

The



Star

Issue 87

"We Speak Their Names"

January 2018

In "tribute to the children of fallen American liberators"

Margraten choir to perform at Gala



The Mergelland Men's Choir

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AWON is honored to announce that the Mergelland Men's Choir of the Netherlands will give a tribute performance to AWON members at the 2018 AWON Gala Gathering, September 28-29, in Washington, D.C.

The choir will be in the United States September 25-30. The group of 25 have planned their holiday for this week.

"We have started all preparations and are in touch with the Dutch Embassy and Hendrik "Henne" Schuwer, Dutch Ambassador to the United States, and with The Netherlands-America Foundation in New York," explained choir member Ton Hermes in an email to AWON.

In addition to performing for AWON, the choir will sing during the Anne Frank Award presentation and at an event to raise funds for maintenance and repairs to the Netherlands Carillon near the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial. The carillon was a gift to the People of the United States from the People of the Netherlands in 1960.

The choir also is fundraising to help defray some of the costs of

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President's Message

by Norm Burkey

The present board wishes it had come sooner, but, nevertheless, we have some exciting news. A group of our members have come forward with a proposal to continue our operations for several more years.

This has several practical implications, beginning with the need for an election, the details of which will unfold in future editions of *The Star*. We are grateful to several members for their willingness to begin the process by serving on a nomination committee. Paul Bremer has agreed to serve as chairman along with Gloria Layne and retiring board director Mike

Forgy. As required by our bylaws, Mike will serve as the board representative on this committee.

Going forward, if you are contacted by this committee to serve on the board, please give it serious consideration.

Another practical aspect has to do with membership. For several reasons, our membership and dues levels have been dropping for the past few years. We have accumulated sufficient funds to finish our major projects underway thanks to our membership's dues and contributions over the years. However, our cash reserves are dwindling and we ask that everyone reading this message continue to pay your dues to keep AWON operating beyond 2018. As we do every year we will contact recently lapsed members to encourage them to rejoin AWON.

Our plans for the Gala Celebration this coming September remain unchanged. However, the reason for the board meeting scheduled during our time in D.C. has changed dramatically. Instead of a farewell, the new board will assume its duties at that meeting.

Please plan to come to Washington, D.C., to celebrate what AWON has meant to all of us and to show support for our new board of directors.

Hooray for AWON!

REMINDERS

- **Are your dues due?**
Check your address label
- **Tell AWON when you head to or from your winter home**
- **Tell AWON when you move or change your email**
- **Make all checks payable to AWON**
- **Print clearly**



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Issue #87 1M (01-18)

Declare by March, ballots appear in June

Candidates sought for AWON board

It's election time again.

All nine seats on the AWON Board of Directors are up for election in 2018. No current directors plan to run for re-election. Seats are held for two years.

Directors set and follow policy, adopt an annual budget and operating plan, oversee AWON's activities, and plan for the future. In the past directors met at bi-monthly (every other month) board meetings by phone, but lately have met monthly. The board is required to hold an in-person meeting in the year an election is not held.

If you are interested in running for the AWON Board of Directors contact AWON Nomination Committee Chair Paul Bremer by March 1. His email is bremergolf@aol.com. In addition to Bremer the committee consists of Gloria Layne and current director Mike Forgy.

Candidates will be expected to answer a short questionnaire about themselves and their goals for AWON, submit a recent photograph, and sign conflict of interest forms.

It is expected that candidate biographies and the election ballot will appear in the April issue of *The Star*. Members in good standing (dues paid for 2018) will have the opportunity to vote. Ballots must be cut out or photocopied from the news-

letter and mailed with a post mark no later than June 1.

To submit a valid ballot the member's name and address must appear on the outside of the mailing envelope, in order to be cross-checked with a list of members in good standing. After verification, the ballot will be removed and the envelope discarded, maintaining the secrecy of the ballot. DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME OR ADDRESS ON THE BALLOT. Instructions on where to mail the ballot will appear on the ballot.

The results of the election will be announced in mid-June and the results will appear in the July issue of *The Star*.

The newly-elected board will be sworn in in September at the Gala Gathering in Washington, D.C. / Arlington, VA.

As Board President Norm Burkey states in the *Presi-*

dent's Message on page 2, a group of members have come forward with a proposal to continue operations for several more years. They need your help and support. Please consider running for the Board of Directors or volunteering for AWON in other ways.

