

The



Star

Issue 77

"We Speak Their Names"

July 2015

Tour two years in the making

Gratitude theme of Margraten visit



The AWON Margraten 'Kids,' at the American Military Cemetery of The Netherlands, Memorial Day 2015. Credit: Joost Claassens.

by Gerry Conway Morenski

It started with a phone call.

After leading two groups of AWON Margraten 'kids' to The Netherlands for Memorial Day 2005 and 2010, I thought we would never return as a group. I had all the excuses: it's too much work, we are an aging group, we have family commitments, and perhaps everyone who needed to make that trip had already done so. I was so wrong!

On a Sunday afternoon two years ago, my telephone rang. It was Mrs. Fien Opreij, the

President of the Stichting Adoptie Graven (Adoption Committee) at Margraten. Fien and I have become email friends over the past ten years, so I knew something was up if she was telephoning.

She explained that 2015 would mark 70 years of Memorial Day at Margraten and, just as important, it would mark 70 years of the Adoption Program there. She said, in her endearing, slightly-askew English, "We are already planning events to mark 70 years... and you will bring the AWON, Gerry." How could I say no?

One email to the Margraten members of AWON asking for a show of interest, and we had a full bus! Some were new AWON

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President's Message

by Norm Burkey

The AWON Board of Directors meets bi-monthly via conference call, but is required to meet face-to-face annually. During conference years this is accomplished at the conference. In the off-years, we meet at a central location selected by the board. This year, however, we selected Boston for a very specific reason.

These off-year meetings offer an opportunity for extended discussions, which in turn leads to a jam-packed agenda. This year was no exception. We began at 3 p.m. Friday and met all day Saturday (their president reluctantly let them break for dinner and sleep on Friday, and lunch on Saturday).

Up for discussion were a review of the 2014 AWON conference, approval of the 2016 conference, Facebook, AWON database, and our archives project. You will hear more about these issues as we move forward, but my purpose here is to introduce you to our archives project.

As our database manager confessed in the April newsletter, her eyes are getting old and so is AWON. There may be a few exceptions, but the youngest orphan members are now 70 years old. Your board members recognized this fact several years ago and initiated an archives project under the

leadership of director Norma Nicol Hamilton.

Our goal is to find a repository for our records once we are gone. However, we want to have our records easily accessible for inquiry and study, not to have them simply stored in boxes in a warehouse situation. At a convention last summer, we heard several archivists mention that they simply do not have the resources to catalog all the materials they store in their facilities. We want to avoid this situation with the repository of our choice.

The reason we chose Boston was to receive a presentation from a commercial company that specializes in digitizing materials and will work with us to find a suitable repository. This will not be a cheap undertaking, but thanks to the generosity of our members over the years, we have the funds available. Our next step is to find a competitor and receive a similar presentation from them.

There are many questions still to be answered and we will keep you advised of our progress. In the meantime, if you have any questions or comments, please let us know.

I want to finish by extending my thanks to the present board for their active participation and interest in furthering the cause of AWON.



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National conference set for October 2016

AWON to host first cruise

by Sam Tannenbaum

Our Fathers died for freedom, so for the 2016 AWON National Conference we wish to welcome you aboard the cruise ship *Freedom of the Seas* of the Royal Caribbean International fleet, departing Port Canaveral, Florida on October 30, 2016, for a five-night trip to the western Caribbean. We plan to honor our fathers, celebrate our camaraderie, and reinforce our commitment to keeping alive the memories of our fathers.

There will be no worries about where, when, or with whom to eat, or the cost of food because all is included. The biggest problem will be bringing clothes that stretch because by the end of *Cruisin' in Freedom, Honoring Our Fathers*, you will have outgrown your clothes due to all the food. And people think the sea air shrinks clothing – ha-ha!

Your Florida 2016 AWON Conference Committee is planning interesting speakers, Sharing Circles, a memorial service on the private island of Coco Cay, a cocktail party, and lots of time to meet new AWON members and renew old friendships. The days at sea will be chock-full of AWON activities.

The itinerary starts Sunday at 4 p.m. when we depart Port Canaveral. We will arrive in Coco Cay, Bahamas, Monday morning where we will spend the day. AWON activities are planned on ship Tuesday while we are at sea. Wednesday morning we arrive at Cozumel, Mexico where we will spend the day. Thursday we will be at sea again and will have various AWON activities. We arrive back at Port Canaveral Friday morning.

Please book your cabin now. They are selling out quickly. If you delay and AWON group cabins are sold out, the cost will be higher - if available at all. A \$100 deposit per person, FULLY REFUNDABLE until August 1, 2016, will get you the cabin of your choice at our group rates. Cabins will be guaranteed at the AWON group rates until Labor Day 2015, or until they are sold out over this summer.

If there is enough interest, we will book a hotel near the port for people wishing to fly in before the cruise or stay after. The best airport to fly into is Orlando and you can make arrangements for Royal Caribbean to pick you up. We will have more details in future communications.

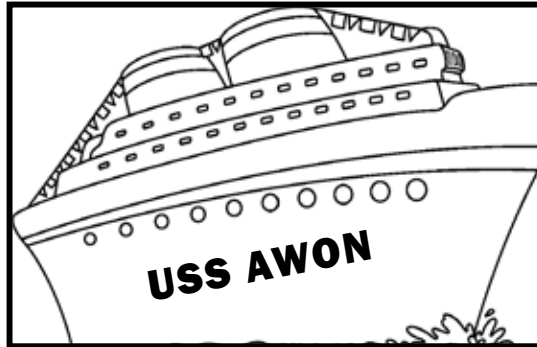
Lastly, your Florida Committee needs volunteers to help make the 2016 gathering fantastic. Please contact Paul Bremer at bremergolf@aol.com, or Sam Tannenbaum at samtan7713@gmail.com, to volunteer.

To book a cabin, contact cruise specialist Paula Podradchik at 877-583-3956 or 561-498-5461, or email her at ppodradchik@cruiseplanners.com.

Here are the cabin choices. All rates are per person, double occupancy:

Interior:	K	\$506.23
Ocean View:	G	\$861.23
Promenade:	PR	\$526.23
Superior Balcony:	D2	\$706.23

All prices include taxes and fees, and you will receive a \$50 per cabin on board credit for you to spend. You also may prepay gratuities. Please be prepared to give a valid Passport number when booking a cabin.



Second grade gets WWII lesson

by Maggie Malone

On the Friday morning before Memorial Day, Betsy Harris and I took the subway from 79th Street in Manhattan up 100 blocks to Washington Heights. Our destination was Public School 115, where my young cousin, Margo, teaches a class of 26 second graders.

Margo had discovered that her students did not know what Memorial Day was about. She knew that we had both lost our dads in World War II and invited us to talk about why Memorial Day is important. She prepared the children, who are mostly of Dominican descent, by having them read and discuss picture-book versions of Anne Frank's diary and other stories of Jewish families who were hidden from

the Nazis by brave people in Europe.

