

The



Star

Issue 76

"We Speak Their Names"

April 2015

American, German friends discover shared life experiences

'Orphanness' stings no matter side of war



by Peter Musil-Dossing and
Karl-Heinz E. Fiedler

Most of us know of a boy or a girl down the street who joined the military and was sent to Afghanistan or Iraq. Perhaps you had a family member who served in Vietnam or who fought in Korea. Our father or grandfather may have spent a couple of years fighting in one of the two world wars during the first half of this past century. The lucky ones survived and hopefully escaped the demons of war when they returned home.

Then there were those who never came home. They were either killed or, worse, declared missing in action, which offered no closure for grieving families.

One of the biggest casualties of any war are the children who lost a parent and were classified as war orphans by the government. This is the story of two World War II orphans whose fathers fought on opposing sides.

My name is Peter Musil-Dossing. I am an orphan of World War II. My father, T/5 Elmer R. Musil, was killed instantly when his M5A1 Stuart light tank was hit by German anti-tank fire in Biesheim, France. He was a member of D Company, 756th Tank Battalion, Third Infantry Division. Their job was to support the infantry and they were assigned to different units on a daily basis,

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Left, Tech/5 Elmer R. Musil with 11-month old Peter, in January 1944 after completing basic training. Right, Gefr. Michael K. Fiedler, before being shipped to the Russian front.

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WWII DVD for girls, grandmas

AWONer Pat Fabri found a World War II DVD she recommends for grandmothers to watch with their granddaughters.

"I found this DVD called *Molly: An American Girl on the Homefront* at Walmart several months ago. It is a good World War II story told from a young girl's point of view," she says. "I watched it with my nine-year-old granddaughter and as I happened to have

some documents (telegram, etc.) that were mentioned to show her, she became very interested and started to ask questions."

The story is about how Molly and her family have been thrown into turmoil as her father, a doctor, goes to Europe to serve with the U.S. Army. Her family takes in an English girl, her age, one of the many children English families sent away for safety.



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ABMC discontinues floral program

by Kathy Le Comte, editor

The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), which manages 14 World War II American military cemeteries overseas, has decided to eliminate its long-standing floral program in order to focus on visitors and preserving the memory of the fallen.

According to a February letter by ABMC Deputy Secretary Robert J. Dalessandro, sent to families of those buried in overseas American military cemeteries, flowers still may be placed at graves, but orders must be made directly with a florist.

"There was a time when this program provided an important service to the next of kin, given the difficulty following the world wars of ordering floral arrangements for placement at our overseas cemeteries," the letter states. "In today's international commerce environment, however, that is no longer the situation."

By removing itself as the floral "middle man," ABMC intends to increase its efforts at providing visitors a meaningful experience.

"Visitor feedback in recent years informed us that younger Americans lacked the understanding of why and under what circumstances our fallen had made the ultimate sacrifice," the letter continues. "We realized we needed to provide context to properly honor our nation's war dead."

To that end, the ABMC is launching or expanding several projects aimed at deepening visitors' knowledge and understanding of World War II, the military cemeteries, and the Americans buried or memorialized at them.

ABMC is expanding its interpretation program, modeling it on that of the National Park

Service. The commission also has started building cemetery visitor centers. The first center opened at Normandy several years ago, and at Cambridge and Sicily-Rome in 2014. A visitor center currently is in progress for Manila.

ABMC also has a project interviewing family members about their loved ones buried or memorialized overseas, and about what the cemetery means to them. The videos are available online and at cemetery visitor centers, and AWON has provided some of the subjects (see *The Star*, October 2013).

But back to flowers.

Starting April 2, floral orders must be arranged directly through a commercial florist.

A contact list for local and international florists is provided on the ABMC website.

One of the main concerns to AWONers about losing the direct relationship with ABMC when ordering flowers is receiving

a photograph of the arrangement at the gravesite. It is unclear from the ABMC website whether ABMC will still provide photographs.

Several AWON members have contacted their senators about ABMC's decision. AWONer Robert Meek previously worked for former U.S. Senator Elizabeth Dole (R-North Carolina). Working through his contact list, Meek announced on the AWON ListServ in late March that onetime AWON Advisor and former U.S. Senator Bob Dole (R-Kansas) has asked the ABMC to continue the floral program. Other AWONers have sent letters and emails to ABMC or their elected officials.

