

The



Star

Issue 70

"We Speak Their Names"

October 2013

Displays of Affection Changed over Time

Mother's Love Complicated



Rondy and her mother, Pauline, in the backyard of her grandparents' home where they lived.

by Rondy Elliott

Apensive adolescent, I often left the house, walked north about the length of a city block, then trudged across a field to an eroded clay cliff overlooking Lake Erie. In all seasons, whether the freezing wind was blowing and howling through barren trees, or whether it was a time of year when warmth was in the air, it was my place for refuge and contemplation in this lakeshore suburb of Cleveland where I went to high school. I loved how the lake changed on its surface, depending on the weather and the color of the sky. I knew that underneath it was constantly changing also, as water life from the tiniest microbe to the largest sturgeon navigated moving currents like shifting clouds in a summer sky. We humans have a superficial surface which changes as we age. Our inner selves are altered too, over time, depending on the phases of our journey.

April 29, 1943 - Pray for a fast end to this thing darling and we'll start our happy, long, blissful life together. Until we are again together, I live in the past. We converse nightly, darling, and we walk together through the day. Every moment is one with you in spirit. You are at my side, and I with you. Our one consoling thought is

Inside:

Features

Gold Star Flags	3
Retirement Gift	5
2014 Conference	6-7
ABMC Interviews	11
Henri-Chapelle Hospitality	13
Fathers' Burials	17-21

Departments

New Members	4
AWON Connections	12
AWON Board News	21-22

...continued on page 8

Director Positions Open on AWON Board in 2014

Next year, five positions on the AWON Board of Directors are up for election. The seats currently are held by Judy Hathaway, Judy Hoffman, Kathy Le Comte, Bonnie Oates and Jerry Pinkerton. The terms are for four years. 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. 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
Kathy Le Comte	johnkath5@comcast.net
Gerry Morenski	dutiem@comcast.net
Bonnie Oates	oatesb@twc.com
Ed Peters	edpeters2@comcast.net
Jerry Pinkerton	jerry.pinkerton@sbcglobal.net

AWON Board to Meet in St. Louis

The AWON Board of Directors will hold its in-person board meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, October 17-20, 2013.

Per the organization's by-laws, the board must meet in person once a year. The board fulfills this requirement in years when there is a national conference. In non-conference years the board selects a city to meet where the board can discuss long-term issues.

All members are welcome to attend.



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The Star Editor Kathy Le Comte

Webmaster Rik Peirson

ListServ Moderators Judy Hathaway,
Judy Hoffman

www.awon.org

Email us at: awon@aol.com

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Issue #70 1M (10-13)

At Least Two AWONers Have Rare Version of American Flag

Mystery of Gold-Starred Flags Unfurls

Many AWONers are fortunate to have the American flag that covered their father's casket. But a few of those flags have the mysterious distinction of having gold or tan-colored stars. The history of the "gold starred" flags vexes orphans and historians alike, but there are some theories.

Susan Friedhaber-Hard received her father's flag from her paternal uncle about ten years ago. At the time she noticed some of the stars were tan on one side and white on the other, and that the tan coloring transferred onto some of the white stripes. After having the flag cleaned and refolded recently, she decided to ask other AWONers on the AWON ListServ if they, too, had tan- or gold-star World War II-era burial flags, and if they knew the story behind them.

AWONer Bob Meek is re-

tired from the military and knows who to call for answers to military questions. He tracked down Luther Hanson at the U.S. Army Quartermaster Museum in Ft. Lee, Virginia.

Hanson has been researching gold-star burial flags for at least 25 years, and still hasn't found any documentation about them. He said there is a lot of speculation on the Internet, including stories that France made flags with gold stars in honor of the American dead, but Hanson says there are holes in those theories.

Hanson says all the gold star flags he has seen bear a



Susan Friedhaber-Hard's gold-starred flag with "PQD" marking on the fly side.

"PQD" stamp or label. His theory is that the Philadelphia Quartermaster Depot made the flags. They had a contract to make 240,000 flags in the spring and fall of 1945 and following years.

"The makers at the depot took it upon themselves to mark every 5,000 flags with a gold star," he says. "This was not only a tribute but, we believe, an in-house accounting process to mark those special flags.

"I never found a directive or written order for this (and) no one is alive to verify it," he adds.

Hanson says he has seen about twenty gold-star American burial flags with one, two, three, nine, and even sixteen gold stars.

Friedhaber-Hard immediately opened her newly-

Email/Address Changes

Send address and email updates to Database Manager Gerry Morenski at dbmanager@awondb.com. (new address!)

Also

Please don't use Facebook to send her address/email changes.

THANK YOU!

...continued on page 4

Welcome New Members

Michael Park, CA, son of CPT Robert E. Petrie, Army
Shirley Willrett, IL, step-daughter of SGT Sivert J. Carlson, Army
Felicity Hallanan, NY, granddaughter of LT COL Payne Williams, Army Air Force
Carolyn Hearn Barrett, CA, dau of SGT Delmar E. Hearn, Army
Billie Simmons Houston, KY, dau of ILT William B. Simmons Jr., Army

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

...Flags, from page 3

cleaned flag and discovered that 46 of the 48 stars are tan or gold. The flag also has the PQD stamp. There also could be a tag inside the "fly" side of the flag, which is the side that attaches to the pole, telling where and when the flag was made.

"Many people probably do not know what they have until they look," Friedhaber-Hard says. "I did not know until I had it cleaned."

Since Friedhaber-Hard's flag has 46 gold stars, Hanson suspects it was made near the end of the manufacturing order.

While Friedhaber-Hard's flag mystery seems to be more or less solved, Dan Crough's is still wide open.

Crough's flag was given to him by his father's mother. She had kept it in a brown paper bag for almost twenty years.

