



# 54-Year Wait Not Too Long to Find Father



T5 Harold F. O'Keefe (left picture) during training at Fort Jackson, SC in 1943, and in September 1944 (right picture, far right, holding mess kit) about one week before he was killed in Grugies, France.

by Fred O'Keefe

If you are a member of AWON then I can say with some certainty that we have shared some of the feelings and experiences of losing a father during World War II. The situations may differ but the feeling that we as children experienced more likely than not were quite similar.

My father, T5 Harold F. O'Keefe, died on 15 September 1944 in the small French village of Grugies. He was assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, 39<sup>th</sup> Field Hospital, 1<sup>st</sup> Air Force Clearing Hospital, 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force. Unfortunately he was electrocuted while testing a high voltage line. A freak accident at best, leaving him with the distinction of being the only man from the 39<sup>th</sup> Field Hospital who died during their entire tour in the European Theater.

My father's story and that of my mother and brother, more than likely follows a pattern that was common to the period during and following the war. My mother, like many war widows, had two sons to raise and try to create a life without her husband. My brother was just under two months old and I was just two years old when my father was killed. Loneliness and silence seemed to be the rule of the times for widows and their kids. A strange world to say the least made up, for the most part, of caring relatives and friends. We sometimes, although not intentionally, are made to feel that we were different than the rest of the kids. After all, our fathers were killed in the war.

Children generally were seen and not heard so there was little information that we, as children, heard or

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# President's Message

by Judy Geis Hoffman

**T**hank you to all 27 of you who mailed back the survey forms. For a membership totaling 600 or so, that isn't a large number from which to draw any conclusions but a typical response to surveys. Many of the responders sent in hand-written pages attached to the form. I read all of them and, in many cases, have already responded personally. I am using the group that completed the surveys as representative of the rest of the AWON membership. Several themes recurred in the responses and deserve answers.

## CONFERENCES

Fourteen members responded that conferences should stay as they are. Five thought they should be downsized. Two members, neither of whom have attended a conference, suggested expansion. Of these two, one suggested annual conferences and the other thought they should be geographically expanded. AWON leadership has always tried to rotate the conferences among different parts of the country; i.e. west, central, east. However, what constitutes west, central, south or east often depends on one's own definition. A huge factor in selecting a conference site is having a volunteer conference chair in the area. If you suggest holding a conference in your area of the country, please have a chairperson's name available with your suggestion.

Among the people responding that conferences be downsized, the most frequently cited reason was financial. Several people suggested financial aid to those who are unable to attend due to cost. The problem with this, of course, is deciding who is in need and who isn't, and none of us on the board want to delve into members' personal finances to decide this. However, this board is quite aware of the problem and two board members are researching this question.

One suggestion was to continue to have biannual conferences but alternate them as they are now with ones smaller in scope. The smaller ones would include "hang out with friends" time, see the sites time, orphan-only speakers, Sharing Circles and anything else cost-free. One member suggested having these conferences near historic sites, and suggested gathering a list of hotels and letting members book themselves. Also suggested was using public space for any group gathering, such as church, VFW hall or city conference centers. Another suggestion was a shorter conference of two days rather than three. Currently, in order to accommodate our numbers, provide what is needed for our presentations, and negotiate reasonable room rates, larger hotels and four-night stays are necessary.

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Money to help orphans make first-time visit to fathers' graves

## Margraten Group Shares Award with AWON

by Gerry Morenski

Recently, I was contacted by the Adoption Committee at the Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial in Margraten, to share the good news that the committee had won the Limburg Award for 2008.

This award is granted to persons or organizations that have distinguished themselves in promoting the Province of Limburg in the Netherlands. The prize is given once a year and is judged by an independent jury. The award was presented at Castle Hoensbroek on March 17, and includes a monetary gift.

