

The



Star



Issue 89

"We Speak Their Names"

July 2018

Online search leads to answer exchange

Defunct cemetery no longer dead end



AWONer Arthur Chotin, second from left, was the keynote speaker at this year's Memorial Day observance at the National World War II Memorial by the National Park Service and Friends of the National World War II Memorial. See page 12 for details.

by Laura Smail Sims and
Christine (Tina) Newland Darling

Have you ever participated in a series of events that resulted in a memorable outcome, only to step back and exclaim, "What just happened?" When AWON comes into your life, commonalities are shared, barriers are shattered, communication is facilitated, and before you realize it, something miraculous has happened!

AWON maintains excellent public and "Members Only" group pages online. Recently AWON's email moderator, Patty Temte, received the following message in the AWON email box from Christine (Tina) Newland Darling:

Good afternoon. I am hoping you can connect me to Laura Smail Sims who wrote an article for your January 2017 (Issue 83) newsletter, "Locals help find last fight, burial sites." She found the place where her father was KIA in Italy and then the temporary cemetery site in Follonica, Italy, where he was initially interred. I am interested in this because my uncle was also buried there before being permanently interred in Florence. (4/12/18)

Patty contacted AWON Database Manager Gerry Conway Morenski to get my email

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Nine elected to AWON Board of Directors

Nine AWON members have been elected to the AWON Board of Directors, with the following results:

Lorin McCleary	119
Penny Legrand	109
Paul Bremer	103
Walt Linne	103
Rik Pierson	102
Judi Kramer	99
Ann Mix	97
Gloria Layne	91
Barry Barr-Finch	90
Arthur Chotin	77
Jean Rhinehart	70

Ballots were tallied June 12. There were 149 valid ballots. Five additional ballots were invalid due to no return address (2), lapsed memberships (2), and over-voting (1).

The new Board of Directors will be sworn in at the Gala Celebration in Arlington, VA / Washington, D.C., in September. Thank you to all who voted, and to the Ballot Committee of Patricia Temte, chair, and Jerry Temte, Judy Pinkerton and Montie Monzingo.

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Dues Jerry Pinkerton

Bookstore Manager Walt Linne

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Issue #89 1M (07-18)

Torah verse changes view on silence

Introduction: I made the following presentation on April 13, 2018, at my beloved synagogue Temple Beth Elohim in Wellesley, Massachusetts. I am a First Founder of AWON. I have modified it to be meaningful to Star readers and AWON members. Briefly, in the Jewish tradition the first five books of the Old Testament are divided into portions, and those portions are read weekly over the course of a calendar year. These books are called the Torah and are written in a scroll. Jewish boys and girls become a Bar Mitzvah for a boy and Bat Mitzvah for a girl, customarily at age 13. The ceremony includes reading from the portion that is read on the week of their ceremony. It is customary for the Torah scroll to be passed from grandfather or grandmother to their offspring boy or girl becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah on that day. It symbolizes the passing of the torch to a new generation and upholds this coming of age tradition. At Temple Beth Elohim I was observing the 60th anniversary of my ceremony which occurred in 1958. The verse that I read and commented on was Aaron, the priest and Moses' brother, and his reaction to the deaths of Aaron's sons, Nadav and Abihu, when offering their first sacrifice as priests of the people of Israel.

by Eric Rosen

After Aaron and his perform the sacrifices and are consumed by the Lord, a deadly turn of events occurs:

Now Nadav and Avihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his fire pan and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered alien fire before the Lord, which He had not enjoined upon them. And fire came forth from the Lord and consumed them; and they died at the instance of the Lord. And Aaron was silent.
(Leviticus 10:1-3)

Aaron remained silent.

What struck me the most was, "And Aaron remained silent." Why did Aaron remain silent?

His two eldest sons suffered horrendous deaths before his eyes. His heirs to the priesthood were immolated

before his eyes. Not a cry, not a wail, not a renting of his garments, not a lament as Jacob lamented Joseph when he thought that Joseph had been killed by a beast.

In the verses immediately following Aaron's silence, Moses tells Aaron and his surviving sons not to display the outward signs of mourning for Nadav and Avihu. Moses is commanding Nadav and Avihu's immediate family not to mourn, not even to display any of the indicia of mourning.

Aaron is still silent about their deaths.

So I said to myself, "What is wrong with Aaron? What is wrong with Moses' orders to Aaron's immediate family not to mourn Nadav and Avihu? What is wrong with this picture?"

I paused and thought. "Am I being too harsh and too judgmental about Aaron and Moses?" I was reminded of the some readings that I had done during my life:

*"Do not judge others until you stand in their place."
(from the Jewish tradition)*

"First of all, if you can learn a simple trick, Scout, you'll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view ... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it." (To Kill A Mockingbird, Atticus Finch's advice to his daughter, Scout)

"Never say you know the last word about any human heart." (P.D. James, one of my favorite mystery writers, quoting Henry James in her book, Sleep No More)

How often do we observe another person's behavior and are certain we know

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...Torah, from page 3

what motivated that behavior? I do, and more often than not, I am wrong. And then I remembered my own family history.

My father was killed six months before I was born. He was serving in the United States Navy during World War II aboard a destroyer, the *USS Spence*, that sank in a typhoon.

My grandfather, my father's father, was silent about his oldest son's death. My grandfather refused to hold a funeral for my father, and refused to mourn my father as the Jewish tradition mandates. He would not permit my mother to name me after him

as the Jewish tradition requires. Indeed, my father did not have a funeral until 1986 when the United States government arranged, at my request, a full military funeral at Arlington National Cemetery, one that my father's surviving brother and sister and I could attend, officiated by a rabbi. Later that fall, the Jewish War Veterans of Worcester, where my father lived, dedicated a square in his memory.

Perhaps my grandfather's silence permitted me to attend my father's funeral, and to be present for the dedication of Rosen Square, and perhaps even sparing my grandfather the pain of attending. Maybe Moses spared Aaron and his surviving sons the pain of mourning for their son and brothers.

My grandfather died a few months after I became a Bar

experienced seeing his sons die.

And I remembered my own decades of silence in not talking about the impact of my father's death and absence in my life. Silence that did not serve me well. Silence that affected my relationships with men in my life. Loyalty is a powerful trait and certainly one that can be applied even to someone who is deceased.

And I remembered when my father's brother, dying of cancer in 1977, broke the silence and helped me break my silence and come to terms with the absence and loss of my father, becoming a Jewish Big Brother to mentor a boy whose father was absent.

Later, in 1991, through AWON and beyond, I met hundreds of men and women who were at most toddlers when their fathers were killed during World War II. When our silence was broken, we were able to talk with one another and learn how similar our journeys were. I was also able to recognize the silence of other boys and girls whose fathers were killed during World War II and who were not able to break their



Eric Rosen, left, and his father and grandfather, BM1 Samuel Rosen, USNR, and Harry Rosen.