AWON awaits word on WH Mem. Day invite

In the recent past the White House invited AWON to a Memorial Day breakfast. The White House did not hold a breakfast in 2017. If one is held this year and AWON is invited, AWON-er Marilyn Lieurance will coordinate. If you are interested in attending a potential White House Memorial Day breakfast, contact Marilyn at ml-rustysgirl@yahoo.com.

AWON Director Email Addresses

Norm Burkey

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Mike Forgy

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Gerry Morenski

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Bonnie Oates

oatesb@twc.com

Ed Peters

edpeters2@mac.com

Jerry Pinkerton

jerry.pinkerton@sbcglobal.net

Diane Pollard

dahpollard@gmail.com

Register now for 2018 Gala

Registration is open for the 2018 AWON Gala Gathering, "Honoring Their Legacy / Honoring Our Legacy." A form appears on page 4. Registration is due by July 1.

The celebration will be held Friday and Saturday, September 28-29, 2018, at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, Virginia, just outside Washington, D.C. Members and guests will arrive on Thursday and depart Sunday.

Check-in begins Thursday afternoon, followed by a casual evening reception. An open board meeting will be held Friday, with a semi-formal reception in the evening.

On Saturday, AWON will board buses to Arlington National Cemetery for a wreath-laying ceremony, and then to the National World War

II Memorial for a ceremony in memory of AWON fathers. Saturday evening will be a cash bar reception followed by a banquet. The evening will be capped off with a nightcap reception.

No events are scheduled for Sunday. A form for placing a memorial ad in the gala program book appears on page 7. More conference details will be announced in the April issue of The Star and on the AWON website.

Hotel Reservations

Room rate is \$149 per night Sept. 26-30. Free hotel-airport shuttle to/from Reagan International Airport ONLY. See page 7 for reservation link and phone number.

...Choir, from front page

the trip. Choir members are footing some expenses, as is the choir organization and the Margraten Grave Adoption Foundation. If AWON members would like to help defray some of the choir's costs, they can give via PayPal through the email account info@adoptiegraven-margraten.nl, with a note "AWON Gala 2018." Donations also may be sent to AWON, payable to AWON, with a note "Margraten Choir" in the memo line.

Ton provided the following background information about the Mergelland Men's Choir:

We are the Mergelland Mannenkoor (MMK), with about 25 members between 50 and 70 years of age. The choir was established in 1995 after a reunion of the boys' choir De Lentebloempjes (Spring Flowers).

All of our choir members live in or near Margraten town, and their fathers have seen and experienced the atrocities of war in Margraten and even assisted in digging graves. Some others lost their land in 1944 due to the American cemetery. There is a variety of backgrounds and professions among the members, which adds to the choir's charm, so, 'more of the same' is not applicable for the MMK.

Our repertoire also is very diverse. We sing sacred as well as secular songs in various languages. Besides the sounds of Limburg province - we sing a complete holy Mass in local dialect songs - we sing English songs like Prayer of the Children (Kurt Bestor), Bridge over Troubled Water (Simon and Garfunkel), You Raise Me Up (Secret Garden), and Hallelujah by Leonard Cohen. German and Russian songs also are in our repertoire. A special song is Lord I'm Coming Home, sung occasionally at the Netherlands American Cemetery during Memorial Day and recently at the funeral of one of our deceased members (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qj0Y3kSPovk>).

In 2015 many members volunteered for the project choir for the opera Tosca, brought by the Maastricht Opera Zuid company. In 2016 we organized the musical D'r Put (The Well), together with the local MTG theater association. D'r Put, set in the year 1541, is about two rival groups and forbidden love (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OcLsOhpgOmo>).

Periodically we add luster to a special moment in people's lives like a wedding anniversary, jubilee and, regrettably, a funeral. Besides the music there is room for camaraderie. Every year we organize a family event in the local area for the choir members and their families.

Registration Form
2018 AWON Gala Gathering
Honoring Their Legacy - Honoring Our Legacy
Washington, D.C. • Arlington, VA
September 27-29, 2018
Return registration and fee by July 1, 2018

Print clearly

Member Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone/Email: _____

Is this your first AWON Conference? yes no

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

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

Special Needs: _____

Registration Fee

(includes Fri reception, Sat banquet and bus transportation)

Member \$190 \$ _____

Guest \$190 \$ _____

Total registration fee enclosed: \$ _____

Indicate choice and number of banquet entrees: Chicken _____ Salmon _____ Vegetarian _____

Name Tag Information (please print clearly)

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

Name of guest: _____

Serviceman's name: _____ Branch of Service _____

rank first middle last
KIA or MIA (circle one) Date KIA/MIA _____ Country KIA/MIA _____

Mail registration form with check payable to **AWON** to:

AWON 2018 Gala Gathering
5745 Lee Road
Indianapolis, IN 46216

Deserves more than sign, Bronze Star - son

WH help sought to better honor private

by George Gary Kinley

I am George Gary Kinley, born September 16, 1938, a son of Pvt. Fred Kinley. Dad was raised in Portage and Summerhill, Pennsylvania. He had three children. My name is George but I go by Gary because my immigrant grandmother could not say George when I was born.

