

Crash site, witnesses found 70 years after shootdown

Never too late to start, restart research



Helen Patton, left, granddaughter of U.S. Army Gen. George S. Patton, places a rose at the gravesite of 1st Lt. Hanford "Rusty" J. Rustand, as Marilynn Rustand Lieurance, Rustand's daughter, looks on at the Luxembourg American Cemetery and Memorial. (Credit: U.S. Air Force photo by S/Sgt. Joe W. McFadden)

by Marilynn Rustand Lieurance

All I knew was his name and that he was killed during the war. There was an ache inside of me. I wanted to know who my dad was, and if I was anything like him.

After Mother died, I found a folder in the bottom of a trunk in a dark corner of the attic, and saw my first picture of my dad - 1st Lt. Hanford "Rusty" J. Rustand. I was in my thirties back then, and already knew at some point I would be searching to find somebody who knew my dad, and who could tell me something about him. While looking through the papers in that folder, I discovered Dad was a pilot who flew a B-17 during the war. A list of names and addresses from the 1940's helped me start my on again, off again search through the years.

In 2000 I learned about reunions of various military units, and sought to find my dad's 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association. I became a member, and in preparation to attend my first reunion in Galveston, Texas, I had a business card made with my dad's picture and unit information. I researched the identification number of the aircraft he was flying during his last mission and came up with the name *PARD*. Tony Starcer was one of three men known for painting the nose art on aircraft and jackets during World War II, and he had painted the nose art on *PARD*.

While searching the Internet, I stumbled across Mike Banta's website *The 91st Ring*, and I posted a

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President's Message

by Norm Burkey

OK, I'll admit it. I am one of those glass-is-half-empty kind of people. I can find the downside in any situation. I'll also confess something else. With many situations I am of two minds, unable to make a choice, either in thought or action. Let me illustrate this in two ways.

Thanks to AWON and only to AWON, I was encouraged to contact my dad's outfit. I could fill an entire issue of *The Star* with the many experiences and relationships that have come from that decision to join them.

More specifically, I became a member of the DC Chapter of the 10th Mountain Division Association. I was able to join in many of their activities, including driving World War II vets to Walter Reed to visit current 10th Mountain wounded. When I became a member, we had more than 20 World War II vets, many of whom became dear friends. Now we are down to two or

three. I can't decide whether to be happy or sad about this situation, so I choose to be both.

The same can be said of my experience with AWON. I have made so many friends and have been able to share "dad stories" with many of you. Without AWON, I wouldn't have been able to travel to Italy with the 10th Association and actually discover the foxhole where my dad was killed.

That's the happy part. The sad part is that we are all now over 70. Even more sadly, we have started losing members to serious illness and death. Our recent "non-election" was the impetus to formulate specific plans to insure that we downsize an orderly and efficient manner (see page 3).

You will be hearing all about downsizing, but for now, let's give ourselves permission to be happy and sad.



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AWON board lays out plans to downsize

by AWON Board of Directors

We have communicated in the last few issues of *The Star* that the AWON Board of Directors has concluded that it is time for AWON to downsize its operations.

As the board has pointed out, our members are aging (we are now all over age 70) and, collectively, we simply do not have enough interested and engaged grandchildren to “take over the reins.” The board has been working on our archives project for several years and discussing issues around downsizing. But, our recent non-election experience brought us to the conclusion that we need to start working on this inevitable event in earnest.

The board has been able to reach and discuss the situation with most of AWON's First Founders to seek their input. The general consensus from them is that we are on the right track.

The board has identified three major activities that need to be accomplished if we are to downsize in an orderly and legal manner. You might say they are the ABC's to our plan, and are outlined here:

Archives

As indicated above and in *Star* articles, the organiza-

tion has been working on this project for several years. It requires many steps. First, AWON needs to complete an assessment of what is in the AWON Collection, which includes an itemized list as well as a calculation of its size, expressed in total cubic feet – something archivists want to know. We then need to decide what we want to archive and then prepare those items for archiving. This involves deciding preservation method (for example digitization), deciding how we want the collection used and, finally, searching for and selecting the appropriate repository. The board has had discussions with some archiving organizations and will seek professional help once we decide what to archive.

Business and Legal Considerations

AWON is a corporation licensed in the state of Washington and registered as a non-profit organization with the IRS. Among other decisions, the organization will need to decide when to dissolve the corporation and what to do with any remaining AWON funds.