"I have no idea where it came from but, to the best of my recollection, when I was nine,



Crough's flag with gold stars but no other markings.

it covered an empty casket at the altar rail in the spring of 1945 when a funeral Mass was said for my father in our local church," he says. "Two-and-a-half years later, when his remains were repatriated, the flag that covered his casket had a standard field with white stars and was presented to my mother."

Crough's flag is a standard size burial flag with 48 dark gold stars in the field. The stars on the reverse side are a lighter gold. There is no label and no printing on the flag, and it has grommets rather than the big clips for hanging.

"Mr. Hanson of the QM Museum was unable to shed any light on its origin. I think our family funeral director may have obtained it, but he died many years ago," Crough concludes.

For more information, contact Hanson at luther.d.hanson.civ@mail.mil, or the American Vexological Society.

Wasmer Mother Dies at 91

AWON was saddened to learn of the passing of Marjorie Fullerton Divine Wasmer, 91, mother of AWONer Bob Wasmer. She passed away July 2, 2013, in Phoenix.

She married Carl A. Divine in 1940. He was killed in action in the Battle of the Huertgen Forest on November 25, 1944. They had two sons, Robert and Jerry. Marjorie then married John (Jack) F. Wasmer, who adopted Bob and Jerry. They also had two more children: Kathy and Paul. Jack died in May.

Caldwell Receives Special Flag

Little did Adrian Leist Caldwell know that she would be the focus of attention at her son's retirement ceremony.

Capt. Robert B. Caldwell Jr., retired from the U.S. Navy in July after 28 years of service. During his retirement ceremony, he spoke emotionally about his family's legacy of service to the country. He talked about his step-grandfather who served in World War II. He remembered his father, CW5 Robert Caldwell, who retired after serving 30 years with the Mississippi Army National Guard, and recognized his brother, currently serving with the Mississippi Army National Guard. Then, he spoke about his grandfather, S/Sgt. Leroy Leist of the 100th Bomb Group, who is Missing in Action after the B-17 in which he was a tailgunner, crashed in the North Sea on February 4, 1944.



Above, Capt. Caldwell accepts the American flag. Below, Adrian Caldwell receives the flag from her son.



Caldwell stated that 8,301 American young men are buried or memorialized at the Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial at Margraten, Holland. He explained how the Dutch have adopted every grave in remembrance of their loss and sacrifice. Caldwell told the gathering that he sent an American flag to the cemetery superintendent, asking him to fly it over the cemetery.

Already in tears at the honor her son paid to his brother, father, step-grandfather and grandfather, Adrian was stunned by what happened next.

Caldwell walked off the stage as a Marine detail marched down the aisle. The Marines lined up with the folded flag and slowly began passing it down the line, from one Marine to the next, each one giving a slow salute as he received and passed the flag. When the flag finally reached Caldwell, he took the flag, walked over to Adrian, and presented it to her.

"I have never been so touched by such a thoughtful gesture in my life!" Adrian says. "I did not cry - I sobbed. I did not think I would gain my composure."

The flag came with a certificate of authenticity from the cemetery, along with a photograph.

Update on Leist Plane Recovery

This month, the Joint Personnel Accounting Command (JPAC) plans to sonar search an area off the coast of Holland where a .50-caliber gun was found from S/Sgt. Leist's plane in 2009. JPAC had scheduled a similar search for Summer 2011, but it was cancelled that spring due to federal budget cuts. Adrian Leist Caldwell has been searching for her father's plane for 13 years.

Meet in September 2014

AWON Revs Up for Seattle Confab

by Barry Barr-Finch

The 2014 AWON National Conference in Seattle is less than a year away!

The conference officially starts the afternoon of Thursday, September 4, and runs through Sunday, September 7. Registration opens the evening of September 3 and continues through September 4.

AWON has secured discounted hotel rooms at the Renaissance Seattle Hotel near Pike Place Market. The AWON special room rate is good starting September 2 for those who would like to arrive early and tour the city. There will be tours available, with special AWON rates, on September 2-3.

The highlight of the conference will be the banquet and memorial service. The banquet



A northwesterly view of downtown Seattle from a room at the Renaissance Seattle Hotel.

will be Saturday night, and the memorial service will be Sunday morning. The conference officially ends after lunch Sunday.

Those who are going on the Alaska Cruise will be departing Sunday. If you would like to stay through Sunday night, there will be a ferry ride to Bremerton to see the first AWON plaque from the 1995 conference.

The room rate for 1-2 persons is \$129 plus tax and 3-4 persons is \$139 plus tax. All rooms have views. If you want to room with other AWON members, your costs will go down considerably. If you want to look for roommates, let us know and we can tell you who else is looking for roommates. The hotel has not given us the code for the special room rate yet. That will be available in the next issue of *The Star*.

If you have any questions, contact me at barrfinch1@gmail.com, or Judi Hollis Kramer at ladybug5@juno.com.

A conference registration form appears on page 7.

Stars of The Star

***Janice Buterbaugh and
Patty Temte***

***Thanks for ALL you do
sending information
packets and responding
to email inquiries.***



Member Name: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

Do you want registration information listed in the conference roster? yes no

Do you have special needs? (If so, please indicate below) yes no

7

...Elliott, from front page

that there will be no more fly-by-night visits – the next time is for eternity. Love, Frank

I am sitting with my mother in the living room of her townhouse in 1990. It is a dark, cold night in mid-February and, outside, the scent of impending snow is in the air. Weakened from several days of radiation treatments, she reclines on the sofa. We are watching a TV program, a drama about the Kennedy family. The scene is during World War II when Kathleen, a Kennedy daughter engaged to a fighter pilot, receives a note that tells her he has been shot down over the English Channel. The camera is poised above the hallway, shooting down from a balcony. Kathleen opens the door, reads the message, there is a pause, and she lets out a piercing scream. Then, all is still. I look over at my mother. Tears are streaming down her face.

