

A Gold Star Mother Twice Over

Kate Nichol Finch Lost Two Sons in World Wars

by Barry Barr-Finch



Above: Corporal John Robert Finch, Killed in Action at Belleau Wood, France, June 6, 1918. Finch's mother, Kate, would go on to lose her youngest son, David Baird Finch, in WWII.

Kate Gertrude Nichol Finch was the sixth child of Midwestern homesteaders John and Sara Nichol. In addition to homesteading and teaching school, Kate's father John served as a two-term Iowa State Legislator. Mother Sara was also a teacher, and worked alongside John on their homestead. John and Sara were married for 60 years and had 9 children, 8 of whom survived to adulthood.

The Finch's daughter, Kate, was of a transitional generation. Born in the pioneer days - spending much of her childhood in a sod house - she survived well into modern times, witnessing the invention of the telephone, the rise of the automobile, and the first flight. This innocent 19th century girl who began life selling eggs and butter, who slept by the fire with her brother and sisters on chilly winter nights, who saw her mother and siblings fighting a prairie fire armed with nothing more than wet sacks, would go on to sacrifice greatly during the 20th century.

On February 9, 1895, Kate Nichol married farmer James Madison Finch in Willowdale, Nebraska. Their first child, John Robert Finch, came along 9 months later. Six more children - Durell, Ramona, Thordora (called Teddy, after Teddy Roosevelt), Gerald, Esther, and Polly were born. James Finch became a Congregational minister and moved his family to Illinois to minister to a church there. Firstborn John Robert was in high school when the eighth and youngest Finch, David Baird, was born, 16 and a half years John Robert's junior.

Sadly, young Polly was stricken by polio and had to be taken to St. Louis for further care. With James and Kate busy running the family farm in addition to caring for a sick child, this left young David to be largely raised by his big sisters. David and his big sister Teddy had a particularly close relationship. He was the golden boy of the family, adored by his older siblings.

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President's Message

by Walt Linne

I would like to thank new Editor Kristin Holmes on her first Star newsletter, Issue #93, Summer 2019. Job well done! She will also be producing her first conference program for our 2020 "Honor and Remember" National Conference at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana, May 11-15.

Conference co-chairs Barbara Kelly, Penny LeGrand and I have been working with the Museum and the Higgins Hotel to finalize arrangements for the Conference. Our program will be centered around the mission of the National WWII Museum - to create and maintain a world-class museum through exhibits, multimedia experiences, and thousands of personal accounts to take us on a tour of every theater of WWII. What a wonderful site to "Honor and Remember" our Fathers! Please see pg. 23-24 for more information and a registration form.

We are starting to formalize an Outreach Project to help raise the visibility of AWON. In the past, we have informally reached out to various organizations, from the Gold Star Mothers to the Vietnam SDIT (Sons and Daughters in Touch) and Friends of the War II Memorial, etc. We are now formally reaching out to the National WWII Museum, WAA (Wreaths Across America) and TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors). More information will be forthcoming.

Finally, I want to thank everyone who has switched from the printed version of *The Star* to our electronic newsletter, the *E-Star*. The *E-Star* provides enhanced online features and color photographs. Making the switch helps AWON reduce printing and mailing costs. We will send the *E-Star* to all members one more time to demonstrate the enhanced features, from color photographs to expanded online coverage on specific topics linked to the AWON Website. Rest assured, everyone who requested a printed version of the Star will continue to receive the printed version. However, if we've convinced you of the advantages of The *E-Star* and you'd like to make the switch, please notify us by sending an email message to awon@awon.org and we will make the change for you.

Thanks to everyone for renewing their membership and welcome to our new members. See you in New Orleans! In our Fathers' memory.



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In 1916, with talk of war in Europe on America's lips, the Nichol family returned to Nebraska. Upon entry of the United States into World War I in 1917, John Robert Finch left behind his career as a teacher and enlisted in the US Army. He was the first to enter the military from York County, Nebraska, and was also the first to be lost in combat.

On June 6, 1918, during the Battle of Belleau Wood, John Robert Finch was killed. 75 men in Finch's outfit were killed that day. The German shelling was so severe the bodies could not be retrieved for several days, and many were unidentifiable; the American Cemetery in Belleau, Aisne-Marne, France contains the largest number of unknowns of any WWI cemetery. The shell holes from the bombing and the foxholes dug by the troops are still visible to this day.

Durell Finch also enlisted in the military and went to France. He was badly wounded in a gas attack and was left permanently disabled as a result.

After John Robert's death and Durell's injury, the Finch family alternated between life in Nebraska, and a new home in Caldwell, Idaho. David graduated high school in Nebraska in 1930.

In 1931 a year after her youngest child's high school graduation, Kate Nichol Finch was given the opportunity, as a Gold Star Mother, to visit her son John Robert's grave in France. The US government arranged for the steamer, USS Republic, to take mothers of fallen Nebraskan soldiers to visit their sons' resting place. It was surely a time of mixed emotions; the excitement of traveling abroad, but with such a somber purpose.



The lull between wars didn't last long. In 1942, Polly's husband Louis "Hap" Gould was killed working at the Washington Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Wa. Ramona, Polly, and the Gould children accompanied his body by train back to his home state of Nebraska. Kate and James Finch were able to travel along with them for a time when the train stopped in Caldwell. James Finch wept for his family's losses the entire journey.

By this time, David Baird Finch, the beloved baby of the family, was 28 years old. He was serving in the Idaho National Guard, and had reached the rank of Sergeant. The military needed older unmarried men to serve as officers, so David, an unmarried man, attended Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia. After months of training so far from home, his outfit joined the Aleutian campaign. He was stationed at Fort Lewis, in Tacoma, WA, where he met and married Zelpha Galloway. Their son, Baird Otis Finch, was born March 27, 1944. In the fall of 1944, David was sent to the South Pacific in preparation for the liberation of the Philippines and was present October 20 when the invasion began on the island of Leyte.

2LT David Baird Finch was killed by a sniper November 13, 1944. That dreaded telegram arrived December 19.



*Above: David Baird Finch proudly serves his country as his eldest brother John Robert did before him.
Left: The Finch Family before youngest son David's birth.*

...continued on page 10

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn - The WWII Soldier's Favorite Book?

by Kristin Holmes

When we think of what our fathers carried to war, we envision weapons, rations, cigarettes, medical supplies, photos from home. But during World War II, American troops carried millions of books along with them.

As many fighting men have noted, the worst part of war is the boredom. Most of the time the men spend waiting; waiting to fight, waiting to train, waiting to return home again. It's a lot of empty hours to think about an uncertain future. Books could occupy a worried man's mind, enlightening him in addition to lightening his burden.

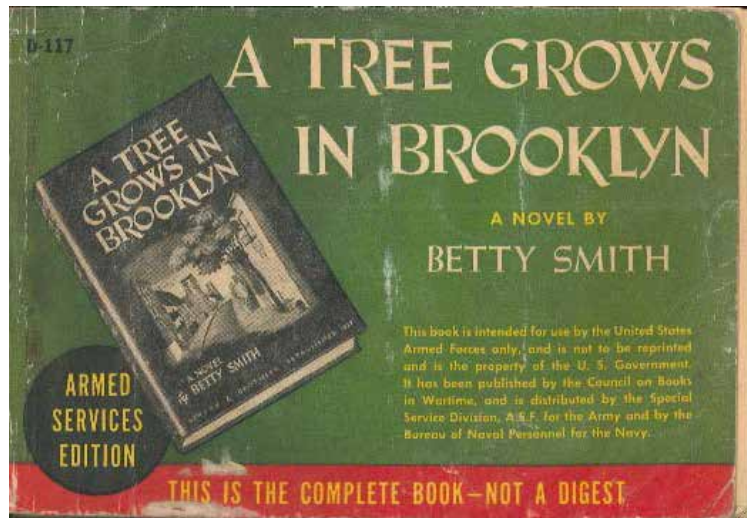
The [Library War Service](#) was started by the American Library Service in 1917 to meet this need. By the time America entered the Second World War, our troops were used to being around books - there were libraries at military camps, books in the barracks, the Army and Navy had their own individual library services, and the Merchant Marines had set up a lending library as well.

Haunted by visions of book burnings in Nazi Germany and after a failed attempt by the [Victory Book Service](#) to ship millions of donated hardcover books overseas (too heavy! too big!) [American publishers and the US army banded together](#) to give away what turned out to be 122,951,031 works of literature - 1024 unique books - to American troops between 1942 and 1947.

The [Council on Books in Wartime](#) - what the *Saturday Evening Post* called "the greatest book-publishing project in history" - was founded in 1942. The editorial staff of the *New York Times* described the program this way: "People in the Axis lands are prevented by force from knowing the facts of the time, and are told what to think. People of this free nation are supplied with the truth as free men see it and are confidently left to think for themselves."