In her acceptance speech, Adoption Committee President Fien Opreij announced that the committee had decided to share a large portion of this monetary award (3500 Euros) with the Margraten members of AWON. The committee requests that AWON use this gift as a travel stipend to any AWON Margraten orphan who has never visited their father's grave at Margraten (to



Members of the Margraten Adoption Committee receiving the Limburg Award are, from left: Bert Kleijnen, Aimé Haenen, Ruud Croonen, Fien Opreij-Bendermacher, Jacques Aussems, Jo Purnot, Wim Kamerman and Maria Duizings-Croonen.

read the speech go to [www.adoptiegraven-margraten.nl/englich/index1.htm](http://www.adoptiegraven-margraten.nl/englich/index1.htm)).

I'm sure all of you share in my excitement at the everlasting generosity of the Dutch to us and to our fathers. Their understanding of the sacrifice of our fathers and the needs of war

orphans to visit a father's grave overwhelms me.

As the Margraten Liaison for AWON, I have formed a committee of Margraten members who have visited Margraten to help distribute this award to first-time travelers.

### Margraten Survey Questions

Your name, father's name, and his grave location, if known.

Are you planning a visit to Margraten?  
2009: yes or no                      2010: yes or no

Would you be interested in traveling as part of an AWON group?

Reasons for not visiting Margraten:

No interest	Medical
Financial	Other

Committee members are Adrian Leist Caldwell, Gloria Layne, Billie Myers Meeks, Doug Cromarty and Donna LaPointe.

We are exploring the possibility of organizing another AWON trip for all Margraten members, with an emphasis on having as many first-time travelers as possible. This trip probably would be another Memorial Day trip, but we are open to other possibilities and suggestions. All AWON Margraten members would be welcome on this trip. However, as per the stipulation of the gift we have received, the stipend only would be applied to travel costs for new AWON visitors to Margraten.

We have developed a brief questionnaire to assist us in determining interest in an upcoming trip to Margraten. If you have never visited your father's grave at Margraten, please take a moment to answer this questionnaire and either email or snail mail your answers to me at [dutiem@comcast.net](mailto:dutiem@comcast.net), or 11 Nancy Ann Lane, Merrimac, MA 01860. You may also call me at: (978)225-8367.

# Remains of 16 WWII MIAs ID'd

Since mid-February, the remains of 16 World War II military personnel have been recovered, identified and buried with military honors, according to the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office.

On Dec. 12, 1944, an A-20J Havoc aircraft crewed by three men crashed near Cologne, Germany.

In 1975, a German company clearing wartime mines and unexploded ordnance reported the discovery of a gravesite of American servicemen. U.S. officials determined they represented three individuals, but they could not make identifications at that time. The remains were

buried as unknowns at the Ardennes American Military Cemetery.

Then in 2003, a group of German citizens came forward with information correlating the unknowns with the crew from the 1944 A-20J crash. The unknowns were exhumed in 2005 and later identified as 2LT John F. Lubben, SGT Albert A. Forgue, and SGT Charles L. Spiegel.

Aviation Cadet Ernest G. Munn was identified after hikers on the Mendel Glacier in the Sierra Nevada mountain range found his remains in 2007, near the site of one of his crewmembers who was found in 2005. 2LT Arthur F. Eastman was found using Australian National Archives records.

Eastman was piloting an F-5E-2 aircraft on a test flight in New Guinea in 1944 when he didn't return.

In 1950 an Australian official found a crash site for an F-5E-2, but no recovery was made. The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) went back to the site in 2004 and 2007 and recovered remains and personal effects, including Eastman's military ID tag.

Eleven airmen lost in Papua New Guinea almost missed being brought home, but JPAC finished the mission.

On Dec. 3, 1943, the men crewed a B-24D Liberator that didn't return from a mission.

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## Ballots in Sept. Issue of *The Star*

For the first time, an AWON election will be conducted through *The Star*.

The September issue will have biographies of all board candidates, as well as the ballot, which must be returned by mail.

Orphan and Family Members in good standing are eligible to vote.