"It brings it all back, doesn't it?"

She nods in agreement, but says no words. Five days later, she dies.

I look back on this death-time and remember how, during her last days, when she is still up and about, I try to hug her. She draws back with a look of distrust on her face. I remember comparing her to a cactus at that moment – an enigma of nature, mysterious, often beautiful, but sharp and prickly to the touch. She has been like this often in recent years. What happened? Exactly when did she change from the pretty mommy I remember from very early childhood, the mommy who made us matching dresses, who took me on interesting outings, the mommy I was so proud of... to this?

January 24, 1944 - If there is anything, any single thing to which the dogface in the ETO could point as being the cause of a tremendous lowering of morale it is this: the Sunday funny papers. Blondie, Popeye, and others of their kind are sorely lacking in the papers of the U.K. ... We just list Maggie and Jiggs among the folks we left behind and long to return again to their company. How does my daughter react to the colorful antics of the funny folk? I don't suppose she fully appreciates them just yet, but it won't be long until you are reading them to her.



Rondy with her father, Cpl. Franklin M. Elliott. He was KIA June 6, 1944, on Omaha Beach.

Over time I realize that my mother does not offer physical affection. But then, there is that picture of her reading me the funnies on a Sunday morning. We are snuggled together in an easy chair. She has on a dark-colored dress with a white collar, framing her fair face, a young face surrounded by wavy coal-black hair. Because I have that little black-and-white snapshot with the white border and crinkly edges, I know that we touched, but I have no memory of it.

My feelings for my mother after I became an adult are

hard to piece together, like one of those jigsaw puzzles that are all one color. In early childhood I remember feeling a great fondness for her but also something akin to pity. I remember that my mother is sometimes out at night – at a bridge game with friends, or on a date with someone – and I miss her, not fearful, but just longing for her to come home. Most nights, though, she is at home, and I remember that she sings lullabies to me – *Rock-a-Bye Baby* and *Sweet and Low*. There is a line in *Sweet and Low*, that says, "... Blow him again to me, While my little one, while my pretty one sleeps."

When she sings these words, her voice falters, and I think of my father, my absent father, the man who will be, for me, forever motionless and devoid of personality, a man who is but a picture on her night table. I know that he is gone, and I wonder if she thinks of him, too, when she sings those words.

May 3, 1944 - ... I sincerely pray that if you fail to hear from me for awhile you will recall the words of the Gospel: 'A little while and you shall not see me, and again a little while and you shall see me,' But in your thoughts I shall always be and you in mine, no matter how great grows the gap of physical relationship.

My mother takes me to church on a sunny afternoon, and we are alone except for someone up front arranging the altar cloths. The light is coming through the mosaics of colored glass in the windows and forming fleeting rainbows of color on the pews, on the gray, stone pillars, and on the marble floor. She is taking me from window to window, explaining who the saints are in the pictures. Her voice is low, reverent, and I sense that this is a special place. "God's house," she has called it. I am very, very young, perhaps three?

After this holy tutorial, she slides into a pew midway down the long aisle, and kneels. I sit next to her, kicking my legs to and fro for they do not touch the floor. I look up at the chandeliers, gazing again at the multi-hued windows and the statues of saints that reside in nooks along the walls. I realize my mother is crying softly, then more, then uncontrollably. She reaches into her purse for a handkerchief. What's wrong? Is she missing my father? I knew that he was a soldier, that he died, and did not come home from the war. She is sad, and I feel sad, too, and a bit worried. I sense her sorrow and her helplessness, but can't put very much into words and don't know what to do.

January 13, 1944 - I see many beautiful gifts for the beautiful advertised in The

The Star • October 2013

New Yorker. Purchase yourself a copy and take your pick. There isn't a perfume nor a ring advertised there that I haven't seen you putting on or dressed in. It's apt that precious things go to precious people. I love you, Frank

Later, during my early school years, my mother is always a presence, stable and steady. I am proud of her. My mother is the only mom who gets dressed up every day and goes off to a job looking pretty. She is a teacher, a job that seems, to me, quite admirable. Nobody else's mother works. Instead, they frump around in housedresses and always seem to be in the kitchen or washing clothes. Yes, I am proud of my stylish and accomplished mommy. And other people enjoy her company — she has lots of friends. Throughout my life I continue to be proud of my mother's appearance and of her career in education, first as a teacher, then as a guidance counselor in a junior high school. She always spends money on pretty clothes, both for herself and for me. She spoils me that way.

Jan. 30, 1944 - Got a surprise chance to visit London today. Enclosed is the program for Madame Tussaud's wax museum. We will make that a point of call on our trip over. Also saw Big Ben, Nelson's statue in Trafalgar Square, Westminster Abbey where all the notables are interred, Buckingham and the guards, and #10 Downing St. It will be a good experience for Dee to come here at about the age of six. It will be a fine contribution to her education, so we will set 1949 as the year we will make the trip.

My mother makes wonderful memories for me. Every summer, when we are both off from school, she takes me on a trip. One year — I was five and in kindergarten — we went by train to Narragansett Pier, Rhode Island, where there are huge rocks and crashing waves. On the train we eat in a dining car where there are tables with

...continued on page 10

white tablecloths and little vases of flowers. Next to the windows, the land streaks along beside us as we speed by, and the rocking motion of the train causes all the liquids in glasses, cups and bowls to slosh the slightest bit, but nothing ever spills. I am afraid when crossing between cars, for the floor is separated and two metal plates slide back and forth, a blur of daylight beneath. My mother is patient and reassures me, helping me jump over the gap and endure the loud, whooshing sound when opening the door to the next car. I feel very safe with her.