I have every piece of mail that my parents sent to one another from the day Dad was drafted, every piece of mail from the government concerning his death, and his burial records. He died with two dollars and change in his pocket.

It was a bad time. Mother worked to keep us as the government would not pay out Dad's insurance. She had to prove we were Dad's children. No one, not even the Red Cross, offered help. The government came to school and called us out of class and interrogated us and asked all kinds of questions about Mother.

My father died in Seltz, France, on December 14, 1944, the only one to die from the 313th Infantry Regt. that day. He was the oldest man in the 313th, born in 1907. He is buried at Lorraine American Cemetery. I talked to S/Sgt. James Carter who was there

about when, where and how he died a hero, five months after the battle ended in the German town of Aschaffenburg. Carter said Dad was a Bazooka operator. There were four anti-tank guns, each with a Bazooka operator and a loader. My father got a shell fragrant wound in the neck, which cost him his life.

I have every letter received and sent, some Dad never even got to open as they were returned "Deceased." I opened the last one around December 14, 1962. I could go home and tell you where the car parked when they delivered the telegram on December 26, 1944. Merry Christmas, kids. The man handed the telegram to my mother and she said, "I know what it is," and he left. No one came, I mean no one, ever came to see us.

My father's name is posted on a sign on the barracks of the 313th, along with 14 others. I have sent information to President Donald Trump and I received a reply that it was re-

ceived and would be looked at. I want to know why Dad was recognized in the middle of Germany after the war ended, and was not made known in the United States. Why should he be honored in Germany and not in the country he died for? All I want is for my dad to be honored for what he did.



Above: sign on the barracks in Germany for the 313th anti-tank company, bearing Pvt. Kinley's name, top center column. Below, display of Kinley's photos and medals, including Bronze Star.



I have a letter that states Company K saved the bridge for the company to cross, and it later saved the bridge to Remagan, Germany. Company K was the first to cross the bridge and into Germany.

I have had three soldiers look at all my information and they all said that my father should have a higher medal for his actions. One of the three thought Dad should have had more honor than what was given in the sign in Germany. My thought is if Dad was honored for the right to have his name on a sign in the main barracks in Germany, why was he not given an honor in the country he died for?

Cong. John Murtha (D-Pa.) ordered Dad's medals and he was not aware of the German sign. What effect would it have had if Cong. Murtha had known about the sign, and what Dad did to get his name on it? Dad had to be one of the last ones to be listed on it as he was ahead of the Band Of Brothers when Company K saved the bridge.

I had a wonderful step-father who married Mother three years after Dad's death. He and Mother had two more sons. Six-and-a-half years ago I had cancer of the vocal cords and had six months to live if I did not have them removed, I am typing this so you know I made it. It's ironic that Dad died from a neck wound, and I almost did from my neck. And if it wasn't for AWON I may never have found the answers I looked for for 20 years.

How to make reservations at Crystal Gateway Marriott:

Option 1: Copy and paste to your web browser, then follow prompts:

[https://aws.passkey.com/
event/49583672/owner/1487/home](https://aws.passkey.com/event/49583672/owner/1487/home)

Option 2: Call 800-228-9290, mention bloc of rooms for the American War Orphans Network

Rate \$149/night. Suggested nights Sept. 27, 28, 29. Credit card needed to make reservation.

2018 AWON National Conference *Honoring Their Legacy / Honoring Our Legacy* 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: Rachel & Sam, 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

Two pilots, two losses, two families together in peace

Serenity meeting German pilot's family

by Laurence Smelser

October 14, 2017, was a day of mellow and sublime emotions.

In southern Germany, near Lake Constance, I met with Egon Mayer's nephew and wife, Helmut and Ilse, and found them to be a gracious couple. Mayer was the noted German pilot who shot down my father's B-17. We compared family and military photographs at their farm house and I was struck by the similarities between our two families, particularly between Egon's mother and my own grandmother.

