



Grandson assists with excavation of grandfather

Private group finds Marines' remains

Edited by Kathy Le Comte



Alix Bonnyman Prejean, standing next to the casket bearing the remains of her father, 1st Lt. Alexander Bonnyman Jr., at joint base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Hawaii.

An AWON father finally has come home.

Last spring, newspapers and stations across the country - and a few around the world - heralded the discovery of 1st Lt. Alexander Bonnyman Jr.'s remains, along with 35 other U.S. Marines, on a tiny atoll in the South Pacific. In September, AWONer Alix Bonnyman Prejean escorted her father's remains to their final rest in the family plot.

This article is a compilation of various news reports about these two events. The stories were just too big and too emotional for Prejean to tell herself, so she contributed some comments and extra details. Another person important to this story is Prejean's nephew, Clay Evans, who had the extraordinary luck to be present when his grandfather's remains were found in their sandy grave, being nearly the first person to lay eyes on Bonnyman in more than 70 years. So let's begin.

As reported in the *New York Daily News*, Lt. Bonnyman was among three dozen Marines found in May 2015 in Cemetery 27 on Betio, Kiribati, Tarawa, in the remote Gilbert Islands, according to Mark Noah, the director of History Flight, a non-profit organization that helps recover military personnel still missing in action. The Marines were among more than 1,100 Americans who died

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President's Message

by Norm Burkey

We have discovered that AWON is a unique organization. Specifically, we recently learned that the Vietnam War orphans organization, *Sons and Daughters in Touch*, doesn't have a newsletter or formal conferences, and they only gather together every five years. However, we are also similar to many other organizations in that we are an aging organization and, as such, are facing a potential leadership vacuum.

Your board of directors has faced the leadership issue prior to every board election and began to take specific steps to address it back in 2013. Prior to that time, terms were four years, and to provide continuity, were arranged so only a portion of the directors' terms expired every two years. At that 2013 board meeting, several of us who have served several four-year terms indicated we would not be willing to serve another four-year term. Also, we sensed that many potential candidates were feeling a four-year commitment was too long. Even at that time, as our Database Manager Gerry Morenski so aptly put it in the April 2015 issue of *The Star*, her eyes were getting old and so was AWON.

Therefore, the board voted to change the term of office to two years. As with many decisions, there is always the possibility of encountering the law of unintended consequences - and that is what has occurred. Six of the nine members of the current board, all of whom have

served multiple terms, have decided not to seek re-election.

For various reasons, we do not want to reduce the size of the board. What this means is we need a number of our members to agree to become candidates for the board. How to do that will be explained elsewhere in this issue. I would ask you not to nominate anyone before consulting with them, including their willingness to serve for at least one term. I would also add that serving on the board is not a ceremonial position. There is real work to be done, but it is also a great opportunity to work with and fellowship with fellow orphans, all for the betterment of AWON.

I also want to briefly comment on two other subjects. Now that we are into 2016, please consider joining us on our cruise in October. This will be a different experience with more free time than was available at past conferences. At the same time, we will experience many of the memorable activities that are unique to an AWON conference.

Second, for the past two years AWON has received five invites (orphans only) to the Memorial Day events in Washington, D.C. The day begins with breakfast at the White House followed by a brief meeting with the president and a bus ride to Arlington National Cemetery. Please contact me personally at normanburkey@verizon.net if you are interested in attending, assuming we are invited this year. Please note: considerable walking is necessary.



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The Star is a quarterly publication of the American WWII Orphans Network (AWON), a nonprofit 501 (c) 3, nonpolitical, public service organization, serving the children of U.S. servicemen killed in WWII. *The Star* is published and mailed from Springfield, Illinois. ISSN 1941-370X (print) 1941-3769 (online). Copyright 2016 by the American WWII Orphans Network. All rights reserved.

Issue #79 1M (01-16)

Book leads daughter to restore memory of airmen

Escort pilot honored alongside father

by Maxine Graham Olson

I did not find my father, 2nd Lt. Max K. Graham, USAF, KIA August 13, 1944, St. Germain des-Grois, France, until I was almost 65 years old.

I knew I had a father, and that he was a pilot of a P-47 in the European Theater of War, and that he died in 1944 before I was born, but my mother was very secretive about him and only spoke of him with great contempt and hatred. My mother told me he did not deserve the Air Medal awarded him posthumously. My grandmother, my mother's mother, told me my dad's Jewish heritage had marked me "tainted blood." Mother let all my dad's effects go for storage fees when she remarried. Both women kept me separated from my dad's family in Dallas. I had no real connection with my father.

Therefore, I was astounded when I received the call from my cousin in Galveston, Texas, who said that Robert Stuard of the Lacey-Davis Foundation in California had put an article in the Galveston newspaper (where my grandmother had lived) that his organization and Jean-Marc Bonnet of the *Association Normande du Souvenirs Aerien 39-45, Orne-Maine*, were looking for me. The Association was planning a ceremony in St. Germain des Grois to honor my father. I could not believe that anyone singled out my dad to honor his sacrifice.

I have repeated this story of my "coming of age" and learning who I was and reconnecting with my family in Dallas so many times. I will not do it again. This story begins where that episode ended.

My son, David, purchased a book for me titled *Jonah's Feet Are Dry*, by G.E. Cross. The book is an incredibly detailed collection of the history of the 353rd Fighter Group in Europe during World War II, including daily reports. For example, on page 536, Entry No. 269, was the report of my dad's last mission. I learned he was a volunteer on that mission. I found a picture of him as a pilot taken in England that no one in the family had ever seen. I also learned that 2nd Lt. George W. McInis had been the pilot who had been attempting to escort my dad to safety after his P-47 was hit. Unfortunately, Lt. McInis also lost his life that day. This book also had a picture of Lt. McInis. The book further stated that both young men had shipped overseas on the same day: July 27, 1944. I knew they had known each other and hoped that they had been friends.

I began my search for Lt. McInis on Ancestry.com. I made brief contact with his niece-in-law. She is the second wife of Lt. McInis's nephew who had died shortly prior to my contact. The niece-in-law furnished

Thanks for letting us know!

Our members are great at finding "new" WWII orphans. When you find a new orphan,



please let AWON know so we can send them an information packet or note them and their father in our database. An address, email or source of your information also would be helpful.

Thanks for being an AWON sleuth!

...continued on page 4

...Closure, from page 3

some details on Lt. McInis.

His widow remained in contact with the family only until she collected her insurance money. She remarried in 1946, before Lt. McInis's parents could arrange for his body to be sent home. The niece-in-law felt she might be able to identify the picture of Lt. McInis from the book if I could send her one on the Ancestry.com site. Unfortunately, my computer skills are such as I was unable to do this. The niece-in-law never told me her name but gave me a telephone number of a great-nephew of Lt. McInis's, a Vietnam veteran who, she said, might be interested in my search. Everyone else in the family who might remember, she told me, was dead or in nursing homes. I called the telephone number and never received an answer. I could not locate Lt. McInis's grave on the internet, and the niece-in-law was unsure of its location. I was at a total loss. I could only honor this hero by putting his name and picture, along with my father's, in the 2012 and 2014 AWON National Conference program booklets.