Arriving at our destination, we stay at a big hotel called The Green Inn. It has two stone lions guarding the front steps, and a fancy dining room with dark, rich-looking furniture covered by white cloth tablecloths. The waiters are kind and make a fuss over me, as if they had never before seen a little girl. It's just me and my mother, and I feel very special and loved.

When I was eight, the trip was to Chicago. Our hotel room overlooked Grant Park and Lake Michigan. One night we went to a sparkling park with what seemed like hundreds of rides and were surrounded by the happy shouts of more people than I have ever seen in any amusement park up until now. Buckingham Fountain is a short walk from our hotel, and its white spray is illuminated at night with ever-changing colored spotlights. I am mesmerized and during the whole adventure in the big city I feel a bit like Dorothy landing in Oz, when everything turns into Technicolor. What a marvelous time this is, and how she saves for these trips all year, in order to provide educational opportunities unknown to most of my peers in our little town. I feel very lucky to have such a wonderful mother.

I do not remember much acrimony on these trips, but by the time I am a teenager, things become very different in my mother's and my relationship. She always seems to be angry with me and I can never figure out what it is that I have done to induce her ire. She is nervous and on edge, almost always.

Many years later, when I marry and move out of town, I look forward to her fairly frequent visits to our home, whether it is with my children's father, John, or my second husband who brings me and my children to North Carolina. I so look forward to seeing her, and imagine that we will have a good visit. I want to show her the things I have done to decorate my home, talk with her on a great variety of subjects, do things with the children and show her around whatever area in which we happen to be living.

It always ends badly, for it seems that within twenty minutes of her arrival I have done something, or said something, to upset her, and she lashes out at me in anger. Ultimately, I cannot take it anymore and retaliate verbally in some way, which hurts her. A pall settles over the visit. She inevitably goes home feeling badly.

During her visits and at the end, I feel guilty, I feel awful. I cannot remember situations, but I remember this pattern, which never changes. A lovely woman at the core, I ask myself, "Why has she become this way?" Has she become almost maddened by loss — first that of her husband, and then the loss of me and her grandchildren when we moved to another state? She has poured a passionate love out on these children. Has she become totally disillusioned by life in general, or is she mortally wounded by my inability to find marital happiness? I think all of the above.

Nov. 5, 1943 - ...please enjoy your holidays, Darling, for it will be your last one without me. God is kind and it is our duty to do His bidding. He has willed our separation for this short period for a reason... so we have no reason to feel sad about it. So it is my plan to enjoy this strange land at Christmas and to be sure it is in my heart that Dee and her angelic mother are enjoying this gay festive yuletide...

It is a matter of record that this is the one event in our daughter's life that I shall miss most keenly — her first Christmas. This will also be our second Christmas

*united by the bonds of marriage and I pray
our last disunited by the scourge of war.*

My mother's favorite time of year is Christmas. She spoils me with marvelous presents purchased from the *FAO Schwartz* catalog. Every year she gives me a copy of the catalog in the fall, and I thrill to go through it, circling my favorite toys. This exercise is soon forgotten, but on Christmas morning, there they are — almost all of these marvelous objects that I once saw on a magazine page and that seemed unattainable.

Later on, my mother still makes a big deal about gifts during the Yule season. She still buys me expensive gifts that are more age appropriate — clothes and bangles — after I outgrow my tomboy phase. After the children are born she goes overboard, always, at Christmas. She buys wonderful things, things we could never afford, and a lot of them. Her wrappings are such works of art that is heart-rending to tear the paper or break a ribbon.

I finally begin to realize that what she lacks in her ability to show emotional or physical affection, she has converted to perhaps a safer activity, the giving of material gifts.

When I am a young woman, I stand on that same cliff overlooking Lake Erie, kissing the love of my life, a man whose future and mine will not be shared. At the age of fifty-one, I stand on a cliff in France overlooking the English Channel, in front of a white marble cross that marks the grave of my father in the Normandy American Cemetery.

The next year, I sit above another Lake Erie beach in New York State. I am at a retreat center near Buffalo taking time out for prayer and meditation. I am writing a letter to my mother some years after her death, hoping that this posthumous work will bring me some sense of peace about our relationship. I realize that my parents' lives and mine are braided tightly together and secured with a strong, intangible band, and that any attempt to unweave them will leave each strand marred and wavy as a head of recently un-plaited hair.

ABMC Seeks Interviews with Family Members

The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) has asked AWON for assistance in a new project.

The ABMC is conducting video interviews of family members who have a loved one buried or memorialized at an ABMC overseas cemetery.

"The intent of this project is to create several short videos that help our users understand every individual buried or memorialized at our sites has family members whose lives were forever changed by their sacrifice," explains ABMC Audiovisual Production Specialist Mike Shipman.

At this time, the focus is on families associated with the Cambridge and Sicily-Rome cemeteries as these cemeteries are in the process of having memorial centers built.

Because this project is in its early phases, interviews are being conducted only at the ABMC's Arlington, Virginia, headquarters. The interview process takes about an hour. The edited interview will be two to three minutes in length and will be accessible on the ABMC website.

In addition to standard questions about them and their loved one, interviewees will be asked about their experience visiting the grave or memorial, and why they feel it is important for Americans to visit these overseas cemeteries.

AWON members who have fathers buried or memorialized at Cambridge or Sicily-Rome and are interested in participating in a video interview are asked to contact ABMC Audiovisual Production Specialist Mike Shipman at shipmanm@abmc.gov, or AWON Vice President Gerry Morenski at dutiem@comcast.net.

