

Changes Lifelong Notion of Parents, Especially Mother

Surprising Story Tumbles Out of Box of Letters Found in Attic

by Rik Peirson



The blue box, wrapped in red string, containing the correspondence, inset, of Rik Peirson's parents that was discovered recently in his attic.

I wasn't prepared for the letters, and in no way saw them coming. A total of 432 letters and telegrams that came to us so quietly, so unexpectedly, in a little blue box tied up with red string. They brought an instant flood of joy and understanding, an overwhelming avalanche of revelations, impressions, discoveries, validations, and palm-to-forehead moments - with laughter, tears, and everything in between. But let's step back a moment.

Dad was 1LT John Silas Sheffield Peirson - the man in that formal picture with his 75th Infantry Division patch. He was killed on Christmas Day 1944, taking the then-important hill, La Roumiere, on the northern shoulder of the Belgian Bulge.

My parents met on December 12, 1941 - five days after Pearl Harbor. Dad was a few years out of Yale. He had spent a couple of years at *Fortune* Magazine in New York, but had been enticed by the headmaster to return to his old prep school, Mercersburg Academy in Pennsylvania, as head of enrollment development and public relations.

It was there that Betty Frost came calling. She was the consummate New York career girl - a total surprise to me - as she was, "just Mom" growing up. But she was on a mission

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Call for Nominees AWON Board of Directors 2012 Election

In September, four positions on the AWON Board of Directors are up for election. The seats currently are held by Norm Burkey, Gerry Conway Morenski, Norma Nicol Hamilton, and Ed Peters. The terms are for four years. (Other board directors are Kathy Le Comte, Judy Hoffman, Judy Hathaway, Jerry Pinkerton, and Bonnie Oates. They were elected in 2010 and their terms will expire in 2014.)

If anyone in the membership is interested in running for the Board of Directors, they should contact a board member, listed below, to be nominated by

APRIL 11, 2012

Directors attend six monthly meetings a year via telephone. They also attend the National AWON Conference and a board retreat in off-conference years.

Norm Burkey	normanburkey@verizon.net
Norma Nicol Hamilton	rlhnnh@comcast.net
Judy Hathaway	judy0305@yahoo.com
Judy Hoffman	jghoffman@satx.rr.com
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Gerry Morenski	dutiem@comcast.net
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Jerry Pinkerton	jerry.pinkerton@sbcglobal.net



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Judy Hoffman

www.awon.org

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LeGrand Attends 70th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor Day with Bomb Grp.

by Penny LeGrand

The "date which will live in infamy," 70 years ago, on December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor, Hickam Field, Wheeler Field, Schofield Barracks, and Bellows Field, were attacked by the Japanese with devastating fury. The attack was without warning, resulting in 2,388 casualties, 1,178 wounded, and thereby plunged the United States into World War II.

We were last in Honolulu ten years ago for the 60th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor Day. At that time my mother and aunt attended with my husband Steve and me. It was enlightening to watch my mother, who was so excited at seeing the areas where my dad, the love of her life, spent his time while she was home pregnant with me.

This year, Steve and I will be at the 70th anniversary commemoration of the attack on Pearl Harbor and Hickam Field. We will also honor my dad and his buddies at the reunion of the 11th Bombardment Group Association. The 11th BG was based at Hickam Field, and many of these men were there during the attack, my father joining them in 1943.

We arrived in Honolulu two
The Star • March 2012



Penny's hand rests beneath her father's name memorialized on the Walls of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, commonly called the "Punchbowl." Inset, the 60 names of AWON fathers remembered at Punchbowl on the AWON wreath.

days prior to the planned events so that we could do the usual touristy things like walking Waikiki Beach, shopping at ABC stores, watching hula shows, touring the city, and envisioning what it all looked like 70 years ago.

We made an initial visit to the Pearl Harbor Visitors Center where we ran into a group of Japanese girls who were touring, taking pictures, giggling and having a good time. Suddenly they reached out to us and asked to have their picture taken together. We thought they wanted only their picture but it turned out they wanted Steve and me

in the picture as well. We then in turn took their picture for our album for which they seemed very excited and giggled more. The girls didn't speak any English and we, of course, didn't speak Japanese, but we managed to communicate just the same. With a loud thunk between my eyes, I realized what a long, long way we have come. We went from bombing, destroying, and killing on these very grounds to laughing and taking fun-filled pictures with the very people we were fighting.

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Welcome New Members

Manfred Klinkenberg, Germany, associate
Patricia Innes, CA, dau of PVT Arthur Fanelli, Army
Nadine Hogue Dowdy, TN, dau of PFC Harold B. Hogue, Army
Lindsey Pollard, CA, granddau of CPT James H. Hardy, Army
Martha Llewellyn Jones Willis, TN, dau of PVT John R. Jones, Army
Richard Adams, OR, son of LT Claude W. Adams, Navy
Glenis Burton, England, dau of unknown American serviceman

(new members since the December issue of *The Star*)

Volunteers Needed For Electronic Deposit Trial

AWON Updates Dues Payments Options

by Norm Burkey,
AWON Treasurer

Your AWON Board of Directors has been working to improve dues payment options available to members.

Many of you already have noticed the multi-year dues payment options we introduced last year. We are happy to report that many of you are taking advantage of this option. It really will have a dramatic effect on the workload of our data processing manager, a volunteer position.

Unfortunately, our other efforts to update, streamline or simplify dues payments have not been nearly as successful.

We spent considerable time looking at the online credit card option again, but to have a secure website is

simply too expensive and complicated for a group our size. We dropped the online credit card payment option several years ago because it became too expensive. For this reason we have abandoned this effort.

However we do have one other option to offer. If you engage in electronic banking and you have the option to electronically transfer payments to outside banks,

we have a method to accept those types of payments.

I would like to conduct a small trial before we fully introduce electronic bank transfers. If you are willing to be a "guinea pig," please contact me at normanburkey@verizon.net.

Also, I wish to remind members that when making ANY dues payment, be sure to make your check to AWON, not me personally.

Keep AWON Up To Date

Send address and email updates to Database Manager Gerry Morenski at dutiem@comcast.net.

If you are on the AWON ListServ and your email has changed, notify

Moderator Judy Hoffman
at jghoffman@satx.rr.com
or

Moderator Judy Hathaway
at judy0305@yahoo.com

Grandson Makes Pilgrimage to Belgium's Henri-Chappelle

One of the most fulfilling feelings for a World War II orphan is knowing their son or daughter - a World War II grandchild - "gets it." That's when an orphan feels assured that his or her father's life and sacrifice will not be forgotten by the next generation.

Helen Vernon's son "gets it."

Keith Vernon, along with his wife, Teena, and daughter, Laura, visited Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery and Memorial in Belgium last fall for the first time, to see the grave of his grandfather, Pfc. Elmer B. Heath.