There will be a deadline date to return your ballot, so be sure to read the September issue as soon as it arrives.

AWON is your organization. Please vote!

## Welcome New Members

Marlene Mertz Collins, IN, dau of SSGT Laverne M. Mertz, Army  
Danny Dale, UT, son of PFC Thomas V. Dale, Marines  
Betty Williams Greenwood, OK, dau of PFC Raymond W. Williams, Army  
Marie Luzzani Jenkins, CO, dau of Lloyd A. Luzzani, unknown  
Susan Weil Joseph, NY, dau of TEC5 John S. Weil, Army  
Zandra Hansford Marlow, KS, dau of PVT Jay E. Hansford, Army  
William McConaughy, CA, nephew of SEA John I. McConaughy, Navy  
Gary Metz, AZ, nephew of CAPT Virgil E. Radcliffe, AAF  
Elizabeth Tekell Nelson, NM, dau of James L. Tekell, unknown  
Melvin Shore, GA, son of PFC Charles G. Shore, Army  
Ganeen Orcutt Sprague, CA, dau of ILT Robert B. Orcutt, AAF

# Boettcher Changes Iowa Plate Rules (Twice!) to Include Orphans

Months of Boettcher can explain it legislative best: legwork has "However... I was still paid off for AWONer left out as my father Terry Boettcher and spent 14 months in Army other WWII orphans in hospitals only to die two Iowa. years later in a VA

In May, Iowa Gov. Chet hospital of war injuries. Culver signed into law "For nearly a year I have an amendment making been working on children like Terry legislation to make this eligible for an Iowa Gold all uniform as it didn't Star Family license plate. seem logical I was an orphan under Iowa code in one section, but not ask? another."

The original legislation After several furnished Gold Star legislative twists and Family plates to parents turns, the bill passed only. Boettcher and unanimously in both fellow AWONer Bob chambers and was Holliday managed to get signed by the governor. an amendment passed to Boettcher testified before include children and the senate veterans siblings. But the story affairs committee, and doesn't end there. his father's name and



Terry Boettcher shaking hands with Iowa Gov. Chet Culver after he signed into law new rules for Iowa's Gold Star Family license plate program that now include orphans like Boettcher.

story were read into the "Obviously, someone House record. doesn't understand that

"We often say in this is more than just AWON that others just about the current war in don't 'get it.' Senator Iraq. However, the Gold Daryl Beall certainly Star Mothers website 'gets it,'" Boettcher adds. does have a list of

He also has some methods to follow that advice for others: are very good when "If there is any lesson to contacting a legislator."

you who are trying to get this legislation passed in your state, make sure you have the right connection inside the legislative process. Having the chair of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs on our side was a tremendous advantage.

"It is disturbing to me to read the Gold Star Mothers website and see some states only affording this privilege to them alone," he adds.

## Got Your PMC?

All honorably discharged deceased veterans are entitled to receive a Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) signed by the President of the United States.

To get your certificate, visit the Department of Veterans Affairs website: [www.cem.va.gov/CEM/pmc.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/pmc.asp).



Member Sherrie Clark's brand new Iowa Gold Star license plate.



## Reaching Out...

**Public Relations and Publicity**  
**by Patricia Gaffney-Kindig**  
**President Emerita, AWON Board of Directors**

**W**hen I left the position of president of the AWON board of directors, where I served for five years, I chose to continue doing public relations for the organization and, as the daughter of a fighter pilot whose remains were repatriated in 1998, to focus on issues related to the 78,000 Americans who remain missing in action from World War II.

It is reliably estimated that as many as 35,000 MIAs could be found, given adequate resources. I saw that as a challenge and set out to fight for sufficient funding for the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) with petitions, letters, faxes and calls to the Senate Armed Services and Appropriations Committees.

According to Johnie Webb of JPAC, their funding is currently sufficient to complete their scheduled missions. I hope I've helped – in the name of my father, 2LT George P. Gaffney Jr., and the man who would have been my father-in-law, Major Earl R. Kindig.