Celebration

The board plans to celebrate AWON's existence and what

AWON has meant to all of us over the past twenty plus years. The consensus from talking with our First Founders and within the board is that it should take place in Washington, D.C., probably in 2018. This will be two years after the upcoming 2016 AWON Florida Cruise Conference, and should allow sufficient time for planning.

The board's plan is to seek your participation in each of these actions. You can begin now by providing your thoughts and ideas to the board.

The board has advised members previously that officially, we do not have an elected board of directors. The three most recently elected board members agreed to continue, but only because those six members whose terms have expired agreed to continue to serve for at least another year. Do not be concerned that present board members are abandoning AWON. We all are committed to helping AWON finish well.

At the peril of being repetitious, we want all our members to understand the situation.

The email addresses of AWON directors are on page 2. We look forward to hearing from you about the ABC's of AWON's downsizing.

Think of father as role model rather than 'dad'

Siblings proud legacy of 'the lieutenant'

by Roberta Lyons Nolan
and James E. Lyons

To the U.S. Army, he was #01307719 (1LT, 106th ID, 423rd Reg., M Co.). To the German Army he was #71893 (POW-Offlag XIII-B). To us, he is simply the Lieutenant (Father).

1st Lt. James O. Lyons is one of countless thousands for whom Memorial Day was designed and enacted, to be remembered, and honored. It is for this reason that of all the national days honoring our armed forces, Memorial Day is uniquely special to my brother and me. And so, I considered it a great honor and privilege to be invited by AWON to attend the national observance in Washington, D.C., this past Memorial Day.

The special events on that glorious day - meeting the president, breakfast at the White House - though enjoyable, were eclipsed by the stirring and solemn ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns. I felt so honored and, more importantly, I felt my father was so honored. I also felt so humbled. I was in the presence of greatness. Not just the medals, brass stars, and dress uniforms. I was humbled by the greatness of my AWON companions with whom I formed an instant bond. I was touched by the stories I heard and by the genuine care with which my own story was received. Laying the AWON wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns was a moment of deep emotion. My brother categorized it as a "true Gold Star moment." Indeed. Looking over the rolling hills of Arlington National Cemetery, I was struck by the enormity of the place. So very

many graves!! I left taking a piece of it all in my heart.

My brother and I had previously read the stories of those who served during World War II on the Our Fathers page of the AWON website. It widened our scope of appreciation for all the fallen heroes of that conflict. Our soldier, our Lieutenant, was one of countless thousands of soldiers, sailors, and airmen, who made the ultimate sacrifice. It is an overpowering realization.

We have always referred to our father as "The Lieutenant." He was never "Dad," or "Daddy," or "Pop." We were a family for just the blink of an eye. My brother, Jim, was 17 months old and I, Roberta, was a mere five weeks old when he died. In all of the relatively few photographs we have of him, he is in his officer's uniform. It's the only image we knew. There are no photographs of the milestone events such as sitting on his lap, first day of school, graduation from college, weddings, him with his grandchildren, because those moments never happened. They were never meant to be.

The following is taken from a tribute to the Lieutenant written by Jim which was previously published on the AWON Our Fathers web page:

We were six months past D-Day. The 106th ID (The Golden Lions), had recently been mobilized and the 423rd regiment was deployed to a relatively quiet sector of the Ardennes. In the early morning hours of December 16, 1944, all hell broke loose! At about 5:30 AM, the Fifth Panzer Army attacked positions held by



Roberta, standing beside her father's grave for the first time, in 2014.

the U.S. 28th and 106th Infantry Divisions. During the period of 16 December and 21 December, Lt. Lyons and his mortar squads delivered offensive fire, and constantly repositioned the mortars, in order to avoid receiving return fire. During this period, all three mortar positions eventually were hit, and damaged or destroyed. Lt. Lyons courageously gathered together the men and the munitions that remained from the three positions, and consolidated them all into one fully functional mortar squad, where they continued offensive fire until ammunition was depleted.

21 December was the first day of the capture and imprisonment of thousands of U.S. soldiers, including Lt. Lyons. Within a few days, the War Department notified his parents and his wife, Sally, that he was being detained as POW #71893. In the weeks that followed, he and thousands of other soldiers were transported by truck and then train, essentially hop-scotching their way from POW camps, to Stalags (for enlisted men), to Of-flags (for officers only). Eventually, POW #71893 was assigned to Offlag 13-B near Hammelburg, Germany.