AWONers also are invited to contact ABMC Deputy Public Affairs Officer Tim Nosal at nosalt@abmc.gov, or Alan Amelinckx at 703-696-6412 or amelinckxa@abmc.gov.



Margraten 'kids' set for Memorial Day tour

by Gerry Morenski

On the road again... In just a few weeks, 54 AWON Margraten 'kids' and their families will travel to the Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial for ceremonies marking the 70th anniversary of Memorial Day at the cemetery. In addition, they will be present to honor the 70th anniversary of the adoption of graves at Margraten.

Stichting Adoptie Graven Amerikaanse Begraafplaats Margraten, or the Adoption Committee as it is more commonly referred to, has pulled out the stops for their AWON guests. It is providing a bus for AWON to use

during their entire stay, as well as honoring our fathers, grandfathers and uncles at a special ceremony in the nearby town of Mesch, followed by a dinner and entertainment. Their generosity also includes a lunch on Memorial Day and an evening concert in Maastricht.

This year AWON travelers include orphans, nieces, nephews, grandchildren and great-grandchildren! Some are first-timers, and some went on a similar trip in 2010.

There already is tremendous interest in AWON's attendance, both here and abroad.

Timothy Broas, U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of the

Netherlands, has contacted us and wants to meet with our families following the Memorial Day ceremonies.

The American Battle Monuments Commission will follow our group on our entire journey. They will document our stories on their website, social media and traditional media, both before and after Memorial Day.

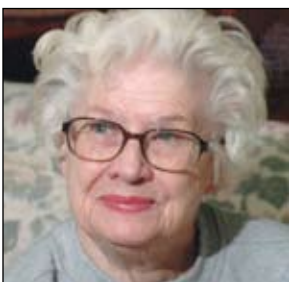
"In the lead-up to Memorial Day, we'd like to be able to share photos of the fathers you'll be going to visit," Sarah Herrmann, Digital Communications Manager at ABMC, told me in an email. "As an example, we might share a post on Facebook

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AWON remembers mother, overseas friend

Ruth L. Kalupy, 93, of Evansville, Wisconsin, mother of AWON President Emeritus Patricia Gaffney-Kindig, passed away January 15, 2015. Ruth married 2Lt. George P. Gaffney Jr. in 1943. He went missing in 1944 and wasn't found until 1998. She

later married veterans Floyd "Cy" L. Main Jr., Lloyd Hendrickson, and Anthony Kalupy. She is survived by her daughter; sons, J.D. Main, Don Main, Richard Main, and Lance Hendrickson; grandchildren, Lisa Ansel, David Ansel, Jason Main, Jacob Main, Cy Main, Josiah Main, and Anthony Hendrickson; and



Kalupy

five great-grandchildren.

AWON Overseas Friend Nico Schroeder, 80, of Luxembourg, beloved father, grandfather and uncle, passed away January 22, 2015, as a result of a cerebral hemorrhage and a massive heart attack. Nico was a supporter of the Luxembourg American Cemetery, and assisted AWONers in preserving the memory of our fathers and all American soldiers who died to free Luxembourg from



Schroeder

the Germans during World War II. He was preceded by his wife, Maggy.

Welcome New Members

Nancy B. Bogardus, KY, dau of T/SGT Roger N. Butt, Army
Karen Lynn McCollum Starr, MO, granddau of PVT Clarence E. McCollum, Army
Tamara J. Maddux, OK, granddau of CPL Murvin L. Tharp, Army
Tim Nosal, VA, nephew of PFC Robert E. Nosal, Army
Montie Monzingo, TX, son of SGT Garland W. Monzingo, Army Air Forces

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

... Margraten, from page 4

prior to Memorial Day that focuses on one person. We'd include a photo of the father with biographical text that reads something like this:

Pvt. John Smith grew up in Chicago, Illinois, and was captain of his high school football team. He deployed overseas when his wife was pregnant. On September 23, 1944 Smith was killed during Operation Market Garden. He never had the opportunity to meet his daughter, but this year she'll be traveling to Netherlands American Cemetery for Memorial Day to be with him.

Herrmann is excited about social media's role in getting our story out.

"It will allow people in the United States to feel like they're following along that weekend," she wrote. So follow us Memorial Day at www.abmc.gov!