AWON Connections

Pictures and Stories of Members
Gathering Around the Country



In May Kansas AWONers got together at Casa Ramos Restaurant in Emporia. Clockwise from bottom left around the table are Penny and Howard Walker (AWONer), Janet and Warren McNulty (AWONer), Larry and Judy Hathaway (AWONer), and Jackie (AWONer) and Don Rackley. It was Warren's first time meeting a fellow World War II orphan, and the first get-together of the Kansas members. *Jackie*



Here is a lesson in how important signature lines in emails can be. In mid-March "Punchbowl" Orphans (those who have fathers buried or memorialized at the National

Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii, commonly known as Punchbowl) were exchanging emails with AWONer Susan Chadd who coordinates the AWON Memorial Day wreath for Punchbowl. Sharon Fuls Sullivan took special notice of the signature on an e-mail from Pat Albani: Pat Cervenak Albani, Albuquerque, NM; Proud daughter of S1C Albert M. Cervenak; <http://www.awon.org/awcerven.html>; KIA 11 May 1945, Battle of Okinawa, kamikaze attack, *USS Bunker Hill*, Memorialized Walls of the Missing National Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl), Honolulu, HI. Sharon realized that her dad, F1C Carson R. Fuls, died along with Pat's dad and nearly 400 others on the *USS Bunker Hill*. Pat was very familiar with the memorial listing of F1C Fuls because she and her husband, Dick, have made many visits to Honolulu and Punchbowl. Each time they visited with all the AWON fathers listed on the Walls of the Missing and those who have graves there. Sharon got in touch with Pat as soon as she made the connection. In June, Pat and Dick were in Florida for a cruise, which gave Pat and Sharon an opportunity to meet for long and most wonderful lunch in Cocoa Beach. *Pat*



In August, Gail Eisenhauer, Gerry Morenski. Stacy Roberts and her sister met for lunch in Boothbay Harbor, Maine, at the Boothbay Botanical Garden. Lunch and discussion were so good that the ladies didn't take a photo.

Overwhelmed by Multiple Gestures of Respect

Staff Personalize First Visit to Henri-Chapelle

by Naomi Rauff

I am home again with a heart filled with emotions following my recent visit to Belgium and, specifically, to the cemetery at Henri-Chapelle.

As the only child of my father, 2nd Lt. George F. Heafy, it was a long-held dream to stand by his final resting place. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge, and was killed there on January 5, 1945. I was only a very young girl then, and have few memories of him. What I do know is mostly from stories told by others. However, as you know, the absence of your father, and the impact his loss had on your mother, impacts your whole life - to this very day.

Therefore, it was especially poignant to have my youngest daughter, her husband, and their only daughter, age 13, with me on this trip. Their presence was a soothing balm. My son-in-law was also the driver and took us around the area where the battle was fought, giving me a feeling of the place where my father so valiantly fought and gave his life.

We were met at the cemetery by Superintendent Bobby Bell. I had been in touch with the staff there months ago to let them know of our visit. Bobby and his staff went out of their way to make this visit special for me. They had prepared for each of us a folder with information about the cemetery, and also all the information they could find out specifically about my father and his unit and what occurred when and where

from December 16, 1944 when the Battle of the Bulge began until January 5, 1945 when he was killed in action. Many of the things they found out we did not know. He also gave us a personalized map of the area surrounding the cemetery where my dad's unit landed, and where they likely went. That is the map we later followed, and we found it so touching to actually be in those same spots.

Bobby spent time showing us that same route on the huge relief map in the visitor's center. Then he took us out to my father's final resting place. I had ordered flowers ahead of time, and they were on the grave with an American flag on one side and a Belgian flag on the other. Bobby later presented the flags to us as a thank you from his staff. After some quiet time, Bobby offered to take pictures, then left us and told us to meet him back in his office when we were ready.

A few minutes later, over a loud speaker - but it sounded as if from the angels in heaven - came *The Star-Spangled Banner*. That was followed by a gun salute and then *Taps*. It was then that I could feel peace descend upon myself, but also for my father, that he had his daughter, granddaughter and great-granddaughter there with him, and that the taps were honoring his service specifically. It was a tribute from all the generations he never got to know and who never had his precious presence in their lives. It was a hallowed moment.



Naomi Rauff and her family at her father's grave in June.

...continued on page 14

...Rauff, from page 13

We were given directions to a nearby 12th century abbey where the monks served a lunch, and that is where we went to process what our morning had been to each of us. It was the perfect place to be. Again, this was due to Bobby's thoughtfulness. Then we drove the route to Trois Point where there is a memorial to those in the Battle of the Bulge, stopping along the way to step onto those areas that the cemetery staff had marked where my dad's unit had been.

The experience of the visit was made so extra personal because of the effort of the cemetery staff to personalize it for us. It was everything I could have wanted and more. I am blessed by having taken this trip, even though it took me a lifetime to have it happen.



In September, Rauff received the above picture and a note from Michel Lorquet, a Belgium school teacher. He uses the stories of those buried at Henri-Chapelle, including 2nd Lt. Heafy, to teach his grade school students about World War II. Lorquet recently visited Heafy's grave with his wife, Benedicte; baby daughter, Juliane; and five-year-old daughter, Efia. He explained that Efia spontaneously kissed Heafy's cross, noting that, "she feels some things we are unable to feel ourselves."

Memorial Day '15 Tour of Margraten Planned

Supporters of the Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial at Margraten are preparing for the 70th anniversary of their annual Memorial Day ceremony — and they want AWON to be a part of it.

Stichting Adoptie Graven Amerikaanse Be-graafplaats Margraten, or the Foundation for Adopting Graves at the American Cemetery at Margraten, is planning a large program for Memorial Day 2015, according to Gerry Morenski, who met with adoption committee members in September during a ten-day personal visit to see the area where her father died in Germany.

A group of AWONers were present at the 2010 Memorial Day events at Margraten (see *The Star*, September 2010), and Morenski wants to pull together another AWON group tour for 2015.

Planning is still in the early stages, but Morenski says the adoption committee once again wants to partially sponsor the AWON group, arrange the bus transportation, and provide the Memorial Day lunch. They also are planning a special concert in honor of AWON.