The Council's founding principle was to use books as "weapons in the war of ideas". President Roosevelt declared, "A war of ideas can no more be won without books than a naval war can be won without ships."

True to this American ideal of free speech and thought, the Armed Services Editions were unedited (a few were abridged for length, but not for content). Some of them involved sexual situations, violence, and controversial issues of the day like interracial relationships. While many were sports, mystery, humor, or adventure stories, and not considered terribly highbrow, others were thought-provoking, even educational. (to see a complete list of the books printed, please visit https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Armed_Services_Editions.)



Above: The Armed Services Edition of *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, by Betty Smith.

The men devoured all of them and begged for more. Some even asked to purchase more books at their own expense, complaining that the officers snapped up the books before the enlisted men could ever lay hands on them.

The ASE books - [portable, lightweight paperbacks](#) small enough to fit in a uniform pocket since that's what men could carry along with them - were beloved, protected, and treated with the utmost care. As one soldier put it, "To heave one in the garbage is tantamount to striking your grandmother."

Perhaps surprisingly, the most popular ASE was not full of juicy scenes or high adventure. *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* is a coming-of-age story featuring a young girl, Francie Nolan, and her loving but dysfunctional family struggling to survive in a New York tenement. Francie has to sacrifice a lot, and endure a lot, but eventually she's able to work hard and make a better life for herself.

Like the titular tree, the Nolan family lived and eventually succeeded against all odds, just as every American who served hoped to, if only he could make it home again.

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn was the first ASE book to be reprinted. Author Betty Smith was inundated with over 10,000 letters - [ten times as many as she received from civilians](#) - from men who had walked through hell and emerged on the other side to find her book there to welcome them, like a friendly letter from home. These men read Smith's words and rediscovered their humanity there.

As one wrote, "A surge of confidence has swept through me and I feel maybe a fellow has a fighting chance in this world after all." Another told her that Francie's story had made his dead heart turn over and become alive again. One man even promised to name his daughter Betty Smith!

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...*A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* in WWII, continued

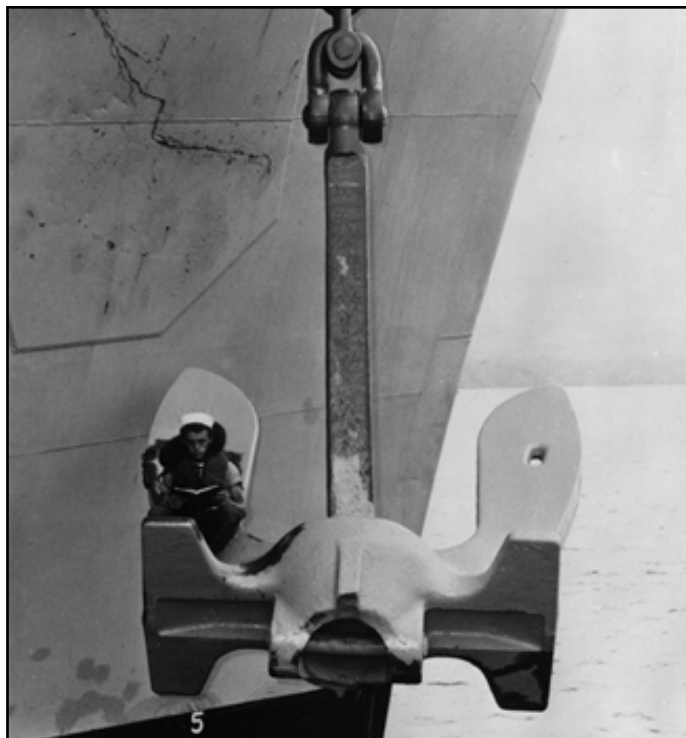
If you've ever wondered what it was your father thought about when he was far away, if he longed for home and hearth and dreamed of that future life with his family that he would tragically not be able to share, he did. Despite there being many more racy and thrilling books available to American troops, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, a simple, homespun story of family and overcoming hardship, reigned supreme.

By VE Day, Nazis had burned over 100 million books. They had destroyed an unimaginable literary treasure held in the libraries and private book collections of Europe.

Meanwhile, the American people were bringing the written word to their fighting men 123 million times. All Americans should take great pride in that.

Right:

A creative sailor enjoys some fresh air and a good book.



Hey...what's *THAT* thing???



That symbol with the AWON logo and blue "W" is actually a link to additional content and information on AWON's webpage! If you're reading the *EStar*, click this icon for more. For print *Star* readers, when you see the "Connected *Star*", visit us at:

www.awon.org!!



It's easier than ever to support AWON!

When you shop through smile.amazon.com, the AmazonSmile Foundation donates .5% of the purchase price on all eligible products to AWON, at no extra cost! Just enter "AWON" as the organization you wish to support.

And don't worry - it's the same great Amazon products you know and love, with the same great Amazon prices and reliable shipping you've come to expect. Placing your Amazon order is exactly the same, only the good people at Amazon share the proceeds with AWON . Everybody wins!



Remember, Honor and Teach

by Sandra Walker

Their hopes buoyed after seeing the Allies triumphant in several horrific battles, by September 1944 American journalists started writing that troops could be home for Christmas. Soldiers and families were hopeful, not about just "being home for Christmas, if 🎵 only in dreams 🎵" but actually celebrating the holiday together.

Alongside the exciting headlines, reality existed: many Gold Star families endured an empty place at the dinner table. Into November 1944, the war in the Pacific and in Europe grew even more horrendous. During the Battle of the Bulge, Christmas Day was white. Rather than any "dreaming", a hideous nightmare ran for hours as fighting raged through bitterly cold, cruel conditions. The season brought remembrances, especially for grieving children, wives, mothers, brothers and sisters. From both theaters of war, more telegrams were delivered well into the summer of 1945.

Today, remembrances from that profoundly sad, silent era will be beautifully expressed. This December 14, Wreaths Across America will orchestrate the placement of tens of thousands of wreaths across Arlington National Cemetery, and in 1,600 additional locations. WAA's iconic fresh evergreen wreath with a bright red bow placed against a snowy-white background spreads a heartfelt expression honoring selfless service to the United States and to the world. A glorious peaceful scene reigns over our Fathers' supreme sacrifice.

Wreaths Across America (WAA) began in 1992 because of Mr. Morrill Worcester in Harrington, Maine. As a 12-year-old boy Worcester had visited Washington D.C. and the Arlington National Cemetery for the first time. The indelible impression of the vast cemetery stayed in his soul. When Mr. Worcester retired, he created a way to honor soldiers, especially ones who made the ultimate sacrifice.

From those humble beginnings at Arlington National Cemetery, today WAA reaches across the nation and even to our international American cemeteries.



While we at AWON observe the date of our Father's death, we also respect our national dates of remembrance through the official Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Veterans Day commemorations. National Wreaths Across America Day is another opportunity for us to pay our respects and remember the sacrifices of our fathers and the other young men just like our fathers, true American heroes.

In 2019, AWON will join in an outreach project with WAA. If we as members actively participate, AWON interaction with WAA, a huge and nationally renowned organization, will help expand awareness of AWON, enabling us to possibly find more of our fellow orphans.

Above all else, we align with the WAA stated purpose: **Remember, Honor and Teach**, for WAA is committed to teaching younger generations where the value of their freedom rests. This AWON outreach project can broaden our ongoing commitment for lasting remembrance of the selfless sacrifice by our heroes.

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Recognition day for Wreaths Across America was established in 2008 by the United States Congress, to be observed each December 13. In 2019 the placing of the WAA wreaths will be held on Saturday, December 14.

The extensive national WAA organization offers the opportunity to send \$15 for a wreath and also fund additional wreaths. WAA is a non-profit 501-(c) (3). Additionally, WAA needs and welcomes volunteers regardless of location. To read more about their broad national and international involvement, one can go to their website, sign up for the weekly newsletter, and/or visit their home office in Columbia Falls, Maine.

The Wreaths Across America website is found at: www.wreathsassamerica.org AWON's WAA page address is: www.wreathsassamerica.org/NJ0153

Mailing address for Wreaths Across America:
WAA, P.O. Box 249, Columbia Falls, Maine, 04623.

And one of the easiest ways to order from WAA is by phone: 877-385-9504.

Interaction with a national organization like WAA expands AWON recognition. And of course, we align with the WAA stated purpose: **Remember, Honor and Teach**. WAA is committed to teaching younger generations where the value of their freedom rests. The AWON outreach project will broaden our ongoing commitment to lasting remembrance of the selfless sacrifice by our heroes.

Let's make our holiday season more meaningful by enhancing the remembrance of our Fathers through a joint commitment with Wreaths Across America, and beyond the United States.

Join AWON's new Wreaths Across America outreach project!