"Keith is the first of my children to visit my daddy. It was very emotional for him and for all of us," explains Helen. "I am so proud of him and so glad that my children and grandchildren revere the memory of my father, just as I have. This assures me that his memory will live on into the next generation."

Correction

In the December issue, Jerry Pinkerton was omitted from the current AWON Board of Directors in AWON's 20th Anniversary coverage. The Star apologizes for the error.



Keith Vernon at his grandfather's grave at Henri-Chappelle.

Keith says he has wanted to take this trip since his mother's first visit to the cemetery about 20 years ago.

"Over the years she has made several visits and met some incredible people that help keep the memory of fallen soldiers alive for new generations," Keith says. "My wife and I got serious about visiting in the last couple of years and started making plans."

It sometimes is difficult for grandchildren to feel the connection to a man who not only died well before they were born, but is buried or memorialized overseas. But standing at the grave makes the grandfather, ironically,

come alive. Or at least real.

"Visiting the gravesite allowed me to make a physical connection with my grandfather's memory," explains Keith. "It was, for me, a pilgrimage to honor him and his sacrifice and also the sacrifices of my grandmother, Virginia Heath."

AWON has many overseas friends. People in places like Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Italy, Slovenia, Switzerland, Great Britain, and the Philippines, have contacted AWON to say they want to honor AWON fathers. They do this in a number of ways, including finding witnesses to a battle or a plane crash, providing transportation to the cemetery, and even arranging accommodations and other services. Many AWON Overseas Friends have adopted the graves of AWON fathers. They visit the grave, say a prayer or leave flowers. They do this because they recognize the sacrifice AWON fathers made for the freedoms they enjoy today.

Keith got tremendous support from AWON Overseas Friends Martijn van Haren, who has adopted Pfc. Heath's grave; and Regine Acten-Villers, her husband,

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Hoosier Hospitality Awaits at 2012 AWON National Conference

As co-chairs of the 2012 AWON National Conference, we welcome you to Indianapolis - one of the Top 25 most-visited cities in the United States.

Our compact downtown alone offers more than 200 restaurants and 50 attractions within walking distance, all prime for exploring. Our host hotel, the Embassy Suites Indianapolis, is in the heart of downtown.

The Indiana War Memorial Plaza Historic District, in the heart of downtown Indianapolis, includes the Soldiers and Sailors Monument; the USS Indianapolis National Monument; the Medal of Honor Wall; monuments to Vietnam, Korea and World War II; and the War Memorial; in addition to landscaped open space. The inscription carved above the main entrance to the War Memorial reads:

To commemorate the valor and sacrifice of the land, sea and air forces of the United States and all who rendered faithful and loyal service at home and overseas in the World War; to inculcate a true understanding and appreciation of the privilege of American citizenship; to inspire patriotism and respect for the laws to the end that peace may prevail, justice be administered, public order maintained and liberty perpetuated.

Indianapolis is the perfect place to host our 2012 National Conference to honor our dads, to share our stories and to be among our brothers and sisters. Please join us for a wonderful AWON gathering in Indy.

**Walt Linne and Barb Kelly
Co-chairs**

... Grandson, from page 6



From left: Keith Vernon; daughter, Laura; wife, Teena; Martijn VanHaren, who adopted PVT Heath's grave; and Regine Acten-Villers, AWON Friend.

Bernard, and daughter, Marie; who have helped AWONers in countless ways. They also are the founders of the AWON Memorial Day Wreath project.

"(They) gave us very good advice and support for our visit," notes Keith. "Their kindness and respect is very comforting and appreciated."

Keith and his family also received tremendous help from Caroline Oliver at Henri-Chappelle, who arranged a tribute with American and Belgian flags at Heath's headstone.

"(She) placed sand in the engravings which made the letters look golden," Keith adds. "She also gave us a packet of information about the cemetery and let me take the flags with me."

"I was fortunate to visit on a Sunday morning at the same time the chimes from the chapel were playing, which added an extra special feeling to the experience."

Keith's mother, Helen, couldn't be more pleased.

"It was an awesome moment when Keith was introduced for the first time to his 'hero' grandfather."

Slots Open on Memorial Day Tour of Philippines

Space is still available for the 2012 AWON Tour of the Philippines by Valor Tours.

The tour is centered around the Memorial Day ceremonies at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial where AWON will honor the fathers who were lost so far from home.

The group will depart San Francisco on May 24 and will return on June 3. Among the sites included in the itinerary are Corregidor, the Bataan Peninsula, the Hellships Memorial, Subic Bay, Clark Field, and Caba-

natuan. While in Manila the group will stay at the historic Manila Hotel, formerly General Douglas MacArthur's headquarters.

This is the third AWON tour of the Philippines by Valor Tours. The first tour was organized in 2007 and the second in 2008. The tours are designed for, but not limited to, AWON members.

Reservations are still available. For more information contact AWONer Patty Temte at patriciatemte@gmail.com, or Valor Tours at valortours@yahoo.com.



The 2007 AWON tour of the Philippines

Contributions Sought for Volkan Conference Topic

Vamik D. Volkan, M.D., Nobel Peace Prize nominee and international lecturer, has agreed to present at our 2012 AWON National Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana, in October.

Dr. Volkan has brought us presentations on linking objects and now will introduce us to transgenerational influence - how the loss of our fathers and associate mourning influenced the next generation, how our surviving mothers and our father's loss influenced our upbringing and, in turn, how it influenced the raising of our children.

Dr. Volkan has been working on transgenerational transmission for years and now would like to present this concept to AWON. He requests our participation by submitting our experiences, feelings and thoughts in writing to help him prepare for this presentation. Also, please indicate if you would like participate on a panel during the presentation. He also is interested hearing from our children and our fathers' grandchildren on how they perceived this transgenerational influence on their lives.

Please submit your comments to:

**2012 AWON National Conference
Transgenerational Influence
5745 Lee Road
Indianapolis, IN 46216
wlinne@iupui.edu**

Orphans Whose Fathers Died Together Meet in London

by Angela Bush Christian

From time to time we all experience our dads putting in an appearance one way or another. My dad has managed to do it twice!

My father was an American soldier, Pvt. Gilbert M. Bush, who died May 8, 1945, near Unna, Germany, the day after the war ended. He and several buddies were drinking a toast to the end of the war, but the liquor had been poisoned with methyl alcohol - perhaps by the vanquished Germans, but this is not certain. My father and several other soldiers, including his buddy, Tech4 Chester Yates, died from the poison. I was not aware of any of this until my mother told me when I was 11.

Then, five years ago, Jimmie Yates picked up on one of my posts to various veteran websites, asking if anyone knew my dad or Chester. Jimmie was Chester's son.