The next four and a half months would be, in a word, grim. The horrible conditions, the weather, the diet they were forced to endure, and the despicable treatment by the guards, would combine to exact a high price: nearly 15% would die, and 70% would be severely weakened by dysentery, pneumonia, malnutrition, or exposure. Daily life in a POW site has been well-documented. He was liberated by Patton's 3rd Army on 16 April 1945, and repatriated to Camp Kilmer, NJ, on 28 April 1945.

Upon his repatriation, hospitalized, he was given two pieces of news: his father, George, had died just weeks earlier, and the second, more joyful, was that on April 10th, he had become the father of a daughter, Roberta. She never felt his touch or heard his voice. He never saw us again. He died on 15 May 1945 from malnutrition/pneumonia as a result of his imprisonment and maltreatment by the German Army.

Of equal or perhaps more importance was our journey, over the course of 70 years, from knowing practically nothing about our father, to knowing everything we needed to know about him, including life-lessons on heroism, sacrifice, perseverance, love of country, and love of family.

When our mother decided to remarry in 1946, she went to the Lieutenant's mother, Nellie, our grandmother, to introduce him and get Nellie's blessing. Our grandmother liked our step-father immediately and happily gave her blessing, but beseeched the couple not to adopt us

and change our name, but rather let us keep the Lyons name. She reasoned that the Lieutenant would want his name and legacy to live on in the next generation and beyond. And so it was done. They agreed, and we have always been Lyonses. Our last name did present some conflicts and quandaries as young elementary school students, however.

When I was in first grade, my teacher called me up in front of the classroom to question who had signed my report card. When I said my mother had signed it, she asked, "Well, if your mother signed your report card, why is



Jim and Roberta, holding a display case containing the Lieutenant's photo, medals and insignia.

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...Legacy, from page 5

her name Rapp and your name is Lyons?!!” I said I did not know. Truth be told, at that age, I did not even know mothers had last names! She chastised me and told me I better find out! I was traumatized! My mother then explained to me, but I was confused and afraid. I feared that if my “father” was not really my father and that I had had another father, then, maybe, my mother wasn’t really my mother. Who was I? Who were they? Terrifying for a six-year-old!

It was not until about 1980 when my brother was able to visit the Lieutenant’s siblings and learn many details and stories of his life. My brother then delved into World War II, especially the Battle of the Bulge. He obtained the Lieutenant’s complete Army record, and obtained his medals and awards. He already had the Lieutenant’s dog tags, other insignia, and the Lieutenant’s handwritten correspondence from his days as a POW.

My brother shared what he had learned with me. By learning everything about our

Lieutenant, we gradually came to know our Lieutenant. His heroism, courage, fortitude, endurance, intrepidity, and being lion-hearted - were his legacy to us. These gifts served us well in our personal battles with cancer, disease, and the grief endured by a spouse's death. They also were indispensable in helping us to achieve personal goals that often were both distant and lofty. I hope we have done well with the time we've been given by his sacrifice. I believe he would smile and say, “mission accomplished.”

One word that would have described him then, and us now, would be “Lyons-hearted.” In our mind’s eye he is the Lieutenant, but he lives in our hearts as “The Eternal Lieutenant.” We can say, through our life experiences, we are so like him! So very much like him! If only we could have known him.

We are World War II orphans, but we have gained far more than we have lost. We have acquired the Lieutenant’s legacy, a priceless and enduring gift that we cherish, and have passed on to the next generation. As Nellie said, “the Lieutenant would have wanted it that way.” And that’s the way it is!

Honor your father with an AWON Tribute

An AWON Tribute is a great way to honor and preserve your father’s memory. Just write your father’s story in 500 to 1,100 words, and submit it and a jpeg image of him in uniform (or the best photo you have), to Nancy Sue Johnson at janceysue@gmail.com.

If you don’t know how to start, look at any of the nearly 200 AWON Tributes already posted on the AWON website, such as the one for 1LT James O. Lyons referenced in the article above, and 1LT Hanford J. “Rusty” Rustand in the feature article of this issue.

Your AWON Tribute will be posted on the AWON website and preserved for posterity in the AWON database.



SGT William E. Crowley



Welcome New Members

M. Elizabeth Galligan, FL, dau of PFC Joseph J. Jordan, Army
Sandy Kaye Severson, SD, dau of ILT Donald D. Almond, Army Air Force
Lyle H. Mann, WI, son of MAJ Lyle H. Mann, Army
Audrey Nadeau Greene, DE, dau of PVT Philip W. Nadeau, Army
Arthur Clark, NC, son of PFC Willard Francis, Army

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

Orphans invited to participate in panel discussion

Veterans, Pearl Harbor Day observances set

AWON members are invited to participate or attend events in honor of Veterans Day at the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.; and Pearl Harbor Day at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans.