Our talks were augmented by maps, projected photos of our families, and letters from our dads. Together, Betsy and I presented a picture of the vastness of the world war and of the diversity of Americans who fought in it.

My father was a civilian, in charge of the Federal Farm Administration office in a small South Dakota county. He was drafted into the army at age 34 and was shipped to France in November 1944. At first he was stationed at



Betsy Harris, left, and Maggie Malone, right, with New York City second graders.

headquarters, working in the post office and supply depot, but then came the Battle of the Bulge when every soldier was needed to fight on the front lines. He survived that battle but was KIA in Germany in March 1945. He left behind a wife, three daughters (ages seven, five and three), and his widowed mother.

Betsy's father was from Kentucky, a career Navy officer in the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, who was drawn into the war in the Pacific at age 41. He became the commanding officer of the flagship of the Yangtze Patrol, the *USS Luzon*, which, though fitted for patrolling the Yangtze River within China, was sent out to the open sea, to the Phil-

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Welcome New Members

Stephen Chabre, CA, son of 1LT William S. Sullivan, Army Air Forces
Jacqolyn "Jackie" Simmons Newberry, TX, dau of SGT Howard E. Simmons Jr, Army
William H. Simmons, ID, nephew of SGT Howard E. Simmons, Army
James C. Wade, CO, son of PVT James C. Wade, Army
Patricia O'Connor, MA, dau of 1LT George F. Beele, Army

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

... Lesson, from page 4

ippines, shortly before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. When Corregidor fell to the Japanese in early May 1942, he became a POW and eventually died of malaria in a harsh prison camp in the late summer of that year. He left behind his wife and three-year-old Betsy and her six-year-old brother.

Betsy and I read parts of letters from our fathers. Hers was written to her on the occasion of her third birthday; mine was a Christmas letter full of hope for the following Christmas when we would "all be together again." Toward the end of the talks, we described the Memorial Day program and wreath-laying we both attend every year.

In the Q & A sessions, the boys and girls mostly wanted to know about how we and our siblings reacted to losing our dads. Their questions were simple and direct: "Did your father want to go to war?" "Did your mother die, too?" "Were you all very sad?" "Were you proud that your dad went to fight

for freedom in the war?" "Why didn't your mother marry again?" "Where do your mother and sisters live?" "Are they okay now?" "Didn't you miss having your dad to walk with you down the aisle when you got married?"



Betsy takes a question.

That they wanted to console us was clear from the affection they showed us at the end of the session. That afternoon, Margo had them write thank-you letters, telling us what they had felt and learned. "That letter you

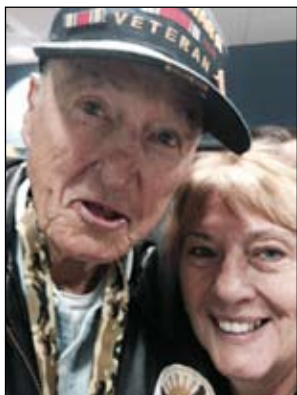
read to us made me want to cry," one wrote to Betsy. Another wrote, "You taught me that Memorial Day is about celebrating people that served our country." One inventive speller called the Nazis "mean...they do not know they are not supost to kill inecent people. I wish they never exected." Several wrote telling us not to be sad. One counseled, "you could still be with your dad like when you go to sleep you could be with him." Another student concluded that our fathers, "were brave and fited (sic) and won the World War II so everybody will have a happy life."

The experience of sharing our stories with the second graders was very moving and satisfying for us both. Granted, we don't all have experienced teachers like Margo in our lives to encourage us to share why Memorial Day weekend isn't just about picnics and fun. But reaching out to schools is a fine thing to do. If you decide to try it, you'll benefit at least as much as the children do.

Report from AWON president emerita

by Patricia Gaffney-Kindig

WWII Remembrance Day at Red Rocks Community College, nestled in the foothills near my Colorado home, took place this spring. I had a table with AWON Fact Sheets and two of the albums I created,



Portraits of Men Who Died in WWII and the Children Who Love Them. I displayed a photo of my parents and had my laptop open to the AWON website. Many people stopped by to talk and learn and express their surprise about American war orphans. There were 23-30 World War II veterans who were honored for their service. I was thrilled to talk many of them including a WASP, Women's Air Service Pilot. College staff members were dressed in uniforms of the era including Rosie the Riveter. The NSO show performed by music and drama students was a big hit! It was a fun and productive day and I've been invited back to speak on Veterans Day.

Two of the albums *Portraits of Men Who Died in WWII and the Children Who Love Them*, were exhibited at the Reading, Pennsylvania World War II weekend.

AWON has participated in this event for 14 years.

News from JPAC: it has been reorganized and renamed. Go to defense.gov for the fact sheet offered by former U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel in February. The new leadership and changes will continue to fulfill their mission to bring home World War II MIAs. AWON's friend, Justin Taylan, remains in Papua New Guinea organizing villagers in searches for wrecks. AWON's good friend, Dr. Robert Mann, has retired from JPAC after three decades. He and his wife will work in Europe where Bob will continue his extraordinary work in forensic anthropology. Search for the "JPAC Forensic Anthropology Academy" that Bob developed. The academy is training future anthropologists to continue the work of JPAC's Central Identification Laboratory in partnerships with universities.

We Speak Your Names: This has been another epic year for me and my family. My best friend, Christina, passed away on Christmas Day. I have four brothers, but she was the sister I'd always wanted. On January 15, my 93-year-old mother, Ruth, passed away in Wisconsin. I was fortunate to be with her. Now my father's 83-year-old sister, Joanne,

is the only living relative who knew my father. Sadly, only days after Mom's death, my 65-year-old brother fell ill and passed on April 28. Now I have three brothers, and we are taking comfort in the idea that Mom called Don home one last time. We are gathering at the family cemetery in Wisconsin this summer where we will lay to rest our brother, Donald J. Main, whose father, Floyd Main Jr., earned a Bronze and Silver Star; and my late husband, Michael R. Kindig. Since his death nearly five years ago, I've pursued the possibil-



ity of having our cremains buried with our respective fathers in Arlington National Cemetery. Earlier this year, my quest came to an end. Michael and I will be laid to rest with my brothers and stepfather, people I loved. My brother and my husband, both, were war orphans. Michael will be buried with military honors as he served in the Marine Reserves during the Vietnam Era.

... Margraten, from front page

members, while others were making a return trip. Adrian Leist Caldwell was one of those returning, and explains why:

My sentimental journey began in 2001 when my husband, Robert, and I, took my mom to visit the cemetery for Memorial Day. Then came my dad's sister in 2004, and my granddaughter and grandson, Haley and Taylor, in 2005. In 2010 our two sons, Stan and Rob, and their wives. Now, this trip completed my journey with my granddaughter, Gracie, and return of Haley and my daughter-in-law, Ranae. My dad has now met the family he never lived to know. They were all in awe (as am I) of the Dutch outpouring of love and honor for my father's sacrifice.