I had another miracle occur in my life when Jean-Marc Bonnet of the Association Normande e-mailed me that Therese Desmond of the Milton Cemetery (Massachusetts) had contacted him through AWON. Ms. Desmond had seen the memorial I placed in the program booklet and was in the process of composing a brochure on all the veterans in the Milton Cemetery, which included 2nd Lt. George W. McInis. She could not find living relatives in the area to help her find information on him. I had previously asked Rob-

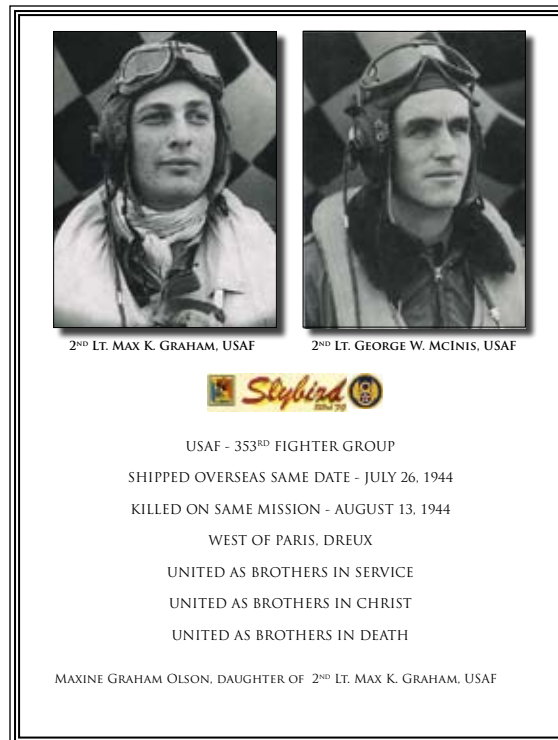
ert Stuard of the Lacey-Davis Foundation to help me get information on Lt. McInis. His researchers were able to furnish me the entire military file on Lt. McInis so I was able to forward this to Ms. Desmond, along with a copy of the report of death and his picture in *Jonah's Feet Are Dry*.

On August 13, 2015, I sent flowers to France to honor my father, Lt. Max Graham, and for the first time was also able to send a floral tribute to Lt. McInis. I am humbled by the

long list of coincidences I have experienced since 2009 that have caused this sad, grieving part of my life to have some closure. I am so grateful to Robert Stuard and the Lacey-Davis Foundation who helped locate me in 2009 and who researched all the information on Lt. McInis; Jean-Marc and Sophy Bonnet who hosted my husband and me in France and who, with the *Association Normande du Souvenirs Aerien 39-45, Orne-Maine*, arranged the ceremony in France to honor my father; my son, David Graham Olson, who bought me *Jonah's Feet are Dry*; France Costrel, the lovely videographer who recorded my first meeting

and my simultaneous au revoir to my father in her film, *Finding Fathers*: the Mayor of St. Germain des Grois and his wife, Jean-Michel and Sylvie Olivier, and the good people of that town for hosting my dad's ceremony; my husband, Fred; and last but not least, AWON, for being there and providing the conduit for the information on Lt. McInis so that this eternally young man may be honored at last for his sacrifice.

Editor's note: For more background on Maxine's father, visit her AWON Father Tribute at <http://www.awon.org/awgraham.html>.



Maxine's AWON conference booklet memorial for her father, left, and Lt. McInis, right.

Welcome New Members

Gerald Sherman, FL, son of SGT Albert Sherman, Army
Nancy Bloomfield, HI, dau of SGT Adolph A. Franks, Army
Gretchen Schneider, CA, Associate Member
Anthony Pierantozzi, PA, son of CPM Anthony Pierantozzi, Navy
Arlys Bullock Aarnes, CA, dau of CPL Alex Bullock, Army
Robie Nagai, TX, dau of PFC Charles B. Talbott, Army

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

Long-time directors stepping down

Urgent need for candidates for AWON board

AWON is facing an uncertain future.

This September, all nine positions on the AWON Board of Directors will be up for election. After serving multiple terms, six of the nine directors are not seeking re-election. It will be hard to replace this font of knowledge and AWON history, plus the various friendships and contacts these individuals have made for the benefit of AWON.

The AWON Nominating Committee is seeking candidates with a commitment to World War II orphans, AWON's Mission, and activities. Those who are interested in running for the board are asked to mail a brief biography including education, profession and relevant experience to Billie Myers Meeks using the contact information at the end of this article. Also, please state the amount of time that you will be able to devote to

AWON duties each month, recognizing that a minimum of ten hours likely will be required, and 20 or more hours for some officer positions.

Some may wonder what the AWON board does. The board is responsible for setting policy, adopting an annual budget and operating plan, overseeing AWON's activities, and planning for the future. Directors attend six bi-monthly meetings a year via telephone, and one in-person meeting. A stipend is given for the in-person meeting to assist with hotel and transportation costs.

The 2016 AWON election will be conducted by mail-in ballot which you will receive by mail in the next few months. Along with the ballot you will receive candidate biographies to help you learn more about the candidates and their hopes and desires for AWON.

As you undoubtedly know, AWON's strength comes

from its many volunteers. All board directors are volunteers. AWON conferences and regional gatherings are organized by volunteers. The AWON Memorial Day Wreath Project has been running strong because of volunteers. And there are many volunteers who operate "behind the scenes," doing tasks you may not even know exist. But AWON is at a critical point in its history, needing new faces to come forward and serve on the board. This is your organization, so please consider giving some of your time and talents to helping AWON continue its mission.

Want to run for **AWON Board?**

Send or email biography to
AWON Nominating Comm.
413 Samantha Dr.
Lewes, DE 19958
billiemmeeks@gmail.com
by MAY 1, 2016

Board: future conferences need to adapt

by AWON Board of Directors

At the 2014 AWON National Conference in Seattle, AWON members had the opportunity to voice their opinion about three topics pertaining to AWON: communications, conferences, and finances. The comments made by members were published in the October 2014 issue of *The Star*. The AWON Board of Directors discussed the results in greater detail at their in-person board meeting in Boston in March 2015.

The results of the board discussion are being published in *The Star* in a three-part series. The first part, Communications, was published in the October 2015 issue. This issue will focus on Conferences.

The board sub-committee that evaluated the Conferences opinions focused on the most frequently made comments. Those included: providing more free time, making conferences less structured, focusing more on regional gatherings throughout the year and the year national conferences aren't held, using a travel agency or hiring a conference planner since finding conference volunteers is getting more difficult, and evaluating members' changing needs every couple years.

The conclusions the sub-committee made fell into three categories:

1. **Structure** - The sub-committee discussed the possibility of providing more free time at national conferences, and changing the structure from "conference" to "gathering." The sub-committee agreed that it may become necessary to hire conference planners due to the declining volunteer help. Conferences also might provide time for sub-groups to meet, such as Normandy Kids, Philippines Kids and MIA Kids. The sub-committee also noted that future conferences could be more adaptable, for instance, not holding Sharing Circles if no new orphans are attending. It also was noted that many members would like to hear new speakers.

2. **Length and Location** - The sub-committee agreed that five days seems to be a reasonable length for conferences, considering many travel large distances to attend. In the past, AWON national conferences rotated between the western, middle and eastern parts of the country, to balance the distance traveled by members as much as possible. However, the sub-committee found that now may be the time to focus on the middle of the country for conferences, in order to limit traveling costs for everyone as much as possible. It was noted, though, that much depends on the location of the conference chair who volunteers to host a conference.