### Fallen Heroes...

On February 3<sup>rd</sup> this year, a story was published on the front page of *The New York Times* titled "Still Trying to Bring Their Fallen Heroes Home." The heroes are the 78,000 men who were declared missing in action in WWII. Lisa Phillips (see page 9) and her organization, "WWII

Families for Recovery of the Missing," were referenced and the mission and work of JPAC, well known to AWON, was described.

After reading the story, my husband Michael and I wrote a letter to the editor that was published in full on February 10<sup>th</sup>. It brought interesting results.

First, a call from a public radio producer in Denver. We discussed the phenomenon of being a war orphan growing up in circumstances where one's father is missing in action, and my sensitivity to the word "closure." I emphasized that the experience of finding my father's wreck in 1998, and being able to bring him home for burial, brought "aperture" or opening, to a large part of my life that had always been closed. And there also was the "Wall of Silence" issue.

To schedule an interview where we would discuss comparisons, she asked for the name of an AWON member living in the Denver area whose father remains missing in action. Ralph Jones and I were interviewed for 45 minutes. The resulting 15-minute interview can be heard on *Colorado Matters* on KCFR.org; search for "World War II Orphans Continue Search for the Missing." It aired on March 6.

A spirited discussion regarding members' feelings about closure

*...continued on page 10*

## AWON Gifts Top \$6K for Museum

*by Chickie Shields Berry*

**A**ccording to Terri Burton at The National WWII Museum, AWON members have raised a total of \$6,085 so far.

She also wants to remind AWON supporters to write their name and contact information on the response forms.

"We have received some donations with the GG001 code, but no name and address. Without a name and address we cannot properly recognize these donors for their contribution," she explains. "If you do not wish to receive further mailings from the Museum, please just make a note of that on the form."

Twenty-five dedicated members have volunteered to distribute museum information and donation packets to family and friends: Dianne Miller Lassitter, Jim and Jamie McCollum, Jean Reid, Joan Fagley Miller, Judy Geis Hoffman, Sandra MacDuffee, Rik Peirson, Kathy Le Comte, Brenda Kightlinger, Roberta "Brigitt" Caito, Sharon and Roger Connor, Gail Eisenhower, Karen Whitney Paine, Barry Barr-Finch, Dianne Baczynski, Carol Down Brooks, Bill Winters, Patricia Ball Morrison, Gerry Morenski, Clydene Despain, Norman Burkey, Helen Vernon and yours truly.

This will be an ongoing project for the next few years and we can still use more helpers. If you would like to be included, please contact me at [chkebry@msn.com](mailto:chkebry@msn.com).

## Stone's Reappearance Coincides with Book Unveiling

# Ratliff Headstone Found After 58 Years

by Tom Ratliff

**M**y father's hometown newspaper in Kentucky ran a story about the unveiling of my new book, *Now I Know*, at the Morgan County Historical Society Museum during their annual Sorghum Festival.

Along with that story there was a feature about my father's military gravestone that came with dad's remains when he was returned for burial in 1949. Mother always said that

my father's best friend told her that Ova Ratliff deserved better than that small insignificant stone to mark his grave. He said dad deserved a monument that was commensurate with his stature in the community, and it should honor the sacrifice he made for our country.

Dad's friend took Mother to a neighboring town where they purchased the large beautiful granite monument that marks dad's grave in Flatwoods Cemetery.



The original military grave marker for Ova W. Ratliff, father of Tom Ratliff. No one knows how it ended up 15 miles from where it was buried.

She didn't know what to do with the military marker, so she decided to bury it.

The man who owned the house where we lived in 1949 was adding about four feet of fill to bring the backyard up to the level of the front yard. Mother had the military gravestone placed in the backyard so that the fill dirt would be dumped over it. In retrospect, I wish she would have used it to mark the foot of his grave, but she didn't.

Now, here is where the story, after 58 years, takes a strange twist.