The Friends of the National World War II Memorial and the National Park Service invite AWONers to the memorial on Veterans Day, November 11, 2016, to pay tribute to the more than 16 million men and women who served with the U.S. armed forces during World War II. The event begins at 9 a.m.

Author and veteran Allan Howerton will offer personal remarks about his service as a rifleman, messenger and company communications sergeant during the Rhineland, Ardennes (Battle of the Bulge), and Central Europe campaigns. Friends' chairman Josiah Bunting III and Gay Vietzke, superin-

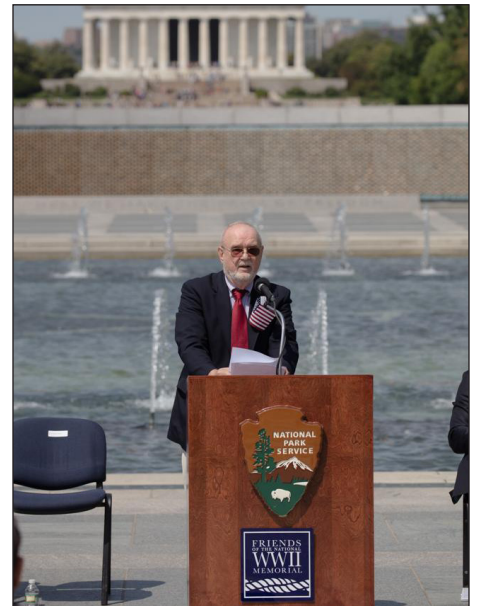
tendent of the National Mall and Memorial Parks, will offer welcome remarks. The Military District of Washington will provide military support.

As part of the ceremony, Howerton and a dozen other World War II veterans will place wreaths at the Freedom Wall (the wall of gold stars) in remembrance of the more than 400,000 Americans who lost their lives during the war.

If you would like to RSVP or participate in the Veterans Day ceremony at the memorial, email Friends of the National World War II Memorial executive director Holly Rotondi at hrotondi@wwiimemorialfriends.org.

The National World War II Museum in New Orleans is commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor with a panel presentation composed of war orphans.

If you would like to share



AWON Board President Norm Burkley, speaking at the National World War II Memorial for a Mother's Day program in 2016.

your story at the museum as part of their public programming on Wednesday, December 7, 2016, AWONer Sam Tannenbaum advises you to reach out to Lauren Handley, Assistant Director for Public Programs, at lauren.handley@nationalww2-museum.org.

paragraph with the heading, "Did You Know My Dad?" Frank Farr answered that posting. He had flown one mission with my dad on 09 October 1944. Frank was the navigator, and the B-17 was the *NINE-O-NINE*.

A big break came at the end of 2013 when I found the first family member connected to my dad's crew. Don Griffith was the nephew of T/Sgt. John A. Griffith, the radio operator. I began pushing to find at least one other family of Dad's crew, so I could invite them to a 91st BG reunion planned for May 2014. I got real lucky, and found them all in time to invite them to attend the reunion. A few of the families were able to attend, and some of us took a flight together in the *NINE-O-NINE*. I had researched all the crew and made a private presentation to each family who attended, and mailed the other folders to the families who were not able to attend.

As far back as I can remember, it was always a goal to visit the grave of my father. He was buried in Luxembourg, and I was finally in a position to go there and honor him by visiting his grave.

Many months before my trip I was networking with people and had become acquainted with Herr Albert Trostorf, the Mayor of Merode, Germany; and Herr Jorg Dietsche, a retired colonel from the German Air Force whose dad opposed my dad during the war. The colonel now works with our government's DPAA (formerly JPAC) to find our American MIA's. While in Germany I also met Prince Simon de Merode, son of Prince and Princess Leonel de Merode of Westerloo, Belgium.

As a member of AWON I was designated in 2015 to present the flowers on behalf of AWON dur-

ing the Memorial Day ceremony at the American Military Cemetery in Hamm, Luxembourg. While there I met His Royal Highness Crown Prince Guillaume of Luxembourg, son of Grand Duke Henri. I also met His Excellency Mr. Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister of Luxembourg.

Constant Goergen, founder and honorary president of the United States Veterans Friends, Luxembourg (USVFL) - and an AWON Overseas Friend - was my contact in Luxembourg, and an extraordinary host while I was there. He arranged to have me taken to a luncheon where I met Patrick Murphy, also known as Murph. We soon discovered we have a great deal in common and talked throughout the entire lunch.