3. **Future** - The sub-committee noted that future AWON conferences will need to evolve. For example, Regional Gatherings may need to become more regular, larger, and perhaps with a theme. Examples include cruises and group travel, such as to cemeteries. Many expressed a desire that conference and gatherings continue even if attendance declines, but this also may necessitate introducing orphans from other wars into gatherings and conferences.

The final installment of this series about AWON Finances will appear in the April issue of *The Star*.

Cemetery wreath coordinators needed

New coordinators are needed for Epinal, Florence, Honolulu and North Africa for this coming Memorial Day. The long-time coordinators for these cemeteries regret having to give up this rewarding contribution to honor our fathers, but now you have a chance. If interested, contact Sharon Crowley Connor as soon as possible for more details at: sharoncconnor@gmail.com



From left, Jerry and Patty Temte, Jerry and Judy Pinkerton, and Margaret and Scott Von Lienen

Orphans from WWII, Vietnam meet

On October 24, 2015 AWONers Jerry and Judy Pinkerton and Patty and Jerry Temte had lunch with Scott and Margaret Von Lienen. Margaret is a war orphan and member of SDIT (Sons and Daughters In Touch), the organization for children who lost their fathers in the Vietnam War. Jerry Pinkerton got in contact with Margaret after reading an article in the *Dallas Morning News* about her and her dad, Lt. Cmdr. Robert Saavedra, appeared on Father's Day 2015. They generally discussed each other's experiences and found many things in common, such as the wall of silence, which for SDIT members is exacerbated by the public condemnation of that war. Margaret and five other SDIT members were set to travel on December 6 to visit the sites in Vietnam where their fathers were lost. The new AWON-SDIT friends plan to meet again in February or March for a combined North Texas area AWONer-SDIT gathering. Margaret will seek other SDIT members in the area to join with us.

Annual York, PA gathering set for April 23

The 11th annual York Gathering will be held in York, Pennsylvania, on Saturday, April, 23, 2016, at Hoss's Steak and Sea House.

Orphans, spouses, relatives and friends will socialize, meet new folks, and share stories about their fathers. The group will enjoy a meal and complete salad bar. Organizer Lynne Lecrone will send out information in February. However, Lynne has moved and has misplaced some of the addresses, so please contact her if you don't hear from her.

This year's date is especially poignant for organizer Lynne Lecrone. On April 23, 1945, Lynne's father was killed in action in Germany. The first York Gathering was held on April 23 also, the 60th anniversary of Lynne's father's death. Nine orphans were present and they held a brief program with each person speaking about their father. Each person then placed a carnation at the World War II Memorial in the York town square.

For more information contact: Lynne Lecrone, 1728 Oakes Ave., York, PA 17404-6701, 717-757-9424 (home) or 717-487-8677 (cell) or lynnelec@aol.com.

2016 AWON National Conference Registration Form
Cruisin' in Freedom, Honoring Our Fathers
Florida Cruise • October 30 - November 4, 2016
Freedom of the Seas departs Port Canaveral, Florida at 4 p.m., October 30, 2016
and returns 6 a.m., November 4, 2016

Please return registration by August 1, 2016

Member Name: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

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

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

Registration Fee

(Please select fee, t-shirt style and size, included with fee.

Note: women's sizes only up to 3XL.)

Active Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$75	T-shirt Style: M or W	Size: S M L XL 2XL 3XL 4XL 5XL
First Guest	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$50	T-shirt Style: M or W	Size: S M L XL 2XL 3XL 4XL 5XL
Second Guest	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$50	T-shirt Style: M or W	Size: S M L XL 2XL 3XL 4XL 5XL
Third Guest	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$50	T-shirt Style: M or W	Size: S M L XL 2XL 3XL 4XL 5XL
Fourth Guest	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$50	T-shirt Style: M or W	Size: S M L XL 2XL 3XL 4XL 5XL

Total registration fee enclosed: \$ _____

Name Tag Information (please print clearly)

Name (include maiden name) and state of residence: _____

Relationship to serviceman (son, daughter, nephew, etc.) _____

Name of spouse/partner attending: _____

Other guests attending (designate if veteran): _____

Serviceman's name: _____ Branch of Service _____

rank first middle last

KIA or MIA (circle one) Date KIA/MIA _____ Place KIA/MIA _____

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

2016 AWON National Conference
5745 Lee Road
Indianapolis, IN 46216

Air, hotel, ground trans. arrangements announced

Getting to AWON cruise a breeze

*by the Florida 2016 AWON
Conference Committee*

Seventy-Six AWON members, friends and family have booked cabins on Royal Caribbean International (RCI) *Freedom of the Seas* to honor our fathers during the 12th AWON National Conference, from October 30 - November 4, 2016.

Please join us by contacting cruise specialist Paula Podradchik at 561-498-5461 and charging a fully-refundable deposit of \$100 per person to reserve a stateroom starting at \$506.23 per person, based on double occupancy. All prices include taxes and fees, and you will receive a \$50 per cabin on-board credit to spend. You also may pre-pay gratuities. Be prepared to give a valid passport number when booking.

Once assigned your cruise booking number, you can make airline reservations through RCI, if you choose. Go to www.royalcaribbean.com and click on "Plan a Cruise." Then click on "Air and Ground Transportation," then the "Air to Sea" tab and follow the directions. Alternatively, call 844-278-9745. RCI can also arrange for an airport shuttle from Orlando International Airport (MCO) to *Freedom of the Seas*.

If you prefer to stay at the Radisson Resort at the port, before and/or after the cruise, go to www.radisson.com/capecanaveralfl, or call 321-868-6573 and mention AWON for a discounted rate. The hotel will provide complimentary shuttle service to and from the port as well as complimentary parking.

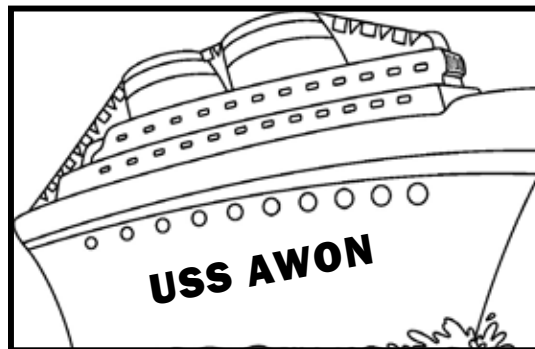
If you prefer to drive to Port Canaveral, call Park-

in door; a hand-crafted patriotic bracelet for the ladies; a battery-operated candle for the memorial service; your conference badge, badge holder and lanyard; as well as your AWON bag.

The Florida 2016 AWON Conference Committee still needs volunteers for the Sibling Panel Discussion (see page 10); three-hour shifts for registration and the hospitality room; event assistants to help with Sharing Circles, the memorial service, and the cocktail reception/awards ceremony/ Missing Man ceremony; IT assistants to help with AV equipment for the speaker sessions, board meeting and the Honor Roll of Fathers; and a reporter/

photographer to post conference updates on the AWON ListServ and images on the AWON Facebook page. Please contact conference co-chair Sam Tannenbaum at samtan7713@gmail.com to volunteer.

As you may gather, *Cruisin' in Freedom, Honoring our Fathers* is a sea change from prior conferences. To paraphrase The Marines' Hymn, AWON is going from the Halls of Montezuma (we will be in Mexico so be sure to bring a valid passport) to the S'mores of Ben & Jerry's.



n-Cruise at 321-454-2500 and mention AWON for a discounted rate. The lot is about two miles from the port and provides complimentary shuttle service to and from the port.