Mitzvah, which he attended. But there was silence at my bar mitzvah about my father's absence. The Torah was not passed from generation to generation. Why? Because it may have been too painful for my grandfather to be reminded of that day when the telegram arrived in January 1945, confirming my father's death. I have that telegram. My grandfather was like Aaron. Perhaps Aaron was silent because of the pain he

Johnston receives Gold Star pin at MS memorial unveiling

In May, AWONer Wayne Johnston and his wife attended the unveiling of the Gold Star Families Memorial Monument at the Mississippi Armed Forces museum at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center near Hattiesburg, complete with 21-gun salute and flyover. This is the first Gold Star Monument in Mississippi. Johnston then was presented with a Gold Star pin by Mississippi Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Jason D. Boyles and Camp Shelby Commander Col. Bobby Ginn. Johnston is the son of B-17 pilot 1st Lt. Gerald W. Johnston who was KIA in Germany on 14 January 1945.



silence and understand and not judge them.

The Torah reading for the following week deals with requirements of Yom Kipper, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. So I got to thinking more about Yom Kipper. My mother passed away on Yom Kipper 1980. She, with considerable help from her mother, my grandmother, aunts and uncles and cousins, raised me in an era when single parent homes were the exception and not

as widespread as they are today.

So look what one verse of Torah of can do. It reminds you of critical events in your life; it connects you with great literature; and most importantly, it can serve as a catalyst for considerable introspection. I related Aaron's silence to my family and personal history of silence. And the more I prepared for tonight, it came to me that my father and my mother are both present this Shabbat,

the 60th anniversary celebration of my becoming a bar mitzvah.

Finally, I learned not to judge Aaron's silence. We all have our own journeys and we should reflect on them and not judge others. Perhaps it is a reminder to be less critical of ourselves. We all have challenges and deal with them in our own way and time. My hope is to be back here in ten years to relay meeting more challenges. Shabbat Shalom.

AWON Connections

Pictures and Stories of Members
Gathering Around the Country



Barry Barr-Finch and spouse Tom Brewer were in Phoenix, Arizona in March, which prompted a lunch gathering at California Kitchens. Seated, from left, are Ted Krissman and Lois Kiely. Standing, from left, are Gail Burk, John Baczynski's cousin; John and Diane Baczynski and Barry. Tom is not pictured due to illness. *Barry*

Le Comte and her husband, John Lupton, who is a Lincoln scholar and answered some questions for Susan. They are pictured at Oak Ridge Cemetery where Susan hoped to and did find Selby's grave, which is in view of the Lincoln Tomb. *Kathy*



In early June Joan Marlow, Patricia Gaffney-Kindig and Maggie Malone got together for their ritual Ladies Who Lunch in New York City. This time they spent time talking about their surgeries, aches and pains. *Patricia*



In March Susan Johnson Hadler visited Springfield, Illinois on a research trip for a book she is writing about her ancestor, Paul Selby. Selby was a newspaperman who supported and was friends with Abraham Lincoln. Susan spent an afternoon with Kathy

Husband of AWON director passes

Richard S. "Rich" Stinger, husband of AWON Director Billie Meeks, passed away May 1, 2018, in Lewes, Delaware, after a long battle with

kidney failure. He was a respected and popular police officer, but he was best known around town as Santa Claus. He was frequently joined by his yellow lab, Dyson, in the sidecar of his red Harley-Davidson motorcycle. He is survived by his wife, Billie; son, Jacob; a sister and many other relatives and close friends.





Texas and Oklahoma Awoners met for lunch in April at the Dallas Outback Steakhouse. It was a long, long lunch, with lots of sharing and just enjoying being together. Pictured left to right are Jerry Pinkerton, Bill Parker, Patty Temte, Jerry Temte, Montie Monzingo, Mark Mulder, Judy Pinkerton, Suzanne Parker, Mary Alice Renner and Ed Renner. Not pictured are Carol and Bill Rogers who had to leave early. *Patty*

Help needed to find dad's regimental comrades

AWONer Laurie Smail Sims is asking for help to find several men who belonged to her father's regiment.

"Building on the article I wrote for the January 2017 issue of *The Star* (*Locals help find last fight, burial sites*), I am completing a book about my father, Pfc. George D. Smail, and that journey I made to follow the footsteps of his unit, the 133rd Regiment of the 34th Infantry Division, in Italy.

"I recently came across a book written in 2007 by Bruno Fulceri, *Il Prezzo della Libertà* (*The Price of Liberty*). It follows the 34th Infantry as it made its way north of Rome and lists, by name, the soldiers that were

killed in action. My father's name is listed!

"In addition to my father, the names of those killed on July 13-14, 1944 from the 133rd Regiment were Raymond E. Goodman, James Arthur Harris, Darwin W. Liston, Richard Smocinski, Leonard L. Beamer and James O. Brashear. No ranks are given.

"I would like to know if any AWON members know of any of these men or can provide me some additional information about their mission and their last days. Just knowing a little about the men who were with my father there is comfort."

If you can assist Laurie, email her at Iss827@gmail.com.

**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

Last reminder to register for Gala

The 2018 AWON Gala Gathering is coming up quick. If you haven't registered yet, now is the time. The last time, in fact.

Some of the events scheduled include Sharing Circles for new members, a performance by the Mergelland Men's Choir of the Netherlands, brief ceremony at Arlington Cemetery, AWON memorial service at the National World War II Memorial, an open board meeting and installation of the new board of directors, and banquet.

There will be a hospitality room, free time for sight-seeing, and opportunities to dine on your own or with friends, as well.

Hotel information is below. The Gala registration form is at right and the form for placing a memorial ad in the program book is at left. All forms and payments are due as soon as possible.

Crystal Gateway Marriott Arlington, VA

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**

Details:

Room Rate \$149/night.

Suggested NIGHTS Sept. 27, 28, 29.

Sept. 26 also available at special rate.

Free hotel-airport shuttle to/from

Reagan International Airport ONLY.

Credit card needed to make reservation.

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

Support sought to lobby ABMC for floral program return **'Government needs to be part of process'**

by Bob Holliday

World War I and World War II are the only wars our country found itself in where there were simply too many killed for our government to ship all the bodies home for burial here in American soil. The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) was started shortly after World War I, and since then has built and beautifully maintained overseas American military cemeteries for Americans fallen from both world wars. The ABMC is part of the executive branch of our federal government.

During World War II our country lost in excess of 400,000. That equates to an average of 220 per day. The exact number of American dead from both world wars and buried or memorialized on a Wall of the Missing in overseas cemeteries is speculative. However, we do know there were also over 183,000 American kids whose fathers died in World War II. No American can simply get into the family car and drive to one of these cemeteries. This becomes important here. Unlike earlier and later wars, for any of us to visit a loved one, or friend, in such a cemetery proves to be quite expensive.

All of those who are buried or memorialized in such cemeteries died protecting the very freedoms we, along with other freedom loving men and women in our world, are fortunate to live with. Simply stated, these Americans died a violent death and gave up everything, their families, their hopes and dreams, and their very futures, to ensure we remain free people.

Knowing we could not simply travel to such cemeteries, and shortly after World War II, the ABMC commenced the Flower Program that worked as follows: Those desiring to place flowers on an overseas grave filled out a ABMC form mailing it to the ABMC along with a personal check to pay for the flowers. In turn, the ABMC sent this to a local florist

who brought the flowers to the grave site. A photo was taken and returned to the person placing the order. This has always worked flawlessly. Even though this system has worked extremely well for almost 70 years, the ABMC has announced it will no longer provide this service. To our knowledge not one family member of an American buried in such a cemetery was contacted to discuss such a decision by the ABMC.