Just outside the family's chapel, built by Egon's grandmother on the edge of the farmyard, which contains a plaque honoring local men who had died in World Wars I and II, I was able to convey greetings and best wishes to the Mayers from the family of Walter Gresham, the American pilot who had shot down their uncle on March 2, 1944. Although Gresham had evened the score, it was now a moment of deep emotion and reconciliation.

For years I had been aware



Laurence Smelser, center, with the nephew of the pilot who shot down Smelser's father in 1942.

that Hauptmann (captain) Egon Mayer, as group commander of the III. Gruppe Jagdgeschwader 2 (JG 2) "Richthofen" - a fighter wing in the Luftwaffe - had brilliantly developed the first frontal attacks on B-17s during their daylight bombing missions. The B-17s were using a strategy of "box formations" to concentrate their collective fire power. Unfortunately Mayer's attacks were directed at my father's group that was attempting to bomb the submarine pens off the coast of St. Nazaire, France, on November 23, 1942. Mayer is credited with the take-

down of two B-17s that day, including the one my father, Maj. Harold C. Smelser, was on as commander of the 324th Bombardment Squadron, 91st Bombardment Group. His bomber, #41-24503, was nicknamed *Pandora's Box*.

As officers and commanders my father and Egon were surely equals. But the B-17s' frontal armament was woefully inadequate at that time. Mayer was credited with 102 enemy aircraft shot down in over 353 combat missions - the first fighter pilot to score 100 victories entirely on the

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Welcome New Members

Susan Conner, NH, dau of SGT Lloyd E. Hatt, Army
Bruce Doyle, FL, son of ILT George E. Doyle, Army Air Force

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

Man remembers serving with AWONer's father

Twenty years after starting to research his father, AWONer Jerry Pinkerton is still learning new information.

Last October, Jerry inquired to a veteran who served with his father about another veteran who served with Pinkerton's father and received the following email reply:

Hi Jerry,

This is Pete "Pedro" Garcia. I saw Edwin on Sept. 30th. He looked great. My daughter from Houston came to Harlingen for a two-week stay and offered to take me anywhere I wanted to go. At 91, my son and daughter are worried about everything I do. They make me feel older -- Bless them for caring,

I think Edwin is a wonderful friend very good at talking and remembering things in every detail and me, I cannot speak to group of people. I

...Smelser, from page 8

Western Front. My father also had seen service in Java in early 1942, and had himself taken credit for many Japanese losses. So the loss of life all around was grim. Families, though proud, were wounded forever.

But meeting with the Mayers removed a veil. And seeing for the first time a part of Germany that is surely one of the most beautiful places in the world, and being reminded that this is a heritage from which I am partially descended - Schmeltzer, now Smelser, in English - has been an experience of great satisfaction and newfound peace.

am a Catholic and I had a hard time reading on the podium the readings from the book for that day.

Jerry I do remember your dad. When we first arrived at Villaba, Northwestern Leyte, we were all adjusting to every thing. I mean everything was new to us. We arrived at this Villaba and we were told this was our base of operations then we were shown where the tent was, where we were to have chow. We were in line and I started talking to this guy next to me. I remember his last name. He was Pinkerton. Our base area had a fence near this tent and leaning and pushing each other were many, many Filipinos begging for food. Kids, girls, boys, grandmas, old people, they had mugs, old cans, anything that would hold food. The people called and begged for food. I ate very little food and gave it (to) them. I could not eat (and) neither could your dad because he was already there giving them his food. Jerry, like I said, we had just arrived at that place.

After that I don't remember nothing until we started going out searching for Japs. Ed, who has a camera clicking in his brain, says Pinky was in the same platoon. I do not remember seeing him. I was a rifleman, machine gunner, and last on 60-mm team. I did not talk to your dad again that I recall, but was one of those who shed tears when he was killed.

Jerry, I am a Texan of Mexican ancestry. At the time I was discriminated against so I stuck with the Hispanic most of the time. I learned in the service that there were very good, nice white people, too, and your dad was one of them. I am glad you sent the email. Times have changed a lot. God bless you and your family.

Promise kept: man finds half-sister

by Bob Hudson

My father was stationed in Manila, Philippines, when the war broke out. He had a fiancée and a two-year-old daughter when the Japanese attacked. He was sent to Bataan immediately. After months of fighting, he surrendered and was on the Death March. In September 1945 he was liberated from a slave labor camp in Japan not far from Nagasaki. He wanted nothing more than to get back to Manila but was too sick and was sent to the United States.

After six months in the hospital, the Army sent him back to Manila to look for his fiancée and daughter. This was April 1946. He went to his fiancée's family home. They were very surprised to see him, figuring he had died during the war. The news he received from them was devastating.