After you have made your travel arrangements, please complete the AWON Conference Registration Form on page 8. The registration fee is \$75 for members and \$50 for guests. The fee includes the cost of your souvenir program guide; list of conference attendees; special edition t-shirt (please indicate your size); a magnet to attach a star decoration on your cab-

2016 AWON National Conference Sibling Panel Discussion

AWON members frequently refer to themselves as "siblings" even though there is no biological relationship. Many AWON members feel they have more experiences and emotions in common with other World War II orphans than with their blood siblings. However, there is much to learn about our relationships with blood siblings, half-siblings and step-siblings other than the obvious.

Dr. Vamik Volkan, M.D., is the author of a 2014 book with a very long title: Siblings in the Unconscious and Psychopathology: Womb Fantasies, Claustrophobias, Fear of Pregnancy, Murderous Rage, Animal Symbolism, Christmas and Easter "Neuroses," and Twinings or Identifications with Sisters and Brothers. Put simply, the book examines adults' identifications and mental representations of sisters and brothers in their daily lives.

Volkan, who is married to an AWONer, will moderate a panel on siblings during the 2016 AWON National Conference Florida cruise. Please consider being on our panel. Review the questions below as thought-starters (not to fill out and submit) and, if interested in participating, contact Sam Tannenbaum at samtan7713@gmail.com.

Questions to Ask Yourself About You and Your Sibling

1. When did you start honoring your father? (e.g., child, adult, following death of mother/step-father, after visiting overseas cemetery/battlesite)
2. When did your sibling start honoring your father?
3. Did you and your sibling have different surnames?
4. What is your sibling's gender?
5. What is your sibling's birth order?
6. Did you and your sibling have different friends? (e.g., introverts, extroverts)
7. Did you and your sibling have different peer groups? (e.g., scholars, athletes)
8. Did you and your sibling have different interactions with teachers?
9. Did you and your sibling have unique experiences? (e.g., physical illness, auto accident)
10. Was there sibling rivalry?

AWON fondly remembers supportive spouses

Al Wheeler Jr., husband of AWONer Patty Nash Wheeler, passed away October 15, 2015, at the age of 80 in Boone, North Carolina.

He was predeceased by his first wife, Barbara Jones, and then was married to Patty. The two enjoyed their Duke-UNC rivalry especially during basketball games. In addition to Patty he is survived by a daughter, two sons, and a step-son.



Wheeler

Robert A. Armstrong, 83, husband of AWONer Patricia Behan Armstrong, passed away on October 22, 2015. They were married for 58 years.



Armstrong

Bob encouraged Patricia to go to Iwo Jima in 1995 for the 50th anniversary of the landing where her father died. When they reconnected with her father's ship, the *USS Pensacola*, they never missed a reunion.

Bob and Patricia had much in common: her father was a U.S. Naval Academy graduate while Bob's father was a West Point graduate. They both were in Hawaii when Pearl Harbor was attacked. Bob's friend brought them the *Newsweek* article about AWON several years ago that opened up a new world for Patricia which Bob felt was so important. Following Bob's wishes, Patricia and her daughter, Karyn Symes, will be attending the 2016 AWON National Conference cruise in Florida. Other survivors include a granddaughter. He was preceded by a daughter, Kristin.

2016 AWON National Conference Florida Cruise *Cruisin' in Freedom, Honoring Our Fathers* Conference Program Book Memorial Ad Form

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone/Email: _____

Select one: (8½ x 11 page)

\$100 ____ full page

\$50 ____ 1/2 page \$25 ____ 1/4 page

\$10 ____ "Lest We Forget" line (100 character limit)

(example: *Sam & Rachel Tannenbaum in memory of Dave Stanek, son of PFC Aloysius Stanek KIA 11/29/44*)

**Everyone placing an ad
will receive a program book,
whether or not they
attend the conference.**

Message (enclose separate sheet if necessary):

Make check payable to **AWON**
and mail form, photos and payment to:
Kathy Le Comte
1004 Williams Blvd.
Springfield, IL 62704
email: johnkath5@comcast.net

... Bonnyman, from front page

in fierce fighting against Japanese forces in the 1943 Battle of Tarawa. Bonnyman posthumously earned the Medal of Honor for his role in securing the island.

The *Knoxville News Sentinel* noted Bonnyman's heroic action: In November 1943, Bonnyman, a combat engineer, led his demolition team on an assault of a Japanese bomb shelter. Eventually he was able to reach the top of the shelter and help flush out several of the enemy. As the Japanese began to fight back, Bonnyman remained in a forward position for three days and was mortally wounded, but not before he killed several Japanese troops. He received the Medal of Honor in 1947 by the secretary of the Navy. His 12-year-old daughter, Frances, accepted the award for the family.

Many of the Marines killed in the Battle of Tarawa were recovered shortly after the war, but Cemetery 27 couldn't be located and the missing Marines were declared "unrecoverable" in 1949.

History Flight began its multi-million dollar effort to find the Marines in 2007, and began sending teams of field researchers to Betio in 2008. Evans, a journalist, joined them.

Evans told *Radio New Zealand* (RNZ) that he joined the expedition in 2009, and for the next six years they dug.

"I've been to Tarawa five times, I've dug holes in the sand, I've sifted sand, I've washed bones in the lab, I've called families asking for DNA samples and, honestly, we agreed that this is a needle in a haystack," Evans explained to the RNZ reporter. "So I was well and truly floored when I got a call saying they felt they had discovered Cem-

etry 27, because if it was 27 then there was every indication we would find my grandfather."

One of the outstanding physical features of his then-33-year-old grandfather was his gold teeth. Evans hoped the teeth might turn up. They did, on May 29. According to RNZ, Evans was hovering over History Flight archaeologist Kristen Baker when she brushed away sand revealing a gold tooth.

"We were working on the Marine in plot 15 and the cranium next to him appeared and she believed that might be my grandfather so she just gradually brushed it down and said, 'It's gold!' I dropped the video camera literally and I just had to recover myself. Even though I'd known for a couple of days that it was possible I just had butterflies everyday. It was hard for me to believe that that was going to happen."

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), which eventually started working with History Flight, conducted the forensic



Kristen Baker of History Flight uncovers Bonnyman's remains. Credit: Clay Bonnyman Evans

review of the remains from Cemetery 27 in the summer of 2015. Lt. Bonnyman was finally going home, what his parents had always hoped for.

"We are very grateful for the efforts of Mark Noah and History Flight for the recovery of these Marines lost during the Battle of Tarawa," DPAA director Lt. Gen. Michael Linnington said in a press release that was published in *Marine Corps Times*. "This is a tremendous example of how private-public partnerships can contribute to our accounting efforts both now and in the future."

Evans has posted his grandfather's story on his blog site, claybonnymanevans.com. Bonnyman was born in 1910 in Atlanta, Georgia, raised in Knoxville, Tennessee, and attended

Princeton University. He was living in Santa Fe, New Mexico, operating a copper mine, when he joined the Marine Corps Reserve in 1942.

His parents, Alexander Bonnyman Sr. and Frances Berry Bonnyman, spent years trying to learn the location of their son's remains and have them brought to Knoxville. They eventually erected a memorial to their son inscribed *Buried at Sea*. Others, including Bonnyman's younger brother, George, and daughter, Frances, continued the quest for decades without success. Evans' presence when Bonnyman's gold teeth and the rest of his remains were uncovered meant the family's chain of efforts to recover him was truly unbroken. It was time for Lt. Bonnyman to go home.

