see happen is "the statement that this is the last conference". That would be a mistake and would cause us to lose members. There was agreement on this point.

GL: how soon can the Mail Chimp blast be sent?

KH: she could have something ready by tomorrow. Will there be a reduction in costs since we are cutting a day off the conference?

WL: thanked everyone for their attendance today. He has to leave for another meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

### Your 2022 AWON Board of Directors:

Barry Barr-Finch - barrfinch1@gmail.com  
Barbara George - blgeorge935@gmail.com  
Bob Holliday - BHolliday@sullivan-ward.com  
Judi Kramer - ladybug5@juno.com  
Gloria Layne - glayne731@gmail.com  
Walt Linne - wlinne@iupui.edu  
Lorin McCleary - ldmcclary@gmail.com  
Robert Meek - rhmeekjr@gmail.com  
Ann Mix - annmix@gmail.com  
Rik Peirson - Rik@dayone.com

....Minutes, 1-23, continued from page 20

WL: plan to have a face-to-face conference and tie in a virtual conference also. Suggests we hold a meeting to discuss this next week. Suggests holding the meeting next Saturday, 4pm EST. JK: suggests scaling back the NO conference by a day and is concerned about the guest registration fee of \$200.

Bob Holliday reported on the Flower Program. RP: the letter in support of the Flower Program has been completed. That letter will be part of the package that will be submitted to ABMC.

New Business: Wreath program for stateside cemeteries. LM: There is no organized program for Memorial Day for stateside US National Cemeteries. 2/3rds of WWII deceased are buried in US cemeteries and 1/3 are buried in overseas ABMC cemeteries. He sent out an email to the directors which listed the 10 largest cemeteries by AWON father burials in the US.

Forgy Awards: WL: will call a meeting to consider nominees for the Forgy Award at the conference.

BM: Friends of WWII Memorial is becoming more receptive to AWON and our members. KH: asked for information for an article about our WWII Memorial participation.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

## IMPORTANT - A FRIEND IN NEED!

Annie Mix has learned AWON Member Bill Chiodo suffered a brain bleed in 2020 (similar to a stroke). He is currently recuperating and his daughters tell us he would love your cards and letters.

His address is: Bill Chiodo, Langdon Place of Exeter, 17 Hampton Road, Exeter, NH 03833

## Friends of the World War II National Memorial Conference Series

Submitted By Robert Meek

Be sure not to miss the Friends of the World War II National Memorial Conference Series.

On the third Saturday of each month the Friends of the World War II National Memorial have an educational conference via a web cast. The purpose is to provide education and information about WWII, the Memorial, and the people it affected. Historians like Alex Kershaw and Matthew Rozell have contributed videos.

The conference is usually in three parts with the order sometime varied but consisting of a WWII Veteran, a historical or pertinent organization, and a WWII orphan. You must go to their website to register (which is free, use this handy link <https://www.wwiimemorialfriends.org/monthly-conference-series>) to get the information to sign on to the web broad cast. In the event you cannot make the live webcast they archive it, and you can look at any of the previous ones.

It usually takes a few days to get them posted, so it won't be up right away. Older videos can be accessed easily at this link: [Friends of the WWII Memorial Site](#) (just click the link on your e-device) or by searching "monthly video series" in the Friends' search box, with the magnifying glass."

So far, the following AWON members have participated in the web cast. November was Sam Tannenbaum, December was Arthur Chotin, January was Bob Meek JR and February is/was Bob Holliday, and March's presentation was given by Sandra Lane Walker. AWON members Janice Powers, Gerry Morenski, Nancy Kragh and others have also participated. As a participant I certainly appreciate the Friends doing this.