In addition, *Washington Post* reporter Ian Shapira will join



The AWON Margraten 'kids' in Holland in 2010

us during the Memorial Day weekend. Look for his future article on the *Post*'s website: www.washingtonpost.com.

In 1945 the Burger Comité Margraten, or Citizens Committee Margraten, was formed to create a grave adoption campaign for the new American Cemetery. Adopters were asked to visit their adopted grave regularly and, if possible and appreciated, stay in touch with the next of kin.

Today, all of the 8,301 graves

and 1,100 names on the memorial wall are adopted, and many of the relationships established almost 70 years ago still continue, now into the second and third generation for both adopters and next of kin.

The Adoption Committee also maintains an Adoption Register with information about adopters and the graves they've adopted.

The one-week trip to Holland is from May 21-28, 2015.

Millions read about Rueckert family

Son cherishes mag keepsake

Below and right are pages from the January 1945 issue of Ladies' Home Journal, submitted by AWONer Bill Rueckert Sargent. LHJ regularly ran a How America Lives section that focused on one family in a specific income range, and how that family spent their money. The 10-page spread has glorious pictures of the Lt. Bill Rueckert family - his widow, Dee; and children, Billy and Dianne. There are several mini-articles about how Dee coped with Bill's loss, her health and fitness regimen, and even her fashion and cooking. The articles are extremely detailed and written in an editorial style we don't see in today's publications. It's a treasure. The Star can't possibly match it, so the best we can offer is a photo essay of the pages. Bill is a lucky man to have this memento.



Widow Dee
Rueckert with son,
Billy, 2-1/2, and Dianne, 6 months



Left page, Dee was hanging clothes when she got the telegram, her mother takes care of the children while Dee works. Right page, Bill's letter to Billy on his first birthday, pictures of the Rueckerts' four-year marriage that was "always like a honeymoon."



Above left page, how Dee made her wardrobe work for her; above right page, LHJ advice for newly-widowed Dee to stay healthy and fit. Left page, tips for a one-parent household and family.



Lt. William G. (Bill) Rueckert

1Lt. Rueckert was from Moline, Illinois and graduated from the University of Illinois in 1941. He was a B-24 pilot with the 93rd Bomb Group in England. He flew his first mission on May 1, 1944, as co-pilot on a night bombing mission. Shortly after being airborne the plane crashed back onto the runway, killing Lt. Rueckert, the pilot, and three other crewmembers. Lt. Rueckert is buried in the family plot at Moline.

AWON Connections

Pictures and Stories of Members
Gathering Around the Country



The weather was perfect in early February for dessert and a picture on Vamik and Betty Volkan's deck in Virginia for Linda Chauvin; Millie and Jim Cavanaugh, who were traveling from New Jersey to Florida; and Ken Underwood, who drove in from Charlottesville. Pictured, from left, are Betty, Millie, Linda and Ken. *Linda*

attended a meeting. They enjoyed Italian food, seafood, sightseeing in Atlantic City and Cape May, New Jersey, and, most of all, good company. *Jerry*



Judy and Jerry Pinkerton of Texas, left, stayed with John and Dianne Baczynski, right, in California a few days on their way to Mexico in January. To get in the spirit the foursome had a meal at the Baczynskis' favorite Mexican Restaurant. *Dianne*



In March Jerry and Judy Pinkerton of Texas, above left, were guests of Bob and Ruthie Joyce, right, in Philadelphia, while Jerry



A Phoenix, Arizona, gathering was held in March at Macaroni Grill. Despite some regulars not being able to attend and some learning about the get-together too late, it was quite a turn-out. Pictured in the front row, from left, are Judy Woodbury, Pat Fabri, Gaylia Olson and Millie Cagen. Standing,

American WWII Orphans Network

from left, are Sharon Taylor, Clint Fredrick, Barry Barr-Finch, Lois Kiely, and Ted Krissman. Unable to attend were Dianne Baczynski, Rodney Franklin, and Ginger Brumeley Pottenger. *Barry*



In February four AWONers - two "old timers" and two "newbies" - met for lunch in Phoenix to talk AWON. From left, are newcomer Gaylia Olson, Dianne Baczynski, newcomer Lois La Point Kiely, and Pat Fabri. Lois lives in New York and winters in Phoenix, while everyone else is local. *Dianne*