How? How do AWON members or supportive family engage in this important outreach project?

We can pursue two avenues:

1. donating funds for a wreath or wreaths
2. volunteering to help WAA in the placement of thousands of wreaths.

One wreath is only \$15. The most common donation is \$75 but smaller donations are accepted. It is critical that anyone wishing to donate do so by **December 2nd**. All funds are due in the WAA office by the final 2019 date of **December 2nd**. For every 2 wreaths purchased, a third will be credited to AWON.

To volunteer requires no financial investment, only a commitment of your time.

IMPORTANT!!!! For AWON to be credited with specific involvement in WAA please follow certain steps using our Group ID and Location ID. If you don't follow these steps AWON will not receive credit for your donation.

State the spelled-out Group name: American World War II Network and then the Group ID: NJ0153. The Location ID is: NAGVRW. The online AWON direct link is: www.wreathsassamerica.org/NJ0153.

WAA is a non-profit 501-(c) (3). Online donations are completed securely on the WAA online fundraising page. Or if you prefer, you may mail donations by cash or check using the fundraising form available on the WAA website at www.wreathsassamerica.org. Remember, the deadline is **December 2**.

To indicate the choice of where to volunteer, on the WAA website go to the "all locations" listing and then find a convenient "specific location". Volunteers are guided by the location coordinator.

To donate wreaths to a specific cemetery, use AWON's direct link above. Click on "sponsor wreaths". A drop down menu will appear to allow you to select a cemetery (Netherlands and Luxembourg American Cemeteries are the only overseas options available for now; more ABMC sites will be added in the future). There is also an option to type in a cemetery manually. If you don't select a cemetery, your wreaths will go to any cemetery where they are needed.

From AWON's WAA page, you can also send invites to family and friends to encourage them to donate too. Let's spread the AWON holiday spirit across the world this year! Support Wreaths Across America...**Remember, Honor and Teach**.



NEW this month in the AWON Bookstore:

Pieces of Us

A journey of discovering the lost pieces of two lives, a father and a daughter, losing each other too soon, yet finding each other after all.

Pieces of Us was written and illustrated by AWON Orphan Janice Crandell Powers.

During WWII, First Lieutenant Leonard Crandell was killed while piloting a B-24 Bomber over Germany in March of 1945. He left behind a wife and a baby daughter. I am that daughter.



Our story that could have ended then, but it was destined to be continued. This is my story, orphaned when I was just a year old, and my search, many years later, for the man who was my father. The journey of over 50 years that led to this book has been dotted along the way with unexpected and amazing connections between our two lives, and the result is a new, real and lasting relationship that will sustain me for the rest of mine.

This is an eloquent memoir. I was hooked on page one when Jan envisions she is in the cockpit of her father's B-24 bomber when it was hit...wondering if he was thinking of her...as it was going down...a beautiful read.

Walt Linne, AWON President

Author and AWON Orphan Jan Powers is a garden writer and illustrator. She lives with her husband Mike in a century-old Victorian house in Illinois, where they raised three daughters and now enjoy five grandchildren. Jan's gardens there are her passion, open for many tours and festivals, and the inspiration for her writing, painting and photography.

Pieces of Us is \$16, with \$4 shipping and handling
You can order from:

Jan Powers
Stone Well Gardens
2320 W. Moss
W. Peoria, IL 61604
stonewellgardens@gmail.com

Or from the AWON Bookstore, www.awon.org or using the order form found on Page 19 of this edition of *The Star*.

In His Memory
First Lieutenant Leonard John Crandell, Pilot, B-24J
8th Air Force, 67th Bomber Squadron, 44th Bomber Group, Heavy.
KIA Wesel, Germany, March 24, 1945



Something's Missing!!!

It's YOU!

If you have photos or personal accounts of AWON events or family history, please send them our way! E-mailing is great, but we can also download photos (with your permission) from social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter.

And if the word "download" makes you break into a cold sweat, that's ok, just mail us your photos the old fashioned way. We're happy to return any original pictures upon request.

Send your photos to:
Kristin Holmes, editor, *The Star*
atomicssagebrush@gmail.com
PO Box 242
Creston, WA 99117
And THANK YOU, AWON MEMBERS!

The Gold Star Mothers Pilgrimages of WWI

An almost forgotten piece of American History



Above: Gold Star Mother Kate Nichol Finch (see pg. 1) stands beside a WWI Grave, "Known But To God" at Aisne-Marne American Cemetery, Belleau, France, circa 1931



Above: The Nebraska delegation of Gold Star Mothers aboard the USS Republic in 1931. Kate Finch, featured in our story on Page 1, is 5th from the right center.

Right: Both sides of one of the two Gold Star Medals given to those who participated in the Pilgrimage. This medal was designed and manufactured by Tiffany and Co.

Kate Nichol Finch (pg. 1) was one of 6654 American mothers and unmarried widows who took the journey between 1930 and 1933 overseas to Europe to visit their loved one's grave.

The Pilgrimage was the brainchild of the Gold Star Mothers' Association. At the time, the Gold Star Mothers Association was largely comprised of wealthy women, most of whom had been able to visit their sons' graves. They realized women who were less fortunate had the same desire to see their sons' final resting place. They lobbied Congress for Federal funding and in 1929, Congress enacted the legislation making the pilgrimages possible.

The Quartermaster Corps of the Army took great care to attend to the mourners' every need. They were accompanied by nurses, Army officers, and translators, taken to visit notable sights in the area, and given ample time at the cemetery for reflection. Women whose sons had not been recovered were taken to the grave of an unknown.

There were no PR reps, no cameras, no politicians giving speeches; the women were given peace and solitude. It was the Gold Star Mothers' trip, not a publicity stunt for others to capitalize on. They were treated with dignity and respect by the soldiers and nurses who accompanied them, and honored as near-royalty by the appreciative French.

Even though it was the height of the Depression, the US Government spared no expense to send these women overseas in splendor the likes of which most of them had never seen before. Despite all the grandeur, it was, of course, a journey no woman among them wanted to take.

The Gold Star Mothers' Pilgrimage was a wonderful program that might well have been emulated, even expanded after WWII. As so many AWON members have experienced firsthand, no family should have to scrimp and save for a lifetime to fund a visit to a cemetery to visit a loved one who died in service of their country. May they rest in peace.



AWON to Expand Membership Categories

Did you know there are more ways than ever before to encourage friends and family to become involved with AWON?

The AWON Board has recently added a new Supporting Membership. Supporting Memberships are intended for any non-relative who wishes to support AWON's mission. Organizations such as military unit associations, WWII groups, historians, or anyone else interested in following and participating in AWON's mission would fall into this category. The more people aware of AWON, the better our ability to spread the word to other WWII orphans who may still be searching.

Additionally, AWON has added a Family Membership category for grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and other relatives. Our goal is to continue keeping our fathers' names and sacrifices alive and remembered into future generations.

Family Member Dues are \$25 a year including a printed *Star*, or \$10 a year with an *EStar*. Supporting Member Dues are \$25 a year and includes your choice of print or e-newsletter.

If you know of an individual, organization, or family member who is interested in learning more about AWON, please turn to page 31 for a membership form.

Help spread awareness of AWON's mission! Introduce someone to AWON today!



...Gold Star Mother, continued from page 3

As James had passed away in 1943, Kate Nichol Finch received the heartbreaking news of her youngest son's passing alone. Soon after, the family was devastated again when Kate's brother John Nichol's only son, Richard Elbert Nichol, was killed in France in 1945.

In 1948, since her daughter-in-law Zelpha Galloway Finch had remarried, Kate Nichol Finch made the decision to lay her son David to rest alongside his comrades in the Philippines. She never saw his grave, but her grandson Barry Barr-Finch was fortunate to be able to visit his father David Baird Finch's resting place at the Manila American Cemetery in 2007.



During that trip, Barry had the opportunity to visit with Bert Caloud, who was at that time the Assistant Superintendent of the Manila Cemetery. Mr. Caloud pointed out that having lost a son in WWI and WWII meant that Kate Nichol Finch was the only Gold Star Mother who lost sons in both World Wars he'd ever heard of - with one exception. Edith Roosevelt, the wife of President Theodore Roosevelt, who lost her youngest son Quentin during WWI, and her son Theodore Jr. from a heart attack after D-Day.

Kate Gertrude Nichol Finch lived quietly in her Caldwell home another 10 years after the end of World War II, tending her garden, surrounded by children and grandchildren. While visiting her sister's family in Oregon, she collapsed and went on to meet her family who had preceded her in death.