(Editor's note: Be sure you click on the point of the "play" arrow in the lower corner of the video, rather than the back or center of the icon. I had a hard time getting the videos to play at first. KH)

# AWON Moments *by AWON President Walter Linne*

*The mission of our AWON Moments series is to review AWON history, celebrating special moments experienced by AWON orphan members since Ann Bennett Mix founded the organization in 1991.*

## **From American WWII Orphans Network Newsletter**

**Issue #46, September 2007, *The National WWII Museum New Orleans***, by Chickie Shields Barry - A report on AWON's campaign supporting the expansion of The National WWII Museum, formerly The D-Day Museum. To date we have collectively raised \$3,715, exceeding the minimum requirement of \$1,000 to achieve the museum's elite donation level of Patriot's Circle.

**Issue #47, December 2007, *AWONer Raising Funds for the Bataan Death March Markers*** - This past May, Patty Temte traveled to the Philippines with AWON members and others. She was impressed and moved by many beautiful memories that marked the invasion sites and battlefields, and that preserved the memory of the Americans and Filipinos who fought there. There is a marker each kilometer along the Bataan Death March route, many in disrepair. The restoration cost for each Bataan Marker is \$600. AWON members have donated enough money to support one marker and are on their way, to supporting a second Bataan Death March Marker. *Update: Two markers are now in place at KM 51 and KM 52 with plates indicating they are supported by AWON.*

**Issue #48, March 2008, *AWON Heads West for Conference on Healing*** - Mark your calendars for the AWON Saguaro Sunset Conference in Tucson, Arizona, Friday, Nov. 7 to Tuesday, Nov 11. Conferences are a biannual opportunity to come together to share, laugh, learn and cry. The theme is "Healing Ourselves" and presentations have been selected with that theme in mind. Prior conferences have focused on our Fathers, but this year we shift the attention to us, the orphans.

**Issue #49, June 2008, *Boettcher Changes Iowa Plate Rules (Twice) to include Orphans*** - Months of legislative legwork have paid off for Terry Boettcher and other WWII orphans in Iowa. In May, Iowa Gov. Chet Culver signed into law an amendment making Gold Star children like Terry eligible for an Iowa Gold Star Family license plate. Why did there need to be an amendment, you ask? The original legislation furnished plates to parents only. Boettcher and fellow AWONer Bob Holliday managed to get an

amendment passed to include children and siblings.

**Issue #50, September 2008, *Wreaths Laid at National Cemeteries*** - AWON members presented Memorial Day wreaths at three national cemeteries this year. They were Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia, Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery in San Diego, California and the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii; popularly known as the "Punchbowl". There are 125 national cemeteries, and six new national cemeteries are under construction.

**Unforgettable AWON Moment** – Member Dale Sisco (daughter of CPL John S. Howe, KIA 12 July 1944) found this poem in her mother's things shortly after she died in 2004. She said, "It gave me insight into her feelings that I never saw while she was alive and deeply touched me."

## ***Spring***

*By Alma Howe, circa 1946*

*Spring has returned to earth once more,  
And the beauty of it leaves me breathless,  
I know God must have prepared it so,  
To bolster the hearts that are sad and restless.*

*Spring with her flowers and birds and bright sun,  
Spring with her laughter and song,  
Spring with peace! That was so dearly won.  
Peace! And it's Spring on earth again.*

*And my heart feels a wee bit lighter.  
'Twas Winter so long there, so very long  
After I lost my Fighter.*

*Peace, with the thought that  
No one is giving  
His life that we may live.*

Please send your AWON Moment to:

AWON STAR

5745 Lee Road. Indianapolis, IN 46216

Or email to:

president@awon.org

Walter Linne, brother of John

Sons of Walter John Linne

KIA March 24, 1945

Germersheim-on-the-Rhine, Germany





**Dr. Montie  
Monzingo**

**May 4, 1940 -  
April 22, 2019**

Dr. Montie Monzingo, Professor Emeritus of SMU, passed away April 22, 2019. Montie was with AWON to remember his father, SGT Garland Monzingo, who was interred in the Netherlands American Cemetery in Margraten, Netherlands. The loss of his father led to Montie's membership in the American WWII Orphans Network and his service as the American delegate for the annual wreath laying ceremony at Margraten in 2017.