In January Steve and Penny LeGrand of Tucson, Arizona, above left, traveled to San Diego, home to married orphans Sharon and Roger Connor, right, to attend Kenny Kemp's presentation, *FLAK-PAK: A Pacific War Scrapbook*. Kemp believes that most Americans know about Pearl Harbor in 1941 and Hiroshima in 1945, but very little about the intervening four years. Kemp's father,

Omer C. Kemp, was a B-24 pilot who flew 15 combat missions in the western Pacific. Kemp knew very little about his father's war-time experience until 2010 when, after his mother's death, he gained access to his father's treasure trove of information. That his father did not talk much about the war will not surprise AWONers. When he delved into his father's papers, photos and other memorabilia, Kemp was astonished at the wealth of information. Both Penny's and Sharon's fathers flew on B-24s in the Pacific. Penny's father, 1st Lt. Charles E. Hopkins Jr., a pilot, vanished with his entire ten-man crew on a midnight raid over Woltje Atoll. Sharon's father, Sgt. William E. Crowley, an armorer/gunner, died when his plane, returning from a bombing mission, collided with another over Yap Island, and crashed into the Pacific with its crew of eleven, never to be found. The formal part of the evening concluded with a screening of a documentary about a typical B-24 bombing mission, a mission that O.C. Kemp, Hopkins and Crowley might have experienced. We in the audience felt almost a part of the crew. *Roger*



Jackie Edwards Rackley, left, and Carla Sue Kingery-Holcomb, right, met for lunch at City Bites in Oklahoma City in February. They met via the AWON Facebook page. Both they and their husbands spent lots of time talking and laughing. They are eager to get together again. "There is a special bond between AWONers," says Jackie. *Jackie*

... Dossing, from front page

depending which units were advancing. In addition to supporting American infantry, they backed up French and British forces attached to the Third Infantry. The light Stuart tanks were used for a lot of reconnaissance work since they were smaller and faster than the bigger M4 Sherman tanks. My father's tank was on a recon mission to prepare for the crossing of the Rhine River into Germany. It was February 3, 1945 and for over a month, the battalion had been fighting through difficult terrain and under the most trying weather conditions of the entire French campaign. This was the battle of the Colmar Pocket. There were extremely heavy snows, sub-zero temperatures (-4 F) and then, finally, impassable muddy roads and flooded fields when the snow started melting.

The battle was fought between the Allied forces and the Wehrmacht 19th Army from January 20 to February 9, 1945, near Colmar, in the Alsace, France area. It is referred to as "the Other Battle of the Bulge," and was among the regions most bitterly defended by the German forces because this area had been taken from Germany by the French after World War I. The Third Infantry Division was in the thick of it and is known for its large number of Medal of Honor recipients. One of them was Audie Murphy.

Colmar is of special interest to me because that is where my mother's side of the family is from. My great-grandfather immigrated to the United States before 1900 to work for his uncle who owned a lumber yard on the north side of Chicago. He worked a team of horses delivering lumber.

Eventually, with some help from my great-aunt, I located my French relatives in Colmar. I have since visited them twice, the last time in 2002. Like many people who lost a

family member in a war, I had a desire to learn more about my father, how he lived and how he died. I've been doing genealogical research on several branches of my family for over 45 years, but only recently started searching for my father's military records.

I first wanted to research the history of the 756th Tank Battalion and requested information on the battalion from the National Archives in Washington, D.C. After selecting date parameters, they sent me the Commander's Narrative for the years of 1944 and 1945. This is a monthly summary report of the battalion from their commander to higher headquarters. It gives the big picture and forms the basis of the historical novel I'm currently writing about the battle of Colmar Pocket.

One day, many months after I started this research, a package from the Department of the Army appeared on my doorstep which contained the Individual Deceased Personnel File for my father. It was granted to me, unknowingly, through the Freedom of Information Act. Enclosed was 65-year-old correspondence from my now deceased mother to the Army,

asking for details of his death and requesting that my father's body be relocated from France to the United States. The file also contained details from the officer assigned to verify that the body they were exhuming was my father's. Included with his remains, which were wrapped in an army blanket, was a sealed Coke bottle that held his name and serial number. Things were pretty basic out in a war zone.