Prejean says she was lucky enough to be present when her father's remains were brought back to Joint Base Pearl Hickam, Honolulu, in June, to be repatriated. In September Prejean, who lives in Hawaii; and her daughter, Alexandra (Andra), from Arkansas; her sister Fran Evans, from Colorado; and her nephew Clay Evans, from South Carolina; all were escorted onto the tarmac at the Knoxville airport in order to watch the final transfer of Bonnyman's remains.

"The flight was three hours late, and it had started drizzling, but the Freedom Fighters had endured the damp, and a great number of hearty Knoxvilleans saluted and waved the caravan on its way," Prejean stated.

The East Tennessee Veterans and the Alexander Bonnyman Marine Corps League conducted a Laying in Honor event in downtown

Knoxville. A few days later, on September 27th, Lt. Bonnyman's remains were reinterred with full military honors at Berry Highland Memorial Cemetery. The 8th Marines led the procession while his casket was transported on a Civil War-type caisson. There also was a Missing Man fly-over by the Marine Corps Huey helicopters.



Lt. Alexander Bonnyman Jr.
credit: Department of Defense

*We all belong to AWON
because we all lost our fa-
thers. I just never thought
mine would be found.*

- Alix Prejean

"The 'whup whup' sound echoing between the Shenandoah and Blue Ridge mountains gave me pure chicken skin," Prejean said. Then came the 21-gun salute and Taps.

"My oldest sister and I were both presented the folded American flag, but I'm sure mine came from Tarawa!" Prejean exclaimed. The middle sister, Tina, passed away many years ago.

"It was a momentous occasion. I have yet to come down to earth. At least now, thanks to Mark Noah and his fantastic crew, my father has joined his father, mother, two sisters, brother and sister-in-law. My grandfather's wish has finally come to fruition, and the family plot is complete."

About 50 family members, including children and grandchildren of Bonnyman's sisters and brother, from as far away as France, were in attendance. Meanwhile, the recovery effort continues. History Flight has been fully funded to

find the remaining Marines on Betio.

"I was just reading about climate change in *National Geographic*," Prejean commented in summarizing her story, "and one spot they did an article on is Tarawa. It is going to be flooded because of global warming. I guess if Mark hadn't found my father's remains, the head stone would have been true: 'Buried at sea!'"

During son's first visit to gravesite

French honor pilot with monument

This is the conclusion to the article that appeared in the October 2015 issue of The Star, in which Billy recounted Capt. William R. Winters' family background and military service that ended with the crash of his P-47 in France in 1944. In this installment, Billy describes his 2014 trip to France for the dedication of a memorial to his father.

by Billy Winters

Florida 2016 AWON Conference Committee

My wife, Donnette, and I were privileged to travel to France so that we could be present at the Lorraine American Cemetery in St. Avold during the Memorial Day ceremonies in May 2014. In addition, we made the short trip from St. Avold to the area of Wolfskirchen and Postroff in France, where Dad's P-47 fighter plane was shot down on November 25, 1944. June 6 was the 70th anniversary of the Allied Forces' D-Day invasion at the Normandy coast of France, so there was a heightened awareness and remembrance of the sacrifices made to liberate the people of Western Europe from the Nazi occupiers.

We traveled with our friends, Paul and Barbara Bremer, of Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. Paul's father is buried in the same cemetery as Dad and he had made the trip to France previously, so they were a lot of help and our trip was a smooth one, thanks to them. But, it was, as expected, quite an emotional ride.

When we arrived at the cemetery on Friday morning, I expected to find Dad's grave like almost all the others, without decoration. To my shock and surprise, the grave was already decorated with a beautiful bouquet

of flowers accompanied by this message addressed -

To The Family of Captain Winters:

The people of Postroff are sincerely grateful to the American soldiers that came to liberate our region and country during WWII.

With special thanks and in memory particularly remembrance to CPT William Robert Winters for his exceptional bravour (sic) and for giving his life so that freedom could prevail.

The people of Lorraine and especially from Postroff



Billy Winters' first visit to his father's grave in France.

I was able to spend plenty of time at Dad's grave, absorbing as much as I could and taking lots of photos. I discovered that he is the only officer buried in his row; the others are mostly privates and sergeants. There is a grave next to Dad's where the remains of an unknown soldier are buried. We went into town to pick up flowers to decorate many of the graves of fathers of AWON members, and Donnette made sure the unknown soldier's grave was properly decorated.

On Saturday morning we drove to Wolfskirchen (population 350) where we met the mayor who was awaiting our arrival. We drove along the road to Postroff (population 201), stopping to take photos of the beautiful hillside farmland where Dad's plane crashed almost 70 years ago. We met up with the mayor of Postroff before moving on to the site that had been prepared for the placement of the memorial plaque in Dad's memory.

The site chosen for the memorial is at the edge of the forest known locally as Bois de

American WWII Orphans Network

l'Isch. The Isch is a tributary of the Sarre River that runs along the northwest side of the forest. We drove part way up a muddy dirt road and parked next to the pasture, then walked some 300 yards up the hill. The farmer who owns the land had prepared the site by creating a small clearing where he had placed a limestone boulder he had cut for the purpose of mounting the plaque. Once mounted, the plaque was covered until the unveiling at the appropriate point in the ceremony. The dedication ceremony, conducted entirely in French, was attended by a large contingent of townspeople who had been presented with invitations by their mayors.

The ceremony included remarks by the two village mayors and Member of Parliament Patrick Hetzel, who represented the government of France. Their remarks were prepared and furnished to us in English. Mayor Wahl of Wolfskirchen greeted the crowd and recounted what he had learned of the background of Captain Winters. Then he went on to remark that:

Here on the hills overlooking the Valley of Isch and the neighboring villages of Alsace and Lorraine over which he flew, we have this duty to remember with respect our allies, the saviors of our motherland, France. And we have the duty to accompany all those who are searching for a father, a brother, or a friend who died for France during the terrible battles of the Second World War. This 70th anniversary of the year of our liberation, we pay tribute to all these fighters, these artisans of our liberation. It is through them

that the Republic has never ceased to exist. It is because of them, we have this day.

He reminded us of French President Charles De Gaulle's declaration that:

Not an effort of these soldiers, of these sailors, of these aviators, one act of courage or self-sacrifice of these sons and daughters, not mourning, not a sacrifice, not a tear will have thus been lost.

Mayors Wahl and Holtzscherer then thanked me for pursuing the placement of the memorial plaque because they would have otherwise never known of the story of Captain Winters who died on this land of Alsace-Lorraine for the liberation of France. Then, all were invited to the community hall to,

"take the glass of friendship and visit with our American guests."

The mayors have committed that the monument to Dad will be decorated annually on VE Day. Victory in Europe Day is celebrated every year on May 8th. Following the speeches, the bugler played the French and American national anthems and Taps. This was followed by hymns presented by the assembled choir.

It had been a cloudy, damp morning and we collected plenty of mud on our shoes as we traipsed through the pasture. As Donnette and I stood looking at the dedicated memorial, a ray of sunshine broke through



At the Capt. Williams marker, from left: M/P Patrick Hetzel, Mayor Ernest Holtzscherer, Billy and Donnette Winters, Mayor Roger Wahl and Councilor Jean Mathia.