A highly accomplished mathematician, Montie had a Ph.D. in Mathematics from the University of Oklahoma and was an honored member of the faculty at SMU from 1966 through 2009. Montie is survived by his wife, Vivian, nephews Jeff (Sandy) Monzingo and Mike (Suzie) Monzingo, as well as numerous cousins, great-nieces and nephews, extended family, his students, and a host of dear friends.

**Jerelyn (Allis)  
Eisenberg**

**1934-2021**



Jerelyn (Allis) Eisenberg of Albuquerque, age 86, beloved wife of the late Alvin Eisenberg; loving mother of Debra Freebairn (Scott), Gary (Janice), Kimberly Allis (Kim Ann); eleven grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren, died peacefully at home with her family by her side.

Jerelyn was with AWON to remember her father, LT Gilbert Allis, Silver Star Winner, who died at Omaha Beach on D-Day.

Jerelyn enjoyed reading, tracing her ancestry and had traveled many places with her loving husband and friends. But most importantly she adored and loved her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Jerelyn requested that any memorial donations on her behalf should go to the Humane Society.



**David Colinan**

**August 29, 1932  
– July 25, 2021**

David Colinan, past AWON member and former regional coordinator for the State of Florida, died recently, surrounded by his family. David was with AWON to remember his father, MAJ George Harper Colinan Sr. a veteran of both WWI and II.

David was very young when his father was a casualty of WWII and it had an indelible affect on him. In 2014, David travelled to France to visit his father's grave in Epinal and participated in the memorial services of the 70th anniversary of D-Day.

David leaves three daughters: Anne (William) Dufort, Martha (Stephen) Ellicott, and Lynne (David) Burke, eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

**Alix Bonnyman-  
Prejean**

**Nov. 28, 1940 -  
Sept. 8, 2021**



Alexandra Bonnyman "Alix" Prejean, 80, died Sept. 8, 2021 of natural causes. Alix was with AWON to remember her father, Congressional Medal of Honor winner 1LT Alexander Bonnyman, Jr, who died at the Battle of Tarawa.

Alix met her husband Carroll while working in Ecuador and they married in 1971. After raising cattle and horses for many years, the couple moved to Hana, Hawaii, where they became an integral part of the community. She was a staple of AWON's Memorial Day ceremony at the Cemetery of the Pacific. Alix is survived by her beloved daughter Andra, her sister Frances Evans, and her nieces and nephews.

# Membership



This is a

- ☐ New Membership
- ☐ Renewal
- ☐ Family Membership
- ☐ Database Registration Only

## About You:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mobilephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 If you're renewing, skip to the Dues Section  
 Your Relationship to Serviceman \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
 How did you hear about AWON \_\_\_\_\_

## About your WWII Service Member:

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 First Name \_\_\_\_\_ M.I. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hometown & State \_\_\_\_\_  
 Military Unit \_\_\_\_\_  
 Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Service Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_ Place \_\_\_\_\_  
 Burial Location \_\_\_\_\_  
 Wife's Maiden Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Additional information on your WWII Service Member's  
 Military Service, Death, or Burial. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your check:

Payable to AWON, include it with this form and send it to:

**AWON Treasurer**  
**5745 Lee Road**  
**Indianapolis, Indiana 46216**

## Membership Types:

☐ **Orphan Member:** Any son or daughter of a member of the US Armed Forces, Coast Guard, or Merchant Marine who was killed, remains missing in action, or who died in the line of duty, or who later died of wounds or injuries sustained during WWII.

- ☐ **Family Member:** Other relations who are not a son or daughter.
- ☐ **Supporting Member:** Other individuals with an interest in WWII, who wish to support us and participate in our outreach activities and programs.