This was three years after the war, in 1948, and the government sent many ships to Europe to bring back our war dead for families who requested re-burial here in the states. The city of New York ceremonially greeted every ship as they arrived in their port and sent individual letters of gratitude to each family of the deceased. My father was



Peter Musil, age two, and his sister, Linda, age 1, in spring 1945.

eventually interred in the National Military Cemetery in Rock Island, Illinois, as per my mother's request.

My mother remarried in 1948 and my new father adopted my sister and me, so we could have the same family name. Mom and Dad went on to have five more children and lived well into their 80's. I was able to go to college through the War Orphan's Act, while my sister went to business college. I eventually was drafted into the Army in 1964 and I spent two years stationed at Fort Hood in the 2nd Armored Division. In 1965, Vietnam was escalating and soldiers in my unit were being sent over there in droves. Being young and stupid I was ready to volunteer, but my mother said she would fight it since I was a sole surviving son. I remember as a youngster, we attended an annual orphan's Christmas party held in a major downtown hotel sponsored by the Cook County Veterans. It was always one of the highlights of my year. I particularly remember a couple of bullying, large girls who lived down the street and would taunt me with chants of "your father's dead!" Kids can be so cruel.

I recently attended my 50th high school reunion and one of the topics that was discussed was who of us were war orphans. It was most interesting to find out that many of my classmates had also lost their father in World War II, something which we never talked about in school. I was particularly struck by several classmates whose fathers were MIA, never to return. A pair of female twins lost their father in the South Pacific when his submarine was sunk. Another good friend lost his dad when his bomber crashed in the South Pacific and the crew was never recovered. Their families had no

closure on losing their father. That had to be rough. War is Hell.



My name is Karl-Heinz E. Fiedler. I was born in February of 1940 in München (Munich), Germany. My parents were from Erfurt, a city in the north of Germany. My father, Michael Karl Fiedler, an accountant by profession, had been transferred to München by his company before the war started. Shortly after my sister was born, he was drafted into the army. I have no recollection of Dad since I was a "babe in arms" on his last visit home. As the war progressed, he was assigned to an army unit that was sent to the Russian front in 1943. Many died, not only from the fighting, but also from the sub-zero temperatures of the Russian winters.

The last letter my mother received was in the summer of 1944. My father was designated as "missing in action." His unit had been part of the last major offensive action

in Bessarabien, at that time in Romania. Records confirm that over a million men, both Russian and German, lost their lives over a period of several days. Eye witness reports confirm that most of the surviving German soldiers died on the way to the prison camps due to the severe cold, lack of food, horrendous sanitary conditions and lack of medical treatment. Michael Karl Fiedler was officially declared dead in 1951. I had become a World War II orphan.

Back home in München, my mother, sister and I, survived the constant bombing raids. It became a regular nightly event to get up, get dressed and go to an air raid shelter



Peter Musil Dossing, left, and Karl-Heinz Fiedler, right, work on wood carving together.

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across the street. As the war came to an end in 1945, we were thankful that there had been no hand-to-hand fighting in our city. When Allied troops entered München, the war was basically over. As a five-year-old, all I remember are the smiles on the American troop's faces, their tanks and trucks and, yes, the famous Hershey chocolate bars they were passing out.

My father is still a mystery to me. I know little about him and have very few pictures, maybe five or six. My mother had a hard time talking about Dad, the war, and anything related to their short life together. Tears would always end any conversation about the subject. Most pictures, documents, letters, etc. were lost or destroyed at the end of the war. No one wanted to remember the pain due to the loss of loved ones.

Life continued. There was a tremendous shortage of housing due to the bombings. If you had an extra bedroom available, you were assigned a renter from the list of DP's (displaced persons). We were assigned such a DP from the Ukraine, who had come through Poland to Germany after the war. He was an electrical engineer who eventually obtained a visa to come to the United States. He worked for Motorola, in Chicago, servicing microwave towers. He was to become my step-father once we came to the United States.

He was a "little" frugal, to say the least. By sleeping in his station wagon and eating cans of pork 'n beans, he saved the money he was allotted per diem for room and meals. With these savings, my future step-father was soon able to pay the passage for my family to come to the United States. We arrived on the *SS Washington* in New York in late 1951, and then by train to Chicago a few days later. A new chapter in my life was beginning.