The ABMC has given two reasons for this decision: the ABMC will now concentrate its efforts on acquiring information and displaying it on those buried in these cemeteries, and though all those ordering flowers have always paid for them, the ABMC now announced that a number of people want to use a credit card for payment, and the ABMC has no way to handle payments by credit card.

In answer to this decision the ABMC needs to consider that most all of the 183,000 who lost their dads in World War II would now be in their 70s at least. While it is outstanding that the ABMC desires to acquire information on those Americans buried in such cemeteries, how long will it take to find, contact, collect information on, and write information on those Americans who all paid the ultimate sacrifice? The idea itself is, indeed, a good one. However, perhaps that should have been started over 50 years ago. Obviously, very few, if any, of those who remain of the 183,000 will live long enough to see this become a reality.

Secondly, at a meeting ABMC administrators expressed their views on the ABMC's lack of ability to take payment for flowers by credit card. Both the U.S. Post Office and the IRS are U.S. Government entities and both take credit cards. Perhaps the ABMC should contact those two offices of our federal government and inquire how that is done. Time, and the methods of doing business, move on. The importance of our United States

Government staying involved in showing respect to the families of those who gave up their lives for the rest of us does not.

To those of us who are left behind it is highly important, in fact critical, that our government stay involved in the process of ordering flowers for such a grave. This business of ordering flowers is the only direct thread of connection, the only direct link, we have with our government which tells us that the United States, and all those who are fortunate to live in this country, understand, remember, and care what those violent deaths in combat meant to the preservation of our freedoms. It tells us who are left that our government, thus our fellow citizens, do not and will not forget our family member or us. It was our families and us that were left to pick up the pieces from those two world wars. Turning us over to FDT simply sends the wrong message. Such a decision states those deaths no longer have the meaning or importance they once did. Such a decision strikes at the very honor and integrity of our country. As such it is a very lamentable decision.

In discussions with ABMC it was learned ABMC may stay involved in the ordering of flowers if the ABMC has its budget increased by \$2 million. As explained by those from ABMC, such a budget increase would allow the ABMC to let a contract to an outside vendor who, in turn, would handle the money, place the floral order, and return a photo to the ordering person. In other words, if this were to occur, the ABMC could essentially "pass the ball" to an outside commercial vendor. When this information was given to Iowa Senator Joni Ernst, Senator Ernst requested us to have the ABMC fully explain the need for and use of the requested \$2 million. This question was then posed to the ABMC. An explainable answer was not received.

It is doubtful that many fellow Americans know of this problem. However, it can be said with conviction that those family members and friends with loved ones buried in these cemeteries are simply not being treated correctly in this scenario. Seeing flowers

on a soldier's grave, or beneath a name on the Wall of the Missing tells all, including those who work at such a cemetery, that this soldier is loved, not forgotten, and thanked for giving up their very life for the rest of us.

This decision by the ABMC makes little or no sense. The ABMC's flower program worked flawlessly for almost 70 years. All those buried in those cemeteries died to protect all of us as a nation, our very way of life, and our government. Simply put: our own government needs to stay involved here. Our government needs to do its duty and not pass this on to an outside source.

Those of us from AWON who are working to convince the ABMC to reinstate the flower program are asking our fellow members of AWON for support. Please send an email of support to me at bholliday@sullivan-ward.com, and let me leave you with these final thoughts:

Soldiers never die until they are forgotten. Tomb Guards never forget. - motto of the Society of the Honor Guard, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, U.S.A.

Finally, despite outreach, programs by the DPMO and the various armed service branches, families are seldom asked what works best for them. The military still seems intent on deciding just what the next of kin need rather than instituting a feedback loop for their responses. We can do better for them, too. - *Soldier Dead, How We Recover, Identify, Bury, and Honor Our Military Dead*, Michael Sledge, Columbia University Press, 2004

Show me the manner in which a nation cares for its dead and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender mercies of its people, their respect for the law of the land, and their loyalty to high ideals. - William Gladstone, 1808-1898, British Prime Minister.

Memorial Day 2018 • Stateside

Remarks by AWONer Arthur Chotin

*Memorial Day Observance • National World War II Memorial • Washington, D.C.
May 28, 2018*

Chairman of the Friends of the National World War II Memorial Josiah Bunting, the incredible World War II veterans who are here with us today, National Park Service Acting Superintendent Patricia Trap, Chaplain Wolf, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen.

"Life isn't fair." For those of my generation, we heard it in 1962 when President John Kennedy answered a reporter's question about the inequities of military service. But my family, the members of the American World War II Orphans Network (AWON), and the families of the more than 1,200,000 men and women who have died during our nation's wars, already knew.

For my mother, that harsh statement became personal on November 3, 1945, months after the war in Europe had ended, when my father, delivering the paperwork that would begin the process of sending men in his unit, including him, back home, was killed when the jeep he was in collided with a truck.

"Life isn't fair." And as those of us who have suffered loss know all too well, the effects of that unfairness impact those left behind for our entire lives.

I never knew my father. He was sent overseas when I was ten weeks old and killed a month before my first birthday. For my entire life, my mother couldn't talk about him without crying. I didn't want to make her cry, so I didn't ask. But, even though I didn't

know him, I think of him almost every day. Yet over the years how I think of him, and of myself, changed... evolved.

When I was young, the loss, the pain, was mine. I was the one without a father. At age nine I cried when all of the other kids in class made Father's Day cards to give to their dads. For me, there was no one. Nor was there anyone to take with me to the father-son sports awards dinners in high school.

My mother came, but it was not the same.

And here I am, today. More than 70 years after his death, I am a husband, a father, even a grandfather. I am more than twice the age of that father I never played catch with, never argued with, never even hugged, and at age 73, the single thought in my mind today is that I hope he would be proud of

me. The power those dead have over the ones they left behind.

As I grew older I realized that it was not all about me. My mother had suffered a horrible loss to which, as a child, I was blithely oblivious. The love of her life was gone after only three years of marriage, much of which had been spent apart.

She could never bring herself to visit his grave at the Netherlands American Cemetery in Margraten, Holland. Although she never told me this directly, I know that somewhere deep inside she held out the hope that one day there would be a knock at the door and she would learn... it had all been a big mistake. Seeing my father's grave would make



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it real and would destroy that dream. What I never told her was that, although I didn't understand it at the time, I had the same dream; a knock at the door one night while I was in bed and then my mother and a man I had never seen before came into my room; and he held me; and I felt safe.

She never remarried. She mourned him until the day she died. But she persevered. And she raised me. I never thought of it until recently, but she, like hundreds of thousands of others, was a Single Mom before the term was invented. And like all single moms, or dads, she had to play the role of both parents. There was no job training for that. Just instinct and luck.

And now, as I transition to the latter stages of my life, and think back on it, I realize that the greatest loss of all was not mine, not even my mother's. It was his. True, he was part of one of the greatest achievements of our republic: a citizen army consisting of volunteers and draftees from all regions and segments of America, they took on and defeated the best that the enemy had to offer and saved Western Civilization in the process. And I am sure he would have been proud of that. And probably would be both embarrassed and pleased when people told him he was part of "The Greatest Generation."

But he had dreams for when he returned: he had worked his way through college to become a certified public accountant. He had a good job, he had parents who relied on him, he had a wife and he even had an eleven-month-old baby who was supposed

to be the first, not the only. His whole future was ahead of him. Until November 3, 1945 when his future stopped. What would he have become? What would he have accomplished? Would he have been a success... or a failure? Happily married with more children, or bitter and divorced? He, and the 1,200,000 other servicemen and women who have died during America's wars never had the chance to live out their future. And

for us as individuals, for their families and for their nation, that is the greatest loss of all.