Murph is commander of the Civil Air Patrol Squadron in Spandahlem, Germany, and also a member of DPAA. He founded an organization named WWII Battlefield Research and Preservation Group (WWII BRPG).

I told Murph about my goal to locate the site near Merseburg, Germany, where my dad's B-17 crashed after coming under

enemy fire on November 2, 1944, and that it was looking like I would not be able to accomplish this. Murph said he was interested in helping me. Over the next seven months, Murph and I exchanged three or four emails. He had done his own research and told me he was confident he would be able to find the crash site, and planned to take a look in the spring of 2016.

In May 2016 my husband, Don, and I were on our way to Nevada on business and to meet friends at a ghost town. Our suitcases were packed and in the car when I went to check email and turn off the computer. Wow, an email from Murph said he was in Germany, thought he had located the crash site, and had waded through two feet of muddy wetlands until twelve midnight, but didn't find



1st Lt. Hanford "Rusty" J. Rustand

anything.

The following day he was planning to go to Berlin for further research, and then return to speak with people in the village. A few people actually remembered the crash. Dad's plane was the only plane that had gone down in their small village - still rural farmland. They gave details of what happened, and then pointed to the location of the crash. It was immediately next to where Murph had been searching a few days earlier. The big plus was the actual crash site was just above the wetlands, on high and dry ground.

Murph went to the field, already planted with a new crop of corn emerging, and found some small pieces of the plane. He emailed me right away, and I booked a flight to Luxembourg. He picked me up at my hotel and we drove seven or eight hours to Germany, got settled in our rooms, and then went to the site. I stood there thinking about that last mission, one of the worst air battles of the war, and all the things I had read and heard about it. For me it was like a silent picture surfacing in my mind, and there was an odd calm about me.

As an experienced treasure hunter, my trained eye was a real plus. It wasn't long before I found pieces of Plexiglass from the nose of the plane, and then a few metal fragments. Murph set up speakers and played a recording of *Amazing Grace* and *Taps* on bagpipes. It was an emotional time.

The next day we located the mayor's daughter, Marie, who understood what we were there for. Marie spoke very good English, and while Murph was talking with her, she made several phone calls. When a stranger drives into a small village of 45 people, everybody knows you're there, and most are a bit reluctant to talk with strangers about the war. It was most helpful to have Marie there to interpret for us.

First we went to the house of an older lady, and spoke with her through the open window of her

home. Then, there was a man who was twelve years of age back then. Murph had spoken with him when he was there two weeks earlier. Next, we found a gentleman who recalled being six years of age when he saw the plane in the air and on fire. He saw it explode and crash, breaking into two pieces - the tail being completely separate from the rest. This man, now 77, said his father took him to the crash site. He said the pilot (my dad) was laying up close and next to his plane. He was face up, with blood all over his face, and he was dead. He told how he could see this clearly in his mind, as it still haunts him to this day.

Upon our return to Luxembourg I attended the Memorial Day ceremony at the American Military



Marilynn Rustand Lieurance, saluting after laying AWON's wreath during the 2016 Memorial Day ceremony at the Luxembourg American Cemetery and Memorial. (Credit: U.S. Air Force, S/Sgt. Joe W. McFadden)

Cemetery for the second year in a row. I had the honor of meeting Helen Patton, granddaughter of General George Patton, and Rene (Rini) Majerus. Together the three of us presented the AWON wreath. Helen took a long walk to my dad's grave and placed a long stem red rose there, honoring him and all the soldiers there.

War is such an awful, but sometimes necessary, thing. The men who fought for every freedom we enjoy each day of our lives will always be our heroes. Their bravery is our history, and we will always remember them for

it.

Our veterans should know the people of Luxembourg remember what our soldiers went through, both in the air and on the ground, and that they remember the cost of lives to twice liberate their country.

Every village has a memorial in it. A day is set aside every year to remember and honor our American soldiers, our fallen soldiers, and all those who served and lived. Rain or snow does not stop this celebration, as people gather at memorials, conduct ceremonies, and as night falls they light torches and parade through the villages. The running theme of Luxembourg is WE WILL NEVER FORGET!