## Membership Dues:

**Basic Orphan Member Dues** are \$25 a year – starting when we receive your check. This includes your AWON Membership Card, a Web Tribute for your father, a physical or E-version of our quarterly newsletter, **The Star**, a personal account on the AWON online List-serv, and an account on the AWON Facebook Page.

**Family Member Dues** are \$25 a year – including a printed Star – OR \$10 a year for Membership with an E-Star.

**Supporting Member Dues** are \$25 a year – including either version of **The Star**.

## Membership Dues Levels:

Please circle your Dues Level below:

	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years
Orphan	\$25	\$48	\$70
Family (Printed Star Version)	\$25	\$48	\$70
Family (E-Star Version)	\$10	\$20	\$30
Supporting	\$25	\$48	\$70
Gold Star (Increased Donation)	\$100	\$192	\$280

## Donation Considerations:

Memorial Day Wreath Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 General Operations & Outreach \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total Dues & Donations Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_



Submittable  
 Online >>>



AWON (American WWII Orphans Network) is a humanitarian, non-profit, nonpolitical service organization under Section 501(c)3 of the US Federal Tax Code. (EINB #91-1538912) Membership is not required to be entered into the Database. For more information, the AWON Website is at [www.awon.org](http://www.awon.org).



# AWON BOOKSTORE

## Price List / Order Form

### Books

Authors in **BOLD** are orphan or family members

Items marked with (\*) include P&H

_____ <i>Pieces of Us</i>	
<b>By Janice Crandell Powers</b>	<b>\$20.00*</b>
_____ <i>A Daughter's Quest: Retracing My Father's Footsteps During World War II</i>	
<b>By Laura Smail Sims</b>	<b>\$16.95</b>
_____ <i>The Gun Club: U.S.S. Duncan at Cape Esperance</i>	
<b>By Robert Fowler</b>	<b>\$15.99</b>
_____ <i>Collateral Damage, A World War II Orphan: Lost and Found</i>	
<b>By Reda Reynolds</b>	<b>\$9.00</b>
_____ <i>Feisty: Chronicles &amp; Confessions of an Old PR Warhorse</i>	
<b>By Joe Finnigan</b>	<b>\$12.99</b>
_____ <i>A Bit of Earth</i>	
<b>By Wendy Crisp Lestina</b>	<b>\$13.95</b>
_____ <i>K.I.A.: An Orphan's Search for His Father Through the Fog of War</i>	
<b>By Patrick Audinet</b>	<b>\$10.00*</b>
_____ <i>All proceeds from Audinet book benefit AWON</i>	
_____ <i>The Beauty of What Remains: Family Lost, Family Found</i>	
<b>By Susan Johnson Hadler</b>	<b>\$15.00*</b>
_____ <i>In Search of a Pilot: Hanford "Rusty" J. Rustand</i>	
<b>By Marilyn Rustand Lieurance</b>	<b>\$7.00*</b>
_____ <i>My Father: More than a Picture, a Beer Bottle and a Flag</i>	
<b>By Jerry W. Pinkerton</b>	<b>\$12.00*</b>
_____ <i>The Lost Submarine: A True Story of Love and War</i>	
<b>By Nancy Kenney</b>	<b>\$16.00</b>
_____ <i>"Daddy's Gone to War": The Second World War in the lives of America's Children</i>	
<b>By William M. Tuttle Jr., PhD</b>	<b>\$30.00</b>
_____ <i>In My Father's Words: Letters From a WWII Soldier</i>	
<b>By Bill McElvain</b>	<b>\$16.00</b>
_____ <i>Farebersville 1944</i>	
<b>By Jeff Wignall</b>	<b>\$18.95</b>
_____ <i>A Soldier's Daughter</i>	
<b>By Lois Brown Klein</b>	<b>\$17.00</b>
_____ <i>The Ordinary Infantrymen: Heroes Then, Heroes Again</i>	
<b>By Imogene Woods and Twelve WWII Infantrymen</b>	<b>\$15.00</b>
_____ <i>Full Fathom Five: A Daughter's Search</i>	
<b>By Mary Lee Coe Fowler</b>	<b>\$29.95</b>