...continued on page 16

...Monument, from page 15

the trees overhead. The mission was accomplished.

As we were leaving the ceremony, I was taken aside and presented with beautiful, etched bottles of homemade schnapps by Louis Wilhelm, an elderly man who had lived in Postroff in 1944. The card he presented with the schnapps said:

Dear Billy.

It is with great emotion that I welcome you to our region of Lorraine, where we will have the opportunity to honour the memory of your very brave father and to remember his wonderfully courageous action when his life was sadly lost fighting the enemy in the struggle to allow us to gain our freedom.

The night your father was killed I lost my uncle and aunt who died in the house next to mine when it was bombed during shelling by the Nazis. These casualties sadly affected us all, and it is important that we continue to remember the tragic loss of life, and to celebrate the wonderful and brave actions of the American soldiers, our liberators.

Allow me to give you this bottle of Schnapps as a token of thanks from the people of Postroff which I hope you will be able to take back to America and share with your family and friends in remembrance of their gratitude to their liberators.

Thank you Billy for visiting us, and for sharing with us the wonderful memories of your brave father.

Louis Wilhelm

Mr. Wilhelm, it turns out, is the person responsible for the placement of the beautiful

flower arrangement on Dad's grave, and he promised me that so long as he shall live, he will continue to place flowers on Dad's grave annually on Memorial Day.

Following the memorial dedication ceremony, we were all invited to the town hall in the village of Postroff where a large tent had been erected to accommodate the crowd. The treats included locally-made knockwurst, beers, wines, cakes, cookies and breads. This was indeed an event to celebrate their newly-discovered hero, "le Capitaine Winters,"

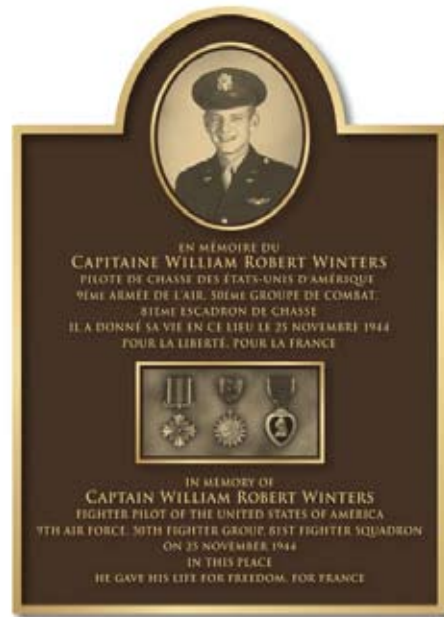
who had given his life in the cause of freedom for these people. I came to understand from them that their liberation from the Nazi occupation actually occurred only two days later on November 27, 1944. They are very happy to know there is an American man they can know of, honor and appreciate for his sacrifice.

Friedel Matty, a long-time resident of Wolfskirchen, brought her contemporary journal of her memories of that time in her life, and she read a poem she had written for the occasion. Theo Schmidt was proud to show

me the rather large model of a P-47 Thunderbolt that he had brought to display during the festivities.

One week after the memorial dedication, there were articles recounting the events of the day in the local French newspaper, *Dernières Nouvelles D'Alsace*. Both of the villages, Wolfskirchen and Postroff, have posted stories of this day in their annual community bulletins for 2014.

We drove back to St. Avold Saturday afternoon so we could complete the placement of flowers on the graves of the fathers of our AWON siblings in time for the Memorial Day Ceremony on Sunday. That event was very well attended by locals from nearby areas of



The plaque for Capt. Winters

Are you a veteran?

If you are, then you have a story to tell. Your father died serving our country during World War II, and you served our country as well. That raises some interesting questions. For example:

If you enlisted, why?

Did your mother ask you not to serve?

If you were drafted, did you consider invoking the surviving son option, and/or were you asked to do so by your family?

AWON would like to hear from our members who served in the military. If you are interested in participating, please contact Diane Pollard at dahpollard@gmail.com, or Gerry Morenski at dbmanager@awondb.org. An article, reporting on our members who served in the United States military, may be published in *The Star*.



northeast France and neighboring countries. Paul and I were honored to place the wreath on behalf of AWON members whose fathers are buried in this cemetery, which happens to be the largest American cemetery in Europe with 10,849 graves. The most popular speaker of the day was Helen Patton, granddaughter of the famous general, George S. Patton. She definitely inherited his fire and passion for America.

It was articles from *The Star* that inspired me to undertake this mission. It was encouragement from my AWON siblings that reinforced my determination to establish the memorial to my father. Before my journey, I asked for and received much helpful advice from them. I am forever grateful for that. My thanks to all of them as they prayed and wished us well on this journey.

Let me leave you with one final thought that I believe is very important. The French people we met were very friendly to us; they

were very kind and welcoming. As you can see from the reception we received, from the spoken remarks and from the very emotional letters, and from the newspaper writings, they do appreciate their history with Americans and they do not hesitate to say, "Thank you." When I expressed to Mayor Holtzschere my surprise at the elaborate nature of the memorial dedication ceremony and the reception that followed, he only said to me that once he came to know who my father was and what he had done for France and for the people of Wolfskirchen and Postroff, it became, "his life's mission to see that the memorial was properly placed and that it was done properly."

Since this trip, I have been able to correspond with new friends in France who have now planted a small dogwood tree next to Dad's memorial. On VE Day, they visited and again placed spring flowers there. I am especially thankful for their friendship.

AWON enacts new Memorial Day wreath policy

The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), which administers the American military cemeteries overseas, announced a major policy change last year that affects AWON.

For 13 years, AWON has presented wreaths on Memorial Day at 16 ABMC cemeteries, plus several national cemeteries, as a tribute to the AWON fathers buried or memorialized there. AWON volunteers would order the wreaths through ABMC. However, since last summer ABMC no longer is taking wreath orders. Instead, the public should order flowers and wreaths directly from local florists. ABMC has provided a list of suggested florists on its website.

Due to this change, AWON took the opportunity to revise and simplify its own policies regarding Memorial Day wreaths.

Starting this year, the AWON wreath coordinator for each cemetery will contact other members with fathers at their cemetery to request donations towards the cost of the wreath. Donations are to be sent directly to the AWON treasurer. The coordinator will then order a wreath from a florist on the ABMC list or a florist of their choice. Many cemeteries also have an AWON contact overseas who helps with this process.

The coordinator also will

order from the florist two ribbons for the wreath, one which will read "American WWII Orphans Network," and another that reflects the sentiment, "In Memory of all the Fathers." The ribbons replace the previous use of banners which listed the names of fathers of members who contributed to the wreath cost.

As in the past, coordinators will arrange for the AWON wreath to be presented during Memorial Day ceremonies, and for a photo, which the coordinator will have sent to the AWON website and *The Star* for publication. The AWON treasurer will reimburse coordinators for

the cost of the wreath up to a prescribed amount, currently set at \$200.

In the past, the cost of Memorial Day wreaths was borne by members who were contacted by the wreath coordinator. Starting with this newsletter any AWON member can contribute any amount to the Memorial Day Wreath Fund using the renewal and registration form near the back of every issue. It is hoped many more AWON members will want to support this project that honors all AWON fathers who served and died overseas. The American military cemeteries are beautiful memorials of their sacrifice.