The AWON Bookstore congratulates and recognizes all the Orphan and Family authors and producers who have honored their fallen loved one through print, film and digital media

PRINT

Patrick Audinet	Susan Johnson Hadler	Conrad John Netting IV
Kay Brigham	Virginia Hallman (mother)	Jerry W. Pinkerton
Bruce Brodowski	Richard Carlson Haney	Damon Rarey
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Thomas Childers (nephew)	BJ Halverson Henry	Sharon Estill Taylor
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Rondy Elliot	Marilynn Rustand Lieurance	Huey Tyra (nephew)
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If your name is not listed as an AWON author and should be, please notify Walt Linne. Also, please send a copy of your work to the AWON Bookstore for the AWON Archives. Address on page 12.



AWON BOOKSTORE

Price List / Order Form



BOOKS

Authors in **bold** are orphan or family members • Items marked with an asterisk (*) include P&H

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All proceeds from Audinet book benefit AWON

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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*
(VHS) **REDUCED!** was \$5.00 \$ 3.00*

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

____ *AWON 2000 Conference: Journeys - Finding Our Fathers*
(VHS) 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

Close Out on the following AWON merchandise:

____ Sweatshirt \$45.00
only two left: one white 2XL, one blue 2XL
____ Golf shirt ____ white ____ blue \$35.00
only three left: one white XL, two blue XL
____ 20th Anniversary Logo T-shirt (navy) \$20.00
only three left: blue 2XL

____ 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

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



In July, eight cowpokes from the SoCal Regional Group saddled up and headed over to the Lone Star Steakhouse in Lake Elsinore, California. Before, during, and after chowing down on our grub, we sat around our campfire (prepared by Barbara Merryman Swenson) and enjoyed sharing and listening to one another in our own inimitable way. Pictured, from left, are Bob Porter, Linda Hallack Porter, Patrick Byrne, Sharon Crowley Connor, Vic Muller, Dale Guernsey Roybal, Barbara Merryman Swenson and Dick

Swenson. Several of the usual attendees, including Roger Connor and Rita Niro Blair, were unable to be with us and were missed. *Sharon*



On April 23, ten orphans and three spouses gathered for at least the eleventh AWON York Gathering. We had a delightful time talking about our fathers, sharing what we have been doing, and looking forward to the upcoming AWON Florida Conference cruise on the *Freedom of the Seas*. A delicious meal was served at Hoss's Steak and Sea House. That restaurant certainly does take excellent care of us. Norm Burkey and Ed Peters talked about AWON and the future of the organization. Norm also shared information about the Memorial Day activities at the White House. Rusty Lerch shared information on the World War II weekend in Reading. It was an enjoyable day for all who attended. Watch for the next AWON Gathering in York in April 2017. Pictured in the front row, from left, are Sondra Sarles, Lynne Locrine, Maggie Fenstermacher and Donna Allen. In the back row are Ken Sills, Janice Buterbaugh, Jeanne Rhinehart, Lerch, Peters and Burkey. *Lynne*

Thanks for being an AWON sleuth!

Our members are great at finding "new" WWII orphans. When you find someone, 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 phone number also would be helpful.



Vietnam vets visit AWON fathers at Normandy

The six photos below were taken in June 2016 by AWONer Bill Chiodo of the graves of six AWON fathers buried at Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial. Bill and several of his fellow Vietnam veteran friends were sailing on a week-long *Viking* cruise from Paris to Rouen and back. During their second day in Rouen they took a bus trip to Normandy. In preparation for the visit Bill created brief biographies with photos of each of the six fathers which he handed out to his buddies before visiting the cemetery. At the cemetery they left a rose at each grave. A special thank you to Bill and his friends for taking time out of their tour to visit some of our AWON fathers and to bring back these photos.



SGT Dallis Drake
father of
Laura Drake Taylor



LCOL Percy O. Forgy
father of
Jack and Pamela Forgy,
grandfather of Mike Forgy



CPL John S. Howe
father of
Dale Howe Sisco



MAJ Robert A. Lane
father of
Sandra Lane Walker



CAPT Edward A. Peters
father of
Edward A. Peters III



PVT Roy U. Talhelm
father of
Donna Talhelm Allen

AWON turns 25 in December

AWON will mark a milestone at the end of this year. This December is the 25th anniversary of AWON's founding.

AWON Founder Ann Mix registered the name *American WWII Orphans Network* with the state of Washington, and in December 1991, AWON was licensed as a nonprofit business corporation.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the country, on December 7, 1991 - 50 years to the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor - the first AWON meeting was held in Washington, D.C.

Because a newsletter is not published in December, starting in January 2017 *The Star* will begin a series on AWON's early days, including photographs and comments from those who were there at the beginning.