In late summer 2007, my cousin Brent Davis, a medical practioner in Kentucky, sent me an e-mail:

"A fellow who used to work with Paul (his brother) stopped by my office last week after being told he had found

something belonging to a relative of mine. He was tearing down a barn at Caney (15 miles away) and while doing clean-up noticed two of the stones used to support the barn didn't look like they belonged. He turned them over and found equal halves of your dad's military headstone. Needless to say, being a Veteran he didn't leave them there. At present they are here at my house. What do you want me to do with them?"

I told him that I wanted the stone, and I would pick it up at the end of September when I go to their annual festival for the unveiling of my new book.

My question was... how did that stone get from under that fill dirt in our backyard on Broadway

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## AWON Notecards Have Arrived!



Use AWON Notecards for veterans, AWON correspondence, holidays and everyday! AWON logo on front and AWON founding date (1991) and address on back.

Package of 20 4x5 Cards and Envelopes  
\$20 includes postage and handling.  
See Order Form on Page 24.

After Mother's 1946 Poem First Appeared in *The Star*

# U.S. Consul, Normandy Group Present Cisco Poem

by Dale Cisco

A poem that my mother, Alma Howe, wrote around 1946 appeared on page eight of the March 2008 issue of *The Star*. Our AWON representative in Normandy, Jean-Marc Lesueur, brought the poem to the attention of Marie-T Lavieille, whose husband, Claude, founded their grave adoption program, "Les Fleurs de la Mémoire" (The Flowers of Remembrance).

Mrs. Lavieille translated the poem into French and read it at the organization's annual meeting or Congress at the cemetery on April 20th. In one of her first e-mails to me, she said, "When I look at the pictures of your parents and yourself - the pretty young mother, holding the cute baby, and the handsome GI, ready for a happy life - I feel so moved and sad. But, at the same time, I think they are, like the thousands of white crosses in the cemetery, a strong call for peace. May this call be heard:

Peace, with the thought that  
No one is giving  
His life that we may live

That is from the last line in my mother's poem.

The day after the Congress she wrote: "I want to tell you

we had a nice Congress yesterday. More than 400 people expressed their gratitude to the heroes who fell for our freedom during WWII. No doubt, the moment when I read the poem written by your mother was the most emotional of the day. Several families proposed to adopt your father's grave. Impossible, because it was adopted already."

That evening I received another request to use the poem! Christelle Zuccolotto, another friend of Jean-Marc, is an English teacher in southwest France. She has a program putting students in contact with heroes from WWII, usually British veterans. She takes them to Normandy each year with money they raise. This year they raised 6250 Euros.

When Kenneth Forder, the U.S. Consul in Bordeaux, heard about the trip he contacted the U.S. Embassy in Paris. After meeting with Zuccolotto he gave her \$1,050 for the trip. She had not asked for the grant, so it was a big surprise and a big honor!

On May 15th there will be one last meeting about the trip for students, parents and financial supporters. Mr. Forder will attend. Miss Zuccolotto has prepared a PowerPoint presentation to show highlights of where the students will go.

She asked if she could use my mother's poem at the end of the presentation. It would be read in French by one of her students, and in English by Mr. Forder. She told me, "I do love this text, especially the part that says, 'since my soldier has gone.'"

"I do imagine how moved you must be feeling when thinking about what your dad went through in Normandy. Just know the French have not forgotten those who fought for us, sometimes now resting here forever. These men are my heroes, and will always be." I immediately wrote back that I was honored that she wanted to use the poem.

My mother was a plain and unpretentious lady and would never seek attention for herself. She would be totally amazed at the fact that so many people have heard and love her poem; and she would worry whether it was "good enough." I just regret that she is gone now and I can't get her reaction firsthand.

I feel a deep sense of gratitude to my French friends and the honor they bestow on my mother and my father, Alma and John Howe.

When I saw the pictures they sent me of the April 20th ceremony, I felt a tremendous connection to my father. It was as though I were standing in their midst at his graveside.