_____ <i>Love Always, Ben</i>	
<b>By Huey Tyra, nephew</b>	<b>Reduced! \$2.00</b>
_____ <i>Sporty Course (bomber pilots)</i>	
<b>By Col. Jack Swayze</b>	<b>\$10.00</b>
_____ <i>The Hotton Report (About the Battle For Hotton)</i>	
<b>By Robert McDonald</b>	<b>\$13.95</b>
_____ <i>World War II: A Legacy of Letters-One Soldier's Journey</i>	
<b>By Clinton Frederick</b>	<b>\$26.95</b>
_____ <i>An 8th Airforce Combat Diary</i>	
<b>By John A. Clark</b>	<b>\$49.95</b>
_____ <i>When I See a "Forty and Eight"... I Remember World War II</i>	
<b>By Lt. Col. Jacques Adnet USAF (ret.)</b>	<b>Reduced! \$5.00!</b>
_____ <i>In Their Memory: American WWII Orphan's Network</i>	
<b>By Turner Publishing Company</b>	
<b>Was 49.95</b>	<b>Reduced \$10.00</b>
_____ <i>The Fighting Tigers: The Untold Story Behind the Names on The Quachita Baptist University WWII Memorial</i>	
<b>By William Downes</b>	<b>\$24.95</b>
_____ <i>The War Journey of Major Damon "Rocky" Gause</i>	
<b>Forward by Damon L. Gause</b>	<b>\$21.95</b>
_____ <i>No Greater Sacrifice, No Greater Love: A Son's Journey to Normandy</i>	
<b>By Walter Ford Carter</b>	<b>Reduced! \$18.00</b>
_____ <i>D-Day + 60 Years: A Small Piece of Airborne History</i>	
<b>By Jerome J. McLaughline</b>	<b>\$25.00</b>
_____ <i>They Also Served: Women's Stories From the WWII Era</i>	
<b>By Jeanie Sutton Lambright</b>	
<b>New Price!</b>	<b>Hardcover \$20.00</b>
	<b>Softcover \$10.00</b>
_____ <i>Finding Billy</i>	
<b>By Diana Thompson Dale, niece</b>	<b>\$16.95</b>
_____ <i>Father Found: Life and Death as a Prisoner of the Japanese In WWII</i>	
<b>By Duane Heisinger</b>	<b>\$13.95</b>
_____ <i>Shobun: A Forgotten War Crime in the Pacific</i>	
<b>By Michael J. Goodwin</b>	<b>\$19.95</b>



# AWON BOOKSTORE

## Price List / Order Form

### CD/DVD



\_\_\_ *Leather and Strings*

by **Mark LaPoint**, grandson of Sgt. William G. Aubet featuring *Somewhere in Germany*, written and sung by Mark at AWON's 10th conference memorial service \$6.00

\_\_\_ *Letters of Love and War* (CD for Mac or PC)

By 1LT John and Betty Peirson \$19.44

\_\_\_ *AWON 2004 Conference & WWII Memorial Dedication* (VHS)

Reduced!! Was \$5.00 \$3.00\*

\_\_\_ *We Speak Their Names: A Tribute to Our Fathers* (VHS)  
produced by Patrick Tierney and **Terry Boettcher**