Identifying *Oklahoma* dead may take five years, DPAA

In June 2015, following a change in policy, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) started the process of disinterring 61 caskets from the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific containing the remains of up to 388 sailors and Marines who died aboard the *USS Oklahoma* during the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

To date the DPAA has identified at least eleven remains, with the agency estimating that 80 percent of *Oklahoma* unknowns are capable of being identified within five years.

The *Oklahoma* lost 429 servicemen, second only to the *USS Arizona* in the greatest loss of life that day. Only 35 of the 429 were identified in the years following the attack. The unknowns were disinterred the first time in 1947 during an unsuccessful attempt at identification. In 1950 they were laid to rest in 61 caskets in 45 graves in Hawaii. DPAA decided to disinter the remains in 2015 due to advances in forensic technology.

Meanwhile, the identification continues of remains belonging to about 35 Marines who were killed on the island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert islands.

In June 2015 History Flight, Inc., notified DPAA that they discovered a burial site containing the remains. One of those identified so far was 1st Lt. Alexander Bonnyman Jr., father of AWONer Alix Bonnyman Prejean.

Poem publishing project proposed

AWON First Founder and AWON Bookstore manager Walt Linne is exploring the idea of publishing poems written by AWON members.

Over the years *The Star* has published many poems written by members (and still welcomes poetry!). Walt would like to collect these poems and publish them in a small booklet, but he needs help.

Previously published poems would need to be identified in back issues of the newsletter. Authors would need to be contacted for their permission. Finally, if enough poems are collected poem copy would need to be prepared for publication.

If you are interested in helping with this project please contact Walt at wlinne@uipu.edu.

New renewal form on AWON website

Now there are three ways you can start or renew your AWON membership.

A form always appears on the inside back page of *The Star*. There also is a fill-in form on the AWON website. And now you can download a pdf form from the website, fill it out, and mail it in with your payment.

Thank you, webmaster Rik Peirson, for updating the membership form!

AWON Board Business
21 June 2016

2016 AWON Conference: Conference Co-chairs **Sam Tannenbaum** and **Paul Bremer** were unable to attend the meeting due to travel. Since only three board directors will be in attendance at the conference, the board decided to hold an informational meeting rather than an official board meeting during the cruise. The board will prepare in advance for a discussion about the status of AWON.

Financial Report: Year-to-date operating income stands at \$10,500 and operating expenses at \$6,300. Memorial Day wreath income is \$4,644 with a budget of \$1,500. To-date reimbursement for wreaths purchased for eleven cemeteries totals \$2,074. Year-to-date dues receipts are \$10,200, with income exceeding the budgeted amount by \$6,600.

AWON Memorial Day Wreath Program: After much discussion the board decided that **Gerry Morenski** and **Jerry Pinkerton**, with the help of *Star* editor **Kathy Le Comte**, will develop an article for the July newsletter listing donations collected for each overseas cemetery. The article is to be approved by the Board.

AWON Archives Project: **Norma Nicol Hamilton** discussed with **Walt Linne** and AWON archivist **Ann O'Connor** the rehoming of AWON holdings from Ann's residence to the AWON office at the American Legion in Indianapolis. Ann and Walt will work out the details of moving the AWON collection. The board also continued their discussion about what items should be archived. **Norm Burkey** will compile a list of items suggested by directors for archiving by directors, and then the board will discuss and decide. Once

this process is complete Norm and **Ed Peters** will arrange to visit a professional digital archiving company in Maryland for a quote.

Money Market Account: Treasurer Jerry Pinkerton has started the long process of opening an AWON money market account.

2016 AWON Election: Norm Burkey has written an article for *The Star* explaining the board's decision to not hold an election.

AWON Father Posters: Gerry Morenski will ask Holly Rotondi, executive director of the Friends of the National World War II Memorial, if they have interest in the AWON Fathers Posters.

First Founders: Norm Burkey will provide the board with a list of AWON's 13 First Founders and an outline for discussing AWON's status with them.

Bonnie Oates, Secretary

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

AWON Board Business
19 July 2016

2016 AWON Conference: Conference Co-chair **Sam Tannenbaum** reported that 33 members and 22 guests have registered for the conference, with 21 having booked the cruise but still have not registered for the conference. The deadline is August 1. The board discussed preparing for a discussion about the status of AWON during an informational meeting during the cruise.

Financial Report: The report shows steady progress. As of June 30, cash-on-hand is \$84,400, with \$11,400 of operating income received and \$6,600 in operating expenses. Receipts total \$10,700.

Money Market Account: A money market account has been opened with BBVA Compass.

AWON Archives: The board discussed at length the potential archive items that each director suggested.