Some of those who died are remembered, some are forgotten. Some were heroes. But I think the word "hero" is over-used today. My father was not a hero. He might or might not have been if he was put into a position requiring heroic action but, as it turned out, he was just a guy who got into a Jeep at the wrong time on the wrong day. Almost half of those we remember on Memorial Day who died during our nation's wars; more than half a million souls,

did not die in battle. And although some of the more than 600,000 who did were heroes, and deserving of praise and admiration, many, if not most, were not. They were victims; men and women who were serving their country and who paid the ultimate price. But there were other real heroes to be found, just not in the usual place.

Merriam Webster defines "hero" in four different ways: 1. a mythological or legendary figure endowed with great strength or ability, 2. an illustrious warrior, 3. a person admired



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for achievements and noble qualities, 4. one who shows great courage. It was their courage, their noble qualities, and their achievements, that distinguished those I call heroes today.

We are used to seeing the photographs or videos of the military burying their own. Folded flags, bugles, precise steps, rifle salutes. They never fail to leave me in tears. Our almost intrusive involvement in that family's loss tends to end when the service is over. But the impact on them has just begun. Surviving widows - and now widowers - suddenly find themselves single-parents, in many cases with the main breadwinner no longer alive. They are trying to raise a child, or children, whose lives have just been shattered. Parents have the horrible burden of living longer than the child they raised and loved. Siblings and friends want to help, but don't know how. And they have their own loss to process as well.

There is not one common story that narrates how all families handle this trauma. But there are common threads. The wife who tries to keep the memory of her husband alive for her children, when even talking about him brings back the horror of the uniforms and chaplain at her front door. The husband who tries to explain to his children why their mother will never be able to come to their school play even though everyone else's mother is there. The grandparents who want desperately to let their grandchildren know about the life their son or daughter led, who can't find the words to speak, but fight through and manage to make their child more than just a story for their grandchildren. Hundreds of thousands of families have had to fight through... fight through the sorrow, fight through the anger, fight through the grief, just to get to the next day. They are the heroes. The survivors. When lesser people would have crawled into bed and never taken off the covers, they put

their shoulders back, stood up straight with a smile on their face and lived. Their noble qualities, their achievements and their courage helped their families, their communities and their nation. They kept alive the memories of their dead. For themselves, and for us as well.

So today, as we begin a day of remembrance, of reflection, and of contemplation, I ask that we remember them all: the draftees and the volunteers; the officers and the non-coms and the enlisted; all of the more than 400,000 who, in World War II, died in service to their country, in service to us, including my father, S/Sgt. Max Chotin, United States Army, serial number 32193094; and their wives and husbands, including my mother, Sylvia Chotin, who if any part of life is fair is with my father today looking down on all of us. And we also remember the 800,000 Americans who died in other wars and conflicts. And the parents, and the children all of those dead left behind. The heroes who remember them, now and always.

In concluding his epic novel, *War and Remembrance*, Herman Wouk wrote:

Though their bones lie in the darkness of the grave, they will not have died in vain, if their remembrance can lead us from the long, long time of war to the time for peace.

May that be the case for my father, and for all the others we honor and remember here today. May their deaths and our remembrance be silent steps on the path to peace.

Thank you.

Editor's note: Other AWONers known to be at the ceremony were Ken Underwood and Betty Volkan and her husband, Vamik. Chotin's speech can be watched online at <http://www.wwiimemorialfriends.org/memorial-day-observance/>. His remarks start at about the 40-minute mark.

Memorial Day 2018 • Stateside



Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument New York City

AWONers Maggie Malone, Betsy Harris and Robert J. Harding, Jr., presented an AWON wreath during the city's annual Memorial Day program. "Great news! We were informed at the wreath ceremony that we would be given time to speak about AWON and ourselves in the program next Memorial Day (2019). We are hoping that a lot more people in the area will attend and participate," Maggie adds.

Special *Punchbowl* Presentation Honolulu, Hawaii

AWONers Alix Prejean and Vanita Rae Smith, along with Smith's grand-nephews, Solomon and Daniel; grand-niece, Grace; and niece, Jana; decorated the graves of AWONer Penny Dempsey Yazzie's father and his crew with leis. Vanita says it was a very special occasion for the children, especially seeing leis on spaces without headstones, "But we know one of those is Penny's Daddy." Penny was beyond appreciative.



Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery San Diego, California

AWONers Barbara Torrey Smith, Roger Connor and Sharon Connor presented the AWON flowers at the annual Memorial Day ceremony at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery in San Diego. Also in attendance were Barbara's husband, Bill; son-in-law, Joe; and grandchildren, Joseph and Christopher.



Memorial

Since 2003, AWON members, family, and Overseas Friends travel throughout the country to attend Memorial Day ceremonies at American War Memorials or memorialized. They participate in the official program and lay wreaths. The floral arrangements for 2018 are pictured here, on the left. The Memorial Day Wreath Project is possible through the generous contributions of wreath coordinators, AWON Overseas Friends, and members.



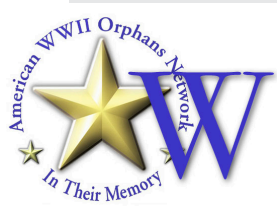
Ardennes American Cemetery and Memorial, Belgium

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



Brittany American Cemetery and Memorial, France

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Brian Hope • AWON Overseas Coordinator – Jack Emery • Presenter – Staff



Suresnes American Cemetery and Memorial, France

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Sharon Crowley Connor • Presenter - Acting Supt. Matthew Brown. Suresnes is a WWI cemetery with 24 WWII unknowns. AWON honors their unknown children for them.



Florence American Cemetery and Memorial, Italy

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Barbara Catterall • Presenter – Staff

Day 2018

... have traveled to Europe, the Pacific, and cities around American national cemeteries where our fathers are buried, presenting a floral tribute along with other dignitaries. The previous page and the following two pages. The AWON generous support, time and financial contributions of AWON for donations. Thank you all for commemorating our fathers.



Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery and Memorial, Belgium

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Rik Peirson • AWON Overseas Coordinators – AWON Belgian Ambassadors and project founders Bernard and Regine Achten • Presenters – AWONers Diane Pollard, Joe Lippi, Audrey Greene and Judi Kramer. Also present were AWONer family members, the Achten, and their daughter, Marie.



Luxembourg American Cemetery and Memorial, Luxembourg

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Roger Connor • Presenters – AWON Overseas Friends, U.S. Veterans Friends - Luxembourg



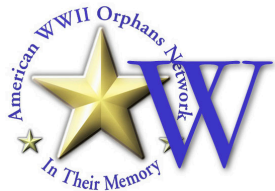
Sicily-Rome American Cemetery and Memorial, Italy

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Bob Meek • Presenter – Site Superintendent



Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial, Netherlands

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Gerry Morenski • Presenter – AWONer Norma Yates Brubaker. Also present AWON Overseas Friend Joost Claassens and Gijs Coppus, photographers.