And so, on Friday, May 22, 2015, the AWON Margraten 'kids' arrived in Brussels to begin what would be another fantastic visit to the cemetery and with our Dutch friends and adopters. Our group was made up of 'kids,' grandchildren and great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and some AWON friends. As the Adoption Program at Margraten now includes the third generation of adopters, it seemed fitting that our group reflected three generations as well.

The Adoption Committee was our host not only for our transportation (the AWON Bus) but also for a Saturday luncheon, a silent procession in the town of Mesch on Saturday afternoon followed by a wonderful dinner and entertainment, lunch on Sunday, and a fantastic concert on Monday evening.

We were greeted in Brussels by Nicole Sproncken, a new member of the Adoption Committee. She led us to our bus, and as many of the Margraten kids know Nicole

from her Netherlands American Cemetery Facebook page, it was a chance to meet her and her lovely family in person.

On Friday night – after a nap – many of our travelers met with their adopter families and enjoyed dinner and conversation at one of the many cafes or restaurants within walking distance of the Hotel L'Empereur in Maastricht.

On Saturday our bus was escorted through Maastricht by vintage World War II vehicles, and traveled the six miles to the cemetery at Margraten to visit with our fathers, and to introduce them to their grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Timothy Broas, U.S. Ambassador to The Netherlands, was on hand to greet all of us, as were all of the members of the Adoption Committee, and former Maryland Congresswoman Constance Morella who is now a commissioner of the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), which oversees all American military cemeteries on foreign soil. Also on hand were members of the Dutch, German and American press as well as Tim Nosal, ABMC Director of Public Affairs, and his video staff, Sarah Herrmann and Mike Shipman.

AWON's Dutch friend, Joost Claassens, led a group of volunteer photographers to capture moments throughout the weekend for us. Photographers were assigned to each family, and saved many of us the job of being the family photographer.:

The AWON travelers were Barry Barr-Finch and Tom Brewer, Adrian Caldwell, Ranae Caldwell, Gracie and Haley, Mike and Leslie Brumley, Angie and Roy Christian, Diana and Wayne Clark, Mike and Pam Dawson, Joan Fitzpatrick and Bob Liardi, Rosalend and Frank Grabowski, Ginger Rutledge



The AWON bench before it is unveiled. Credit: J. Claassens

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... Margraten, from page 7

Gregory and Shirley Rutledge, Richard Haney, Jo Hunt and Jane Black, Zudora and Max Keele, Donna, Butch and Mark Lapointe, Gloria Layne and Lynne Layne Molan, Jimmie McCollum and Karen McCollum Starr, Billie Myers Meeks and Rich Stinger, Nancy Meyer and Jan Stocklinski, Monti and Vivien Monzingo, Patricia O'Connor, David and Jacqueline O'Sullivan, Ron, Deborah, and Noah Paci, Jerry and Beth Palmento, Mike and Gerry Park, Patricia Rathje and Coty Rathje Zacharias and Raigan Rathje Fletcher, Karen Yancy and Karla Owens, and Gerry, Kathleen and John David Morenski.

Before lunch we had time to visit graves and walk through the beautiful cemetery. My son, John David Morenski, who attended his first Memorial Day at Margraten, was impressed by the genuine care and respect the Dutch still have for those buried at Margraten:

I think one of the more striking impressions came as I wandered about the cemetery to gather AWONers. I noticed a group involved in rubbing sand into the letters so they would show up. After rubbing in the sand, the leader asked, "Who is this soldier?" A scout would then answer with details about the soldier's life. Was he married? Did he have children? When and where did he die? This was not a "public" event. It would pass unnoticed unless someone walked by. Yet here you had volunteers taking the time to rub in the sand and know the story of each soldier buried seventy years later.

After a lunch hosted by the Adoption Committee, we gathered at the Eisjden-

Margraten town hall for a reception which included our adopters and town officials. It was a wonderful time to spend renewing friendships, and in a few cases, meeting adopters for the first time.

At the end of the reception, we asked all present to follow the Margraten 'kids' to the town plaza so that we could unveil our gift to the Adoption Committee and to the adopters. In the years preparing for our trip, AWON Margraten Kids contributed to a fund that was designated for this gift – a beautiful and symbolic bench – which is a permanent 'thank you' to these wonder-

ful people who have so lovingly cared for our fathers, uncles, and grandfathers for 70 years. The sculptor, Paul Koenan, called his creation, *The Love Bench*, and sculpted it to represent the road from Normandy to Margraten. But thanks to an observation by Anne Maloney Black, "for the Margraten 'kids' it also represents the road from Margraten to our hearts." The plaque reads:



Trying out the new bench, from left, are Capt. Robert Buzzell, USN Defense Attaché to The Netherlands; Fien Opreij, President of the Adoption Committee; Billie Myers Meeks; Gerry Conway Morenski; Margraten Mayor Ackermaans; and sculptor Paul Koenan. Credit: J. Claassens

The American WWII Orphans Network
Dedicates this bench with love and appreciation
to the Stichting Adoptie Graven
Amerikaanse Begraafplaats Margraten
Whose members have attended
those memorialized at Margraten
and befriended their families for 70 years

After the presentation we traveled to the small town of Mesch – the first town to be liberated in the Limburg region of Holland by the 30th Infantry Division. The bus stopped at the Laathof Farm and Restaurant, where we began a silent procession to the center of Mesch. At the monument to the 30ID in the town square we participated in a memorial service to our fathers. Each name was announced solemnly and reverently.

Then, AWON member Mark Lapointe, son of AWONer Donna and Butch Lapointe and grandson of Sgt. William Aubut, sang the song he wrote using the words from his grandfather's letters home. Mark sang this song, *Somewhere in Germany* at the 2012 AWON National Conference in Indianapolis, but hearing him sing it in the town that his grandfather liberated brought tears to everyone.

After a not-so-silent procession back to the Laathof we were hosted to a buffet dinner and evening entertainment. Singing, dancing, and libations - a lovely way to end a day!

Sunday dawned sunny with temperatures in the 70s - perfect weather to attend both the morning Dutch Mass and the afternoon American Memorial Day ceremony. We were a bit overwhelmed by the size of the crowds in attendance at both of these ceremonies, and once again, we were greeted with hugs and 'thank you for your father.'

One highlight of the many special moments of that day was listening to a speech delivered by AWONer Arthur Chotin. He spoke for all of us, and he received one of the very few standing ovations at any Memorial Day ceremony at Margraten.