Consequently, Jimmie and I corresponded and swapped

what information we had. Eventually he found a couple of pictures belonging to his mum which turned out to be my dad. This was the most precious gift that anyone could ever have given to me, to finally be able to see the face of my father and not



Angela Christian, center, with Norma Brubaker and her husband, Jim, at Westminster Bridge in London, England.

have to stand at a grave with no face to mourn. Jimmie also had my father's army pocket knife and rosary beads which were sent in error to his mum when Chester's and Dad's stuff were mixed up. Without Jimmie's help I would be without any of my dad's personal possessions.

In 2010 Jimmie died suddenly of a heart attack and I lost what I thought was the closest person to my dad in the whole world.

But a couple of months ago I received a call from Jimmie's sister, Norma Brubaker of Tennessee. Jimmie had told her about our connection.

Whilst rummaging through her brother's stuff she came across my telephone number and decided to give me a call. She was planning a visit to her dad's grave at Margraten. She was going to be the first member of their family to visit Chester's grave, so it was going to be a pretty emotional trip. She was going to have a stop-over in London for a couple of days and asked if we could meet up, something I never managed

to get to do with her brother, which was very sad. I agreed and my husband, Roy, and I made arrangements to meet at the beginning of October last year.

We spent two days with Norma and her husband,

...continued on page 9

... Christian, from page 8

Jim, doing the usual sight-seeing trips around London and talking mostly about her brother Jimmie who was so special to us both. We invited them to stay at our home on their return from the Netherlands before their return back to the states. We took them to the beautiful countryside of the Peak District National Park and then, sadly, said a tearful farewell at the train station.

This meeting was about as close as I can get to my father. I really feel that Jimmie had somehow orchestrated it from heaven. Norma and Jim are now back home in Tennessee and in her words -'still living the dream.' God is so good.

AWON Helps Members Find 'Lost Buddies'

Fortunately, Angela Christian's story is not unique in AWON.

The AWON website (www.awon.org) has a page devoted to helping others find members' fathers. The *Lost Buddies Project* page at <http://www.west-point.org/family/awon/lostbuddies/>, allows members to post photos and information about their father's war-time buddies. Anyone who does an online search for the buddy's name, for example, will be directed to the *Lost Buddies Project* page. It already has happened a few times.

In early January, AWON was contacted by a World War II veteran who was searching for the son of a buddy with whom he had served and had died. On the slim chance that he might find some information, he Googled his buddy's name and was immediately taken to the "Our Fathers" tribute page on the AWON website. There, he found the story of his buddy and his buddy's only son. The veteran then emailed AWON and within a day, he and the orphan were put in touch.

"Those of us who were involved in helping the vet make this contact felt that a little miracle had taken place," stated AWON Database Manager Gerry Morenski. "The veteran had many photos to share, and many stories to tell.

"Don't all of us wish for these contacts?"

To post a *Lost Buddies* item, contact Janice Buterbaugh at janicebuterbaugh@gmail.com.

Dear Mom and Dad

by Dr. Jack R. Dauner Ph.D.

Dear Mom and Dad is composed of letters written by the author to his parents during his military service in World War II, highlighting his day-by-day reactions to life in the military.

Chapters are conveniently divided into the organizations in which the author was assigned: Meteorology Cadet Training at the University of Wisconsin; ASTP programs at Grinnell College, Grinnell, IA, and Colorado State College at Ft. Collins, CO; 97th Infantry Division; Co. K, 60th Infantry, 9th Division; 366th Bomb Squadron, 305th Bomb Group, 8th AF; and the 397th Bomb Group, 9th AF. Photos and many summary remarks by the author are included.

Copies of *Dear Mom and Dad* are available for \$25,
postage and shipping included, through
Jack R. Dauner & Associates, P.O. Box 4719, Pinehurst, NC 28374

AWON Connections

Pictures and Stories of Members
Gathering Around the Country ...AND
WORLD.



In early December John Lupton, center, husband of AWON granddaughter and *The Star* editor, Kathy Le Comte, was in San Diego for business, but had some free time to visit with Sharon and Roger Connor. They drove along the San Diego bayfront before crossing the iconic bridge to the picture-perfect military town of Coronado. They also stopped at the nearby Veterans Museum to see a scaled-down replica of a B-24. John's and Sharon's fathers both flew B-24s with the 307th Bombardment Group in the Pacific, but John's father survived. In another coincidence, John's father and Kathy's grandfather both were B-24 tailgunners. *Sharon*

byshire, England, to spend the day talking, touring and eating with Sharon and Roger Connor, left, who were visiting Bath and Stonehenge. Angie's father, Pvt. Gilbert M. Bush, was an American soldier (see story on page 8). She has visited her father's relatives in New Jersey and while there met AWONers Maggie Malone and Sharon Connor. Pvt. Bush is at final rest in the American Military Cemetery in Margraten, the Netherlands. Angie has participated in memorial services there with Gerry Morenski and other AWONers. She hopes someday to attend an AWON Conference. *Angela and Roger*

Husband, Orphan Join AWON Fathers

The AWON family has lost two members recently.

Robert Caldwell, husband of member Adrian Leist Caldwell of Mississippi, passed away on January 5



following a brief illness. He is survived by his wife of 50 years, two sons and three grandchildren.

In November, AWONer Dixie Maurer-Clemons Wilcox of Oregon passed away from complications from cancer. She was the daughter of Sgt. Robert H.



Kisor. She is survived by her husband, Rick Wilcox; a son; two grandsons; and several siblings.



In early November, Angela Bush Christian and her husband, Roy, right, traveled 180 miles from their home in Chesterfield, Der-



Dianne Wiegand Baczynski, left, and new AWONer Patricia Innes, right, met for lunch with their husbands in January. They live in the same California town. Innes' husband found AWON on the Internet and signed her up. Dianne showed Patricia her father's album and gave her a "goody bag" of back issues of *The Star*, photos of past AWON reunions and a copy of Ann Mix and Susan Hadler's book, *Lost in the Victory*. Patricia's father belonged to the 84th Infantry Division "Railsplitters" and would appreciate any information about the unit. *Dianne*



During a port call in San Diego in January, Millie McConnell Cavanaugh, center, and

Annual York Gathering Set for April 28

The annual York, PA AWON Gathering will be held on Saturday, April 28.

Any orphans from or visiting the region are welcome to meet at Hoss's Steak and Sea House for lunch around 11:15 a.m. Afterwards, the group will visit the York Historical Society Museum where they will have an opportunity to tour the York County Heritage Trust's exhibit, *Front Porch to Front Lines: York County Goes to War*.

"Come join us for a day of sharing with AWON friends, meeting new orphans, and going back in history during the time of our fathers," Lynne says. "(Join) us for the day or weekend."