School started in fourth grade. I suffered from tuberculosis in Germany and missed so much of the fourth grade there that I had to repeat it. There was a Catholic school across the street. Great! However, I only knew three

words of English: "I don't know," which was my standard answer to any question. "What is your name?" "How old are you?" "Where do you live?" Well, you get the idea, lots of laughs. One day my mother sent me to the neighborhood store to get milk. Everything went well until I came home with butter milk. Oops. Another time I came to school wearing a brand new pair of jeans. One of the nuns promptly started yelling at me in the playground while pointing to my jeans. I had no idea what that was all about until much later, when I realized that jeans were verboten in school. The final straw was in math. Math is the same in any language, but I kept getting my answers wrong. I mixed up the German 1's with the English 7's and vice versa. It was a very long year!

The next year we moved into a house near a public school and things progressed nicely. By the time I started high school, I had become so Americanized that I fit in with friends, had good grades, was part of the tennis team. The first summer in high school, I was old enough to get a job at the local *A&P*. I reached a point where I did not speak German anymore. My mother spoke to me in German and I would respond in English. All was well!

I got married during college, had three children, and graduated to become a teacher in Chicago. During this time my fantastic teaching salary was supplemented by continued work in the food industry and later also by doing home repairs. During my 34 years of teaching, I was able to obtain a master's degree in computer education and re-marry. The opportunity for early retirement brought us to Sun City, Texas, in 1999. Seeing people in shorts, leaves on trees, and flowers - all in the middle of winter - was too good to pass up. We promptly joined the Sun City Woodshop and with some friends started a wood carving club as carving was my favorite hobby. Ah, life was really good!

Editor's note: This story also was printed in The Williamson County Sun (Texas) on Memorial Day 2014.



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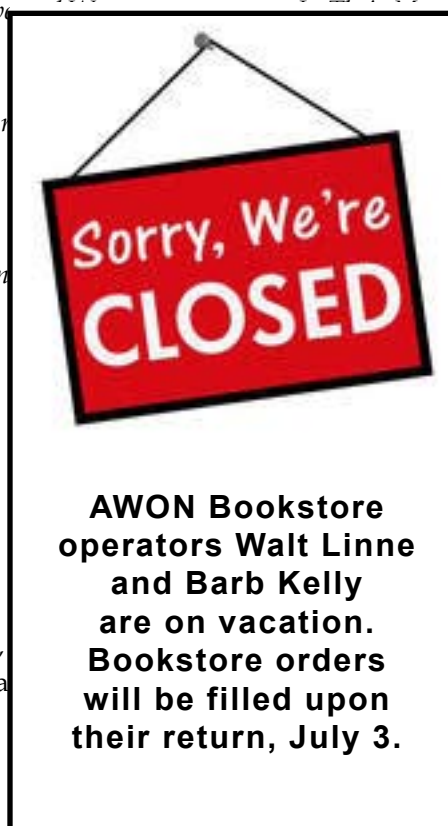
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____ Windbreaker (blue) \$40.00
(circle size: S M L XL 2X 3X)

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

____ **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

____ **AWON 20th Anniversary Totebag REDUCED!*\$5.00**
* small, P&H included

____ Tote bag (large) \$20.00

____ **20th Anniversary Garden Flags** **\$15.00**
without holder

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)

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

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

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AWON Bookstore

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Indianapolis, IN 46216

email: bookstore@awon.org

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

New galleries 'immerse' visitors in sights and sounds of war

Dossing attends opening of new building at National WWII Museum

by Peter Dossing

Recently, I was invited to attend the grand opening of a new pavilion at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans. I was one of several others who were nominated to represent AWON.

In December the museum opened the Campaigns of Courage: European and Pacific Theaters pavilion. The 32,000 square foot pavilion features two immersive galleries: *Road to Berlin: European Theater Galleries*, open now, and *Road to Tokyo: Pacific Theater Galleries*, opening in 2015. The innovative design of this building recreates battle settings and villages down to icy paths and realistic sounds. The result is a richly layered, multimedia experience that invites exploration and connection.

But let's back up.