His fiancée had been raped and murdered by the Japanese. The family barely had the means to feed themselves during the war so they put his daughter in an orphanage. He went to the orphanage and with their help, discovered that she had been adopted by a Filipino doctor who had an American wife. He contacted them and made an appointment to meet them.

York, PA social set for April 21

Lynne Lecrone announces that the annual gathering in York, Pennsylvania, will be held on Saturday, April 21, 2018. As in the past, the meet-up will take place at Hoss' Steak and Sea House on White Street from 11:30 to 3:30.

Lynne is hoping for a large turn-out before the AWON Gala Celebration in Arlington, Virginia, in September. Typically the York gathering attracts 10-20 or more members and spouses every year.

For more information contact Lynne at lynnelec@aol.com or call 717-487-8677 (cell) or 717-757-9424 (home).

They were frightened that he would take her away. After meeting the adoptive parents and being introduced to his daughter as "Uncle Richard," he could tell she was loved and well taken care of. The doctor was wealthy and they all lived in a large mansion-type home. He didn't have the heart to take his daughter away from the only family she had ever known.

He left their home with a photo of his daughter and a promise from the doctor to send him letters about his daughter as she grew and matured. That continued until 1960 and contact was lost. My father never heard what happened to his daughter and on his deathbed, in 1988, he made me promise to find her.

Fast forward to 2007. After years of following dead ends, I started a blog and told the story of my father and his daughter. I retired in January 2012 and moved to the Philippines in February. In November 2012, I received an email from a Filipino in Manila who had stumbled across my blog while researching his mother and her adoptive father. It was serendipitous. This Filipino turned out to be my nephew and my father's grandson. He also has two brothers and three sisters. Sadly my half-sister, my father's daughter, passed away in 1999 from cancer. My 24-year quest was over and the promise to my father fulfilled.

Above is the photo of my father's daughter which sat in a frame on the nightstand next to his bed until he died in 1988.



Leonida Arbis Bondoc



Need help identifying sailor

AWONer Leslie Decker is asking for help.

"I am hoping to be able to identify this man standing by my mother, whom we believe to be a relative," Leslie wrote. "He was in the Navy, stationed in Indianapolis in 1942-43, and from the state of New York."

Leslie believes the photo was taken in Indianapolis because her mother, Dorothy, lived there and worked for Eli Lilly before and during the war. Dorothy Gene was born in 1921 in Orleans, Orange County, Indiana, the daughter of Raymond and Grace Baxter Sanders. The Baxters were from French Lick, Orange County, Indiana. Dorothy went to work in Indianapolis after her high school graduation in 1939.

If you have any clues or suggestions, contact Leslie at 269-381-5842 or fred.decker@wmich.edu.

75th Anniversary observances continue at WWII Memorial

In 2016 the Friends of the National World War II Memorial began a four-year program of observing the 75th anniversary of major World War II battles, along with observances of other events. This special program will continue through Sept. 2, 2020. Below is the list of events scheduled for 2018 at the Memorial:

**Feb. 19 - Battle of Kasserine Pass
75th Anniversary Commemoration**

**March 23 - Battle of El Guettar
75th Anniversary Commemoration**

May 8 - V-E Day Observance

May 28 - Memorial Day Observance

June 6 - D-Day Observance

**July 9 - Battle of Sicily
75th Anniversary Commemoration**

Sept. 2 - V-J Day Observance

**Sept. 9 - Battle of Salerno
75th Anniversary Commemoration**

Nov. 11 - Veterans Day Observance

**Nov. 20 - Battle of Tarawa
75th Anniversary Commemoration**

**Dec. 7 - Pearl Harbor
Remembrance Day Observance**

For more information or to register to attend any of these commemorations at the National World War II Memorial, visit the Friends website at <http://www.wwiimemorialfriends.org>.

Start with basics, let questions be guide

Records abound for those who follow steps

by Kathy Le Comte

I've been wanting to write this article for a long time but like many things in my life, it doesn't get done until someone notices.

AWONer Clyde Gasparick emailed, "... it would be extremely helpful for old and new members to reprint the information that explained the various steps and procedures to get information to get records from the armed services in regards to our fathers death" I'll try to help.

First, some disclaimers. Most of what I know and will present here can be traced back to AWON Founder Ann Mix's 1996 book, *Touchstones*. The book is no longer in print. The contact information it contains are undoubtedly out-of-date, but not the records or advice. Second, I'm not a professional military researcher. I don't know every resource that exists, where it is, or how to get it. All I can do is tell you what I know from my own experience. And speaking of my own experience, my

research has focused on the Air Corps/Army Air Force. Each branch of the service has records and terminology unique to it, so I'm going to focus on basic military records.