There will be a \$5 charge per person, group rate, to tour the exhibit. For more information about the York gathering, including the day's activities, local motels and directions, contact Lynne Lecrone at 403 Chambers Ridge, York, PA 17402-8819, (717) 757-9424 (home), (717) 487-8677 (cell), or email her at lynnelec@aol.com.

husband, Jim, spent a day with Sharon and Roger (not pictured) Connor. They visited local sites, enjoyed an authentic Mexican meal, and then visited Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, stopping at the memorial plaque for Sharon's father, which she had placed there in 2003. In one of those odd coincidences, Jim's birthday, July 15, is the same day Sgt. Crowley's plane was lost. *Sharon*

... Peirson, from front page

then: to convince Mercersburg to increase enrollment by advertising in *Parents' Magazine*, a mission which took her right to my dad. An extended campus tour followed - as sparks flew. It took several months for Dad to "knock her senseless" enough to marry him, although he first describes the way he thought he'd meet her in Letter #12:

... It all happened so fast . . . and yet it happened almost as I'd always thought it would. I thought perhaps I'd find you in the next seat on a train, some fine unsuspected day - or coming out of a Post Office in Chester, PA, or running along the beach at Daytona with the wind in your hair and sunshine in your smile. Wherever it was to be, I knew it would happen suddenly. A little Wheel would flip over as soon as I saw you and heard you speak. ...

The "knocking senseless" routine came from that same letter:

... I was sure You were You . . . but I needed time to bash you on the head to tell you who I was. I've always given you credit for being too smart to fall for my tripe unless in a state of semi- unconsciousness." ... Perhaps I will be enough if I can keep you sufficiently groggy. (Miss Beedle, please remind me to pick up another blunt instrument on my way to the office tomorrow). ...

Then, a little more seriously, in Letter #15:

... When I come over we'll have a million things to do and talk about. It might be

fun to take the traditional old ferry ride to Staten Island and back - wonderful night view of New York - and go dancing at the Waldorf roof, and call on our old friend Mostel again, and maybe night court, and how about spending a long beautiful day together out at Jones Beach, if the weather is just right? And how about Bermuda, and a walk down the Champs-Elizee (sp) or up to L'Etoile, and there's a little town in Sicily I know that I want to take you to someday, and a place on the coast of Algiers. Darling, wait till the war is over, and if there's anything left to work on I'll show you a life of fun and adventure and fascinating interest that you've never even dreamed of.

Nor have I, perhaps. That's the point - it'll take both of us. I love you. ...

Three weeks after their wedding on September 2, 1942, in the beginning of a commitment they made together, Dad was a private in the Army. It was time. But not good timing for two people so in love who had already taken so long to find



Betty Frost Peirson and 1LT John S. Peirson

each other.

Basic Training at Camp Robinson, Arkansas; Officer Training at Fort Benning, Georgia; and stints at several other posts, including deployment overseas; represent the legs of a long-distance relationship punctuated occasionally by actual togetherness, but mostly by letters and telegrams.

Fast forward to the summer of 2009. Our daughter, Lindsey, was in California to help repack our load. Unceremoniously down from the attic came the little blue box. My wife, Dianna, had an inkling as to what was inside, as Mom had spoken to her about some love letters. Mom once asked her if we would ever be interested in seeing them.

Dianna's enthusiastic "Yes!" was answered by, "Great, but not until I'm gone."

Mom passed away in 1981, and in the muddle of ingesting her things into two locations during a momentous business crunch, the box was all but forgotten in the attic. When it came down, it froze us all.

I thought the letters were all Mom's, but as we lined them up on the dining room table - sorted by year from 1941 to 1944 - Lindsey said, "Dad, I think this one is a letter from your dad." And it was! Then there was another, and another. One hundred thirty letters were his! Unbelievable. Along with 302 letters of hers. Overwhelming. Mom must have asked Dad to send her letters back in batches, making our attic discovery a dialogue of letters, back and forth. Together they paint an unusually graphic, time-based picture.

Just picture Dad's granddaughter reading to us a 70-year-old letter we'd never seen! It was one of those moments. Lindsey hadn't gotten far when she said, "Geez, Dad. Your dad had a way with words!" And he did. They both did, describing the fabric of two lives I'd never known.

I spent several weeks in shock, reading and processing the letters, learning about my dad. It was an incredible journey for me just in itself. But then, an almost bigger surprise was learning about my mom, and seeing her through my father's eyes.

It turns out his eyes were very different than mine. She was alive and fearless back then. She was funny, and energized. Now I know that I had never really known my mom - and I knew exactly why. The light of her life had long been out - extinguished - by the time I was old enough to talk, let alone old enough to understand what a light like that would have meant to her.

The letters are exceptional descriptions of life, in and out of the Army, in the run-up to love and war. There was a truly exceptional love, and a crushing, looming war. One was always getting lost in the other. There's so little doubt now that it's their very finest collaboration. Dianna looks at me and says, "It was their finest *writing* collaboration." I

get it. Here are a couple lines about me from both of them:

From Mom, August 18, 1944, Letter #375

... I'm beginning to realize. And oh Johnny, I can never put it into words. I'll never explain either how close he brings you -- deeper than resemblance, it's an involuntary feeling he brings of having you against my heart. ...

From Dad, September 20, 1944, Letter #398

... Love you, darling, with all I have. And that wonderful, rugged, healthy, energetic, "sweet" son of ours, too. Our son, darling, ours together. ... Do you really think of him as me, or partly so?? Does he make me closer -- and am I 'there' more when you have him? Hope so; he's my son and holds the saber in my absence, as he should. ...

Writers when they met, they had planned writing collaborations after the war, strategizing their approach in the letters, in a fascinating, well-written story we knew was too honest, too American, and just too beautiful not to share.

Dianna spent weeks scanning every page of every letter - 2,090 pages in all. Then she transcribed all of them. She was afraid that a California earthquake would come and we'd lose them all to history. But now we won't. We made them into a CD project. CDs of the transcriptions - in 10-letter PDF sets with resources - are available through the AWON Bookstore. The first 50 letters are on the web at <http://www.storyofmylife.cc/startletters>. The website is interactive, menu-driven and with sounds aboard. The sounds are '40s music you'll recognize, everything from the Mercersburg Carillon at Christmas to a snippet of Edith Piaf in *La Boheme*. The whole gamut - the time of their lives - is there, in a medium and in a dynamic that will simply never come again.

Soldier's Uncensored Letters Offer Rare Perspective on War

In 1983, orphan Bill McElvain came across a box of war letters written by his father, Sgt. Walter McElvain of the 44th Infantry Division, Signal Company, to his wife and parents. A Bloomington, Indiana, correspondent for the *Indianapolis Star* and *Chicago Tribune*, Sgt. McElvain had the training - and urge - to share his thoughts and opinions about the war going on around him in France and Germany. From his harrowing trip aboard a troop ship to the hostile attitudes of German civilians he encountered, Sgt. McElvain describes his experiences in impressive detail, and offers commentary rarely seen in other books about World War II. Now, his son shares his father's less-often-told war perspective in his self-published, *In My Father's Words: Letters from a WWII Soldier*.