ABMC advice for ordering at Ardennes

A cemetery associate at the Ardennes American Cemetery in Belgium has some advice for those ordering flowers or wreaths for Ardennes.

Vincent Joris contacted AWON and said, "On the ABMC webpage you mention, two addresses are indicated that deliver to our site. The 'Panier Fleuri' florist is in the process of upgrading his website with Paypal functionalities, and the order page is translated into English. They are our usual supplier and are able to address all kinds of requests, from simple sprays to the AWON Memorial Day wreath.

"The florist 'Orkhis' takes email orders, and credit card payment is accepted. Since they help the other florist for large orders, such as the Memorial Day period, their skill is comparable.

"I hope this information is helpful to your members."

AWON deeply appreciates the advice and assistance that ABMC continues to provide AWON members.



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AWON Connections

Pictures and Stories of Members
Gathering Around the Country



AWONers in the Phoenix, Arizona, area in October enjoyed a three-hour lunch and gabfest at the seafood restaurant, Papadeaux, organized by Pat Fabri. New Yorker Gloria Layne was in town for a Navy reunion and joined the group. Pictured, from left, are Pat Fabri, Dianne Baczynski, Gloria Layne, Clint Fredrick, Susan Fuch, Ginger Brumley Pottenger, Tim Krisman and John Baczynski. *Dianne*



Also in October, a few New England members of AWON gathered for lunch at the Sheraton Tara Restaurant in Framingham, Massachusetts. Everyone enjoyed a good lunch and chat on the chilly New England day. This group plans to meet again, so New England AWONers - stay tuned, or get in touch with one of these members for the

next gathering: from left, Bill Clements, Karen Clements, Bill Chiodo, Amy Chiodo, Ann Rainsford, Gail Eisenhauer, Alison Chiodo, Paula Bergquist and Gerry Morenski. *Gerry*



The Linne brothers of Indianapolis, Indiana, were in Phoenix in December to visit their godfather, Uncle Paul. Enjoying a fine Mexican dinner together, from left, are: John Linne, Uncle Paul, Dianne and John Baczynski, and Walt Linne. *Dianne*

Hadler attends book signing in Indianapolis

AWON First Founder Susan Johnson Hadler held a booksigning at the historic Victorian mansion, The Propylaeum, in Indianapolis in November, for her latest book, *The Beauty of What Remains*, a memoir about solving several family mysteries and being healed in the process. Her book is available in the AWON Bookstore, and she is donating a portion of the proceeds to AWON. Hadler also has published *Lost in the Victory*, with AWON Founder Ann Bennett Mix.

Attending the book signing were AWONers Bridget Caito and husband, Phil; Barb Kelly and Walt Linne. *Walt*

Preparing for association's centennial

AWONers attend 35ID reunion in MO

by Paula Baker

Six AWONers attended the 98th reunion of the 35th Infantry Division Association in Kansas City, Missouri, in September. Five are daughters of men who were killed in action during World War II: Paula Evans Baker, Pat Rowe Cook, Maggie Stein Fenstermacher, Victoria Ramirez Frisenda, and Marilyn Bowers Jensen. Ben Weber, an AWON associate, is the nephew of Brig. Gen. E. B. Sebree, commander of Task Force Sebree. It included 35th Division elements in the liberation of Nancy, France.

Unlike many veterans' groups, the 35ID Association extends full membership to widows, family and orphans. This group has representation on the board and a part on the reunion program.

Among the reunion activities was a visit to the Kansas National Guard Museum in Topeka. The association wing includes a "memory wall" dedicated to widows, family and orphans. Marilyn and Paula created the posters that tell the "Gold Star story" with examples of "The Telegram," "The Last Family Photo," "The Last Letter Home," and photos of private burials and those in overseas military cemeteries. Examples were sought from all the 35th Division orphans available.

Reunion programs included a report on the current Kansas National Guard and its activities during Hurricane Katrina. 35ID daughter Roberta Russo presented a program on locating military information. She is the creator of a comprehensive website that honors her father, Pfc. Harry A. Krantz. He



AWONers at 35th ID reunion, from left: Paula Baker, Maggie Fenstermacher, Victoria Frisenda, Marilyn Jensen and Pat Cook. Not pictured is Ben Weber.

was a combat medic in the 134th Regiment who never spoke of his experiences. The website includes day journals, morning reports and books pertinent to the 134th Regiment. Eventually it will cover all elements of the 35ID.

Paula spoke about the way in which the internet message board and active correspondents were able to help a new AWONer, Kathy Travis, visit her father's death site near Nancy. Kathy's trip to France was underway and she had a train reservation for Nancy when Paula read her message posted on the 134th Regiment site. Kathy was hoping to see a mural dedicated to the 35ID. She had no idea that her father died in an historic battle marked by a large monument. During an intense 48-hour period,

Canteen 'links' to next generation

AWONer Betty Palonen Volkan has a canteen that belonged to her father. In 2002 she visited the area in Italy where he fought when the guide took note of her father's name - Palonen. He had her father's canteen in his museum. There is no doubt it was his: it is inscribed "Palonen, MA" for Massachusetts, his home. The canteen is a linking object.

Today, the canteen links a new generation to Pvt. Jorma Palonen - his great-granddaughters, as Betty describes:

"Through telling my grandchildren about my father and telling them about finding his canteen I hope they will focus on how he lived rather than on how he died. When they visit they play in the living room by the charcoal drawing of him above the table displaying his canteen and my parent's wedding photograph. It is almost as if he is looking down on them just as his likeness looked down on me in my childhood living room.

"Questions they ask are, 'Did he want to go to war?' 'Will my daddy have to go to war?' They are learning about civic responsibilities and they are learning the consequences of war. They have learned that you respect war dead by putting flowers on a distant grave and a local war memorial. In school you write letters to soldiers like Grandpa Joe to thank them for their service and bravery.

"But I also want them to know that he played with a sling shot as a child, he liked to race motorcycles and he smoked an occasional cigar. Although he did not get to spend much time as a father, and he never experienced the joy of being a grandfather and great-grandfather, I have learned that he was a loving and playful uncle. He could sharpen the sharpest pencil with a knife and he carried a nephew on his shoulders even though his nephew had endured a long bus ride and had wet his pants. I tell my grandchildren that their great-grandfather would have loved them so much, and I know his memory will always be with them."



Paula was able to contact AWON Overseas friend Jerome Leclerc of *L'Espace de Memoire Lorraine 1939-1945*, a support group in northeastern France. Jerome met Kathy and her son at the train and accompanied them to the memorial sites and the World War II Museum for Lorraine.

Paula and Marilyn keep tabs on international support groups and write a column about them for the 35ID newspaper, *The Santa Fe Express*.

The reunion included a memorial service and Hall of Fame induction ceremony. An evening dinner allowed active service mem-

bers to wear their dress uniforms and medals. Three AWONers - Victoria, Marilyn and Paula - wore their Medals of St. Maurice (civilian level) awarded for their service to the U.S. Infantry.

During the next two years the 35ID Association will focus on the 100th anniversary of the association and the United States' entry into World War I. Reunions will be held in Kansas City which is the site of the National World War I Museum. The division's most famous veteran is President Harry S Truman, who honed his leadership skills serving in the 35ID in World War I.

Missing air crews from France, New Guinea, recovered in 2015

Six World War II airmen lost in Belgium late 1944, were laid to rest with full military honors in 2015 following the recovery of their remains in a private - public partnership.