Before trying to write this article I asked our travelers to contribute some of their thoughts about a week that passed too quickly. Here are some of their impressions:

After 70 years they still remember and treat us as their liberators. They are proud to have their flag fly alongside ours. ~ Joan Fitzpatrick

One would have to experience the life these brave people lived to show such appreciation. Their memories are everlasting. This,

no doubt, was a lesson of life I will never forget. ~ Mike Dawson

Since arriving home, I have searched for words equal to the experience. Time and time again, I find myself saying...profound! There is a song from the Broadway play Wicked that says "because of you, I have been changed". Because of this trip I have been changed. Telling the tale of the trip is like explaining snow to someone who has never seen it - I keep coming up short - I just can't convey it. There was a happy sadness, if such a thing is possible. Above all else, it has left me already wanting to return. ~ Patricia O'Connor



The Silent Procession. Credit: J. Claassens

Art Chotin's address at Memorial Day services so eloquently summarized how it was growing up without a father, and the bond we now have with the Dutch... The flyover, the flowers, the flags... together on each soldier's grave. Now and

forevermore this is what Memorial Day will be about for me, and my heart will always be in that small Dutch town called Margraten. ~ Billie Myers Meeks

Our 2015 trip ended on Thursday, May 28 when we rose very early to travel to Brussels to board our homeward bound planes. We have made lasting memories, shared tears and laughter, and found comfort in being together. Jimmie McCollum summed it up:

Our trip was a continuous emotional high from the moment we arrived till we all had to say our goodbyes; and even then we got to watch as our Dutch friends Leon and Anneke Segers led us out of town on their bicycle at 5 a.m.!

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Memorial Day address

delivered by Arthur Chotin

Major General Van der Louw, Prime Minister Rutte, Commissioner Bovens, General Breedlove, Ambassador Broas, Congresswoman Morella, members of the American WWII Orphans Network (AWON), Ladies and Gentlemen, Dames en Heren.

In 1962 President John F. Kennedy, in response to a question from a reporter about the inequities of military service, famously told Americans "life isn't fair." But my family, and the families of the 10,022 men and women buried or remembered here, already knew. For my mother, that harsh statement became personal on November 3, 1945, months after the war in Europe had ended, when my father, delivering the paperwork that would begin the process of sending men in his unit, including him, back home, was killed when the jeep he was in collided with a truck.

Life isn't fair. And as my 60 new brothers and sisters from AWON who are here today know all too well, the effects of that unfairness impacts those of us left behind for our entire lives.

I never knew my father. He was sent overseas when I was ten weeks old and killed a month before my first birthday. For my entire life, my mother couldn't talk about him without crying. I didn't want to make her cry, so I didn't ask. But, even though I didn't know him I think of him almost every day; what he missed and what my mother and I missed. So here I am, 70 years old, more than twice the age of the father I never played catch with, never argued with, never even hugged, and the single thought in my mind today is that I hope he would be proud of me. Oh the power these dead have over those they left behind.

But for my family, and the families of the other soldiers buried and remembered here,

there was a comfort because we learned about the incredible efforts made by the people of the Netherlands to adopt these graves. First the BurgerComité Margraten and more recently the Stichting Adoptie Graven, The Foundation for Adopting Graves.

What would cause a nation recovering from losses and trauma of their own to adopt the sons and daughters of another nation? And what would keep that commitment alive for all of these years, when the memory of that war has begun to fade? It speaks to the character of the Netherlands and its people that every single grave in this cemetery and virtually every single name on that wall has been adopted. It is a unique occurrence in the history of civilization. And it is deserving of recognition, and of thanks.

Yet I imagine that for many of the adopters, there is the question of why more families of these dead never visited the graves of their sons, their brothers, their husbands, their fathers.

Traveling to Europe from the United States was very expensive in those days. Surviving widows suddenly found themselves single-parents, raising their fatherless children in many cases with the main bread winner no longer alive. Parents were getting older and didn't travel and sisters and brothers were too young to come here on their own. But for my mother, although she never told me this directly, somewhere deep inside she held out the hope that one day there would be a knock at the door and she would learn that ... it had all been a big mistake. Coming here and seeing my father's grave would make it real and would destroy that dream.

She never came. She never remarried. She mourned him until the day she died. But in her sadness she always had a special place in her heart for the people of the





Netherlands and for those who had adopted graves. She would have been so honored to meet members of the Adoption Committee, and Petra, Boy and Pim Naaijken who have adopted five graves here, including my father's. When she met Dutch people traveling in the United States she made a point of speaking with them and thanking them. And when I traveled here for the first time in 1974 she devoured the letters I wrote and the pictures I took.

So where does this lead? It leads to the fact that I, and the hundreds of thousands of natural born descendants of these 10,022 want you, their adopted descendants, to know how appreciated you are and how grateful we are to each and every one of you. You have made a positive difference in the lives of those these dead have left behind.

And so, namens mijn vader, on behalf of my father, S/Sgt Max Chotin, United States Army, serial number 32193094; namens zijn vrouw, on behalf of his wife, my mother, Sylvia Chotin, who if any part of life is fair is with my father today looking down on all of us; namens zijn dochter in wet, on behalf of his daughter-in-law, my wife, Betsy, who has joined me in mourning and missing my father since the day of our marriage; namens zijn oudste kleinzoon, on behalf of his eldest grandson, Matthew, who is named for my father; namens Matthew's vrouw, on behalf of Matthew's wife Sharon who this fall will give birth to his great grandchild; namens zijn jongste kleinzoon, on behalf of his youngest grandson, David, who, when he visited here for the first time, left a letter he had written to his grandfather telling him how thankful he was for his sacrifice and

the sacrifice of the others buried here so that David and his generation could be free; namens de leden van AWON, on behalf of the members of AWON, many of whom, the Margraten Kids, have parents buried here; on all of their behalf I stand here today:

Door het maken van deze dode deel van uw familie, by making these dead part of your family, you have become part of our family. You have created a bond between us that will never be broken. So, from this day forward, from now until the end of time, hartelijk bedank, a heartfelt thank you. May the kindness and compassion you have shown them, and us, be returned to you many times over. We thank you, we salute you, we are forever grateful. Bedankt.

... Margraten, from page 9

My thanks to all who made this trip a joy to organize and lead: Penny LeGrand, without whom I could not have managed. She did the hard work of managing hotel reservations and money; Billie Myers Meeks, who suggested the bench gift ten years ago, and with her help we made it happen in 2015! To Robert Michael Joseph and the supportive folks at Boston Scientific. Thanks also to Adrian Leist Caldwell, our 'button' lady; Patricia Rathje, our 'jacket' lady, and to my two wonderful children who helped with the Dutch language, luggage, and were my support.

AWON attends WH Breakfast

by Norm Burkey

I'm not exactly sure what I was expecting of the overall experience, but I know it wasn't what I actually did experience.