Morenski is starting to make plans from this side of the Atlantic. If you are interested in being part of the Margraten Memorial Day 2015 tour, contact her at dutiem@comcast.net.



AWON BOOKSTORE

Price List / Order Form



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

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hardcover \$35.00 softcover \$24.00

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AWON BOOKSTORE

Price List / Order Form



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by Mark LaPointe, grandson of Sgt William G. Aubut
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at AWON's 10th conference memorial service \$6.00

___ *Letters of Love and War* (CD for Mac or PC)
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\$ 5.00*

___ *We Speak Their Names: A Tribute to Our Fathers*
produced by Patrick Tierney and **Terry Boettcher**
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Father Burials & Family Relationships

Editor's note: This is the second continuation of the AWON ListServ discussion about fathers' burials. More than 30 members shared their memories or knowledge of where their fathers are buried, the details that went into the decision, and their father's final burial service. The stories of those who gave permission for publication are here.

I have been reading with great interest all the posts about the various burial sites.

My grandmother was the one who made the decision to keep my father's remains in the Philippines. He was buried originally in one of 12 cemeteries on Leyte. Then one large cemetery was created on Leyte where his remains were moved. In 1947-48 all the remains were taken to Manila when the families made the decision. So, growing up, I never had a grave to visit. But it must have been my mother - since I can't remember who it was - that introduced me to the memorial wall in downtown Seattle where the war dead are memorialized. I remember visiting it in my youth and then taking my sons to visit it. I think that doing that really helped them to become aware of who their grandfather was.

When I went to the cemetery in the Philippines in 2007, I was amazed at how beautiful it is. Now I try to encourage anyone who is traveling there that there is one of those cemeteries to visit. It is really nice to know that the graves in each of them will be lovingly taken care of by the locals who choose not to forget.

Barry Barr-Finch
Son of 2nd Lt. David Baird Finch
KIA, 13 November 1944
Leyte, Philippines



Like the rest of you I, too, have been reading each and every post on the cemeteries, burials, and how our mothers or our dad's families dealt with their loss.

There was a service for my dad, a memorial so to speak, but his place of burial is an unanswered question. I didn't know about the memorial wall in Seattle until Barry told me about it. Barry was instrumental in helping me get my dad's name on the wall. I am and will always be grateful.

Someday I hope to find out where my dad was buried, whether it is a mass grave or among the unknown soldiers. Then I will be asking the question, "Do I bring him home or let him rest?" Someday I hope I will be able to answer that question.

Kathie Schuler Hobbs
Only child of PhM 2c Fred Schuler, USN
KIA 10 November 1942
Guadalcanal



As long as we're getting some old stories off our chests, I must tell you one about my mom.

Mildred Savard Chiodo was married to Dad at 20 in 1940. She subsequently became quite a mess after Dad died in 1945. She began to drink very heavily, and never really recovered until her death in 1959. My attitude towards her only reflected what I saw at the time, and in retrospect, it was horrible.

During my research on my dad, I discovered that she had never responded to any of the Army's inquiries about repatriation to the U.S., or a permanent burial place for Dad overseas. Tied up with this, and unknown to all the rest of us in the family, was

...continued on page 18

... *Burials*, from page 17

her secret battle with them over widow's benefits, which she never received. Meanwhile, he had been placed in a temporary cemetery in northern Italy until 1948.

After several attempts to resolve the issue by mail, the Army had to send a representative from the Red Cross to visit her and get some resolution. She finally decided upon Florence, and he was interred there in 1948. After having been there twice - in 2000 and 2009 - I would have to say she knowingly or unknowingly made a very wise decision. It is quite a beautiful place.

I've come to learn a great deal about Mom through reading the files, and from discussions with you about topics like this on the list. Now I have an entirely new perspective on the poor woman's mental and emotional state.

I wish I could have been tolerant enough to ask her a lot more about a lot of things when she was alive. I'm afraid I was much too rash when I was young, but that could probably be another whole series of stories on us all.

Bill Chiodo
Son of 2nd Lt. Godfrey J. (Fred) Savard
Co. A, 339th Regt., 85th Div., 5th Army
Italy



I wish we had a gravesite to visit, but we do have the Punchbowl, a memorial marker at Arlington, and various submarine memorials in Hawaii; Groton, Connecticut; and other locations.

Patty Wheeler
Daughter of Lt.j.g. Benjamin M. Nash
USS S-44
KIA 19 October 1943
near the Kuril Islands



I have been reading with interest today all your comments on your dad's burials.

My dad was buried near Sydney, Australia, from 1943 to 1947. Many of the men who died in the South Pacific were brought back to the U.S. in 1947. I have a photo of the troop ship carrying these remains going under the San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge in 1947. I also have a photo of the entrance to the cemetery where he was buried for four years in Australia.

I was nine years old when he was repatriated, and I vaguely remember the commotion that took place in our home when my stepfather didn't want my mother or me to go to the reburial. I can't remember if she went or not - guess I blocked that out - but I know I didn't go. I don't think she went or I would have his burial flag. One of my aunts must have represented the family.

Bob and I have visited Golden Gate National Cemetery several times and it is a beautiful place. Member Diane Baczynski and her husband, John, have also visited and decorated my father's grave on several occasions. Thank God for our AWON family.

I visited my father's resting place a few times before I found AWON, but it was after I was a member and embarked on my journey to know him that I was able to really come to grips with my loss during one of our visits to Golden Gate. I know you all can relate.

Chickie Shields Berry
Daughter of CWO John C. Shields
Bandmaster, 41st Div., 162nd Inf.
Died 6 December 1943
Sydney, Australia / New Guinea



I have been reading all of your interesting stories over the past few days. I have a bit different story about my dad being returned to the United States for reburial.