The 139 letters selected for this book include early experiences in training camps in Washington, Louisiana, and Kansas; to eyewitness reports of the Allied invasion of France and Germany and their pursuit of the Nazis on the European Front. Bill McElvain expanded upon the letters with his own narrative on troop movements, battlefield details, and other information the soldier could not divulge because of

army censorship. Students of World War II history are familiar with battle dates, locations and leaders, but rarely do they get the chance to read a first-hand account from a soldier on the ground, or learn about war from the civilian's perspective. Sgt. McElvain's letters help to fill that void. One excerpt, from Chapter 12:



"... The first and most prominent thing we noticed in traveling from France and moving into Germany was the definitely hostile attitude of the German people, old and young. They stare at you sullenly, insolently, or just look the other way. Some of the kids, unable to cover their fiercer emotions, stick out their tongues, spit at you, or take mock pistol shots at you..."

Sgt. McElvain also wasn't shy in his opinions. He disliked the army. He not only complains about the conditions of the average foot

soldier but about his lack of freedom. An excerpt from Chapter 9:

"... I think one of the most pleasant things about being a civilian is freedom - freedom of speech, of expression, and movement. If I am ever lucky enough to be a civilian again, no one will ever tell me what I can or cannot write - or do. You can only appreciate freedom when you no longer have it..."

Although Sgt. McElvain was not allowed to reveal his location, the author has documented where the division was located on the date in each letter, and what they were doing there. The letters, though, are the soul of the book.

Sgt. McElvain survived the battlefield but in April 1945 was admitted to a field hospital with swelling of the neck. He was sent to a stateside hospital where he died of Hodgkin's Disease in January 1946.

The book has 176 pages and includes an appendix of Army memos issued to 44th Division soldiers while they were on the front.

In My Father's Words is more than a diary or journal. It is uncensored history, told by a foot soldier who had the talent and courage to tell it the way he saw it.



AWON BOOKSTORE

Price List / Order Form



BOOKS

(Authors in **bold** are orphan or family members)

New! *In My Father's Words: Letters From A World War II Soldier*
by **Bill McElvain** \$16.00

____ *If These Stones Could Talk*
by Col. Calvin G. "Jerry" Lyons, USA (Ret) \$27.00

____ *The Dad I Never Knew: A War Orphan's Search for Inner Healing*
by **Bruce Brodowski** REDUCED! \$7.95

____ *Farebersville 1944*
by **Jeff Wignall** \$18.95

____ *A Soldier's Daughter*
by **Lois Brown Klein** \$17.00

____ *The Ordinary Infantrymen: Heroes Then, Heroes Again*
by **Imogene Woods** and Twelve WWII Infantrymen \$15.00

____ *Full Fathom Five: A Daughter's Search*
by **Mary Lee Coe Fowler** \$29.95

____ *Love Always, Ben*
by **Huey Tyra**, nephew REDUCED! \$3.00

____ *When Your Number's Up: Meritocracy Goes to War*
by Raymond S. Ross, PhD. \$10.00

____ *Sporty Course (bomber pilots)*
by Col. Jack Swayze \$10.00

____ *The Hotton Report (about The Battle for Hotton)*
by Robert McDonald \$13.95

____ *World War II: A Legacy of Letters - One Soldier's Journey*
by **Clinton Frederick** \$26.95

____ *In Their Memory: American WWII Orphans Network*
by Turner Publishing Company
Standard Book was \$49.95 **REDUCED! \$10.00**
Leatherbound Book was \$79.95 **REDUCED! \$25.00**

____ *The Fighting Tigers: The Untold Story Behind the Names on the Quachita Baptist University WWII Memorial*
by William Downes \$24.95

____ *The War Journey of Major Damon "Rocky" Gause*
by Maj. Damon "Rocky" Gause, foreword by **Damon L. Gause** \$21.95

____ *Love, Honor and Cherish: The True World War II Story of a Screaming Eagle and a Courageous Woman*
by **Sandra Bonilla Thompson** \$23.00

____ *Soldier's Son*
by **Ben McClelland** \$28.00

____ *No Greater Sacrifice, No Greater Love: A Son's Journey to Normandy*
by **Walter Ford Carter** \$24.95

____ *D-Day + 60 Years: A Small Piece of Airborne History*
by Jerome J. McLaughlin \$25.00

____ *They Also Served: Women's Stories from the World War II Era*
by Jeanie Sutton Lambright
hardcover \$35.00 softcover \$24.00

____ *Finding Billy*
by **Diana Thompson Dale**, niece \$16.95

____ *Father Found: Life and Death as a Prisoner of the Japanese in World War II*
by **Duane Heisinger** \$13.95

____ *An 8th Air Force Combat Diary*
by John A. Clark \$49.95

____ *When I See a "Forty and Eight" ... I Remember World War Two*
by Jacques Adnet, Lt. Col. USAF (ret.) \$12.00

____ *For Those Who Love, Time Is Not*
by **Kay Brigham** was \$30.00 **NOW \$16.00**

____ *Lost in the Victory: Reflections of America's Orphans of WWII*
by **Susan Johnson Hadler** and **Ann Bennett Mix** \$32.50

____ *After the Liberators: A Father's Last Mission, A Son's Lifelong Journey*
by **William C. McGuire II** \$16.95

____ *Shobun: A Forgotten War Crime in the Pacific*
by **Michael J. Goodwin** \$19.95

More AWON Merchandise and Order Form on Other Side



AWON BOOKSTORE

Price List / Order Form



CD / VIDEO

NEW! *Letters of Love and War* (CD for Mac or PC)
by 1LT John and Betty Peirson \$19.44

____ *We Speak Their Names: A Tribute to Our Fathers*
produced by Patrick Tierney and **Terry Boettcher**
was \$15.00 \$10.00*

____ *AWON 2004 Conference & WWII Memorial Dedication*
\$10.00*

____ *AWON 2000 Conference: Journeys - Finding Our Fathers*
by Justin Taylan was \$15.00 \$10.00*

____ *Sleep My Sons: The Story of the Arisan Maru*
by **Shawnee Brittan** \$30.00

____ *The War in Europe* by **Shawnee Brittan** \$30.00

AWON Logo Products

(Items in **bold** are new)

____ **Sweatshirt** \$45.00
(circle size: S M L XL 2X 3X)

____ Windbreaker (blue) \$40.00
(circle size: S M L XL 2X 3X)

____ Denim shirt ____ short sleeve ____ long sleeve \$40.00
(circle size: S M L XL 2X)

____ Golf shirt ____ white ____ blue \$35.00
(circle size: S M L XL 2X)

NEW! 20th Anniversary Logo T-shirt navy \$20.00
(circle size: S M L XL 2X 3X)