Memoria



Honolulu Memorial National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific Honolulu, Hawaii

AWON Stateside Coordinator Tatum Young • Presenters – AWONers Alix Prejean and Vanita Rae Smith, center and right, along with Jr. ROTC Cadet assigned to them. Vanita also placed leis at the grave of AWONer Penny Dempsey Yazzie's father, and all of his crew members.



Epinal American Cemetery and Memorial, France

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Sharon Crowley Connor
• Presenters – AWON Overseas Friends Roland Prieur,
Nicholas Liegey and Jerome Leclerc



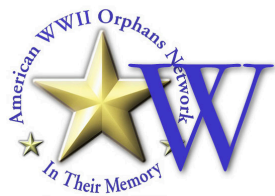
Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial, England

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Jean Rhinehart • Presenter – Staff



Lorraine American Cemetery and Memorial, France

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Paul Bremer



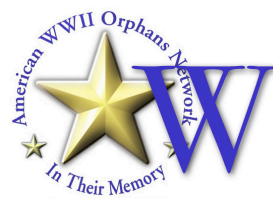
Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial, France

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Charlene Czajkowski • AWON Overseas Coordinator and presenter – AWON Normandy Ambassador Jean-Marc Lesueur and JeanMarc Bonnet, vice president of Association Normande du Souvenir Ae'rien 1939-1945 Orne-Maine (ANSA).



Rhone American Cemetery and Memorial, France

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Vic Muller • Presenter - HMC Adam Clayton, U.S. Naval Hospital, Naples



North Africa American Cemetery and Memorial, Tunisia

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Bonnie Hellums • Presenter – Staff



Manila American Cemetery and Memorial, Philippines

AWON Stateside Coordinator – Patty Temte • Presenter - AWONer Vicente Lim IV

... Cemetery, from front page

address for Tina. It is good to know that a member's contact information is never directly shared without the member's permission.

When Gerry emailed me I was intrigued by the request, but responded with some trepidation. After all, who was this person who sought such personal information about my father? In retrospect, I had absolutely nothing to fear.

"How did you find me?" I asked Tina when I responded to her email.

Tina explained that a few weeks earlier, she thought she would try again to find more information about Follonica, where her Uncle Bob was originally buried. She wanted to know more about its location and when those soldiers were re-interred at their final resting places. She knew that Bob had been moved to the American Cemetery in Florence. Several uncles, aunts and cousins had been there to visit but questions persisted, including why she couldn't find a death certificate for him, and when was he moved to Florence?

Tina didn't think to ask her dad before he passed, but she did ask him why his mother, Tina's grandmother, had not brought Bob home to be buried in Washington. Tina's dad wasn't sure, but he surmised that she must have decided to simply let him rest in peace where he had fallen.

As Tina perused search engine matches that day, her eye was caught by one in particular: an article about "retracing my father's footsteps in Italy in July 1944" and "finding where my father was buried in Follonica." Both the date and the location matched what

Tina was looking for. Talk about catching her attention!

She clicked on the match and the January 2017 issue of *The Star* popped up. That's how Tina found my story.

"To say the least, I was riveted," Tina said. "Laurie's father was in a different regiment but in the same infantry division (the 34th) as my uncle, and was killed just a few days before. This was the closest I had come to finding any information about Bob's outfit and where he had been up to July 1944."

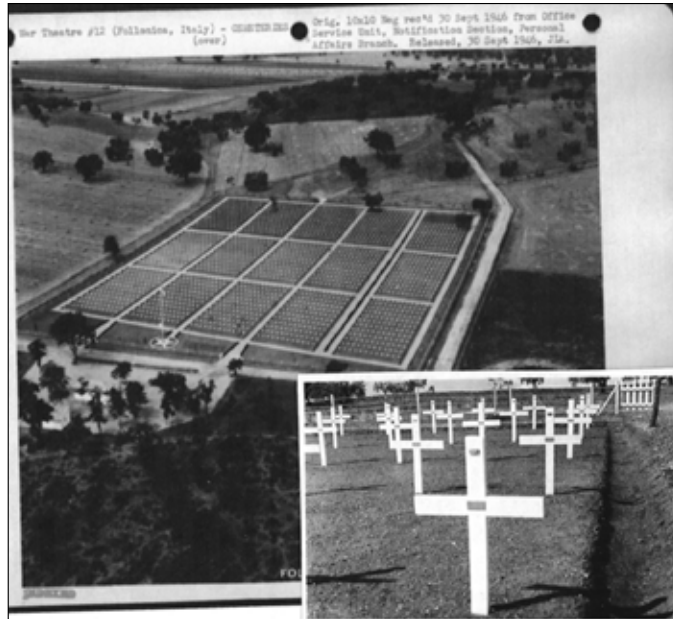
Tina promptly fired off the email that Patty picked up. I wrote Tina back the next day with a long list of resources, including how to get her uncle's burial record.

"I could not believe my good luck," Tina explains. "Our emails began flying back and forth as we asked each other, 'Did you know this? Do you have that?'"

With as much information as I had, there was one thing I had not found. In the years of searching for information about my father, Pfc. George Smail, one elusive component of the narrative was a picture of the temporary cemetery at Follonica, Italy where he had been buried from

1944 to 1949. The cemetery no longer exists, as we learned during our journey there in 2016, with rows of white crosses replaced by a grove of olive trees. In stepped this Internet-stranger-turned-friend, with the information I had been seeking.

"It gave me great pleasure to share with Laura the photos my father had taken when visiting Bob's grave, so she could see what it looked like then," Tina says. "In addition, upon returning to his news reporter job in Indianapolis after the war, Dad wrote a retrospective piece for the paper, recalling his



September 1946 photograph of U.S. Military Cemetery at Follonica, Italy.

visit to the cemetery, including a description of what he saw and how it felt. I sent this to Laura, too."

A Jeep driver (assuming U.S. Army) had given Tina's dad a ride, and as they approached, her dad recalled his first sight of "a field marked singularly by an American flag waving high above 4,000 white crosses ... in this small village by the side of a road, an hour's ride from Grosseto." He thanked the driver, hopped out, and began the mile's walk up the "dry, dusty road ... sun blazing down and perspiration dripping, no breeze," seeing "farmers in the distance, working their land, tending vineyards which bordered this final resting place for American dead."

He described the crosses upon crosses, and how the one on his brother's left was for "a lad from Tennessee, the one on the right from Texas," and how every cross bore the same three words: "Killed in Action." He said a prayer next to Bob's grave, and "an hour later, walked away." (Newland, J.G., "Second Thoughts at a G.I. Grave: Was It All in Vain? A Year of 'Peace' Gives No Answer," *The Indianapolis News*, August 21, 1946, page number unknown).

He never saw his brother's grave again.

"However, I felt that the photos, combined with Dad's recollection of his visit, could now perhaps help Laura partially fill one more gap in her quest to touch, feel and understand the circumstances under which her father fell."

I was able to provide Tina with some information in return. The assistant superintendent at the Florence American Cemetery referred me to a book, written in Italian by Bruno Fulceri, titled, *Il Prezzo Della Liberta. Diario di Guerra, ii nomi dei caduti, 34a Division USA*, 2007. This book listed the names of the fallen from the 34th Infantry who had died in combat north of Rome. I was able to share with Tina that her uncle's death was recorded in this book on page 53: Newland, Robert J., KIA, 17 Jul 1944, 168th Regiment.