Reduced! was \$15.00 now \$3.00

\_\_\_ *AWON 2000 Conference Journeys - Finding Our Fathers* (VHS)

by Justin Taylan was \$15.00 \$3.00\*

\_\_\_ *Sleep My Sons: The Story of the Arisan Maru*

by Shawnee Brittan Reduced! was \$30.00 \$20.00\*

## AWON Logo Products

*Closeout on the Following AWON merchandise*

\_\_\_ AWON Hat \$15.00

\_\_\_ Scarf (royal blue fleece - only 3 left!!) \$10.00

\_\_\_ 20th Anniversary Tote Bag (small)  
REDUCED! \$5.00

\_\_\_ Tote Bag (large) \$10.00

\_\_\_ 20th Anniversary Garden Flag (without holder) \$10.00

\_\_\_ \*AWON Holiday Ornament \$10.00

\_\_\_ \*AWON lapel pin \$10.00

\_\_\_ \*AWON Button 2 1/4" \$3.00

\_\_\_ \*AWON Lanyard w/ nametag and ticket holder (blue with white lettering, 4"x6"holder) \$6.00

\_\_\_ \*AWON notecards & envelopes (pkg of 20) (Only 2 left!!) \$20.00

\_\_\_ \*AWON bookmarks

Circle amount: 1 for \$1.00 5 for \$3.00 10 for \$5.00

## The Star Newsletters

\_\_\_ \*Individual issues: \$4.00 - Includes P&H

\_\_\_ \*All archived issues: \$40.00 - Includes P&H

\_\_\_ \*Special!! Most recent five issues: \$15.00 Inc. P&H

### Ordering Information

Postage and handling: \$8 for each item. Items marked with an asterisk (\*) include postage and handling.

For multiple purchases: Up to \$40 - \$10 P&H \$40-\$60 - \$12 P&H \$60 and up - \$15 P&H

Washington State residents please add 7.8% sales tax

For more information and color photos please visit <http://www.awon2.org/resources/bookstore.html>

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EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

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**AWON Bookstore**

**5745 Lee Road**

**Indianapolis, IN**

**46216**

email: [bookstore@awon.org](mailto:bookstore@awon.org)

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## The Star

"Breaking Down the Wall of Silence"

AWON Headquarters  
5745 Lee Road  
Indianapolis, IN 46216  
[www.awon.org](http://www.awon.org)



### AWON Mission

To locate and bring together sons and daughters of those who died or are missing as a result of American involvement in World War II, honor the service and sacrifice of our fathers and provide information and support to these people who were orphaned by the war.

# AWON Directory

#### Address Corrections

Lorin McCleary [ldmccleary@gmail.com](mailto:ldmccleary@gmail.com)

**Archives** OPEN POSITION

#### Bookstore

Walt Linne [bookstore@awon.org](mailto:bookstore@awon.org)

#### Database Coordinator

Lorin McCleary [ldmccleary@gmail.com](mailto:ldmccleary@gmail.com)

#### Dues

Robert Meek [rhmeekjr@gmail.com](mailto:rhmeekjr@gmail.com)

#### Facebook

Barry Barr-Finch [barrfinch1@gmail.com](mailto:barrfinch1@gmail.com)

#### First Inquiry Coordinators

Lorin McCleary [AWON@awon.org](mailto:AWON@awon.org)

Janice Ott Buterbaugh [Janicebuterbaugh@gmail.com](mailto:Janicebuterbaugh@gmail.com)

**Friends of the National  
WWII Memorial Liason** Rondy Elliot

#### MeWe

Lorin McCleary [ldmccleary@gmail.com](mailto:ldmccleary@gmail.com)

#### Membership

OPEN POSITION

#### Memorial Day White House Event

Marilynn Lieurance [mlrustysgirl@yahoo.com](mailto:mlrustysgirl@yahoo.com)

#### Memorial Day Wreath & Banner

Jeanne Rhinehart [hart1003@comcast.net](mailto:hart1003@comcast.net)

Rik Peirson [rik@dayone.com](mailto:rik@dayone.com)

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Barry Barr-Finch [barrfinch1@gmail.com](mailto:barrfinch1@gmail.com)

#### The STAR

Kristin Holmes [atomicsagebrush@gmail.com](mailto:atomicsagebrush@gmail.com)

#### Washington, D.C. Liason

Gloria Layne [glayne731@gmail.com](mailto:glayne731@gmail.com)

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