At the age of 84, Kate was a contemporary of Laura Ingalls Wilder who was born 3 years before Kate and died 3 years after. As so many of her generation, Kate Nichol Finch was witness to great change, great upheaval, great tragedy, but also great joy. In the words of her grandson Barry Barr-Finch, "When I read the Little House on the Prairie books, I like to think of my grandmother growing up in a sod house like the Ingalls family. They lived from the time of schooners on the prairie to the jet age. A remarkable journey for some remarkable people."

More on the Journey >

American WWII Orphans Network



AWON Moments

by AWON President Walter Linne

The mission of our AWON Moments series is to review AWON's history, celebrating special moments experienced by AWON's orphan members since Ann Bennett Mix founded the organization in 1991.

We will be celebrating the 30th anniversary of the founding of the American World War II Orphans Network (AWON) in 2021. We've all had so many wonderful memories from our time in AWON, let's share them!

From *American WWII Orphans Network Newsletter* Vol 3, Winter 1992: "It was announced that spouses and children of war casualties are entitled to receive a Gold Star pin issued by Congress. The Gold Star pin is a quiet reminder of our Dad's sacrifice."

From Vol 4, Winter 1993: "As a son or daughter of a Purple Heart recipient you are entitled to associate membership in the Military Order of the Purple Heart. There are chapters across the country."

From Vol 5, Winter 1994: "A WWII War Orphan Memorial Service was held in the National Cathedral, Washington, DC on November 11, 1994. Rev. Jack Hadler, husband of fellow war orphan, Susan Hadler (RIP) officiated at the service. Eighty people attended the service; many were war orphans who had never attended a service especially for their fathers."

Our first national AWON conference took place September 2-3, 1995, in Seattle, Washington. A ferry ride was planned to take everyone to the Commemorative Ceremonies at the US Missouri where the Japanese signed the surrender.

Unforgettable *AWON Moment* - Father's Body returned at last. Private Morris Thomas was killed-in-action on 5 October 1944 near the village of Opheusden, Netherlands. He was a member of the "Screaming Eagles", 101st Airborne Division. His remains were buried in an unmarked grave until 1971 when his body was recovered and identified. Army representatives visited the next of kin to explain the circumstances of recovery and subsequent identification. The next of kin was our very own Brenda Kightlinger (daughter) of Erie, Pennsylvania.

Please send your *AWON Moment* to:

AWON STAR, 5745 Lee Road, Indianapolis, IN 46216 or president@awon.org, so we can share in the joy of knowing your Father!

Walter Linne
Brother of John
Sons of Walter John Linne
KIA March 24, 1945
Germersheim-on-the-Rhine, Germany

AWON Wishes to Thank Our New and Renewing Members from July, August, September

Joan Marlow
Ann O'Connor
Billy Winters
George Sterhaus
Dale Roybal
Karen Yancy
Carolyn Holley
Robert Emergh
Donna Allen
Nick Mott
Janet Cotton
Marylee Obert
Brenda Kightlinger
Arthur Clark
Lee Mathis
Marie Kramer

Ruby Wolens
Nancy Bachant
Thom Kettle
Adrian Caldwell
Rosalind Grabowski
Doris Davis
Diane Morris
Jaclyn Rackley
Penny LeGrand
Wendy James
Patricia Armstrong
Pat Inselmann
Robbie Harrell
Margaret Kuhns
Ronald Smith
Phillip Silverman

Shirley Willrett
Charles Patterson
Carmine Pesce
Mary Martin
Richard Basile
David Burkey
Clydene Despain
Gaye Rule
Anne Sisco
Charli Greenlees
Donna Umbro
Anne Wile
Mary Slowey
Antonetta Bell
Kenneth Sills
Sue Perko

Valerie Flynn
Edward Fink
Bonnie Hellums
Joyce Crosslin
Darlene Smith
Wayne Johnston
Welcome New Members!
Philippe DeHand
Kristie Clark
Michael Lorquet
Cary Zehner
Paul Linne
Shannon Linne
Meredith Lowe
Roberta Rule
William Blake

AWON - Connecting With Others

Members Reaching Out to Keep
AWON Reaching Into the Future

TAPS and AWON Join Forces to Spread Awareness

By AWON President Walt Linne



Walter Linne, AWON President, AWON VP Gloria Layne, Boardmember Jean Rhinehart, and Asst. Treasurer Barbara Kelly were in attendance at the recent TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors) meeting on Tuesday, August 6, 2019, in Arlington, VA.

[TAPS](#) is an organization that provides compassionate support to bereaved survivors who have endured the loss of a loved one in service to their country.

AWON was invited to encourage collaboration among organizations supporting military surviving families. In addition to AWON, the American Gold Star Mothers, the Gary Sinise Foundation, Gold Star Wives, the Hershel "Woody" Williams Medal of Honor Foundation, the National League of POW/MIA Families, Sons and Daughters in Touch, Tragedy Assistance program for Survivors, and the Travis Manion Foundation were present at the meeting.

There were approximately 15 organizations in attendance supporting our Military Survivors, from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, to the Honor and Remember organization to The American Legion to Tuesday's Children to Wounded Warrior Project.

The emcees for the meeting were Bonnie Carroll, President and Founder of TAPS and Tony Cordero, Sons and Daughters in Touch (SDIT).

We had the opportunity to reach out to other organizations, in particular the Gary Sinise Foundation. Barbara plans to keep in contact with the representatives of the Gary Sinise Foundation to hopefully develop a mutually beneficial relationship with this fine organization.

On behalf of AWON, we have invited the Founder of the Honor and Remember organization, George Lutz, to speak at our Conference. The mission of Honor and Remember is to honor and remember every American fallen service member and recognize the enduring sacrifice of every family.

The goal for the meeting was to form an "alliance of resources". A committee was formed to determine how this would be done. AWON has chosen not to actively join the committee because our resources are targeted for a war that occurred 75 years ago.

Most organizations attending the meeting focus resources towards current events. While they'll take the lead, AWON will remain on the distribution list and will be in contact with TAPS' "alliance of resources" to help in their mission if we can.

We shared what we as AWON members all have learned over the course of our journeys - to reach out and bring families together, to let families know they are not alone, that other families have the same feelings, and that it is helpful and healing to share these feelings.

As every AWON member knows only too well, there is much good to be had in sharing stories across generational lines, letting families who have lost loved ones know they are not alone. We're proud to support TAPS in their mission in any way we can.

AWON Connections

Pictures and Stories of Members Gathering Around the Country



Above: AWON members Donna Allen and Patricia Temte and their escorts met for lunch in Dallas, TX earlier this spring. One of the best parts of AWON is the lasting and meaningful friendships we've made!



Below: The AWON Southern California Lunch Bunch met at the Point Loma Cafe on August 24. There were two new members in attendance. Karen Wisner, a longtime resident of San Diego County, learned of AWON from a brochure at Henri-Chapelle Cemetery in Belgium, where her father's name is on the column of the missing. Joe Lippi, whose father also rests at Henri-Chapelle, has recently moved to San Diego.

Everyone attending discussed their fathers' lives, deaths, and how they'd been memorialized. It was good sharing our stories with one another, both the familiar stories and the new ones.

L to R - Sharon Connor, Joe Lippi, Karen Wisner, Roger Connor, Dale Roybal, Barbara Smith

Hey...these AWON Connections look like fun!

They sure do, don't they? Do you want to take part in an AWON meetup, but aren't sure where to start? The best way is by taking part in a local or regional group.

AWON has roughly 50 hardworking regional coordinators. A Local Regional Coordinator, or LRC, is a source of first contact for new members, reaching out to welcome them to AWON. They will also ask if new members wish to be further contacted for gatherings. Gatherings don't have to be fancy. They can take place in a local restaurant, a park, a private home. They can even be as simple as presenting a wreath at a local national cemetery on Memorial Day, Veteran's Day, or at a Gold Star Families Memorial Monument.

As AWON Regional Coordinator Barry Barr-Finch says, we're limited only by our imagination.

If you joined AWON thinking that maybe getting together with people wasn't your cup of tea but have since changed your mind, it's not too late! Just contact Barry Barr-Finch at barrfinch1@gmail.com and he will put you in touch with your LRC. And don't worry, your personal information is always kept confidential!

And if you haven't ever been contacted by your LRC, it may be that your area is lacking one. That could be you! AWON does not have LRCs in all areas, and in many of the larger states, distance is a factor. It's just too far for people to travel no matter how badly they would like to meet their AWON brothers and sisters. Having more people willing to organize gatherings and help keep our membership database current is of paramount importance to keeping AWON going into the future.

If you are interested in contacting your LRC or becoming a Local Regional Coordinator yourself, please contact Barry Barr-Finch at barrfinch1@gmail.com.

And if you're an LRC and haven't been in touch for a while, please reach out to Barry as well. Even if you'd prefer not to continue on in your coordinator role, AWON leadership would appreciate being updated on that decision so we can find another person to pick up the mantle. Thank you!