Further, I learned that the cemetery in Follonica was built in June 1944 to the rear of the fighting in Cecina and Rosignano in an-

ticipation of casualties from that combat zone. By the end of August, however, the cemetery at Follonica was filled and a new one had to be built at Terricio.

Tina provided me with a photo of the cemetery at Follonica and close-ups of the graves there. When I view that expanse of grave markers, I can only guess where my father had been temporarily buried from 1944 to 1949 - Plot F, Row 62, Grave 734, U.S. Military Cemetery, Follonica, Italy. Thanks to Tina, I now have visual documentation of that temporary cemetery and a glimpse of what it looked like in 1944.

Why I Contacted AWON

by Christine (Tina) Newland Darling

In the mid-2000's, I became acutely aware that my parents would not be around for much longer. Both were in failing health, and their memories were fading. I did my best to pick their brains about things I didn't know. Even so, it seemed the minute they passed away I thought of a hundred questions I should have asked.

My dad and I would have conversations about his family; his growing-up years in Washington, Indiana; his time at the University of Notre Dame before World War II; and so on. Like many World War II vets, he rarely spoke about his time in Europe, claiming that because he was "just a PR guy" for the 71st Fighter Wing of the 8th Air Force, he "didn't really do anything." For the record, he earned the rank of sergeant and as the non-commissioned officer in charge of the news department of the public relations section of the fighter wing, he was awarded the Bronze Star for meritorious service in connection with military operations against the enemy from 23 November 1944 to 8 May 1945.

I knew he was comparing himself to soldiers like his younger brother, my Uncle Bob, who had lost their lives for the cause. While I understood this, it still bothered me that he saw his nearly four years of service

...continued on page 22

overseas as inconsequential and irrelevant. In an effort to persuade him to my side of the argument, I reminded him that a) he was there; b) he was wearing the uniform as directed by his country; and c) if needed, they would have slapped a rifle in his hands and turned him into an infantryman in a heartbeat. He thought for a moment and then slowly nodded his head and said, "Yeah, well...I guess you're right."

Dad and Bob were the sixth and seventh of eight children, born six years apart and into a devout Irish Catholic family where church and faith in God were not just the backbone of one's existence, they were the point around which everything in life revolved. Dad had a paper route, delivering *The Washington Democrat* around town. He graduated high school in 1936, sat out a year to save money, and then made his way to South Bend, Indiana, where he graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1941.

Upon graduation, he secured a job with the now defunct *Indianapolis News*, where he worked until he was drafted in October 1942, ultimately to serve with the U.S. Army Air Forces in the European Theatre of Operations. He had wanted to be a pilot, but he was colorblind and therefore ineligible for flight training. With a college degree and experience with the press, it was determined that he would serve as the aforementioned "PR guy" for his outfit.

When Dad left Washington, Bob picked up the paper route and carried on the tradition, graduating from Washington Catholic High School 1942. Bob was tall and was captain of the 1942 WCHS basketball team that made it to the state Catholic championship tournament in Fort Wayne that year. For Hoosiers this was, of course, extremely important, but for the family, not nearly as important as the depth and breadth of Bob's Catholic faith. Rumor had it that had he lived, he would have entered the priesthood. An older sister had joined the Sisters of Providence many years earlier.

Bob was drafted into the U.S. Army in May

1943, most likely as one of those infamous "replacements," and ended up in Gen. Mark Clark's 5th Army in Italy. He was KIA at age 20 on July 17, 1944, and was interred in a temporary cemetery in Follonica, Italy. By this time, my dad was in France and did not receive the news of Bob's death until nearly six weeks later.

His news reporting skills still actively with him, it comes as no surprise that on August 19, 1944, he wrote a letter home sharing exactly how and where he was when he heard about Bob. He said he was on his way to a rare USO show, the first since their arrival in France the previous month, when someone told him he should stop by the Orderly room to pick up a letter. The letter was from home, and it included a newspaper clipping announcing that Bob had been killed in action in Italy. Dad's August 19 letter was promptly published in *The Washington Democrat* ("Jim Newland Writes About His Brother: Classic Letter Comes from Ex-Democrat Reporter in France," *The Washington Democrat*, August 30, 1944, page number unknown) and generally served as my only reference for most of what I knew about the man. I also knew that after hearing of Bob's death, and finding out where he was buried (putting those investigative reporter skills to work), Dad went AWOL, hitched a ride on some sort of Air Force transport plane to Rome, and then hitchhiked his way to Follonica to visit and take photos of Bob's grave. Upon arrival, the cemetery sentry told Dad that photos were not permitted. As gentle and patient as my father was, I can still envision his "Irish" rising up, as he promptly told the sentry that the man had two choices: either take the pictures of him beside his brother's grave, or answer to his little old gray-haired mother back in Washington, Indiana. The sentry chose wisely, the pictures were taken, and they are still with us. One of those photos appears with this article.

Fast forward to 2007. I was having one of my conversations with Dad about his life. I don't recall how we got on the topic of Bob, but Dad shared that a favorite pastime was

going to baseball games together in Indianapolis. "Two peas in a pod," I thought to myself. While my dad was never a star athlete like Bob, he was the world's greatest sports spectator and loved watching just about any sports event, especially when it was live and in person. It came as no surprise that the two of them would have done this together. With insight like this, I realized just how close the two of them had been, and that my dad had lost not just a brother but a very dear friend.

Now in his late 80's, Dad could not remember certain details about Bob's enlistment, when he was drafted, when and to where he had shipped out, etc. My curiosity piqued, and with Dad's permission, I tried to obtain Bob's Army records that would have provided this information, but they were destroyed in a fire in St. Louis many years ago. I was completely unsure where to go for more information. Internet searches kept looping me back to "sending a letter of request" with the caveat that if the records had been in St. Louis, they were most likely gone for good. Plus, my search was side-tracked by my mother's passing in 2009 and then my dad's in 2013, working full time, raising children and conducting the rest of life that happens when we are not looking. Isn't that always the way?

When my grandmother died in 1980, she was 94 and I was 17. She had outlived her husband, two of her children, her sister, and a great-grandchild. I recall standing next to her casket with my Aunt Margie, my dad's twin sister, when I noticed a beautiful pin on my grandma's dress. It was a gold star on a black background. Aunt Margie explained what it represented: that my grandmother

had lost a son to battle and was therefore a Gold Star Mom. I had never heard of such a thing and never knew that such a commemorative had been given to moms like Grandma. I remember being profoundly sad and sorry for her. I think that might be the moment when I really became interested in Uncle Bob, this gentle giant of a man I had never met, whose loss had surely broken my grandmother's heart. And I realized then that I wished I had known him.

I had heard of AWON, and I assumed that it existed for and primarily benefitted only



Sgt. James G. Newland, U.S. Army Air Forces, at the grave of his younger brother, S/Sgt. Robert J. Newland, at the American Cemetery in Follonica, Italy, c. Aug-Sept 1944. (Photo courtesy of the Newland family.)

those who are war orphans like Laura Sims, children of the fallen. Little did I know that they would take me in as well, helping me uncover answers to questions on behalf of a grateful family. I have wondered if these were questions that perhaps even my father held in his heart, but didn't know who to ask or where to turn to find them. With help from Laura and AWON, together with some of Uncle Bob's wartime letters that have survived, I can say that I may be as close to knowing him as anyone could be at this stage. I am truly blessed as a result.