There are three basic military records any AWONer would want: the Official Military Personnel File (OMPF, service file), the Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF), and the Veterans Administration Claim File (C-File).

To get these records you need to have three pieces of information: the serviceman's name, including middle initial as it eliminates a lot of others with the same name (if you think the name you're interested in is nearly unique, it's not); all units or ships the serviceman served with, down to the company level, if possible; and the serviceman's serial number. Some other information that is helpful is the serviceman's birthdate, the state the serviceman enlisted from, and date of death. It may seem obvious that one needs to have this information, yet many people expect to get records by just submitting a name or a year of death.

Next, researchers need to understand what happened in 1973.

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Underwood receives grandfather's wings

On June 30, 2017, AWONer Ken Underwood had the honor of pinning his father's World War II silver fighter pilot wings on his son, 1Lt. K. Harryson Underwood, USAF, who is now an F-15E Strike Eagle fighter pilot. Ken's mother pinned these same wings on Lt. Kenneth H. Underwood 74 years ago. He was killed in a flying accident piloting his P-38 Lightning in England on May 18, 1944, six weeks before Ken was born.

...Records, from page 12

1973 Fire in St. Louis

In July 1973 the St. Louis building that housed military personnel records caught fire. Approximately 16-18 million records were destroyed. None of the records that were destroyed had duplicates, were micro-filmed or were indexed. No computer or database existed, and millions of records were on loan to the Veterans Administration. All of this made it difficult to precisely determine which records were lost.

Generally speaking, 80 percent of Army personnel records from 1912 through 1959 were lost, and 75 percent of records for Air Force personnel discharged between 1947 and 1964 with names alphabetically after Hubbard, James E., were lost. Navy and Marine Corps records were filed in a different area and generally survived the fire. For a complete explanation of the fire and its negative and positive results, see this National Archives publication: <https://www.archives.gov/files/publications/prologue/2013/spring/stl-fire.pdf>.

So what does this mean to a World War II-era researcher? If your serviceman was in the Army, his personnel records likely were destroyed. Air Force, Navy and Marines likely survived, although my grandfather's Air Force

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AWON Bookstore Seeks Copies of Family-Authored Books

More than 40 books about AWON fathers have passed through the AWON Bookstore over the years. Authors include one brother, two nephews, one mother and 38 orphans. All of these books are in the AWON Archives, except the nine books listed below. If you are an author listed below, or if you own a spare copy, please consider donating it to the AWON Archives. And thank you to all the orphan authors who have written about their fathers. Telling your story helped the rest of us to understand or to reflect on our own fathers' and mothers' experiences.

These are the works AWON needs:

***Almost A Family* by John Darnton**

***Unmistakable Beams of Light* by Rondy Elliot**

***See Naples and Die* by Robert B. Ellis**

***More Than A War Hero* by Virginia Hallman**

***When Is Daddy Coming Home*
by Richard Carlson Haney**

***Freedom Reigns* by BJ Halverson Henry**

***Delayed Legacy* by Conrad J. Netting IV**

***Phantom Son: A Mother's Story of Surrender*
by Sharon Estill Taylor**

***Phantom Father: A Daughter's Quest for Elegy*
by Sharon Estill Taylor**

Please contact Walt Linne, AWON Bookstore Manager at wlinne@iupui.edu or 317-697-4697 before sending your copy so that multiple copies aren't sent.

In Their Memory

...Records, from page 13

records were singed on the edges and they still smelled of smoke when I saw them in 1998. If a request is made for personnel records that were affected by the fire, the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) will reconstruct the file using other available records. In September 2017 I requested an uncle's World War II Army file. I was told his file was reconstructed and it would cost \$70 for copies. If the file did not contain the information I was seeking the fee would be refunded.

That notwithstanding, records exist; it just may take a while to get them or there may be a significant charge. So let's get started:

Official Military Personnel File (OMPF)

The OMPF contains just that - an explanation of a serviceman's career in the military. It should include dates and places of enlistment and training, duty stations and assignments, qualifications, disciplinary actions, and awards and medals. This file will tell you about his military life, not death.

Request the OMPF from NPRC at: <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records>. Researchers can make their request online, by mail or FAX. The options are near the top of the page in the link above, using form SF-180. The form or a letter with

identifying information previously discussed here can be mailed to: National Personnel Records Center, 1 Archives Drive, St. Louis, MO 63138.

Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF)

Sometimes called the Mortuary File or Casualty File, the IDPF documents all known details about the serviceman's death, handling of his remains, and burial. The IDPF is especially important for those researching Army servicemen because of the loss of service records in the 1973 fire. The IDPF can be used to reconstruct parts of the service file. The file usually describes when and where the remains were found; their condition, along with a skeletal chart; what identifying materials were found with the remains; a description of how the remains were identified; and finally, how the remains were disposed (burial). This file could contain 30 pages or more.

Request the IDPF from NPRC using SF-180 described previously, but under Section II select "other" and request the IDPF.

VA XC Claims Folder

This file is held by the Department of Veterans Affairs and contains both military and genealogical information about the serviceman and his beneficiaries, including service re-

records, vital records, family correspondence, and even photographs. This file may contain military and genealogical information that is hard to find or doesn't exist anywhere else.

The first step in obtaining the Claims Folder is calling the VA toll-free number 800-827-1000 to request the Claims Folder or C-Folder for your serviceman. The staff will need the serviceman's name, serial number and state of enlistment. They then should be able to provide you the XC File number (XC denotes the file is closed, that no one is drawing benefits). They also should provide the address of where to request the claim folder using the XC File number.

Other Records

There are many other military records that are available to researchers. After obtaining these basic records you will be better prepared to consider requesting other records, such as VA Insurance Records, draft registration cards, Ship's Rosters (officers) and Ship's Muster Rolls (enlisted men), Surgeon General Tapes, Chaplains Reports, Missing Air Crew Reports and Morning Reports. All of these records, and more, are available to researchers, but it is advised to follow a step-by-step procedure, starting with basic records and then drilling down as information is obtained and new questions arise.



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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____ *A Bit of Earth*
by **Wendy Crisp Lestina** **NEW!!** \$13.95

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All proceeds from Audinet book benefit AWON

____ *The Beauty of What Remains: Family Lost, Family Found*
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____ *In Search of A pilot: Hanford "Rusty" J. Rustand*
by **Marilynn Rustand Lieurance** \$7.00*

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

____ *The Measure of a Man: My Father, the Marine Corps, and Saipan*
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____ *The Lost Submarine: A True Story of Love and War*
by **Nancy Kenney** \$16.00

____ *"Daddy's Gone to War": The Second World War in the Lives of America's Children*
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____ *In My Father's Words: Letters From a WWII Soldier*
by **Bill McElvain** \$16.00

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by **Jeff Wignall** \$18.95

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by **Imogene Woods** and Twelve WWII Infantrymen \$15.00

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

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by **Huey Tyra**, nephew **REDUCED!** \$2.00

____ *Sporty Course (bomber pilots)*
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by **Clinton Frederick** \$26.95

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

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

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

____ *The Fighting Tigers: The Untold Story Behind the Names on the Quachita Baptist University WWII Memorial*
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____ *They Also Served: Women's Stories from the World War II Era*
by Jeanie Sutton Lambright
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by **Diana Thompson Dale**, niece \$16.95

____ *Father Found: Life and Death as a Prisoner of the Japanese in World War II*

by **Duane Heisinger** \$13.95

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



AWON BOOKSTORE

Price List / Order Form



CD / DVD

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

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

____ *AWON 2004 Conference & WWII Memorial Dedication*
(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*

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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

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____ Tote bag (large) \$20.00
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(circle amount: 1/\$1.00, 5/\$3.00, 10/\$5.00)
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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:
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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 Board Business 3 October 2017

Financial Report: As of September 30, 2017 AWON had \$80,000 in cash, including \$12,200 restricted for Memorial Day wreaths and \$750 restricted for Bataan Death March markers. Year-to-date operating income is \$8,600 and incurred operating expenses are \$13,750. Dues receipts for 2017 to date are \$7,420. In 2016 year-to-date dues were \$11,830.

Action Items: **Gerry Morenski** gave a report on the discussion she had with Holly Rotondi of the Friends of the National World War II Memorial concerning the eventual placement of AWON's database. **Kathy Le Comte** gave input as to the possibility of a future online presence of AWON featuring the newsletter and AWON's Fathers Tributes. Further discussion was given concerning the possibility of AWON leaving a memorial, to be determined, to fathers whose remains were brought home, if AWON distributes memorials to ABMC cemeteries. AWON sent a letter to Ohio Rep. Marcy Kaptur regarding the Remembrance Circle at the National World War II Memorial.