Memorial Day 2019 - Overseas



Right: AWON presented this charming wreath at Florence American Cemetery, in Florence, Italy.

Above: A pretty pastel wreath in the sunshine on Memorial Day 2019, at the Lorraine American Cemetery, just outside St. Avold, France.



Above: Walt Linne and Barbara Kelly represent AWON at the Lorraine American Cemetery's Memorial Day Ceremony

Since 2003, AWON Members, family, and overseas friends have traveled the globe to attend Memorial Day ceremonies at the American cemeteries where our AWON fathers are buried or memorialized. They participate in the official programs, presenting a floral tribute along with other dignitaries. The AWON Memorial Day Wreath Project is possible through the generous support, time, and financial contributions of AWON wreath coordinators, AWON Overseas Friends, and member donations. Thank you for commemorating our fathers.



Want more Memorial Day Photos?
Please join us online for more!
Visit www.AWON.org!





Above: The Memorial Day Wreath Presentation at Brittany American Cemetery just outside St. James, France

Center: Close up detail of the AWON wreath at Brittany

Below Left: This stunning wreath was presented at the North African American Cemetery in Tunisia.

Below Right: At Luxembourg American Cemetery and Memorial, AWON was proud to present this lovely wreath.





Above Right: The AWON Wreath at Normandy American Cemetery. Above Left: Close up on the AWON banner featuring the names of AWON fathers buried at Normandy. Right: Jean-marc Lesueur holds the Normandy wreath.

Below: At the Epinal American Cemetery near Dinoze, France, overlooking the Moselle River below, AWON presented this floral display in memory of our fathers.





Left: From Cambridge American Cemetery near Cambridge University in the United Kingdom, a gorgeous ring of roses circles the AWON banner.

Center Right: At Rhone American Cemetery, the AWON wreath was laid by COL David K. Chapman, the Senior Defense Attache at the US Embassy, Paris, and COL Eric Zimmerman, US European Command J2X.

Below Right: Colonel Chapman was accompanied to the Rhone wreathlaying by his daughter Nola, and Colonel Zimmerman by his son Jackson.

Center Left: Young Nola Chapman adjusts a small detail out of place on AWON's Rhone wreath.

Below Left: At Suresnes American Cemetery, AWON pays honor to the 24 WWII American Unknowns resting there.



This fall, the grateful Dutch people have been paying tribute to the brave Allied soldiers who liberated their nation from Nazi occupation 75 years ago. The liberation of The Netherlands began September 21, 1944, when 35,000 Allied paratroopers landed behind enemy lines as a part of Operation Market Garden.

Right: A row of ambulances waits, fortunately without casualties here in 2019. Bottom Left: The Stars and Stripes wave over a joyous Dutch celebration of freedom.

(photos by A. Lejeune and J. Kerkofs)

Bottom Right: Georgette van den Heuvel poses by a photo of her mother, her aunt and uncle, her grandmother, and two liberating American soldiers. (photo part of the Freedom and Friendship Project by J. Wanders.) The family went on to adopt the grave of S/SGT Rocco Zuccarella, father of AWON member Gloria Layne (photo by Georgette van den Heuvel)

75th Anniversary of the Liberation of The Netherlands - September 2019



AWON BOOKSTORE

Price List / Order Form

Books

Authors in **BOLD** are orphan or family members

Items marked with (*) include P&H

New this month in the AWON Bookstore!!

____ *Pieces of Us*

By Janice Crandell Powers **\$20.00***

____ *A Daughter's Quest: Retracing My Father's Footsteps During World War II*

By Laura Smail Sims **\$16.95**

____ *The Gun Club: U.S.S. Duncan at Cape Esperance*

By Robert Fowler **\$15.99**

____ *Collateral Damage, A World War II Orphan: Lost and Found*

By Reda Reynolds **\$9.00**

____ *Feisty: Chronicles & Confessions of an Old PR Warhorse*

By Joe Finnigan **\$12.99**

____ *A Bit of Earth*

By Wendy Crisp Lestina **\$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 Marilyn Rustand Lieurance **\$7.00***

____ *My Father: More than a Picture, a Beer Bottle and a Flag*

By Jerry W. Pinkerton **\$12.00***

____ *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 Airforce Combat Diary*

By John A. Clark **\$49.95**

____ *When I See a "Forty and Eight"... I Remember World War II*

By Lt. Col. Jacques Adnet USAF (ret.) **Reduced!** **\$5.00!**

____ *In Their Memory: American WWII Orphan's Network*

By Turner Publishing Company
Was 49.95 **Reduced** **\$10.00**

____ *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*

Forward 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. McLaughline **\$25.00**

____ *They Also Served: Women's Stories From the WWII 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 WWII*

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 LaPoint**, grandson of Sgt. William G. Aubet 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 now \$3.00*

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

by Justin Taylan was \$15.00 \$3.00*

___ *Sleep My Sons: The Story of the Arisan Maru*

by Shawnee Brittan Reduced! was \$30.00 \$20.00*

AWON Logo Products

Closeout on the Following AWON merchandise

___ Scarf (royal blue fleece - only 3 left!!) \$10.00

___ 20th Anniversary Tote Bag (small)
REDUCED! \$5.00

___ Tote Bag (large) \$10.00

___ 20th Anniversary Garden Flag (without holder) \$10.00

___ AWON Gold Star Crystal Pendant 1 1/2" (40mm)
(chain not included, only 2 left!!) \$15.00

___ *AWON lapel pin \$10.00

___ *AWON Button 2 1/4" \$3.00

___ *AWON Lanyard w/ nametag and ticket holder (blue with white lettering, 4"x6"holder)

\$6.00

___ *AWON Holiday Ornament \$10.00

___ *AWON bookmarks

Circle amount: 1 for \$1.00 5 for \$3.00 10 for \$5.00

The Star Newsletters

___ *Individual issues: \$4.00 - Includes P&H

___ *All archived issues: \$40.00 - Includes P&H

___ *Special!! Most recent five issues: \$15.00 Inc. P&H

Ordering Information

Postage and handling: \$8 for each item. Items marked with an asterisk (*) include postage and handling.

For multiple purchases: Up to \$40 - \$10 P&H \$40-\$60 - \$12 P&H \$60 and up - \$15 P&H

Washington State residents please add 7.8% sales tax

For more information and color photos please visit www.awon.org/bookstore/bookstore.html

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____

Total Enclosed (check/money order payable to AWON): _____

Send check or money order to:

AWON Bookstore

5745 Lee Road

Indianapolis, IN

46216

email: bookstore@awon.org

The Gold Star Lapel Button was created in 1947 to honor those who lost immediate family members in service of their country. As children of fallen soldiers, AWON sons and daughters are entitled to receive and proudly wear the Gold Star Lapel Button.

If you have not received your Gold Star Lapel Button, you can fill out form DD Form 3 or the form printed on Page 22 to receive yours. (please include DD-1300, Report of Casualty as proof of death in service)



Information provided for reproduction by Ann Bennett Mix, author:
Touchstones: A Guide to Records, Rights, and Resources for Families of American World War II Casualties

SEC. 578.25 OF CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS TITLE 32, CHAPTER V (REV. 7-1-99) P 406-407

Accolade

(a) As a token of appreciation and in recognition of services rendered by those who died in the service of their country, an Accolade signed by the President is issued to the next of kin of record of all military personnel whose death occurred in line of duty during World War II, September 8, 1939 to July 25, 1947, both dates inclusive, and in Korea during military operations from June 27, 1950 to July 27, 1954, inclusive. The Accolade is also issued to the next of kin of civilians who died overseas or as a result of injury or disease contracted while serving in a civilian capacity with the Armed Forces of the U.S. during the dates and/or in the areas prescribed above in connection with military personnel.

(1) The Accolade reads as follow:

In grateful memory of _____ who died in the service of his (her) country at _____. He (she) stands in the unbroken line of patriots who have dared to die that freedom might live and grow and increase its blessings. Freedom lives, and through it he (she) lives -- in a way that humbles the undertakings of most men. (Facsimile signature) President of the United States.

(2) Accolades will be issued by The Adjutant General upon receipt of reports of death.

(b) In order to provide an appropriate identification for widows, parents, and certain next of kin of members of the Armed Forces of the United States who lost their lives in World War I, April 6, 1917 to March 3, 1921; World War II, September 8, 1939 to July 25, 1947; Korean operations, June 27, 1950 to July 27, 1954; or during any subsequent war or period of armed hostilities in which the United States may be engaged, a Gold Star lapel button was established by an Act of Congress on August 1, 1947.

Gold Star Lapel Button

(1) The Gold Star lapel button consists of a gold star on a purple circular background, bordered in gold and surrounded by gold laurel leaves. On the reverse is the inscription, "United States of America, Act of Congress, August 1947," with space for engraving the initials of the recipient.