Ratliff,  
continued from page 7

Avenue to a barn foundation 15 miles away at Caney? I still don't know the answer to that, but hopefully the answer will surface someday. It's possible the dump truck driver hauling the fill dirt saw the stone grave marker laying there, saved it from being covered over, and later used it in that barn foundation.

Then I began to think about what I was going to do with that broken gravestone. Finally, I decided that the stone is a part of Morgan County history and it deserves to stay in Morgan County, Kentucky. So, I donated it to the Morgan County Historical Museum.

The museum curator said they will put the gravestone in a place of honor and frame the newspaper article to explain its significance.

The story about my father's gravestone generated a lot of interest and newspaper coverage. It came to light at the same time as the unveiling of my new book. I have wondered if a higher power played a part in all of that coming to together at a time when I needed all the press coverage I could get for my new book. Only God knows for sure.



## Shares AWON's Goal of More Funding for WWII MIAs

# WWRM on Mission to Recover MIAs from World War II, lobby Congress



*Editor's note: Lisa Phillips is president of WWII Families for the Return of the Missing. She describes her organization below. There is a new link for WWRM on the AWON website, and one for AWON at WWRM's site.*

### Who is WWRM?

WWRM (WWII Families for the Return of the Missing) is a WWII advocacy group whose mission is to advocate and assist families of MIAs. We assist in efforts to locate missing service members through investigations and research. WWRM works world-wide with researchers to interview eyewitnesses, and locate and document sites of our missing from WWII. We then report these known locations to the appropriate U.S. government agency with the hope of a possible recovery. Our website is [www.wwiimissing.com](http://www.wwiimissing.com).

### What is WWRM doing?

Since incorporating in 2006 we have made contacts around the

### How DNA Can Help

Both AWON and WWRM can supply DNA kits for orphans whose father is MIA. Due to the way DNA works the child cannot submit DNA, but certain relatives can. Contact AWON's Patricia Gaffney-Kindig or WWRM for details.

world to help families search for their missing.

Right now WWRM is trying to raise \$20,000 to begin a pilot program in Bangladesh to search for all missing aircraft in that area. During WWII, Bangladesh was part of India, which was part of the CBI (China, Burma and India) Theater. If successful, this pilot program will be used in other countries such as the Philippines where there are missing service members. In the CBI theatre there are 430 known MIA cases from WWII.

WWRM recently was successful in gaining support from the Indian government to do a joint venture with the U.S. government, through the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), to search India for missing personnel. You can read about this at the following link: [http://dannai.civiblog.org/blog/\\_archives/2008/3/19/3591041.html#1097603](http://dannai.civiblog.org/blog/_archives/2008/3/19/3591041.html#1097603).

In the Philippines, we were able to document a crash site and report this to JPAC. Today, JPAC is negotiating with the Philippines to begin searches there.

In the Netherlands, we are working with an oceanographer regarding an aircraft that was shot down off the coast of Domburg Zeeland. We may send some divers to check an area where a crash site was reported by local fisherman with remains in the aircraft.

We are in contact with an historian in Italy who has been tracking aircraft and burial sites in Italy. And

he knows someone who has information on sites in Slovakia/Czechoslovakia. Both of these historians have large databases of information.

Recently, the team has begun work to find the crash site of MAJ Milton Joel. Joel was commanding officer of the 38th Fighter Squadron of the 55<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group when he was shot down by German airplanes 29 November 1943 on the Dutch-German border. One European team member will be in Luxembourg in May to seek local information on a missing Army private missing since February 1945 during a crossing of the Sauer River.

### WWRM Behind the Scenes

One of our most important initiatives is to gain access to the "X-files" that contain information on the buried unknowns in American Military Cemeteries in Europe. We believe that access to these files would enable us to make significant progress in the documentary research needed to identify several WWII MIAs.