AWON Archives: **Norma Nicol Hamilton** gave a report on the AWON Archives project. Norma reported that member **Judi Hollis Kramer** is willing to have the AWON quilt go to a repository to be honored along with all fathers' information. AWON Bookstore co-manager **Barbara Kelly** sent a current list of books held in the AWON office. There are 46 books plus five others to be purchased and added to the AWON authors list. Also included are titles of film, DVD, etc. Norma will contact Florida State University as a possible archive repository. She also will contact the World War II Museum after a decision is made as to what will go into the Archives. Much discussion was given to each individual item on the archival list. The board approved the following list as archivable items: AWON database, AWON newsletter, AWON Turner book, AWON photo albums, AWON's newsprint portfolios, AWON-member authored books, AWON quilt, AWON Father Tributes (listed in database), AWON 2004 National World War

II Memorial Dedication VHS tapes (transferred into DVD format), and large photos. The following items will not be archived: AWON board minutes, AWON financial records, AWON website, AWON ListServer posts, AWON cemetery visits, any other memorials, AWON father burial information, AWON banners.

Gala Celebration: Co-chairs **Diane Pollard** and **Billie Meeks** gave a report on the gala. There was discussion about bus transportation, awards, welcome letters, and registration forms. A conference registration form will appear in the January and April issues of *The Star*. The deadline for registration being July 1, 2018.

AWON Downsizing: A draft letter responding to questions raised by the membership regarding the downsizing of AWON's operations was emailed to the board, discussed and approved. The letter will be published in *The Star* and on the AWON ListServe.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the board is set for November 21, 2017.

Bonnie Oates, Secretary

This is a condensed version of the minutes. For the complete minutes, visit awon.org. Next scheduled meeting September 19, 2017

AWON Board Business 21 November 2017

Financial Report: As of October 31, 2017 AWON had \$79,000 in cash, including \$12,000 restricted for Memorial Day wreaths and \$115 for Bataan Death March markers. Year-to-date operating income is \$8,600 and incurred operating expenses are \$14,300. Dues receipts for 2017 to date are \$7,520 and interest income is \$457. Expenses year-to-date total \$19,800. Expenses exceed income by \$9,300.

AWON Archives: The board discussed the list of AWON Archives items and clarified what were print

...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
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(217) 414-1400 (cell)
johnkath5@comcast.net

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

...Minutes, from page 17

items and what were electronic. Not all repositories will accept both digitized and print records. **Norma Nicol Hamilton** reported on a phone meeting she had November 7 with Kimberly Guise of the National World War II Museum in New Orleans to discuss their interest in AWON's materials. Another meeting was set up for December 7 with Kimberly Guise and Ellen Clancy. The AWON database, AWON Fathers posters, and AWON Father Tributes are to be excluded from the other items for discussion. Norma will also write a description of the AWON Photo Albums to clarify their inclusion. **Diane Pollard** volunteered to contact University of Florida as a repository. Norma reported she is being assisted with her Archives work by AWON member **Sharon Estill Taylor**.

Gala Celebration: The board discussed the conference registration fee and registration form. The board decided to devote the December 19 board meeting to reviewing the conference budget and cost estimates in order to set registration fees. The board discussed limiting the number of guests attending the conference to each member plus one due to limited seating in the hotel banquet room. Co-chair **Billie Meeks** will send a tentative registration form to the board for approval. There was discussion about the banquet menu, hotel rooms, name badges and memorial ads in the conference program book.

AWON Database: **Gerry Morenski** gave a report on the conference call with Mike Carico of Ablespark Development Services about developing a new website that is capable of linking with the AWON database to make Father Tributes searchable online, plus other pages that would best serve the needs of the public. Gerry also said she would contact Holly Rotondi of the Friends of the National World War II Memorial for a meeting to discuss the possibility of merging with the Friends' organization in order to have a webpage on the Friends' website.

AWON Plaques: AWON sent a letter to Ohio Rep. Marcy Kaptur whose office led the initial effort for the creation of the National World War II Memorial, asking that AWON be a participant and contributor to the FDR D-Day Prayer Addition to the Memorial.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the board is set for December 19, 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 _____

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 and Gold Star memberships also are available. Circle your option and total below:

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year
Basic	\$25	\$48	\$70
Sponsor	\$50	\$96	\$140
Gold Star	\$100	\$192	\$280

Would you like to include a donation for:

AWON Memorial Day Wreath Fund? \$ _____

AWON General Fund? \$ _____

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

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

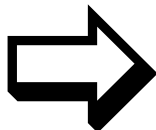
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The Star

"Breaking Down the Wall of Silence"

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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.

AWON Directory

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The Star

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