(2) One Gold Star lapel button will be furnished without cost to the widow or widower and to each of the parents of a member of the Armed Forces who lost his or her life while in active military service during the period indicated above. The term "widow or widower" includes those who have since remarried, and the term "parents" includes mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, mother through adoption, father through adoption and foster parents who stood in loco parentis.

(3) One Gold Star lapel button will be furnished to each child, stepchild, child through adoption, brother, half brother, sister, and half sister of a member of the Armed Forces who lost his or her life during any period indicated herein.

continued next page →

Gold Star Lapel Button Application Form

Date:

Send to: National Personnel Records Center

1 Archives Drive

St. Louis, MO 63138

www.archives.gov

In compliance with the Federal Law 578.25, I hereby request a Gold Star Lapel Button as a token of appreciation for service and sacrifice rendered by this veteran:

_____.

Service number _____

who was killed on (date) _____

at (place) _____,

while serving in the (branch of service) _____ in World War II.

The above named veteran was from (hometown) _____

Enclosed you will find proof of his death in service.

My relationship to this Veteran is: _____

Please send the Gold Star Lapel Button to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

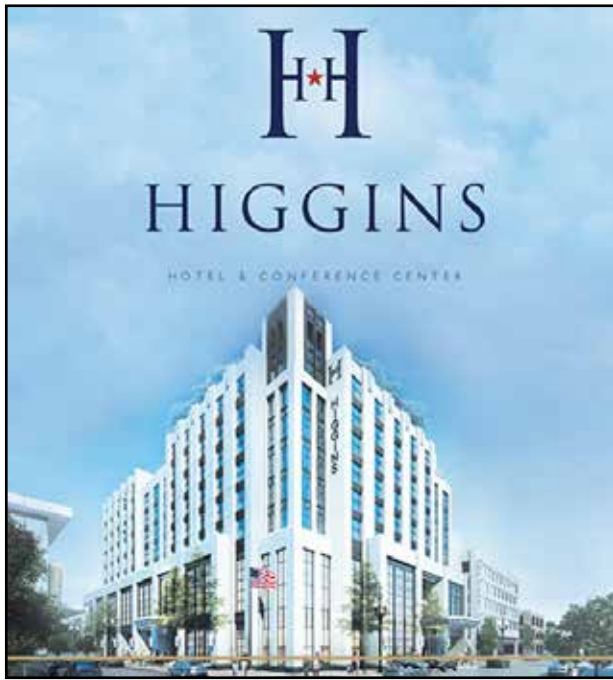
Email: _____

Signed

Date

Form provided for reproduction by Ann Bennett Mix, author, *Touchstones: A Guide to Records, Rights and Resources for Families of American World War II Casualties*

Register now for AWON's 2019 Conference



AWON is pleased to announce our upcoming 2020 conference, "Honor and Remember", will be held at the Higgins Hotel and Convention Center at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, May 11-15, 2020.

Since its opening in 2000, the [National WWII Museum](#) has become a popular destination for history lovers, war buffs, and families. The museum's stated mission is to tell the story of the American experience during the Second World War, or in their words, "the war that changed the world" - why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today - so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn.

At first blush, a world-class hotel like the Higgins, part of the distinctive Curio Collection by Hilton, built alongside a war museum seems a strange pairing. But when that museum is the National WWII Museum - the #3 museum in the United States and amazingly, the top tourist destination in tourist mecca New Orleans - it only makes sense to give the museum's hundreds of thousands of yearly visitors a place to stay while they explore one of the most important chapters in our nation's history.

The [Higgins Hotel and Conference Center](#) provides a luxury hotel experience only a minute's walk from the National WWII Museum, and ample meeting space for organizations like AWON to conduct their business.

Named after shipbuilder Andrew Higgins, whose company, Higgins Industries, built the amphibious LVCP (Higgins Boat) widely used in WWII, the Higgins Hotel is brand new, opening earlier this year. The Higgins Hotel features spectacular Art Deco stylings with all the modern amenities.

The National WWII Museum features a vast array of displays, exhibits, and much more. At BB's Stage Door Canteen you can see a dinner show or a Wednesday matinee. You can hear Tom Hanks narrate the story of WWII in *Beyond All Boundaries*, at the Solomon Victory Theater Complex. In the US Freedom Pavillion at The Boeing Center, you'll be able to explore the the cars, planes and other vehicles our fathers drove to war. There's even an option to take a ride on a PT-305 boat if you're feeling adventurous.

We'll enjoy a taste of the south as our banquet will feature the Higgins Hotel's Southern Hospitality Buffet - Gulf Shrimp and Corn Chowder, Classic Cobb Salad, Three Bean Salad, Cajun Chicken and Sausage Pasta, Braised Short Ribs, Baby Carrots and Onions, Herb Seared Catch of the Day, Pineapple Mango Relish, Buttermilk Whipped Potatoes, Sautéed Zucchini Squash, and Berry Short Cake. Yum!

For a gorgeous gallery of photos from the Higgins Hotel and the National WWII Museum, please visit: <https://www.higginshotelnola.com/photos>

Participants are due to arrive on May 11, 2020 and depart on May 16. However, the discount prices for conference attendees run for 3 days before and after, should you wish to extend your stay and do some sightseeing in The Big Easy.

To book your room, please call (504) 528-1941 and be sure to mention that you are a member of the American WWII Orphans Network to get the discounted price of \$149 plus tax per night for king or two double beds. Parking is \$25 a night. To book online, please visit <http://group.curiocollection.com/AmerWWIIOrphanNetwork> (the entire URL must be copied and pasted, or entered, for the link to work properly)

To book your flight at a discounted rate, please go to www.united.com/meetingtravel. In the box marked *Offer Code*: enter the number ZHVP289929 and then click the small yellow arrow directly below the box (do not hit "enter", it doesn't work). You will be taken to a webpage for booking at AWON's discounted rate. Or you can call the United Meeting Reservation Desk at (800)426-1122, M-F 8am-10pm Eastern Time, or 8am-6pm Saturday and Sunday. Mileage Plus Members will earn Premier Qualifying Dollars and miles.

You'll find a registration form on page 24. Please return your registration form with check or money order payable to AWON 2020 National Conference by April 3, 2019 to:

AWON
5745 Lee Rd.
Indianapolis, IN
46216

Questions? awon@awon.org





Registration

New Orleans WWII Museum • Higgins Hotel • May 11-15

Please return registration and fee by April 3, 2020

Member Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Is this your first AWON Conference? Y N Do you want your name listed in the conference roster? Y N

Do you have special needs?: _____

Registration Fee (includes Reception, Banquet, Meeting Room Fees and WWII Museum Admission)

____ Members & Guests X \$185 \$ _____

____ New Members & Renewals X \$210 (includes 1 year AWON Membership Dues) \$ _____

Total Registration Fees enclosed: \$ _____

Name Tag Information (please print clearly – and include State of Residence)

Your Name: (include maiden name) _____ State: _____

Guests Names: _____ State: _____

Serviceman's Name: _____ Service Branch: _____

Rank First Middle Last

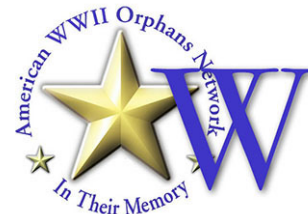
Circle One: KIA MIA Died while on Duty Date of Death: _____ Country Died: _____

Mail Registration Form with check or money order payable to AWON to:

AWON 2020 National Conference
5745 Lee Road
Indianapolis, IN 46216

Connecting With History

by Barbara George



The ABMC (American Battle Monuments Commission) contacted me about doing a video for D-Day. The brief video would be featured on a large screen at the D-Day 75th Ceremony at Normandy American Cemetery in France. They wanted to highlight the important stories of caretakers, relatives, and veterans of those servicemen buried and memorialized at the cemetery.

In talking with Michael Shipman, Audio Visual Production Specialist, I became more curious about the ABMC beginnings. Therefore I turned to the Internet and discovered that the Commission administers, operates, and maintains permanent U.S. military cemeteries, memorials and monuments both inside and outside the United States.

While that seems like a big responsibility, it is the history of ABMC that really struck a chord with me. It got its start when President Warren Harding signed legislation that established the ABMC on March 4, 1923. I also found that President Harding appointed General of the Armies John J. Pershing to the newly-formed ABMC and the other members of the commission elected Pershing as Chairman.

Why did that strike a chord with me? My grandfather, H. John George, and John J. Pershing were third cousins. Not only that, but I have the Pershing Family Reunion picture taken September 8, 1923, just six months after Pershing became Chairman of the ABMC commission.

The picture was taken at Idlewild Park, Westmoreland County, PA. Of course when I mentioned the picture to Michael Shipman, he was interested. It is 36 inches by 8 inches and was impossible for me to copy it at home.