However the annual White House Memorial Day Breakfast did begin as I felt it would - with very tight security. We lined up at the public entrance on the southeast side of the White House. Security checked our IDs against a list - twice - before we went through a checkpoint like at any airport. It seemed to me that the guy with the wand took extra time checking out a group of attractive young ladies, but it could have been my imagination. Then it was a rather long walk to the White House entrance and to the State Dining Room. When we entered the White House very impressive-look-

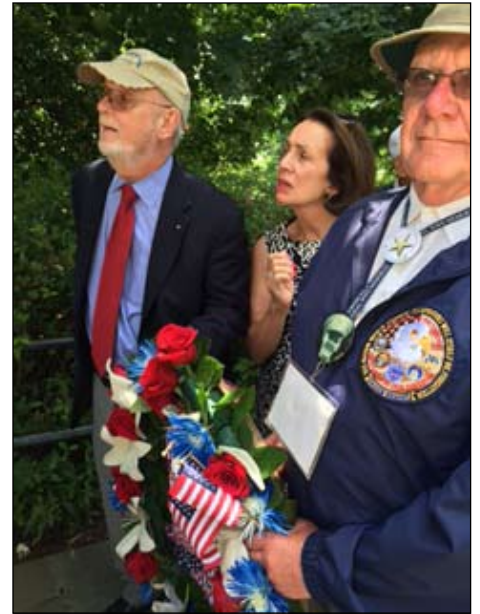
ing young military personnel were in place to point the way to breakfast with others invitees.

The breakfast experience was a surprise. It was well presented, but it was a light buffet with lots of dainty Danish-type offerings. The coffee, by the way, was excellent. We had assigned seats, but there were no official hosts, nor was there a program. I estimated about 100 attendees comprising different ages and a mixture of military types and civilians.

At a certain point, we were asked to line up to meet President Obama. Our meeting with him consisted of a handshake and a picture - about 15 seconds. The president is a much taller man than he looks on TV - about 6'2" or 6'3".

Those who wanted to go to Arlington National Cemetery for the wreath laying were placed on buses and taken to the cemetery with a police escort. That was exciting.

There is a small amphitheater at Arlington where, after the president lays a wreath at the



Norm, Anne and Rusty keep an eye on the front of the wreath line.

Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers, the official ceremony takes place. After we arrived, we located the AWON wreath.

"Ed and Norm and Rusty were amazing!" stated Susan Hadler. "When we found the AWON wreath Ed guarded it like a soldier on duty. We needed to stay near the head of the line for the wreath laying because we had to return to the White House on the same bus that took us there and was due to leave before the long line of wreath-laying ended."

We did not receive our tickets for the amphitheater so Rusty Lerch, Ed Peters and I waited in the shade. We had



Rusty Lerch, Ed Peters, Norm Burkey and Anne Black in the White House State Dining Room.

...continued on page 13

Reading hosts 25th airshow, AWON

By Norm Burkey

This June AWON participated at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's WWII Weekend *A Gathering of Warbirds*, in Reading, Pennsylvania. This marked the 25th anniversary of the popular airshow that AWON has attended for many years.

As usual, AWONer Rusty Lerch arranged for a table for AWON inside the hangar. We saw many of the same faces among our fellow exhibitors, but there were also some new participants. Two of our old "friends" were also there. Both arrange for World War II vets to come to the show so they can talk to the attendees about their World War II experiences. As you might imagine, this requires a great deal of preparation and care. We hope to have some of their experiences available for inclusion in future editions of *The Star*.

Also, for a change, the weather was rather pleasant all three days. This was good for the aircraft, but it did tend to limit the traffic inside the hangar. We just can't compete with all that's going on outside.

As usual, Rusty's two grandsons were in attendance. The older one is now a bona fide re-enactor. In addition to all the uniforms and equipment, he bought a World War II-era jeep. His relatives are always glad to see him, but not necessarily his jeep, which has the bad habit of dripping oil all over their driveways.

In addition to myself and Rusty, Ed Peters and Rusty's son, Kevin, were also there to help man the table. Fellow AWONer Jennie Sauer was going to attend, but unfortunately, fell ill earlier in the week.

It took until Sunday but we did finally meet two orphans. We are arranging for them to receive information packets.

... *Breakfast, from page 12*

several very nice conversations with some young military families. Anne Black and Susan Hadler attended the ceremony, but had to stand.

After the ceremony the wreaths are laid. There were 30-40 organizations with wreaths. This part is not well organized so we worked our way up to the front and were second in line, just after the Gold Star Mothers. This is the second time I have been privileged to help lay the wreath and it was just as emotional this time as it was previously.

"It was such an honor to walk together

slowly into the center of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier with the beautiful wreath that represented all of our fathers and AWON brothers and sisters." Hadler added. "I felt our fathers with us all the way."

My description may sound a bit mundane, but in my opinion every citizen should have this experience once in their lifetime. It is a very well attended event and is very moving to see so many fellow citizens take the time and trouble to attend. In anticipation that we will be invited back again, we will try to get an earlier start next year, so more of our members can experience this very special day.



Lorraine American Cemetery and Memorial, France

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Paul Bremer • Overseas Coordinator – Valerie Muller, Cemetery Associate • Presenters – AWONers Walt Linne, Barbara Kelly and Lorin McCleary. Also present was Lorin's wife, Roberta.



Ardennes American Cemetery and Memorial, Belgium

AWON Stateside Coordinator and Presenter – Gail Eisenhower • AWON Overseas Coordinators – Bernard and Regine Achten, also in attendance



Florence American Cemetery and Memorial, Italy

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Bill Chiodo • Presenter – Assistant Superintendent Angel M. Matos. Also present, for the first time, were Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi and United States Ambassador to Italy John R. Phillips.



Sicily-Rome American Cemetery and Memorial, Italy

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Bob Meek • Presenter – Cemetery Superintendent Jay Blount

Memorial

Since 2003, AWON has presented wreaths on Memorial Day at American cemeteries. The arrangement includes the names of AWON fathers buried or memorialized. The project chair Sharon Crowley Connor, banner designer Rik Peirson, and presentations appear on the next three pages. More photos

<http://www.awon.org>



Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery and Memorial, Belgium

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Regine Achten, above, and AWON Overseas Coordinator – Bernard Achten, below. Also present were the United States Ambassador to Belgium and project chair Sharon Crowley Connor.

Day 2015

in military cemeteries overseas and national cemeteries stateside. Each
 lized at that cemetery. Special thanks go to the wreath coordinators,
 d for the tremendous assistance from AWON's Overseas Friends. More
 s and information about Memorial Day 2015 can be found at
g/new/memorial.html



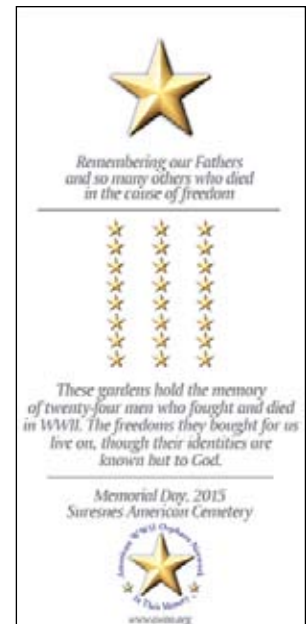
**American Cemetery
 al, Belgium**
 dinator – Rik Peirson •
 inators – AWON Belgian
 ct founders Bernard and
 with daughter, Marie



**North Africa American Cemetery
 and Memorial, Tunisia**
 AWON Stateside Coordinator – Diane
 Marnette Sagen • Overseas Coordina-
 tor – Staff



**Luxembourg American Cemetery
 and Memorial, Luxembourg**
 AWON Stateside Coordinator – Mary
 Nguyen • AWON Overseas Coordina-
 tor – Denise Thill • Presenter – AWONer
 Marilyn Rustand Lieurance, right. Con-
 stant Goergen, Founder of U.S. Veter-
 ans Friends, Luxembourg and an AWON
 Overseas Friend, left, carries the ar-
 rangement Marilyn designed and placed
 at her father's grave.