____ Hat \$15.00

____ Scarf (royal blue fleece) \$15.00

____ Tote bag (large) \$20.00

AWON Gold Star crystal pendant (no chain included):

____ Gold Star crystal pendant 1 1/8" (28mm) \$10.00

____ Gold Star crystal pendant 1 1/2" (40mm) \$20.00

____ *AWON lapel pin \$10.00

____ Gold Star earrings \$20.00

____ *AWON button (2 1/4 inch) \$3.00

____ *AWON lanyard and name tag/ticket holder
(4" x 6") blue with white lettering \$6.00

____ *AWON note cards w/envelopes (pkg. of 20) \$20.00

____ *AWON bookmarks
(circle amount: 1/\$1.00, 5/\$3.00, 10/\$5.00)

____ *AWON auto magnet \$6.00

____ *AWON holiday ornament \$10.00

____ **AWON blanket (royal blue w/gold lettering)** \$30.00
(send father's name & rank (if desired) with order)

The Star NEWSLETTERS

____ * Individual issues \$2.00 includes P&H

____ * All archived issues: \$35.00 includes P&H

____ * Special! Most recent five issues: \$7.50 includes P&H

Ordering Information

Postage and handling: \$5 for each item. Items marked with an asterisk (*) include P&H. For multiple purchases:
Up to \$40: \$9 P&H \$40-\$60: \$10 P&H Over \$60: \$12 P&H Washington State residents add 7.8% sales tax.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____

Total Enclosed: _____

Send check or money order to:

AWON Bookstore

5745 Lee Road

Indianapolis, IN 46216

email: bookstore@awon.org

For more information and color photos go to: www.awon.org/bookstore/bookstore.html

... LeGrand, from page 3

On December 6, the 11th Bombardment Group Association began their program by conducting their own small ceremony at the 'Punchbowl.' The cemetery is a peaceful, serene, and beautiful resting place inside a volcanic crater overlooking the busy city of Honolulu. There were ten veterans attending, all but two were Hickam Field survivors ranging in age from 87 to 98 years old.

At this time the 11th BG presented a wreath, and I presented a wreath from AWON for our fathers who are memorialized there. The two wreaths were laid at the bottom of the steps leading up to the Walls of the Missing, on a marble slab with the message:

IN THESE GARDENS ARE RECORDED
THE NAMES OF AMERICANS
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES
IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY
AND WHOSE EARTHLY RESTING PLACE
IS KNOWN ONLY TO GOD

After a short ceremony I visited my dad, 1LT Charles E. Hopkins Jr., B-24 pilot, and his crew, all memorialized at the Punchbowl. They all went MIA on January 20, 1944, over the Marshall Islands. I also had time to visit a few of the other AWON dads that are also memorialized in this beautiful place.

After I blew them sweet kisses, the group went by bus to Pearl Harbor. We watched the film of the attack and then proceeded to the *USS Arizona* Memorial sitting directly over the ship where 1,177 young men died and are entombed. It is said that the 300 survivors of the *USS Arizona* have requested to be buried in the ship with their battle brothers. There is now a separate marble stone for names to be added as they pass on.

We went back to the hotel for rest and relaxation with an evening event planned in the hospitality room.

The evening presented four-star Gen. Gary L. North, Commander of the Pacific Air Forces, with his "brass" entourage, who came to visit in the hotel hospitality room and inter-



Gen. Gary L. North, Commander, Pacific Air Forces, with Penny and Steve LeGrand

view our ten vets. It was so interesting to learn, first hand, the adventures, sorrows, and fears of these ten guys. One vet said that Pearl Harbor/Hickam Field was mild compared to Guadalcanal. He was in the Army Air Corps for four years, five months, and eleven days, and he was thankful that he was one who came home alive. Another two who were the pilot and navigator of the same B-24, are still harassing each other over who was at fault for getting them lost on a reconnaissance flight.

The room was filled with plenty of other stories, too, including families who lived on Hickam Field and remember and survived the Japanese attack. One lady was 14 years old at the time and showed us the house where she lived on a later tour. We also met the colonel who is now sitting at the very same desk where her father sat 70 years ago. I very much enjoyed all of these stories that made up so many pieces of my own journey to find my dad.

The next morning, December 7, we gathered at the flag pole in Atterbury Memorial Park, and at 7:55 a.m. the flag was raised to half-mast, and the remembrance ceremony began with the Missing Man Flyover of F-18's. The sun shown in our eyes as we faced the east, listening to the Air Force

...continued on page 18

... *LeGrand*, from page 17

Band and a young military woman singing *Lest We Forget*.

Gen. North then came to the podium and related the very stories our vets told him the night before: "... from three days to four years, five months, eleven days, we all appreciate your service to our country," Gen. North stated. As our ten veterans sat in the front row, Gen. North presented each an American flag, bending down on his knees for those who could not readily stand up. I was overwhelmed with pride for all those old vets, and Gen. North as well for his heart-warming gestures.

The ceremony ended with a 21-gun salute, laying of the wreaths, and *Taps*. My mother's 94th birthday is December 7, so I called her after the ceremony while looking up at the flag to wish her a happy birthday. It was an honorable and memorable day indeed.

Following the ceremony, we bussed to the brunch buffet at the Officers Club on Hickam Field, where again we mingled with Gen. North and his men. The Officers Club has an open lanai sitting on the edge of a Pearl Harbor channel. We watched a submarine find its way to its dock.

Afterward, we loaded on to the busses again for a tour of Hickam Field Hangar 13

which is where most of the 11th BG aircraft were destroyed during the attack, still showing the bullet holes in the walls. Best of all to me, and what I was waiting impatiently for, was the Heritage Room in the 11th BG museum. I could spend days in there searching through volumes of books, scrapbooks, and photo albums of World War II in the Pacific. In the few minutes we were there I found a few pictures of my dad and a cartoon of former POW Lewis Zamporini who also was in the 11th BG and for whom the book *Unbroken* was written. I was whisked away far too soon but was invited back whenever I wanted to come.

On December 8, we had the luxury of relaxing until the evening banquet, again on the Officers Club's open lanai at Hickam Field. It began with a color guard, followed by a very short speech and welcome from Gen. North. I do need to mention the dinner that was served. I don't normally eat beef, and we were not given choices. The entree was the most delicious, cooked-to-perfection, filet mignon that you could cut with a fork. Steve was licking his chops and coveting my portion and was greatly disappointed when he saw me eat it - all of it! His was the trifecta of disappointment.