He was KIA on March 9, 1945, in Luzon, Philippines, and was buried twice in Manila,

with the most recent being the American Cemetery in Manila. On March 7, 1949, he was buried at Ft. Snelling in Minneapolis, Minnesota, as that was the closest national cemetery to Montana that they would bury him in without charging my mother \$750 to bring him back to Montana. In those days she did not have the money to have him returned to Montana so that is how he ended up being buried at Ft. Snelling. I have never been able to afford to go there myself, but I do hope that one day I will be able to make that journey.

I have received many pictures of his headstone with flowers as Maggie Fens-termacher's daughter and her daughters took flowers to his grave on Memorial Day. I so appreciate what they did to honor my dad and it always made me feel like I was there, too.

The comments that they could be returned to any cemetery in the states jumped right out at me as I knew that wasn't always true. At this point, I don't feel it would be right to move him from Ft. Snelling where he is buried with his comrades to bring him to the new Western Montana Veterans Cemetery right here in Missoula, Montana, even though it is considered a national cemetery now.

Nancy Sue Johnson
Daughter of Pfc. John R. Brown
12th Cavalry
KIA 9 March 1945
Luzon, Philippines



My dad is in Luxembourg and I am glad that his grave will always be cared for in a beautiful cemetery with his comrades and his commander, General Patton. It is a place of light and hope and glory. The Luxembourgers revere "Our Liberators" after all these years, and special ceremonies are held on Memorial Day. Interestingly, I believe every AWONer that I have talked to is pleased that his/her father is at final

rest where he is, whether overseas or in the USA.

Sandweiler, the German cemetery just down the road, is, by contrast dark and somber. The grave markers are a dark-colored stone. It is not as well cared for as the American Cemetery. I thought when I was there that a German mother/ wife/son who came to visit would be sad to see their loved one's grave, especially if they visited the nearby American Cemetery.

My parents were divorced before the war. My mother, who was only 17 when I was born, left town. I was raised by my paternal grandparents and aunts. I never thought of myself as an orphan and I never thought anything that happened was my fault.

After the war, my mother went to court to get me back. She lost. Then she tried to kidnap me, but I thwarted that. She is still alive but we have no relationship. Believe me or don't, I have tried to have a decent relationship with her. But I, or we, have failed. All this is too complicated to explain here. Families are hard to understand from the inside and it's impossible from the outside.

We have in common that our fathers died in World War II. That is our strong bond. Until AWON, I had not met another war orphan. Now I know many and that is good.

Roger Connor
Son of Pvt. George R. Connor
6th Armored Division, 3rd Army
KIA 4 January 1945
near Warden, Belgium



My father was buried in France, the Lorraine American Cemetery in St. Avold. He was killed in Haguenau which is about 50 kilometers from St. Avold on December 9, 1944.

His father made the decision because Mother had remarried in 1947. Due to her

...continued on page 20

marriage she was told the choice was not hers to make. Not certain why his father chose to leave him behind.

My mother was very angry regarding his choice, keeping me and my older sister from contact with our father's family. As adults we have met and become family with some of our cousins, but very few.

Jan Robertson
Daughter of Pfc. Carl M. Robertson
313th Infantry, 79th Division
KIA 9 December 1944
Haguenau, France



My Dad was buried in France from the time of his death, April 1945, until early October 1948, when Mother finally had his body repatriated. He was laid to rest in Winchester, Indiana, at that time. My grandmother had begged Mother incessantly to bring him home; Grandma needed that gravesite near her. Grandma lived in Ridgville, not far from Winchester, and Winchester had been his and Grandma's home when he left to go into the service.

My brother and I spent a lot of time with these grandparents, and so trips to the cemetery were very frequent. These grandparents also were funeral directors, so we weren't unfamiliar with cemeteries at all - actually quite comfortable in them. So for years, trips to my dad's grave were part of what we did vacation after vacation, summer after summer.

Fast forward: married and living in Indianapolis, I still would visit that grave whenever I visited Grandma, and after she was gone continued to do so, probably wanting my children to know where he was. One day when they were in the car and we had made a trip over just to visit the grave, we entered the cemetery and began the drive to his grave. My oldest son said, "Mom, why do you always drive to your dad's grave

winding around this way instead of just taking the perimeter path that goes right by his grave?"

I stopped the car and thought about how what he was saying was true, and the way I always went was really a lot of wasted winding around. And then I realized what I was doing. All those years with Grandma we would enter the cemetery and drive to where the hand pump was for the water she would put in the bucket always with us to water the flowers by his grave. I could have driven that path blindfolded. And that is what I had been doing over and over without thought.

Roberta "Brigitt" Caito
Daughter of Cpl. Robert V. Reno
14th Infantry, 71st Division, 3rd Army
KIA 1 April 1945
Germany



All this discussion of the family life resulting from losing our fathers makes me feel somewhat out of place as so many of you had so much trouble and I had so very little.

My mother was 20 and a college student when I was born, five months after my dad's death. She lived with her parents and four younger siblings on a farm. She graduated from college then went to graduate school and became a teacher. Her parents doted on me and probably spoiled me rotten.

Though Ohio was a long way from South Carolina in those days, we visited my paternal grandparents at least once a year and they were both gracious and loving to Mom and me. Mom remarried when I was five and my step-dad legally adopted me, but did not change my name. My wife once asked him about this and he said as a World War II vet if the situation were reversed he would not want anyone changing his son and only child's name. This greatly endeared him to my paternal grandparents and they considered his daughter, my half-

sister, one of their own grandchildren.

My adopted dad actually got along better with my paternal grandfather than he did with his own dad who was an alcoholic. My paternal grandfather was the stereotype of the perfect grandparent. Kind of short and round, he had infinite patience, a most interesting house and later small farm, and the respect and love of all his children and grandchildren. My maternal grandparents were the ones I knew best and until I was in high school I spent every summer with them.