"What's the National WWII Museum doing in downtown New Orleans?" you ask. There are literally hundreds of military museums in the United States, located in small communities to military bases, everywhere, but there was no national museum dedicated to World War II history. New Orleans has just as big a claim to

the title as anybody. It was famous for inventing and mass-producing the Higgins Boat landing craft which was used extensively in amphibious landings on both fronts in the war. The craft was designed by Andrew Higgins and based on his smaller versions that were used in swamps and marshes by rum-runners to smuggle illegal liquor into the country. New Orleans was also a major troop train stop during the war, as the trains carried troops from the west coast to the east coast — a lot of memories for some.

The museum first opened on June 6, 2000, as The National D-Day Museum. In 2003 it was designated by Congress as America's National World War II museum. Founded by historian and author, Stephen Ambrose, who wrote *Band of Brothers* and several other major World War II books, the museum tells the story of the American experience in the war that changed the world — why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today — so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn.

The museum showcases large artifacts and exhibits



about D-Day at Normandy, the home front, and the Pacific, where exhibits and interactive experiences paint the picture of a nation mobilized for war; a pavilion to watch staff and volunteers restore artifacts in public view; a 4D theater showing the exclusive Tom Hanks production, *Beyond All Boundaries*; a canteen for good eats and even a soda shop, where the music and entertainment of the 'Greatest Generation' comes to life. That's where you'll find The Victory Belles, the museum's own tribute group to the Andrews Sisters who were known as America's wartime sweethearts.

Noted for their close harmonies and synchronized dance steps, the Andrews Sisters epitomized the 'we're all in this together' spirit of the war years, and their optimistic songs and exuberance made them ideal morale boosters. The Victory

...continued on page 16

...Museum, from page 15

Belles pay tribute to this talented trio, who volunteered so much time entertaining our troops here and abroad. Songs that included *Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy*, *Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree, I'll Be With You in Apple Blossom Time*, *Accentuate the Positive*, and *Chattanooga Choo Choo*, are just a few of the upbeat signature favorites sung by The Victory Belles in the Canteen of The National WWII Museum.

The National WWII Museum's exhibits cover the epic and global scale of the war that changed the world, in a voice that is intimate and personal, right in the heart of New Orleans. Exhibits not only highlight the role of world leaders, but also the everyday men and women who found the strength and courage to accomplish the extraordinary.

Even before the National WWII Museum opened its doors in 2000, Ambrose had

already begun to amass artifacts collected from veterans as he interviewed them. Now, the museum's vault houses more than 100,000 artifacts. While many items in the collection — including but not limited to Allied and Axis uniforms, weaponry, vehicles, medals, diaries, letters, artwork, photographs and other mementos — are on exhibit, the majority are kept safely in storage to be used for research and future exhibitions, or are being restored to their original condition. With one of the richest historical museums in New Orleans, exhibits from The National WWII Museum span the years leading up to and following the war. The museum has a large collection of memoirs of wartime experiences, as well as an impressive collection of oral histories conducted with veterans from all branches and who served on all fronts

The National WWII Museum is in the midst of a \$325 million capital expansion project that will quadruple the size



Peter with The Victory Belles

of the original museum facility, add state-of-the-art programs and exhibit space, enhance the library and archives, and expand collections and conservation space. When completed in 2017, the museum will be positioned as a leading resource on the history, values, and lasting significance of World War II, prepared to educate audiences for generations to come.

If you can't make it to New Orleans for a visit, there is the newly-designated National Museum of the Pacific War, home of the Admiral Nimitz Museum, located in Fredericksburg, Texas. This world-class military museum features a six-acre complex where visitors can immerse themselves in Pacific War history. This museum is the only institution in the country dedicated exclusively to telling the story of the Pacific and Asiatic theaters in World War II. As with the National WWII Museum in New Orleans, the National Museum of the Pacific War is a must-see for military history buffs.



Battle of the Bulge gallery, cr: Nat'l WWII Museum

AWON Board Business
19 October 2014

Email Vote: Prior to the regular AWON board meeting, an email vote was taken and passed on September 26 giving approval to **Gerry Morenski** and **Billie Meeks** to compose and send letters outside AWON requesting support for the Margraten project.

Introductions: This is the first meeting for three board members: **Mike Forgy**, **Billie Meeks**, and **Diane Pollard**. Each board member gave a brief introduction and shared some of their AWON story.