The last day was spent on Ford Island where we visited the new Pacific Aviation Museum and the *USS Missouri*. The museum was very interesting, having been converted from an old hanger. It, too, donned bullet holes in the walls and windows from the attack. The many displays included a Japanese Zero, a B-25, and maps showing the direction of the war, island by island, from Honolulu to Tokyo. And last, we visited the *USS Missouri*, a brass medallion marking the spot where the official unconditional surrender of the Japanese to the Allied Forces was signed on September 2, 1945.

On December 10 we said farewell. For some it will be a final farewell. For others only an *Aloha*. Hopefully, I will be able to attend the 80th anniversary, for it will be us children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, keeping the history of World War II alive.

2012 AWON National Conference
Embassy Suites Indianapolis - Downtown
October 19-21, 2012
Hotel Reservations

AWON rate \$129 plus tax per night for king or two doubles. Parking \$21 per night.

Call (317) 236-1800 or
800-Embassy (800-362-2779).

Mention AWON 2012-IC block. Or book online at
www.indianapolisdowntown.embassysuites.com.

Use group code AWO.

Reservation cutoff date September 18, 2012

Registration Form
Celebrating 20 Years • 2012 AWON National Conference
Indianapolis, Indiana • October 19-21, 2012
Please return by August 1, 2012

Member Name: _____
Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____
Father's Name _____
Guests: (name and relationship to member and if a veteran): _____

Is this your first AWON Conference? (circle one) yes ☐ no ☐

☐ I do NOT want registration information listed in the conference roster. (check box if desired)

Do you have special needs? (If so, please indicate on next space) yes ☐ no ☐

Are you driving to the conference? yes ☐ no ☐

Would you be willing to shuttle others to events? yes ☐ no ☐

Please indicate choice and number of banquet entrees: beef _____ chicken _____
fish _____ vegetarian _____

Registration Fee

(includes banquet)

Note: Conference registration fee is reduced in celebration of AWON's 20th Anniversary

Active Member	\$125 / \$75 deposit	\$ _____
Inactive Member	\$150 / \$75 deposit	\$ _____
First Guest	\$75 / \$50 deposit	\$ _____
Add'l Guests w/banq.	\$65 / \$50 deposit	\$ _____
Add'l Guests no banq.	\$30 / \$15 deposit	\$ _____

Total registration fee/deposit enclosed: \$ _____

Must be returned by August 1 and paid in full by August 15

Name Tag Information (please print clearly)

Name (include maiden name) and State of Residence: _____

Name of Spouse attending: _____

Name of Mother attending: _____

Other guests attending (designate if veteran): _____

Serviceman's name: _____ Branch of Service _____

rank first middle last
KIA or MIA (circle one) Date KIA/MIA _____ Country KIA/MIA _____

Mail registration form with check or money order payable to **AWON** to:

2012 AWON National Conference
5745 Lee Road
Indianapolis, IN 46216

Contact List for Local Regional Coordinators

Would you like to meet other WWII orphans in your area? AWON's Local Regional Coordinators can answer your questions and introduce you to other orphans. They also help plan local gatherings like the ones listed on pages 10-11. Look below for the name of the person living closest to you and contact me. I will email you their email address (some members prefer their email address not be distributed in a list). Even if you have been a member for a while, please contact your LRC to let them know you're here!

Barry Barr-Finch
Director of Local Regional Coordinators
barrfinch1@gmail.com

Ginny Finney Bugg	Birmingham, AL	Adrian Leist Caldwell	Tupelo, MS
Phoebe Palmer	Centre, AL	Patty Wheeler	Blowing Rock, NC
Shirley McKinney	Little Rock, AR	Mary Ann Otte	Morse Bluff, NE
Pat Fabri	Phoenix, AZ	Millie Cavanaugh	Point Pleasant, NJ
Dianne Wiegman Baczynski	Novato, CA	Pat Albani	Albuquerque, NM
Roger & Sharon Connor	San Diego, CA	Lorin McCleary	Medanales, NM
Marilyn Bowers Jensen	Denver, CO	Penny Dempsey	Las Vegas, NV
Gail Eisenhower	Hamden, CT	Sandy MacDuffee	Binghamton, NY
Bill Chiodo	Windsor, CT	Joan Morrow	Long Beach, NY
Jamie & Jimmie McCollum	Fernandina Beach, FL	Maggie Malone	New York, NY
Beth Miller	Hollywood, FL	Nick Mott	Troy, OH
David Colinan	Sarasota, FL	Ellen Haux	Portland, OR
Vanita Rae Smith	Kailua, HI	Catherine Webber	Salem, OR
Terry Boettcher	Indianola, IA	Janice Buterbaugh	Chambersburg, PA
Chickie Shields Berry	Spirit Lake, ID	Brenda Kightlinger	Erie, PA
Susan Chadd	Northfield, IL	Lynne Carol Lecrone	York, PA
Barbara Kelly	Indianapolis, IN	Brenda Burchfield	Knoxville, TN
Bonnie Oates	Nortonville, KY	Jerry Wayne Pinkerton	Dallas, TX
Eugene Zachman	Shawnee Mission, KS	Mary-Anne Hansen	Houston, TX
Jaclyn Rackley	Wichita, KS	Andy Mannering	McAllen, TX
Phyllis Epstein Louis	Baltimore, MD	Ellen Jones Blackburn	Staunton, VA
Judy Epsha	Clinton, MI	Betty Nester	Williamsburg, VA
Pat Morrison	La Crescent, MN	Judi Kramer	Bremerton, WA
Susan Nichols Linville	Kansas City, MO	David Stanek	Appleton, WI

AWON Board Business
8 October 2011

Financial Report and Budget: Treasurer **Norm Burkey** discussed the financial report and budget year to date. Norm also discussed various banking options. The board approved Norm looking into those other options and to report back at the January 2012 meeting.

American Legion Donation: The board approved making a \$500 donation in 2011 and 2012 (\$1,000 total) to the American Legion for its continuing support of AWON with free office space and hospitality for the board meeting. The board plans to make a presentation to the Legion at the 2012 National Conference in Indianapolis.

AWON Database: Database Manager **Gerry Morenski** gave a report on AWON's database. There are 824 active members. Gerry will research options for renewing the database maintenance agreement and give a report in January.

Future Planning: Everyone present spent considerable time discussing long-range plans for AWON considering the age of the membership, vacancies in some posts, and the difficulty in finding volunteers, among other issues.

Public Relations Director: The position of public relations director has been vacant since **Patricia Gaffney-Kindig** resigned the post. In 2011 the board explored several options for replacing her but voted to table further discussion.

Complimentary Newsletter List: Before the meeting Gerry emailed directors a list of about 155 people who receive free subscriptions to *The Star*. Many are to superintendents of overseas American cemeteries and others who support AWON's activities and mission. The purpose for some others being on the list isn't clear. Gerry asked directors to provide her the background of anyone they know on the list.