My adopted dad died of colon cancer in 1984, just 20 days shy of the anniversary of my dad's death. My adopted dad was in the first group of Americans to go into Nagasaki, and in 1999 the VA ruled that any of that group who developed one of some 33 cancers were service-connected disease and death. So ultimately, my mom lost two husbands to World War II.

Whenever I do an AWON-based talk or a Memorial Day speech I always comment that I had two great dads: one who gave me life and one who taught me how to live it. May they both rest in peace.

Bob Meek Jr., USAR (Ret.)
Only child of 2nd Lt. Robert H. Meek
487th Bomb Sq., 340th Bomb Gp., 12th AF
KIA 19 October 1944
over the Magenta Bridge near Milan, Italy



Editor's Note

This feature will conclude in the January issue of The Star.

The AWON ListServ is a benefit of membership. The ListServ is a great way to introduce yourself, tell your story, learn about other members, and contribute to discussions like this.

To register, contact ListServ Moderators Judy Hoffman at jghoffman@satx.rr.com, or Judy Hathaway at judy0305@yahoo.com.

AWON Board Business 21 July 2013

2014 Conference Report: Conference Co-Chair **Judi Hollis Kramer** reported a proposed schedule of events and speaker topics. The theme for the conference will be *I'll Be "Seaing" You*. Conference Co-Chair **Barry Barr-Finch** talked about conference costs and registration fees, noting that he wanted to keep both as low as possible due to the cost of traveling to Seattle. Kramer and Barr-Finch hope to have the conference budget ready by late August or early September. The goal is to break even on the conference rather than make a profit. The board approved sending \$2,000 in seed money to **Barbara Kelly** in Indianapolis who will manage bills for the 2014 conference.

October 2013 Board Meeting: **Penny LeGrand** provided information about possible hotels in St. Louis for the October 2013 in-person board meeting. Board President **Ed Peters** suggested that board members send e-mails to each other with topics for the October board meeting. **Norma Nicol Hamilton** reminded the board that it also was time to begin planning 2014 AWON Board Election. **Jerry Pinkerton, Judy Hoffman, Judy Hathaway, Kathy Le Comte, and Bonnie Oates** are all up for election next year.

AWON Website: Norma Nicol Hamilton stated her desire for the board to renew the discussion about the AWON website. The board agreed to discuss it further at the October in-person board meeting in St. Louis.

Next Board Meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting of the AWON Board of Directors is Sunday, September 15, 2013.

Judy Hathaway, Acting Secretary

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

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 photos to the editor in Word, WordPerfect, RTE, formats, or in the body of an email. High resolution jpeg, bitmap, gif or tiff images are preferred. Text and photos also can be mailed. Photos returned upon request.
- Please keep text to one page (500 to 1,000 words),
- Preference is given to material written by and about AWON members.
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Kathy Le Comte, Editor
1004 Williams Blvd.
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(217) 787-6512
johnkath5@comcast.net

**Deadline for the
January Issue
is December 1**

AWON Board Business 19 May 2013

2014 Conference Report: Conference Co-chairs **Judi Kramer** and **Barry Barr-Finch** reported that the conference hotel has been selected. Dates for the conference are Tuesday-Sunday, September 2-7, 2014; with check-out on Monday, September 8. Activities are planned for early arrivals on Tuesday and Wednesday. The room rate is \$151.60 per night, including tax. The chairs are developing a conference schedule, obtaining speakers and organizing the memorial service. The board suggested leaving some time unscheduled for personal time with friends and/or touring the city. The board approved reimbursing **Penny LeGrand** for expenses incurred in traveling to Seattle to help with hotel selection.

October Board Meeting: **Judy Hoffman** will contact Dr. Niels Zussblatt at the National Personnel Records Center about a tour and research at the facility. Penny LeGrand volunteered to find a hotel for the meeting.

AWON Website Security: Judy Hoffman requested that this discussion be pended until the next meeting. There was no objection.

2015 MEMORIAL DAY: **Gerry Morenski** suggested that the board encourage AWONer-led trips to overseas cemeteries in 2015 for the 70th anniversary of the end of the war. Gerry will work with AWON Memorial Day Wreath Project Coordinator **Sharon Crowley Connor** and the wreath coordinators, as well as putting an article in *The Star*.

Next Board Meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting of the AWON Board of Directors is Sunday, July 21, 2013.

Judith Hoffman, Secretary

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

Correction

Margaret Hohmann's name was misspelled in *AWON Connections* in the July issue due to incorrect information provided.

New Address

Please use AWON Treasurer Jerry Pinkerton's new address (on page 23) when paying dues or making donations.

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

(please print clearly)

Where did you hear about AWON?

Did widow remarry?	Yes	No
1	0	1
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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 dbmanager@awondb.com

Archives

Ann Whelan O'Connor awolaojr@earthlink.net

Bookstore

Walt Linne bookstore@awon.org

Dues

Jerry Pinkerton jerry.pinkerton@sbcglobal.net

First Inquiry Coordinators

Patty Temte AWON@aol.com

Janice Ott Buterbaugh janicebuterbaugh@gmail.com

Headquarters

Ed Peters edpeters2@comcast.net

ListServ Moderators

Judy Hathaway judy0305@yahoo.com

Judy Geis Hoffman jghoffman@satx.rr.com

Regional Coordinators

Barry Barr-Finch barrfinch1@gmail.com

The Star Editor

Kathy Le Comte johnkath5@comcast.net

Washington, D.C. Events

Phyllis Epstein Louis pelouis@verizon.net

Washington, D.C. Liaison

Lee Mathis jlee123@verizon.net

Webmaster

Rik Peirson rikp@dayone.com