Twice a year we attend the Department of Defense, Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office(DPMO) strategy meetings. WWRM also attends the DPMO family update meetings eight times a year, and coordinates with families and government agencies

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and aperture followed on the listserv when I posted information about the interview on KCFR. It was fascinating to read the wide range of personal interpretations of those words. Please see the following page for the ListServ discussion.

Then I received a call from a man who grew up in a rural mountain town in southern Italy. He described white crosses in local cemeteries where the bodies of men who washed up on the beaches had been taken on horse drawn wagons for burial. He said that this occurred in many small towns during and after the war. I passed the information on to JPAC in hopes that it might lead to more recoveries.

### **Recoveries...**

On page 10 of the March 2008 issue of *The Star*, you'll find information about recent recoveries of WWII servicemen. I'm always happy when I receive news releases from JPAC and the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) regarding the recovery and repatriation of U.S. servicemen from all wars, worldwide. Many recoveries continue to be made in Korea, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea and even in France.

The most recent was on April 25<sup>th</sup> when it was announced that the remains of 11 men, missing in action since December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1943, have been identified by JPAC and will be returned to their families for burial with full military honors. The wreck of their B-24 Liberator was found by three Papua New Guineans hunting in

the forest. Dental records, mtDNA and crew-related artifacts such as identification tags were used in the process. In the words of an official at the DPMO: "Welcome home, gents."

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO website at [www.dtic.mil/dpmo](http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo) and JPAC's website at [www.jpac.pacom.mil](http://www.jpac.pacom.mil).

We're hoping to have a representative from JPAC join us again at our November conference. The stories and technologies are always new and fascinating. AWON is very privileged to have the attention of JPAC, a world-renowned organization. Their work epitomizes the meaning of the words, "They are not forgotten." Indeed, their credo is "Until they are all home."

### **Public Relations...**

I continue to reach out to media with information about AWON, and in cases such as *Oprah* and *Charlie Rose*, I send a copy of the Turner book *American WWII Orphans Network: In Their Memory*.

A news release will be prepared and made available to members who wish to send it to their local media prior to the conference in November. It will be accessible on our website or by contacting me after October 1<sup>st</sup>. In addition, I'll be sending it out to the major media outlets. Call your local newspapers and public radio or TV stations and get the name of a specific contact for veteran/military stories. You may be able to find that information online. I suggest that you do not send it to

a media website because it will not be read.

### **AWON photo albums...**

The photo album I started, *Portraits of Men Who Died in World War II and the Children Who Love Them*, has grown to three large photo albums that were created as a visual statement about these men as fathers, and the children they left behind.

The albums will be in the hospitality room at the conference in Tucson. If you haven't already sent photos to be included, please send an 8 x 10 photo of your loved one who died in WWII. Print his name, rank, group or squadron and date of death on the back of the photo. Also, send a 5 x 7 or smaller photo of yourself as a child with your name, phone and email on the back. Photos will not be returned so please, do not send originals. Mail them to:

Patricia Gaffney-Kindig  
1675 Glen Moor Parkway  
Lakewood, CO 80215

### **Blessings, Doni...**

I had a wonderful conversation with Doni Troglio recently. In spite of her struggle with ALS, she remains positive and proactive about her care. She's also traveling and keeping busy with her interests. I had the pleasure of working with Doni on many projects during the years we served together on the board of directors. You are in our thoughts, Doni!

If you have questions or comments about any of the above, email me at [pabi@att.net](mailto:pabi@att.net) or call 303.233.4361.

# AWON ListServ Discusses Aperture vs. Closure

*Editor's note: In Patricia Gaffney-Kindig's interview on Colorado Public Radio (see page 6 for details) she described how the discovery of her father's remains did not bring her "closure." Rather, it created an opening or "aperture." The following is a compilation of the "Aperture vs. Closure" discussion that followed on the AWON ListServ. It was meticulously compiled by Rosalie Miles Francisco.*

**Tom Ratliff** was responsible for beginning an intriguing conversation on the Listserv about our experiences when people ask about "closure." He recounted an answer given by **Barb Kelley**, whose reply was, "There would never be closure for as long as I live, because I am constantly learning." Tom's insight after finding out about his father was, "Over time, that certainty led to insightful understanding... but not closure. Closure is an ending... the accumulation of knowledge is a never ending journey."