2012 National Conference: Conference co-chair **Walt Linne** gave a report on the conference, set for October 19-22, 2012, in Indianapolis, including potential themes and itinerary. **Penny LeGrand** reported on potential hotel sites. The board chose

...continued on page 22

2012 AWON National Conference
"Celebrating 20 Years"
Conference Program Book
Memorial Ad Form

If you would like to place a memorial ad in the conference program book, complete the form below and include a photo(s) or email an image. Forms and payment are due by **July 1**. If you send photos by mail, **do not send originals**. They will not be returned. Identify the subject of the photo on the back. If you email a photo, please send a high-resolution jpg.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Select one: (8½ x 11 page)

\$20 _____ 1/8 page \$35 _____ 1/4 page

\$70 _____ 1/2 page \$100 _____ full page

Ad prices have been reduced in honor of AWON's 20th Anniversary. Everyone placing an ad will receive a program book, whether or not they attend the conference.

Message to accompany photo
(enclose separate sheet if necessary):

Make check/money order payable to **AWON**
and mail form, photos and payment to:

Kathy Le Comte
1004 Williams Blvd.
Springfield, IL 62704
email: johnkath5@comcast.net

Guidelines for Submitting Material for Publication

- Topics considered for publication in *The Star* include, but are not limited to, unit reunions, visiting battle or crash sites, cemeteries, ceremonies, seeking or finding families and veterans, poetry, etc.
- Email copy-ready articles and pictures to the editor in Word, WordPerfect, RTF, or in the body of an email. High resolution jpeg, bitmap, gif or tiff images are preferred. Text and pictures also can be mailed. Photos returned upon request.
- Please keep text to one page (500 to 1,000 words), including pictures.
- Email short articles about resources, queries, book/movie recommendations, and general information for the List Tips column to the assistant editor.
- Preference is given to material written by and about AWON members.
- Authors retain copyright to published original writing. Permission to reprint should be obtained from the author by contacting the editor.

Kathy Le Comte, Editor
1004 Williams Blvd.
Springfield, IL 62704
(217) 787-6512
johnkath5@comcast.net

**Deadline for the
June Issue
is May 1**

... *Minutes, from page 21*

the downtown Embassy Suites as the conference site. The conference registration fee was set at \$125 per member, adjusted accordingly for non-members.

Image Security: **Judy Hoffman** distributed copies of the new Security of Digital Imaging Policy and Procedure. The policy protects the use of AWON's digital images, such as AWON's father photos. The board approved the new policy and procedure.

Membership Committee: **Ed Peters** reported that **Mary Kenny** resigned as chair of the membership committee.

Website Member Application: Norm Burkey discussed issues with the website member application form. Many people submit the application over the internet but don't follow through by mailing their dues. The board discussed various options. Norm will review the options and report back in January.

Board Meeting Time: The board approved moving the teleconference meeting time one hour back. Meetings are on the third Sunday of every other month, beginning in January, beginning at 9 p.m. Eastern.

Pearl Harbor Anniversary: Penny LeGrand reported that she will represent AWON at the Pearl Harbor anniversary ceremonies. The board voted to purchase a wreath for her to present at that time.

Meeting Stipend: The board approved increasing the stipend for the in-person meeting to \$500, retroactive to 2011.

Archives Mission Statement: **Norma Nicol Hamilton** presented the proposed AWON Archives mission statement developed by the archives committee. The statement was approved as amended.

AWON Brochures: The board and Walt Linne discussed revising AWON's brochures which are given to overseas cemeteries and distributed at events and conferences. A committee consisting of **Kathy Le Comte**, **Judy Hathaway**, Walt and Norma will work with AWON webmaster **Rik Peirson** to update the brochure and give a report to the board, with a goal completion date of Memorial Day 2012.

Next Board Meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting of the AWON Board of Directors is January 15, 2012.

Judith Hoffman, Secretary

This is a condensed version of the minutes. For the complete minutes, visit awon.org.

American WWII Orphans Network

Application, Registration & Renewal Form

- ☐ I would like to become a member
☐ Register my father/family member and me only
☐ Renew my membership

Information about You

(please print clearly)

Name _____
 Spouse's Name _____
 Address _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 Phone _____ (home, work, cell, other)
 E-mail _____
 Relationship to Serviceman _____
 Your Date of Birth _____
 Would you like to receive *The Star* electronically? Y N
 Where did you hear about AWON? _____

Information about WWII Serviceman Who Died

Be as complete as possible. If you do not have some of the information, leave it blank and we may be able to provide it to you. Do not delay mailing the application for lack of information.

Name _____
 Last First M.I.
 Birth Date _____ Date of Death _____
 Place of Death _____
 Where Buried _____
 Military Unit _____
 Service Number _____

Additional details about serviceman's death and/or service: (rank, medals, etc.)

Home Town and State _____
 Wife's Maiden Name _____
 Did widow remarry? Y N
 Names and addresses of your siblings with same father, and/or additional family members:

(Please include information on another sheet, if necessary.)

Membership Levels

Any child of a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, Coast Guard or Merchant Marine, who was killed, remains missing in action, or who died in the line of duty or later died of wounds or injuries sustained during World War II, is eligible to join as an **Orphan Member**. Any direct relative is eligible to join as a **Family Member**. Any individual, including friends of those killed in World War II, those who wish to participate in AWON activities, or organizations with an interest in and compatible with AWON's purposes and goals, are eligible to join as an **Associate Member**.

Check Your Membership Category:

☐ Orphan ☐ Family ☐ Associate

Dues Options

Basic annual membership dues are \$25. Sponsor, Gold Star and Multi-year memberships also are available:

	1 Year	3 Year	5 Year
Basic	\$25	\$70	\$110
Sponsor	\$50	\$140	\$220
Gold Star	\$100	\$280	\$440

AWON greatly appreciates gifts beyond these levels.

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

I give permission to AWON to release my name, address, email address, phone number and relationship to and pertinent information about the serviceman to other members. I understand the list of members is confidential and will *never* be sold or given to any other organization or business. I hereby release AWON from any liability that may arise from the release of information.

Signature (optional) _____

AWON is a humanitarian, nonprofit, nonpolitical, public service organization under Section 501(c)3 of the U.S. Federal Tax code (EINB #91-1538912). Membership is not required to register in our database.

Mail form and payment to:

Norm Burkey
AWON Treasurer
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Forest Hill, MD 21050

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"Breaking Down the Wall of Silence"

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awon@aol.com
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

Gerry Morenski dutiem@comcast.net

Archives

Ann Whelan O'Connor awolaojr@earthlink.net

Bookstore

Walt Linne bookstore@awon.org

Dues

Norm Burkey normanburkey@verizon.net

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Patty Temte AWON@aol.com

Janice Ott Buterbaugh janicebuterbaugh@gmail.com

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