Advocacy Request: The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) has asked AWON for its support of The Independent Budget, a report that provides budget recommendations to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The Independent Budget is formulated by DAV, AMVETS, Paralyzed Veterans of America and Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. The board reviewed the Independent Budget proposal and approved having board president **Norm Burkey** fill out the endorsement form that will include AWON in the list of supporters printed in the publication.

Meeting Schedule: The board discussed setting up a 2015 meeting schedule and possible locations for an in-person board meeting where HistoryIT would explain its archival services.

AWON Archives and Website: New board directors were brought up to speed on ongoing projects concerning the AWON archives, website and database.

Next Board Meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting of the AWON Board of Directors is Sunday, November 16, 2014.

Bonnie Oates, Secretary

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

AWON Board Business
16 November 2014

Financial Report: The financial report was approved as submitted showing assets of \$91,400 at the end of October 2014.

Taxes: The board approved engaging Condley and Co. to prepare AWON's taxes and file IRS Form 990 for 2014 for the sum of \$500.

2014 AWON Conference: Seattle Conference co-chair **Barry Barr-Finch** submitted to the board an overview of the conference. There are some outstanding expenditures and a total will be given when all items are in.

AWON Rules: After much discussion the board approved a motion for **Diane Pollard** to draft a letter expressing that all conference members should abide by conference rules.

In-Person Meeting: All directors stated they would be available March 20-22, 2015, for an in-person board meeting in Indianapolis where the board will hear a presentation by HistoryIT about archiving. The board will contact **Penny LeGrand** to find a hotel for the board.

2016 Conference: Conference co-chairs **Sam Tannenbaum** and **Paul Bremer** will be invited to join the board on a conference call in January to discuss the 2016 AWON National Conference in Florida.

Round Table Results: The board agreed to review results from the Seattle Conference roundtable discussions at future board meetings, one section of the results as published in the October 2014 issue of *The Star*, per meeting. The board will publish their conclusions in a future issue of *The Star*.

Website Letter: The board discussed a letter written by **Lorin McCleary** regarding the website project.

Next Meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting of the AWON Board of Directors is Sunday, January 18, 2015.

Bonnie Oates, Secretary

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

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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.

- Authors retain copyright to published original writing. Permission to reprint should be obtained from the author by contacting the editor.

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

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

...Minutes, from page 17

AWON Board Business 18 January 2015

Financial Report: No financial report was presented.

2014 Conference: The books for the 2014 AWON National Conference in Seattle are finalized.

In-person Meeting: HistoryIT, a firm that develops technological tools for preserving historical records, gave the board a video to watch about its archiving philosophy. In the process of planning a meeting with HistoryIT and learning that Indianapolis is home to their processing center, the board changed its in-person meeting location to Boston in March.

Star of the Star: Gerry Morenski and Jerry Pinkerton volunteered to work with *The Star* editor Kathy Le Comte to recognize volunteers as future *Stars of the Star*.

Lifetime Membership: After considering the overall ages of our membership, the board rejected the idea of lifetime memberships.

International Gold Star Children: At the March in-person board meeting directors will discuss the possibility of adding international war orphans to AWON's membership.

2016 Conference: Conference co-chair Sam Tannenbaum informed the board a conference planning meeting is scheduled for late January. An update will be prepared for the board's in-person board meeting in March.

Next meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting of the AWON Board of Directors is Friday and Saturday, March 20-21, 2015, in Boston.

Bonnie Oates, Secretary

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

REMINDERS

- Make all checks payable to AWON
- Tell AWON when you move/change email
- Please tell AWON when you head to/from your winter home

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 _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ (home, work, cell)

E-mail _____

Do you prefer to receive *The Star* electronically? Y N

(Checking Y means you will not receive a copy in the mail. You will receive an email notification to read your copy online.)

Renewing members may skip to Dues Options

Relationship to Serviceman _____

Your Date of Birth _____

Where did you hear about AWON? _____

Information about WWII Serviceman Who Died

Be as complete as possible. If you do not have some information, leave it blank and we may be able to find it. Do not delay mailing 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 or service: (rank, medals, etc. Add additional sheet, if necessary.)

Home Town and State _____

Wife's Maiden Name _____

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: \$ _____

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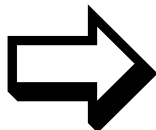
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The Star

"Breaking Down the Wall of Silence"

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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

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