To say that I am grateful to Laura for her research, and to AWON for publishing her story, is such an understatement. Without them, this one

connection that has meant so much to two people would never have been made.

Laura adds, "I feel truly blessed in return. Not only have I obtained the additional information I was seeking about my father and where he was laid to rest in Italy, I have gained a personal connection with whom I can share information about our family members, victims from the Italian Campaign in World War II. Losses from that time have led to rewards for us now, in both information sharing and friendship."

AWON 'Father' albums now at Florida State

by Patricia Gaffney-Kindig
AWON President Emerita

The *Our Fathers* albums were developed over a period of fifteen years, it was a true labor of love for me, spending countless hours preparing them, becoming familiar with those precious young men and appreciating their presence on my bookshelf.

As a visual artist, my concept was to provide a moment when an orphan could be seen with his/her father, a moment most of us,

including myself, did not have. Two hundred fathers and their child/children are represented in four albums. I've made them available to AWON conferences and other events over the years. It gave me immeasurable joy to know they were being shared. It should be noted that none of the photographs in the albums are originals.

My intention has long been for the albums to be available for viewing and for research by future generations. There was discussion of developing a book. The conversa-

tion regarding archiving began when Anne Marsh from Florida State University attended the 2006 AWON conference in San Antonio to discuss the possibility of our organization's materials being included in their World War II archive developed in 1997. That archive includes the manuscripts and research materials donated by Tom Brokaw as he wrote *The Greatest Generation* and *The Greatest Generation Speaks*, which includes the story of the recovery and repatriation of my own father as well as a story about AWON member Anne Black and her mother.

So when I read the news of the potential closing of AWON, I began looking in earnest for a home for the albums that would provide exposure. Ultimately, I made arrangements to donate them to the Institute on World War II and the Human Experience at Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida. The director of the department, Dr. G. Kurt Piehler and his staff, saw the value of the albums to history and research. My copyright has been transferred to FSU.

The staff recognizes that American orphans of World War II have had little attention and they plan to address

Stars of The Star

Volunteers Who Make AWON Work

***Judy Hoffman
and
Judy Hathaway***

AWON ListServ Moderators

Thank you for keeping the ListServ running smoothly by adding and updating member registrations, keeping a watchful eye on content, reminding us of the rules (!) and giving us another place to ourselves.



...continued on page 27



AWON BOOKSTORE

Price List / Order Form



BOOKS

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

____ *The Gun Club: U.S.S. Duncan at Cape Esperance*
by Robert Fowler **NEW!!** \$15.99

____ *Collateral Damage, A World War II Orphan: Lost and Found*
by **Reda Reynolds** **NEW!!** \$9.00

____ *Feisty: Chronicles & Confessions of an Old PR Warhorse*
by **Joe Finnigan** **NEW!!** \$12.99

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

____ *K.I.A.: An Orphan's Search for His Father Through the Fog of War*
by **Patrick Audinet** \$10.00*
All proceeds from Audinet book benefit AWON

____ *The Beauty of What Remains: Family Lost, Family Found*
by **Susan Johnson Hadler** \$15.00*

____ *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*
by **Kathleen Broome Williams** \$28.00*

____ *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*
by William M. Tuttle Jr., PhD \$30.00

____ *In My Father's Words: Letters From a WWII Soldier*
by **Bill McElvain** \$16.00

____ *Farebersville 1944*
by **Jeff Wignall** \$18.95

____ *A Soldier's Daughter*
by **Lois Brown Klein** \$17.00

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

____ *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*
by William Downes \$24.95

____ *The War Journey of Major Damon "Rocky" Gause*
foreword by **Damon L. Gause** \$21.95

____ *No Greater Sacrifice, No Greater Love: A Son's Journey to Normandy*
by **Walter Ford Carter** **REDUCED!** \$18.00

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

____ *They Also Served: Women's Stories from the World War II Era*
by Jeanie Sutton Lambright
NEW PRICE!! hardcover \$20.00 softcover \$10.00

____ *Finding Billy*
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

that neglect. Assistant Director Marsh plans to feature a father and orphan once a month on the Institute's Facebook page. Meanwhile, the Institute can be found on Facebook by searching InstituteOnWWII. She will advise me when they have completed processing the collection by sending a link to find all four albums. I'll send that information on to *The Star*.

Further, Marsh stated that she has a display case in her office where researchers use the collections, in which she plans to feature AWON and the albums. She added that they will provide a great example to their many visitors of materials that can be donated to the Institute.

Marsh shared that as the staff has viewed the albums, their reaction has been very emotional, "it gave them goosebumps." She went on to say, "These are very precious."

I'm proud the albums are included in the collection at the university where students and scholars from around the world have access to primary sources in their quest for knowledge of the World War II human experience. I've requested that they be referenced by their title and by the American WWII Orphans Network. Once they are processed, they will also be included in fsuarchon.fcia.edu, a database that contains descriptions of the archives and manuscripts

Upcoming Family Update Meetings

If your father is MIA, you can register for a one-on-one meeting with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency to discuss your case. They hold meetings around the country several times a year. To register or for more information, go to www.dpaa.mil/Families/Family-Events/

August 9-10, **2018**
September 8
November 17
January 26, **2019**
February 23
March 23

Washington, D.C.
Philadelphia, PA
Greensboro, NC
San Antonio, TX
San Jose, CA
Birmingham, AL

Legal Guidance Sought for AWON Poetry Book

The plan to republish a collection of poems written by AWON authors over the years and previously published in *The Star* has run into a snag. It is probable that permission to republish is needed from the authors, but AWON has lost contact with many of them or they have passed on. If anyone has a solution to the issue please contact Walt Linne below. The poems are emotional, meaningful, beautiful, and come from the hearts and minds of your fellow brothers and sisters, in memory of our fathers.

AWON Headquarters
Attn: Orphan Poems
5745 Lee Road
Indianapolis, IN 46216
wlinne@iupui.edu

collections. Untold numbers of people will have access to them through the Internet. AWON will have infinite exposure there.

In addition, I donated a copy of *American WWII Orphans Network In Their Memory* published by the Turner Publishing Company in 2004, to the FSU archive. I've recommended that complimentary copies of *The Star*

be sent to FSU to accompany the albums. The staff is looking forward to having them.

I trust that AWON members will appreciate the honor of being represented at the Florida State University Institute on World War II and the Human Experience. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this project. For more information go to ww2.fsu.edu

Town holds yearly observance of its liberation

Journey in time for Czech 'Memorial' Day

This story comes from one of those viral emails that actually turns out to be true.

In the Czech Republic, school children who are in our equivalent of fifth grade are assigned to one of the American and Canadian liberators buried there. Their grave is the student's responsibility for the year and they learn all there is to know about their serviceman. The serviceman's family is sent letters, and they correspond with the child who tends their loved one's grave.

But that's not all the people of the Czech Republic do to show their gratitude.

Every year in the town of Pilsen (birthplace of pilsner beer), citizens hold a Liberation Celebration to honor the American soldiers under Gen. George S. Patton who freed the city from German occupation in May 1945, ending fighting in Europe. Most of the Czech area was occupied by the Soviet army, while the bulk of western Bohemia was occupied by the U.S. 3rd Army led by Patton. On May 6, soldiers with a white star arrived in Pilsen.

During Soviet occupation, the memory of fighting or dead Americans was covered up.