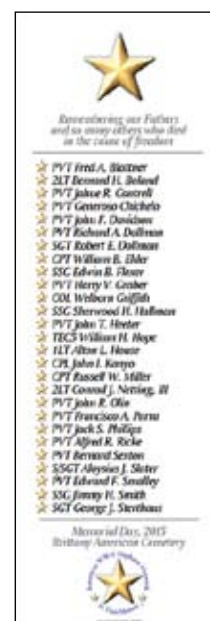
**Suresnes American Cemetery
 and Memorial, France**
 AWON Stateside Coordina-
 tor – Sharon Crowley Connor
 • Overseas Coordinator - Staff
 • Suresnes is a WWI cemetery
 with 24 WWII unknowns. Their
 children also are unknown
 therefore AWON honors their
 fathers for them.

Memorial Day 2015



Manila American Cemetery and Memorial, Philippines

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Patty Temte • AWON Overseas Coordinator – Assistant Cemetery Superintendent Bert Caloud • Presenters – AWONers Vicente Lim III, far right, and Vicente Lim IV, second from left. Also present were the extended Lim family.



Brittany American Cemetery and Memorial, France

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Brian Hope • Presenter – Staff



Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial, Netherlands

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Gerry Morenski • Presenter – AWONer Billie Myers Meeks. Also attending were members of the 2015 AWON Margraten tour and AWON Overseas Friend Joost Claassens.



Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial, England

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Jean Rhinehart • Presenters – Gerry and Audrey Darnell

Memorial Day 2015



Epinal American Cemetery and Memorial, France

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Cal Boardman • Presenters – left, AWON Epinal Ambassador and Retired Epinal Superintendant Roland Prieur; center, Nicolas Liegey, junior member of the Association of l'Espace de Memoire Lorraine 1939-45; and Jerome Leclerc, AWON Overseas Friend and secretary of the Association of l'Espace de Memoire Lorraine 1939-45.



Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial, France

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Charlene Czajkowski • AWON Overseas Coordinator – AWON Normandy Ambassador Jean-Marc Lesueur • Presenters – Jean-Marc Bonner, left, and Jean-Marc Lesueur, right



Rhone American Cemetery and Memorial, France

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Vic Muller • Presenter - Navy Capt. Edwin J. Grohe, U.S. Liaison Officer at Toulon, France

Memorial Day 2015 • Stateside



**Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument
New York City**

For a fifth year AWON has presented a wreath at this monument, which was built in 1902 and is newly restored. For decades it was the terminus of New York City's Memorial Day parade. Today it hosts the city's annual Memorial Day observance. Pictured, from left, are Elizabeth Harris, Robert J. Harding Jr., Renee Cooley, August and Carol Palegi, and organizer Maggie Malone in front.

**National Memorial Cemetery
of the Pacific "Punchbowl"
Honolulu, Hawaii**

For more than ten years AWONers Alix Bonnyman Prejean, right, and Vanita Rae Smith, right, have presented the AWON wreath on Memorial Day in Honolulu.



**Arlington National Cemetery
Arlington, Virginia**

See page 12 for the story about the AWON wreath presentation at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers.



**Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery
San Diego, California**

Each year AWONer Barbara Torrey Smith provides a floral offering on AWON's behalf during Memorial Day observances at Ft. Rosecrans. This year her two grandsons, Joseph Gentile and Christopher Gentile, carried the basket for presentation, along with AWONers Sharon Crowley Connor and Smith. Also attending was AWONer Sara Rouse Dumas. Pictured left is the single red rose placed on each marker.





AWON BOOKSTORE

Price List / Order Form



BOOKS

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

____ *In Search of A pilot: Hanford "Rusty" J. Rustand* by
Marilynn Rustand Lieurance NEW!! \$7.00*

____ *My Father: More than a Picture, a Beer Bottle and a Flag*
By **Jerry W. Pinkerton** NEW!! \$12.00*

____ *The Measure of a Man: My Father, the Marine Corps, and Saipan* by **Kathleen Broome Williams** NEW!! \$28.00*

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

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

____ *When I See a "Forty and Eight" ... I Remember World War Two*
by Lt. Col. Jacques Adnet USAF (ret.) **REDUCED!** \$5.00

____ *The Lost Submarine: A True Story of Love and War*
by **Nancy Kenney** \$16.00

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

____ *"Daddy's Gone to War": The Second World War in the Lives of America's Children*
by William M. Tuttle Jr., PhD

____ *In My Father's Words: Letters From II Soldier*
by **Bill McElvain**

____ *Farebersville 1944*
by **Jeff Wignall**

____ *A Soldier's Daughter*
by **Lois Brown Klein**



____ *Tigers: The Untold Story Behind the Names on the University WWII Memorial*
by **Lois Brown Klein** \$24.95

____ *Journey of Major Damon "Rocky" Gause*
by **Rocky" Gause, foreword by** \$21.95

____ *Sacrifice, No Greater Love: A Son's Journey to the Front*
by **Lois Brown Klein** **REDUCED!** \$18.00

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

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

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

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

____ *Love Always, Ben*
by **Huey Tyra**, nephew **REDUCED!** \$2.00

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

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

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

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

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

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



AWON BOOKSTORE

Price List / Order Form



CD / DVD

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

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

____ *AWON 2004 Conference & WWII Memorial Dedication*
REDUCED! was \$5.00 \$ 3.00*

____ *We Speak Their Names: A Tribute to Our Fathers*
produced by Patrick Tierney and **Terry Boettcher**
REDUCED! was \$15.00 \$ 3.00*

____ *AWON 2000 Conference: Journeys - Finding Our Fathers*
by Justin Taylan was \$15.00 \$ 5.00*

____ *Sleep My Sons: The Story of the Arisan Maru*
by **Shawnee Brittan** **REDUCED!** was \$30.00 \$20.00*

AWON Logo Products

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

____ 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)

The Star NEWSLETTERS

____ * Individual issues \$2.00 includes P&H

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

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

Ordering Information

Postage and handling: \$8 for each item. Items marked with an asterisk (*) include P&H. For multiple purchases:
Up to \$40: \$10 P&H \$40-\$60: \$12 P&H Over \$60: \$15 P&H Washington State residents add 7.8% sales tax.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____