I went to a photo place which made a copy and Mr. Shipman said it will hang in the ABMC office.

The reunion picture is a great piece of history with Pershing in his uniform and his wife beside him. There is the Army band, several little drummer boys, a group of women dressed in white, and hundreds and hundreds of relatives all around him. To make the family connection more real, my grandparents and their sons are there with my father being only 12 years old.

What an amazing connection! To think that my father, Capt. Malcolm L. George, at 12 years of age met John J. Pershing as simply another family member. Little did anyone suspect that boy would unfortunately end up in the Normandy American Cemetery for which his father's third cousin had the responsibility of ensuring that it stays in the pristine condition of today.

The dates prove the connection. My father was KIA in 1944 and permanently interred in 1947 in the Normandy American Cemetery. John J. Pershing was Chairman of the ABMC until his death in 1948.

I have to admit that I didn't do the video. However my father's two oldest grandchildren, cousins Debra Lannon and Keith George, participated in the video. They both said they enjoyed working with Michael Shipman and it was a pleasure to honor their grandfather.

Editor's note: AWON members may have an opportunity to meet with the wonderful and dedicated Mike Shipman of the ABMC personally! He's interested in working with AWON members to document your family stories. More info in the upcoming Winter edition of The Star!

The Star Guidelines for Submitting Material

The Star is here to serve AWON.

We want to tell your story and your family's story.

We accept submissions both electronically and via US mail. If you have an article or picture and aren't sure how to submit it, that's ok. Message *The Star* editor and we will work with you. Photos returned upon request.

Please keep text reasonable in length - 500-1000 words or one page is a good guideline.

Preference is given to material written by, for, and about AWON members and families.

Authors retain copyright to published original writing. Permission to reprint should be obtained from the author by contacting the editor.

Kristin Holmes, Editor
PO Box 242, Creston WA
99117 (509) 279-5241

atomicsagebrush@gmail.com



Gold Star Families Memorial Monument - Update!

In issue #93 of *The Star*, you may recall an article about the Hershel Woody Williams Medal of Honor Foundation. Founded by Hershel "Woody" Williams, one of America's last surviving WW II Medal of Honor recipients, the HWWMOF is dedicated to one cause - recognition for America's Gold Star Families.

In addition to creating a scholarship program for Gold Star Children and raising awareness of Gold Star Families, the HWWMOF is building not just one memorial, but dozens nationwide, to pay tribute to the fallen and their families.

The Gold Star Families Memorials are carved from black granite. One feature the words "Gold Star Families Memorial Monument, A tribute to Gold Star Mothers, Fathers, and Relatives who sacrificed a Loved One for our Freedom." The reverse tells a story in four panels: Homeland, Family, Patriot, and Sacrifice. In the center of the monument, a hollow space in the shape of a saluting figure representing the empty place our fallen heroes left behind.

The Gold Star Families Memorial Monument Project seeks to place at least one memorial in all 50 states, to publicly acknowledge America's Gold Star Families who may sometimes feel that their sacrifice has been forgotten in the victory. 56 monuments have been erected to date and 63 more are underway. There is a Gold Star Family Memorial Monument standing or being built in 42 states - from Manchester, New Hampshire, to Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii.

Earlier this year, AWON's own Roger and Sharon Connor attended a Gold Star Families event sponsored by the Gold Star Families Memorial Monument Project, held on Military Appreciation Day at Petco Park in San Diego. Gold Star Family members from Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan were present, in addition to those who'd lost loved ones in WWII. Sharon spent time sharing experiences with two orphans whose fathers had been killed in Vietnam. The struggle of Gold Star families to breach the "wall of silence" still continues.

The Hershel Woody Williams Medal of

...continued on next page

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Rik Peirson	rik@dayone.com
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Correction: In Issue 93 of *The Star*, page 20, "AWON Wishes to Thank Our New and Renewing Members", Judy Bezjak's name was misspelled. Hugest apologies!

AWON Treasurer's Report

Submitted by Paul Bremer 9/30/2019

General Fund - \$15,155.75

Money Market Savings - \$48,075.89

Bookstore Account - \$582.35

...Gold Star Update, continued

Honor Foundation, through its Gold Star Families Memorial Monument Project, seeks to tear down that “wall of silence” and shine a much needed light on the emotional, financial, and spiritual needs of our Gold Star families...not just mothers and wives, but all family members who have lost a loved one in service to their country.

New memorials are being dedicated as we speak. It has been Woody Williams’ dream to see a Gold Star monument in all 50 states, and to attend the dedications of all of them for as long as he is physically able.

Do you want to get involved? Please visit <http://hwwmohf.org> for more information about the Gold Star Family Memorial Monument Project, to see some photos of these beautiful monuments, and to find the location of a monument near you.



Please Help Find....

The Faces of Margraten

As the people of The Netherlands celebrate the 75th anniversary of their nation’s liberation from Nazi occupation, they have begun an amazing new project - to seek out and share the photographs of those brave soldiers buried at Netherlands American Cemetery (Margraten) and listed on the Walls of the Missing there.

Between May 2-6 of 2020, the photos of thousands of fallen American soldiers will be displayed at the Netherlands American Cemetery, both at individual gravesites and on the Walls of the Missing. This has been an ongoing project for the people of Margraten; last year there were 5800 photos featured.

In honor of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands, the Fields of Honor Foundation <https://www.fieldsofhonorfoundation.com/>, sponsors of The Faces of Margraten, hopes to display 7500 photos in 2020. So far they’ve found only about 6000.

Don't Forget!!

The deadline to order your wreath from Wreaths Across America is **December 2!!**
Wreaths will be placed December 14.

Use AWON's WAA page at www.wreathsasscrossamerica.org/NJ0153



You may be able to help. An interactive map has been created to assist people in finding out if their relative’s photo has been located to be displayed.

You can check that interactive map here: [Margraten Interactive Map](#)

If you find your loved one’s photo has not yet been found, you can send it to The Faces of Margraten at:

The Fields of Honor Foundation
Stekkenburg 20b
6561 XJ Groesbeek
The Netherlands

Or via email: info@degezichtenvanmargraten.nl

More information about how to send the photos and how to donate to support this amazing program is here: [Faces of Margraten Program Information](#)

We also have shortcuts to these webpages available on the AWON webpage: www.awon.org



IN MEMORIAM

AWON First Founder Susan Johnson Hadler PhD



AWON First Founder Susan Johnson Hadler, PhD, 74, of Madison, WI and Washington DC, passed away on July 19, 2019 after a sudden illness.

Born January 24, 1945, Susan was the daughter of Margery Laughlin and 2LT David Selby Johnson Jr.

In addition to her career as a psychotherapist, Susan was an accomplished writer, publishing articles in *Reader's Digest* (where she published an article that led many people to AWON), *The Washingtonian*, and *The Mindfulness Bell*, and of course her beloved books *Lost in the Victory* (coauthored with Ann Bennett Mix) and *the beauty of what remains*, her personal story of the journey she took to find her father.

She was survived by her husband of 52 years, Rev. Jacques B. Hadler Jr, her children Jacques (Rachel) Hadler and Sarah (Alex Hadley) Hadler, and 3 grandchildren, Sonora, Sylvester, and Sadie.

Editor's Note: While I never had the privilege - and it sounds as if it was truly a great privilege - to meet Susan, I was struck by the way she described herself, and I can think of no other way to pay tribute to such an amazing person than to think of them the way they thought of themselves. Here is Susan in her own words:

To quote Walt Whitman, "I am multitudes."
Silence-loving and serious
Quirky and curious
Flummoxed by facts and numbers
Entranced by mysteries, the lost, and unknown
Lover of trees, poems, books, and sky
Mitten-knitter, cushion sitter
City walker, perpetual student
Sister, lover, mother, friend, granny, auntie,
used-to-be-daughter
Out-of-tune singer, buddha bell ringer

On Susan's personal webpage at www.SusanHadler.com you can read her beautiful poems and essays, and share your remembrances with her family.

If you have AWON-related memories of Susan you would like to share, a tribute page has been set up on the AWON website. <http://www.awon.org/susan/> Please send your remembrances to AWON webmaster at rik@dayone.com or to *The Star* at star@awon.org.

I met Susan and Ann Mix at the No Greater Love Ceremony at Arlington Cemetery in 1991. I met Susan again in 1993 at the first AWON Conference.

She interviewed me for "Lost in the Victory" in 1995 and that began our friendship that endured. Our fathers' markers were located close to each other at Arlington Cemetery. Each time Susan visited her father's, David S. Johnson's marker she visited my father, Samuel "Sonny" Rosen's marker. She always placed a stone on the marker, the traditional indication that the grave had been visited.