Any official celebration marking the arrival of the U.S. Army in Pilsen was unthinkable before 1989.

"In schools, they told us only (the Soviets) liberated Pilsen, but my family knew the truth," Vladislav Vojtech told *Stars and Stripes* in 2017 leading up to that year's celebration. "This is a big celebration for us. I'm happy to remember the American soldiers."

Since 1990, Pilsen travels back in time to 1945, transformed with American flags, re-enactors, military vehicles, music and even American veterans who liberated them 70-odd years ago. In fact the veterans, who are treated like rock stars, were the focus of the festival for many years, but as age and death decrease their participation the celebration has focused more on preserving history.

Crowds line the streets as a convoy of military vehicles pass. Commemorations are held at war memorials. Mil-



Ceremony of Lights at Brittany Cemetery

For the first time, this past March U.S. Memory Grand Ouest organized a Ceremony of Candles at the Brittany American Cemetery and Memorial in memory of the GIs buried in there, as well as those on the Wall of the Missing.

Jean Marc Lesueur, AWON Overseas Friend and USMGO vice president, explained the USMGO board purchased enough LED lights to illuminate all 4,409 graves, as well as 500 names of the missing, with no financial assistance.

The ceremony had the support of the cemetery superintendent and was attended by several guests.



Crowds line the streets for miles to see the convoy of military vehicles, re-enactors and veterans.

itary camps and canteens are set up and visited. Veterans are photographed and interviewed by citizens and reporters alike. The entire city transforms itself into a living museum and history lesson.

In 2017, 90,000 people attended the four-day Liberation Festival, 40,000 more than the previous year, setting a new record.

In addition to the festival, Pilsen also has a scholarship program. The Brian LaViolette Foundation established The Gen. George S. Patton Scholarship of Honor. Each year a different military hero is honored in Patton's memory. The award is presented to a graduating senior from one of Pilsen's five high schools who will be entering the military or another form of community service. The first award was presented in 2011 in honor of Lt. Virgil Kirkham, a 20-year-old P-47 pilot who was the last recorded American pilot killed in Europe during World War II. It was Kirkham's 82nd mission and one that he volunteered to go on. The award was presented by Kirkham's brother, who himself served during World War II in the U.S. Army Air Corps.

The visual display triggers deep emotions for the crowds and veterans alike. "I would definitely go through it again," commented 93-year-old American veteran George Thompson in 2017. "Freedom is not for free. It is always redeemed by bloodshed, and not only ours, but even of our brothers, fathers, or mothers, grandfathers, grandmothers, simply by everyone."

AWON Board Business 20 March 2018

The Board of Directors last met in January 2018.

Financial Report: As of February 28, 2018 AWON had \$74,400 in cash, including \$12,800 restricted for Memorial Day wreaths and \$320 for Bataan Death March Markers. Year-to-date operating income is \$3,300, and incurred operating expenses are \$900. Dues receipts for 2018 year-to-date are \$3,100. Expenses year-to-date total \$5,400.

AWON Archives: After discussion, the Board decided to request a list of AWON book authors before deciding to archive only AWON-authored books or to include all books in AWON's archives. **Norm Burkey** will contact **Patricia Gaffney-Kindig** for her opinion of the use of the AWON Photo Albums, with the possibility that AWON keep one for continued use and one to go to a repository. **Norma Nicol Hamilton** will contact the National World War II Museum in New Orleans about their interest in the AWON Photo Albums.

Miscellaneous Topics: Board Secretary **Bonnie Oates** will send a letter to Webmaster **Rik Peirson** about the new website under development; co-chairs **Billie Meeks** and **Diane Pollard** gave a progress report on the Gala Celebration; discussion about the AWON election, creation of an executive summary, a member letter to the White House requesting to restart the White House Prayer Breakfast, and a letter from a member expressing past and present feelings about AWON.

WWI Commission: Norm Burkey will update the board at the next meeting regarding a letter from the World War I Centennial Commission. He will also draft a letter to **Walt Linne** regarding a poetry publishing project.

Next meeting: The next meeting of the board is set for April 2018.

Bonnie Oates, Secretary

This is a condensed version of the minutes. Contact the Board for the complete minutes.

Minutes continue on page 30

Guidelines for Submitting Material for Publication

- Topics considered for publication in *The Star* include, but are not limited to, unit reunions, visiting battle or crash sites, cemeteries, ceremonies, seeking or finding families and veterans, poetry, etc.
- Email copy-ready articles and photos to the editor in Word, WordPerfect, RTE, formats, or in the body of an email. High resolution jpeg, bitmap, gif or tiff images are preferred. Text and photos also can be mailed. Photos returned upon request.
- Please keep text to one page (500 to 1,000 words),
- Preference is given to material written by and about AWON members.
- Authors retain copyright to published original writing. Permission to reprint should be obtained from the author by contacting the editor.

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**Deadline for the
October Issue
is September 1**

AWON Board Business 17 April 2018

Financial Report: As of March 31, 2018 AWON had \$77,200 in cash, including \$13,400 restricted for Memorial Day wreaths. Year-to-date operating income is \$7,026, and incurred operating expenses are \$2,036. Wreath income to date is \$1,300 and \$100 was received for Bataan Death March Markers. In March 79 membership renewals were received as a result of the mailing to lapsed members. The budget includes the expected return of \$2,250 of seed money advanced for the 2018 Gala.

AWON Archives: **Norma Nicol Hamilton** gave a progress report. She has a list of AWON-authored books that are in the AWON Bookstore. Database Manager Gerry Morenski created a spreadsheet of books AWON has written by members and non-members. The Board approved paying one night's hotel for Norma to meet with staff at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans in May to discuss the AWON collection. The Board decided that only AWON member-authored books will be archived, and books by non-members are to be negotiated at another time.

AWON Correspondence: Secretary **Bonnie Oates** sent a letter to Webmaster **Rik Peirson** regarding the AWON website under development. **Norm Burkey** will draft a letter to **Patricia Gaffney-Kindig** regarding the AWON Photo Albums. Norm sent a letter to **Walt Linne** regarding a poetry publishing project. Norm will forward to the Board a letter from the World War I Centennial Commission to be studied and discussed at the next meeting.

AWON Gala: Co-chair **Billie Meeks** gave a progress report on the Gala. She said she is still waiting for Gala information to be posted on the AWON website. She said **Penny LeGrand** will check in with the hosting hotel. The Board discussed the Mergelland Men's Choir of the Netherlands coming to the Gala.

AWON Database/Website: An update to the AWON database should be completed by end of May. Development of the new AWON website is going smoothly and possibly will be ready by the end of May.

AWON Election: Ballots are now out to the membership, through *The Star*. The Ballot Committee that will tally the vote consists of **Patty Temte**, **Jerry Temte**, **Judy Pinkerton** and **Montie Monzingo**. The ballots will be counted on June 10 or 11.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the board is set for May 2018.

Bonnie Oates, Secretary

This is a condensed version of the minutes. Contact the Board for the complete minutes.

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

Names and addresses of your siblings with same father, and/or additional family members:

(Please include information on another sheet, if necessary.)

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 _____

e-Star • July 2018

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? \$ _____

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:**

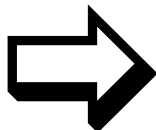
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The Star

"Breaking Down the Wall of Silence"

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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

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The Star

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