Total Enclosed: _____

Send check or money order to:

AWON Bookstore

5745 Lee Road

Indianapolis, IN 46216

email: bookstore@awon.org

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

AWON Connections

Pictures and Stories of Members
Gathering Around the Country



Washington State members met in April. From left are Shirley Santini, Hope Maloney, Judi Kramer, Barry Barr-Finch and Bob Wasmer. Bob brought a really nice photo frame he had put together with family photos and a couple of bird drawings that his dad drew. *Barry*



The So-Cal Lunch Bunch met in Lake Elsinore, California, at Lone Star Steakhouse on D-Day + 71 years. We discussed the significance of D-Day and our unpayable debt to the men who achieved victory on that epic day, at horrific cost. Of course we

also talked about our fathers and, in Vic's case, his older brother; our families, including children and grandchildren; our travels, past and planned, including the 2016 AWON National Conference cruise. Lastly, we discussed the future of the So-Cal Lunch Bunch. There are 34 members in our email group but only twelve have come to any of our semi-annual lunches in the past two years. Six months ago we had only five. We had hoped that alternating locations, north and south, would increase participation, but it has not. We are pondering whether or not to have just one meeting a year but no decision was reached. While we lamented the lack of participation, all in attendance today noted with satisfaction that the small group was more intimate, with plenty of time for all to have their say. We thoroughly enjoyed our time together. Perhaps a smaller turnout is the new normal. Shown, left to right, are Rita Niro Blair, Dick Swenson, Barbara Swenson, Roger Connor, Sharon Connor and Vic Muller. *Roger*



While in the United Kingdom, AWONer Barry Barr-Finch and Tom Brewer stopped by the home of AWONer Angie Christian and husband, Roy. Pictured above, from left, are Roy, Angie, Barry and Tom enjoying a great dinner at an English pub. *Barry*



In May the North Texas/Oklahoma region met for lunch at the Texas Land and Cattle Company in Richardson, near Dallas. We spent a fun three hours together, and as always we had thoughtful and meaningful conversations. Our fathers were well remembered as we spoke their names. In the front row, from left, are Tom Travis, Patty Temte, Mary Alice Renner, Gail Brown, Montie Monzingo, Mary Nguyen and Jerry Pinkerton. In the back row are Cheryl Travis, Jerry Temte, Ed Renner, Ron Burrus, Vivian Monzingo and Judy Pinkerton. *Patty*

AWON mourns passing of brother, veteran

Gaeton Messina, 73, of Yoakum, Texas, passed away April 21. He was born December 18, 1941 in Fullerton, California, to Charles and Josephine Taormina Messina. Survivors include his sister, Claudia Ennis; and brothers, Gene Messina and Cam Messina. He worked in the family canning business as a quality control manager and then established an import company. He was proud member of AWON, having attended several conferences and traveled to Europe with AWON.



Messina

World War II veteran Art Mahler, 92, passed away April 3, in Seattle. He was born June 26, 1922 in Vienna, Austria, and migrated to the United States after fleeing the Nazi occupation in 1941. He enlisted in the U.S. Army and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. He was an engineer at Boeing until his retirement. He was a special friend of AWON member Joe Lippi and spoke at the 2014 AWON National Conference in Seattle. He was preceded in death by his wife, Siveig Gilie.



Mahler

AWON Board Business
Annual in-person board meeting
20-21 March 2015
Boston, MA

Financial Report: The financial report was submitted prior to the meeting by Treasurer **Jerry Pinkerton**. At the end of February 2015 total funds equaled \$89,329.68 with \$18,058.47 budgeted for the year 2015. The treasurer volunteered to prepare a page of financial information for *The Star* along with a narrative. This is to improve transparency to the membership about AWON's financial status.

Budget: The proposed budget for 2015 was discussed with comparisons of the previous four years: 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. After discussion of some line items in the budget and some suggested revisions the budget for 2015 was approved.

Money Transfer: The board approved opening an account with \$50,000 in AWON funds with BBVA Compass. This national bank carries a higher interest rate than AWON's account with Bank of America.

Star of the Star: The board discussed the purpose of the *Star of the Star* feature in the newsletter, which is to acknowledge volunteers and others who have contributed so much to AWON. It was suggested two names a year be placed in *The Star*. Suggestions are to be given to **Gerry Morenski** and Jerry who will supply the names Newsletter Editor **Kathy Le Comte**.

Facebook: The board discussed at length the AWON Facebook page and where the organization stands. Board President **Norm Burkey** will contact **Rosalie Francisco**, the administrator of the page, to discuss how the page operates. The board is interested in making the AWON Facebook page available to more members, and using it as a public relations tool. Director **Mike Forgy** was named administrator of an AWON Facebook page and to oversee other social media with a description of AWON and what it does.

Seattle Conference: The board broke into three groups to review three themes that came out of the group discussion at the 2014 AWON National Conference:
e-Star • July 2015

conferences, communication, and finance. A summary of each group's review will be published in *The Star* through the *President's Column*.

Reimbursements: The board approved reimbursing board directors all travel expenses, including airfare, car, parking and hotel, for this and future in-person board meetings during years there is no annual conference. Snacks provided for the meeting also will be reimbursed, but meals will not be.

AWON Expansion: The board discussed the possibilities of expanding membership eligibility in AWON to blend with other orphan groups from Korean, Vietnam and post-Vietnam and foreign orphans. Discussion also included AWON being an umbrella organization or an auxilliary service for groups such as Gold Star Children and Sons and Daughters In Touch (SDIT). Norm will contact AWON First Founder **Clint Frederick** and discuss a request concerning a Canadian war orphan in order to get his thoughts on membership of other nationalities. Norm also will contact the Korean War group. **Ed Peters** will contact past SDIT President Tony Cordero to explore concerns of blending organizations and set up a possible phone conference with AWON.

HistoryIT: Prior to the speaker's arrival there was a preliminary discussion about the Society of American Archivists and AWON still being in the exploratory phase of a identifying a future home for AWON's holdings. The board then viewed a twelve-minute video and discussed other sources including Fold3 and Eloquent Solutions. Then Kristen Gwinn-Becker, founder and CEO of HistoryIT, gave an informative presentation explaining the possibilities for digitizing AWON's materials and getting the materials to repositories. She left the board with much to consider. Director **Norma Nicol Hamilton** will contact HistoryIT competitors so that other possibilities might be considered, and will follow up with a thank you letter to Becker.