My father's death occurred in December and each December Susan visited his marker to commemorate the anniversary of his death as is done in the Jewish tradition. Each time there was an AWON memorial ceremony, Susan made sure that the Jewish memorial prayer, the Kaddish, was recited.

Susan was a wonderful human being and a great friend whom I will miss.

-Eric Rosen, Proud Son of Samuel "Sonny" Rosen KIA December 18, 1944



To visit Susan's AWON tribute page please visit: www.AWON.org/susan/

Call for Tributes!

Add a Tribute to the AWON Website! This could be one of the most long-lasting and satisfying ways to remember your Father, Grandfather, Brother, or Uncle. Just be a current AWON Member!

Here's How: 1. Have a look at our website's TRIBUTE section at www.awon.org (click "Our Fathers") to see what others have done; 2. Check the web page on "How to prepare a Father Tribute" – (at www.awon.org/check5.html); then 3. Scan (or have a Kinko's scan) your best picture of your loved one in uniform; 4. Collect your thoughts, memories, and service record of your loved one; 5. Send your JPG-formatted image and between 500 and 1,100 words to our Tribute Stager, Nancy Sue Johnson. Her E-Mail address is . . . janceysue@gmail.com. If you need her snailmail address, just call Nancy Sue at 406/529-2315.

Don't let another day go by. AWON is honored to help you honor your Father or loved one! . . . a Tribute page is yours for the asking.



My American WWII Orphans Network (AWON) sister, Susan Johnson Hadler, PhD, died on July 18, 2019. Her years were short but her accomplishments on behalf of AWON are long.

She coordinated the Memorial Service for our fathers at the Washington National Cathedral on November 11, 1994. Susan believed that homage to our fathers should be a family affair. Her daughter Sarah read some of our fathers' names. The reading of the names became an AWON tradition that continues to this day. Her husband, The Reverend Jack Hadler delivered a blessing, another AWON tradition. Rachel and I send our condolences to Sarah, Jack and the entire family including her stepsiblings particularly John Henkel.

Days later, Susan became a First Founder, a select group of war orphans who pledged significant funds to provide "seed money" to grow AWON into the organization it is today.

In 1998, Dr. Hadler co-authored "Lost in the Victory: Reflections of America American War Orphans of World War II." In addition to the collected stories, she submitted her own memoir. Publication of the book came at a personal sacrifice because it caused further estrangement with Susan's mother, who was not mentioned by name in the memoir.

Also, in 1998, Susan was asked by National Public Radio host Bob Edwards how a preteen Sam Tannenbaum was able to care for his psychotic mother. Susan's answer was both simple and profound. "He did what he needed to do."

In 2004, Susan submitted her father's biography in "American WWII Orphans Network: In Their Memory." The dutiful daughter writes that 2nd Lt David Selby Johnson died when an allegedly booby trapped mine exploded. Susan did not write that her father was "atomized." There was literally nothing left. Perhaps she thought it was too graphic a description for a general audience. I saw his name engraved on the Wall of Missing in American Cemetery near Hamm Luxembourg and on a marker in Arlington National Cemetery.

In 2008, at an AWON Conference in Tucson, Arizona she gave a presentation based in part on her training as a psychotherapist and a practice from her Buddhist faith, "tonglen." The technique involves absorbing suffering and sending comfort. Many war orphans benefited from her presence. She will be missed by all who knew her. To paraphrase Susan, I raise my glass to you, dear Sister, fire and spirit!

-Sam Tannenbaum, Son of PVT Henry Irving Tannenbaum, KIA January 11, 1945

AWON Webpage and ListServ Update!!

Some of you may have noticed recently that our ListServ was down and parts of our webpage temporarily lost functionality. Our intrepid AWON Webmaster Rik Peirson investigated and found out more about what happened. - Editor

AWON maintains two main servers for the AWON Website and ListServ: The original Impulse server we've maintained since 1995 is our "Hub" server - and the West-Point.org server holds both the AWON ListServ and considerable content used by the AWON Website.

To make a very long story short - Ransomware hit our WP server - big time - and took it down in Early August. It took away our ListServ completely - and all but the most critical AWON Web pages.

The WP server was down for several anguished weeks while the dedicated WP folks grappled with the problem and prepared for restorations - complicated by the fact that they couldn't fully explain the remedies they were engineering without alerting the bad guys and putting the restoration ways and means in jeopardy.

Thanks to a lot of work behind the scenes by the gurus at WP.Org, the AWON ListServ was back up near the beginning of September - and now we have MOST (but not yet quite all) of our WEB content back. The rest is promised soon, so please be patient as we adjust.

Two of our most critical elements - Star Issue 93 and our submittable online Membership Application - were renavigated and moved to the Impulse server - so they could still be accessible, downloadable, and submittable in the interim.

This Star issue (94) and the Membership App are now accessible - just as before. Meanwhile, a whole new AWON Website has been in the works . . . slated for a beta rollout near the first of the year . . . with a more complete and full-featured version, including some surprises and major upgrades aimed for rollout in the spring.

Be patient while we come back bigger and better than ever!

In Their Memory! Rik Peirson, AWON Webmaster

Do You Have a Gold Star Licence Plate??

by Ann Mix

Most states have special Gold Star car license plates. A registered automobile owner who is an eligible family member of a member of the United States armed forces who died while in service to his or her country, or as a result of his or her service, may apply to the department of transportation in their state for special gold star license plates for use on a motor vehicle.

I applied in Washington State and it was easy and only a small fee. Each state is different so contact your state at the email below and search your state Dept of Transportation.

As a son or daughter of a father who died in WWII you may (should be) eligible. Each state is different in their eligibility requirements for Gold Star License Plates.

If you investigate your state and learn you are NOT eligible be sure and contact your local State Representative to have them introduce an amendment to your state's law.

Grandchildren are usually not eligible and all of us should also ask our State Reps to add Gold Star grandchildren to the law. We want to see as many cars across America with Gold Star Plates honoring our war dead and their families as possible.

Most states include the following categories in their eligibility: widow, widower, biological parent, adoptive parent, stepparent, adult in loco parentis or foster parent, biological child, adopted child, or sibling. If you fall into one of these groups, you may be eligible to have a Gold Star Licence Plate.

To see if your state has Gold Star Licence plates and how to apply, go to your state's Department of Transportation and look under their specialty plates menu. There may or may not be a fee.

Gordon State College in Georgia has compiled a convenient list of DMV departments and information about licence plate eligibility for Gold Star families here: [DMV Departments](#)

Membership



This is a ☐ New Membership
☐ Renewal
☐ Family Membership
☐ Database Registration Only

About You:

Name _____
 Address _____
 City/State/Zip _____
 Home Phone _____
 Mobilephone _____
 E-Mail _____
 If you're renewing, skip to the Dues Section
 Your Relationship to Serviceman _____
 Your Date of Birth _____
 How did you hear about AWON _____

About your WWII Service Member:

Last Name _____
 First Name _____ M.I. _____
 Birthdate _____
 Hometown & State _____
 Military Unit _____
 Rank _____ Service Number _____
 Date of Death _____ Place _____
 Burial Location _____
 Wife's Maiden Name _____
 Additional information on your WWII Service Member's
 Military Service, Death, or Burial. _____

Please send your check:

Payable to AWON, include it with this form and send it to:

AWON Treasurer
5745 Lee Road
Indianapolis, Indiana 46216



Membership Types:

☐ **Orphan Member:** Any son or daughter of a member of the US Armed Forces, Coast Guard, or Merchant Marine who was killed, remains missing in action, or who died in the line of duty, or who later died of wounds or injuries sustained during WWII.

☐ **Family Member:** Other relations who are not a son or daughter.

☐ **Supporting Member:** Other individuals with an interest in WWII, who wish to support us and participate in our outreach activities and programs.

Membership Dues:

Basic Orphan Member Dues are \$25 a year – starting when we receive your check. This includes your AWON Membership Card, a Web Tribute for your father, a physical or E-version of our quarterly newsletter, **The Star**, a personal account on the AWON online List-serv, and an account on the AWON Facebook Page.

Family Member Dues are \$25 a year – including a printed Star – OR \$10 a year for Membership with an E-Star.

Supporting Member Dues are \$25 a year – including either version of **The Star**.

Membership Dues Levels:

Please circle your Dues Level below:

	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years
Orphan	\$25	\$48	\$70
Family (Printed Star Version)	\$25	\$48	\$70
Family (E-Star Version)	\$10	\$20	\$30
Supporting	\$25	\$48	\$70
Gold Star (Increased Donation)	\$100	\$192	\$280

Donation Considerations:

Memorial Day Wreath Fund \$ _____
 General Operations & Outreach \$ _____
 Total Dues & Donations Enclosed \$ _____

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The Star

"Breaking Down the Wall of Silence"

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



AWON Mission

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

AWON Directory

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