Norma Nicol Hamilton, AWON archivist **Ann O'Connor** and **Walt Linne** will inventory the AWON collection, and Norma will present a progress report in September.

SDIT: **Jerry Pinkerton** and **Ed Peters** will follow up with Tony Cordero of Sons and Daughters in Touch, and give a full report for the August meeting.

AWON Father Posters: **Gerry Morenski** will discuss with Holly Rotondi, executive director of Friends of the National World War II Memorial AWON's father poster collection, and will inquire about having AWON representation at Victory in the Pacific commemorations.

First Founders: Each director will contact an AWON First Founder to share with them as a courtesy the present status of AWON and its future downsizing. The contacts should be completed by the end of August with a short report written by each board member.

In-Person Board Meeting: A tentative date for the board's in-person meeting, held during off-conference years, was set for March 2017, possibly in Indianapolis.

Bonnie Oates, Secretary

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

2016 AWON Conference: The conference roster is complete. The roster has been sent to Conference Co-chair **Paul Bremer**, and information for name badges sent to AWON webmaster **Rik Peirson**. The board discussed the process that will be followed for the informational meeting at the conference. In addition to discussing the status of AWON, other topics of discussion will be AWON's multiple attempts to reach out to other war orphan organizations for potential collaboration, and the expansion of the AWON Father Tribute project to include mother tributes.

Financial Report: As of July 31 cash-on-hand is \$81,900, including \$13,600 that is restricted for Memorial Day wreaths. Operating income stands at \$12,000 of operating income, and operating expenses at \$9,100. Year-to-date dues receipts are \$11,400. There will be no cost for a board election this year for which \$800 had been budgeted. A money market account was opened with \$10,000 as approved by the board. AWON's CD matured and was rolled into the money market. Year-to-date interest income is \$340. IRS Form 990, return of organization exempt from income tax, has been completed and filed.

AWON Membership Form: **Jerry Pinkerton**, **Gerry Morenski** and *Star* editor **Kathy Le Comte** were authorized to update the AWON membership form for maximum three-year paid memberships instead of the current maximum five years.

SDIT: After many delays AWON has received no response from Tony Cordero of Sons and Daughters in

...continued on page 18

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
1004 Williams Blvd.
Springfield, IL 62704
(217) 414-1400 (cell)
johnkath5@comcast.net

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

...Minutes, from page 17

Touch, indicating possibly no interest in forming a new organization with orphans from the Vietnam War. A follow-up with a Korean War orphans group left the impression that their mission is different than AWON's. **Norm Burkey** will follow up and possibly provide an article for the Korean orphans' newsletter to see if there is any interest.

AWON Father Posters: **Gerry Morenski** reported that the Friends of the National World War II Memorial would be happy to receive AWON's large collection of poster-size photos of fathers that was created for the 2004 AWON National Conference in Washington, D.C. during the dedication of the National World War II Memorial. The process of turning over the posters to the Friends will be discussed after the AWON cruise. AWON also will give the Friends a video of the 2004 AWON National Conference.

AWON Archives: **Norma Nicol Hamilton** shared with the board a list of the materials AWON archivist **Ann O'Connor** has received, preserved and stored as the AWON Collection for the past 16 years. **Walt Linne** is compiling a list of AWON authored books and other works. The board will look into two references given for institutions that might be interested in the AWON Collection. The board also discussed archiving information stored on the AWON website in the AWON database.

First Founders: Directors contacted AWON's First Founders to inform them of AWON's current organizational status and its future. The board discussed the discussions they had with the founders, and the founders were appreciative of the information and offered their help in any way.

In-Person Board Meeting: The in-person board meeting has been tentatively set for March 2017.

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 _____

The Star • October 2016

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	2 Year	3 Year
Basic	\$25	\$45	\$60
Sponsor	\$50	\$90	\$120
Gold Star	\$100	\$180	\$240

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
mail it and form to:**

Jerry Pinkerton
AWON Treasurer
2848 Woodside St. #401
Dallas, TX 75204

Editor, The Star
1004 Williams Blvd.
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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

Gerry Morenski dbmanager@awondb.org

Archives

Ann Whelan O'Connor awolaojr@earthlink.net

Norma Nicol Hamilton rlhnnh@comcast.net

Bookstore

Walt Linne bookstore@awon.org

Dues

Jerry Pinkerton jerry.pinkerton@sbcglobal.net

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ListServ

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The Star

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Washington, D.C. Liaison

Lee Mathis jlee123@verizon.net

Website

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