Monthly E-mail: The board discussed the worthiness of starting a monthly email to more regularly communicate with members. Gerry will contact **Amy Chiodo**,

...continued on page 26

2014 AWON FINANCIAL REPORT

	Actual '11	Actual '12	Actual '13	Actual '14	Budget '15
Budgeted Operating Income:					
Membership Dues	\$18,845	\$23,862	\$16,110	\$15,790	\$14,000
Bookstore Income (net)	2,041		2,000		1,500
Interest	220				
	21,106	23,862	18,110	15,790	15,500
Non-Budgeted Operating Income:					
Conference Net Income	11,500		5,000		2,500
Donations	106	165	680	825	500
Miscellaneous	56				
	11,662	165	5,680	825	3,000
TOTAL OPER. INCOME:	32,768	24,027	23,790	16,615	18,500
Designated Purpose Income:					
Cromarty Margraten Fund			1,560		
Margraten Bench Fund				9,148	2,750
Overseas Wreath Net Income	1,000	1,507	1,539	1,000	1,000
TOTAL DESIG. INCOME:	1,000	1,507	3,099	10,148	3,750
TOTAL INCOME	33,768	25,534	26,889	26,763	22,250
Operating Expenses:					
Newsletter	7,890	8,118	6,605	5,301	7,000
Telephone	451	465	440		
America Online	373	395	423	456	500
Postage and Shipping	156	147	25		100
Insurance & State fees	500	500	550	637	700
Public Relations	191				
New AWON brochures		1,578			

Above is AWON's summary financial report for 2011-2014 and the approved 2015 budget. It includes income from all sources, and expenses by category. A financial report is presented at each national conference, but for the first time this report is being published to provide financial information for the membership. Comments and explanations:

Membership dues collection increased in 2012 after offering multi-year dues payment options. As expected, later years' dues renewals have decreased. Additionally, overall membership has been trending downward slightly.

AWON Bookstore income and AWON National Conference net income are received in the year following the conference. Conference registration fees were lowered starting in 2012.

Newsletter costs have decreased due to more e-Star subscriptions and culling of addresses that once received a free issue yearly.

AWON pays the expenses of its founder when she attends AWON national conferences. Board members receive a stipend to attend an in-person board meeting during the off year of a conference, as required by AWON bylaws.

AWON gives donations to westpoint.org and the American Legion for providing to AWON at no cost its Listserv and Indianapolis office space and services, respectively.

The AWON Board of Directors continues to investigate options for the future archiving of AWON records. Expenses in 2014 were for the board's archive project leader to meet with other archivists.

2014 AWON FINANCIAL REPORT

	Actual '11	Actual '12	Actual '13	Actual '14	Budget '15
Operating Expenses (con't):					
Regional Coordinators				70	250
Database Manager	5,049	2,767	3,334	2,344	3,000
Database Supplies	121	152	269	219	250
WP Listserv Donation	350	350	350	500	500
Website	903	900	900	723	1,000
Conference Expense (founder)		1,014			
American Legion Donation		500	500	500	500
Arlington wreath	315	478	315		500
Archive Expenses	65	386	8	2,663	350
Supplies-Indy office		21	91		100
Membership Outreach & care	119	294	412	37	350
Board Meeting off-year	5,000		4,549		6,500
Treas. expenses & tax return				50	700
Conf. advances & expenses		2,208	2,902		
Misc	603	126		12	500
BOD Election		1,171		721	
Database webpage design				3,825	2,500
Info Packets & Postage	122	59			150
TOTAL OPER. EXPENSES:	22,207	21,629	21,731	18,058	25,450
Designated Purpose Expenses:					
Cromarty Margraten Fund					1,560
Margraten Bench				5,185	6,713
TOTAL EXPENSES	22,207	21,629	21,731	23,243	33,723
INCOME OVER (UNDER) EXPENSES					
	\$11,561	\$3,905	\$5,158	\$3,520	(\$11,473)

The AWON member who previously donated the preparation of AWON's non-profit tax return has retired. Beginning in 2015 AWON will pay for an outside individual to prepare the return.

AWON's election process has been streamlined, with the most recent changes being in 2014 to save printing and mailing costs.

In 2014 the board authorized a project to upgrade AWON's database in order to store Father Tribute text and images from the AWON website. The cost to upgrade the AWON database to receive the Father Tribute data will continue into 2015.

At the end of 2014 AWON had cash and certificates of deposit totaling \$86,373, of which \$5,523 was Margraten funds which will be spent in 2015.

AWON currently enjoys sufficient financial resources to operate, thanks to the generosity of the membership; however, the AWON board wishes to remind members about AWON's future financial needs. AWON has reached the point at which many services that were provided by volunteers will of necessity require outsourcing. This includes but is not be limited to AWON's tax return, database management, and the newsletter.

Additionally, costs will continue in order to maintain the AWON database, and there may be significant costs associated with archiving AWON's records at a repository to be accessible in the future by researchers. All of these issues may require more financial resources than the current decreasing annual membership and attendant dues, both multi-year and annual, can sustain.

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
October Issue
is September 1**

...Minutes, from page 23

and Norm will talk to Kathy and give the board a follow-up at the next meeting.

Wreath line item: Gerry will talk with AWON Memorial Day Wreath Project Coordinator **Sharon Crowley Connor** about how to dispose of about \$9,000 in AWON's budget designated for Memorial Day wreaths. The money is overage from monies collected from members for Memorial Day wreaths.

2016 AWON Conference: The 2016 Conference Committee strongly recommends holding a "reunion cruise." The board suggested calling it a gathering rather than a reunion to reflect possible first timers attending. Port Canaveral, Florida, was selected as the port for the cruise. From two choices, the board chose *The Freedom of the Seas* departing on Sunday, October 30, 2016 for five nights. Norm will confer with 2016 Conference Chair **Sam Tannenbaum** by April 10, 2015. Details the board wants pointed out include price for singles should be known, the accommodation of informal events, adequate facilities on ship for gatherings, meeting room possibilities, meal options for group seating, and arrangements for a common dinner place.

AWON Database: For the benefit of the new board directors Database Manager Gerry Morenski gave an overview of what the database is and how it works. The AWON database contains 5,410 names and contact information for orphans, associate members and family members. There are 3,666 father names, with some being the names of brothers or uncles who served and died in World War II. There are 511 active AWON members with 400 of them war orphans.

Father Tribute Project: Ed explained the purpose and goals of the Father Tribute Project, how it is being accomplished, and its current status. Ed and Gerry then demonstrated how Father Tributes will be displayed in the AWON database and how the tributes could be searchable online. The project currently is testing trial tribute pages.

AOL account: The board voted to cancel AWON's AOL account.

Lapsed members: Norm agreed to send out a president's letter to lapsed members.

Next meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting of the AWON Board of Directors is in May.

Bonnie Oates, Secretary

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

American WWII Orphans Network

Application, Registration & Renewal Form

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

Information about You

(please print clearly)

Name _____

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: \$ _____

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

Make check payable to AWON and mail it and form to:

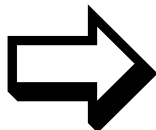
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The Star

"Breaking Down the Wall of Silence"

AWON Headquarters
5745 Lee Road
Indianapolis, IN 46216
www.awon.org



AWON Mission

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

AWON Directory

Address Corrections

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The Star

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