According to the Department of Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) the identified servicemen are Army Air Forces 1st Lt. William P. Cook, of Alameda, California; F/O Arthur J. LeFavre, of Red Bank, New Jersey; S/Sgt. Maurice J. Fevold, of Chicago, Illinois; S/Sgt. Frank G. Lane Jr., of Cleveland, Ohio; S/Sgt. Ward C. Swallow Jr., of Chicago, Illinois; and Sgt. Eric M. Honeyman, of Alameda, California.

On Dec. 23, 1944, Lt. Cook along with five other B-26G Marauder crewmembers took off from Saint Quentin, France, on a mission to bomb an enemy-held bridge in Eller, Germany. The aircraft was shot down by enemy anti-aircraft fire near Seffern, Germany, near the Belgium border.

Following the war, the Army Graves Registration Command (AGRC) conducted extensive field investigations and was unable to locate the aircraft and the crew. In May 1949, AGRC concluded the crew members were unrecoverable.

In 2006, a group of researchers from Airwar History Working Group Rhine-Moselle and History Flight - 99th Division MIA Project, located the wreckage of a B-26G associated with the loss of this crew, near Allmuthen, Belgium, and notified the U.S. Army. In 2007, a Department of Defense (DoD) team investigated the site and recommended it for excavation. In 2012 and 2013, another DoD team excavated the crash site and recovered human remains, aircraft wreckage, and personal effects.

To identify the remains, scientists from DoD and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools including, partial Y-Chromosome Short Tandem Repeat (Y-STR) DNA and mitochondrial DNA to match with living relatives including siblings, cousins and nieces and nephews.

The remains of an eight men from a B-24 shot down in New Guinea in early 1944 also were recovered and laid to rest with full military honors in 2015.

They are Army Air Forces 1st Lt. William D. Bernier, of Augusta, Montana; 1st Lt. Bryant E. Poulsen, of Salt Lake City, Utah; 1st Lt. Herbert V. Young Jr., of Clarkdale, Arizona; T/Sgt. Charles L. Johnston, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; T/Sgt. Hugh F. Moore, of Elkton, Maryland; S/Sgt. John E. Copeland, of Dearing, Kansas; S/Sgt. Charles J. Jones, of Athens, Georgia; and Sgt. Charles A. Gardner, of San Francisco, California.

On April 10, 1944, twelve B-24D Liberator crew members took off from Texter Strip, Nazdab Air Field, New Guinea, on a mission to attack an anti-aircraft site at Hansa Bay. The aircraft was shot down by enemy anti-aircraft fire over the Madang Province, New Guinea. Four of the crewmen were able to parachute from the aircraft, but were reported to have died in captivity.

The AGRC conducted investigations and recovered the remains of three of the missing airmen. In May 1949, AGRC concluded the remaining nine crew members were unrecoverable.

In 2001, a U.S.-led team located wreckage of a B-24D that bore the tail number of this aircraft. After several surveys, DoD teams excavated the site and recovered human remains and non-biological material evidence. Identification was accomplished using mitochondrial DNA and circumstantial

AWON Board Business 15 September 2015

2016 Conference Report: Conference co-chair **Sam Tannenbaum** gave the conference committee report. The theme of the 12th AWON National Conference is *Cruisin' in Freedom, Honoring Our Fathers*. To date 72 people, including two grandchildren, have booked cabins for the Florida cruise. More information will be included in the newsletter.

AWON Wreath Project: Project coordinator **Sharon Connor** gave an informational report on the wreath program. In a previous email, she offered recommendations for revising the wreath process to the board for consideration and action. The board verbally approved the revisions in general but no vote taken. Some of the suggested modifications will be worked on before final and official board approval. **Jerry Pinkerton** will work with Sharon on the modifications.

Financial Report: As of August total cash on hand was \$78,000. Year-to-date unrestricted cash is down \$3,300 from year end. Year-to-date income received is \$14,900, or 81% of the budgeted amount. Incurred operating expenses are \$18,100 or 71% of the budgeted amount. IRS Form 990 and the Washington State filing were made in August.

2016 AWON Election: Each board director needs to decide whether he/she is running for re-election by the

evidence. To account for Poulsen and Copeland, scientists from DPAA used circumstantial evidence that placed them on the aircraft and accounted for as them as part of the group.

, For additional information on the DoD's mission to account for Americans who went missing while serving our country, visit the DPAA website at www.dpaa.mil or call (703) 699-1420.

November board meeting. **Billie Meeks** volunteered to chair the Nomination Committee.

Allen County Public Library: The board approved *The Star* editor **Kathy Le Comte's** request to add the Allen County (Indiana) Public Library to AWON's mailing list to receive *The Star*. The library has one of the largest genealogical collections in the country. It recently received several older issues of *The Star* as a donation. Upon reviewing them and recognizing their historical value, the library requested current issues as well.

AWON Veterans Stories: The board discussed a proposal by **Diane Pollard** to collect stories from orphans who are veterans, linking those stories to their father. Diane will contact Kathy Le Comte to draft an announcement in *The Star*.

Next meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting of the AWON Board of Directors is November 17, 2015.

Bonnie Oates, Secretary

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

AWON Board Business 17 November 2015

2016 Conference Report: Conference co-chairs Sam Tannenbaum and Paul Bremer gave the conference report. At present, 76 people have booked cabins, 44 active members and other friends, family and grandchildren. The board and co-chairs discussed communication issues due to this being the first cruise conference AWON has hosted. The committee will meet again in January.

Financial Report: As of October 31, cash on

...continued on page 26

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.

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**Deadline for the
April Issue
is March 1**

...Minutes, from page 25

hand was \$78,300, including \$10,200 that is restricted. Year-to-date income is \$15,900 or 86% of budget, and incurred operating expenses are \$18,900 or 74% of budget.

Lapsed Members: The quarterly reminder to members whose memberships lapsed in the last three months will be emailed in January. A letter will be mailed in January to those whose memberships have been overdue longer.

Gold Star organization: The board discussed at length the potential collaboration of Gold Star families, blending members of AWON and Sons and Daughters in Touch (SDIT), the Vietnam orphans group. **Jerry Pinkerton** shared a productive discussion he had with SDIT. He will be able to give a more detailed report after February when they will have a joint meeting. **Ed Peters** will contact SDIT board member Tony Cordero to see if he is interested in a discussion also.

2016 AWON Election: The board discussed the nominating process for the 2016 board election. **Norm Burkey** will address some of the concerns brought up, in the *President's Message* in the January issue of *The Star*.

Father Tributes: Using an online link, board members were able to view Ed Peters' demonstration of the Father Tribute upgrade to the AWON database. The board discussed the process of how the database now could display tributes on a website.

AWON Wreath Project: The board approved the revised process for coordinators to follow in presenting wreaths at overseas American cemeteries. The board sent a letter to **Rik Peirson** in reference to the wreath project.

Monthly Meetings: After much discussion about the number of issues the board has to complete before the election, the board decided to hold monthly meetings instead of bi-monthly.

Next meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting of the AWON Board of Directors is December 8, 2015.

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

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 and Donation Options

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

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

Would you like to include a donation for:

AWON Memorial Day Wreath Fund? \$ _____

AWON General Fund? \$ _____

Total Dues and Donations 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
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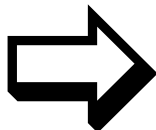
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The Star

"Breaking Down the Wall of Silence"

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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.

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