**Patricia Ball Morrison:** "For me there will never be a closure — for too many years of my life, there was a tightly closed door. It has opened ever so slightly. I know it will never be as open as those who have graves to visit or a battlefield monument to visit commemorating his death. Closure, no. There will always be an open, somewhat raw, sore — there will always be a scab that itches to be picked away, keeping the healing process always in process."

**Steve Wilkins:** A video at the Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial website ([www.abmc.gov/cemeteries/cemeteries/ca.php](http://www.abmc.gov/cemeteries/cemeteries/ca.php)) shows his father's name on the Wall of Missing, along with Benny Goodman. "Another example of our "closure." The video is great!"

**Kathie Schuler Hobbs:** "It wasn't a closure for me just another opening of a door for continual research about the man that meant the most to me who had never been part of my life, only a picture that I didn't find until I was older. So I don't look at the word closure as an end but as an opening to new discoveries."

**Judith Grant-Botter:** (close) : n. 1a: a coming or bringing to a conclusion... a conclusion or end in time or existence ... adj. 1: having no openings. She adds: "It was then I realized that I had no real openings to have a (closure). I had never seen nor was seen in person by my dad. He had left one month before I was born for overseas. Also, there can be no (closure) as most of us are seeking the information."

**Sandra MacDuffee:** "AWON has been an opening for all of us to search for our dads, information on their time in the service, who they were as people, and what their life was like before they left to fight. ... 'I didn't find it at the cemetery at Hamm but standing on a pathway overlooking the field where my Dad fell. I've told this story before but briefly, I felt my Dad, he as there with me at that moment - a feeling overcame me that I could never, ever explain but one that I embraced with every part of my heart and soul."

**Roger McKee Connor:** "I think the word Patricia uses — aperture — is much better than closure. Whenever I hear closure, I want to scream. Comfort or peace is also better than closure."

**Chickie Shields Berry:** "There can be no "closure" as long as we are seeking."

**Maggie Malone:** "I myself have found the word 'plateau' useful. I see my orphan self as being on a long climb up a steep mountainside, trying to reach my father. As I climb, new information and events keep me going forward, upward. And every once in a while, there seems to be a psychic

space where I can rest, feel the earth under my feet and integrate what I've experienced and learned. I will never reach the top and find my father in this life, but the climb gives me hope that I will know him better and better as time goes by. I am grateful to AWON that I am on the journey and that I speak his name."

**Jack Forgy:** "We do not have closure because we do not know exactly what happened and never will, exactly. We can speculate but we can't know so there is no closure. Because of my contacts and family situation, I was able to know better than most what happened to him, but it was not closure. Even years later when I found official documents it was not closure for there was no end. Was he brave? How did he die? Where exactly did he die? Why is there a one day discrepancy in official records on date of death? Why did he come back to me in a dream on a cold night in France, depart his wisdom and never return?"

**Nancy Kragh:** "I think in terms of "connections" rather than closure - I am on a mission to connect with someone I don't really know, but whose absence I grieve."

**E. Kay Thomas Merliss:** "Closure, I have found is a word that people have come up with so that they don't have to deal with anyone's grief too long. Grief in others just makes people uncomfortable and for the most part they just want you to get through it and move on so that their comfort level can be satisfied. But, I assure you I felt everything BUT closure. I have had resolution. The only thing that has come close to filling the silent hole he left was finding AWON and all of you. I now see him in those who have come after him and know that is the way he lives. But closure, no. Long overdue acceptance, yes."

**Barry Barr-Finch:** "I think of closure as completion also... I still am on a journey of learning more about the man who means so much to me. And isn't that part of the wonder of life that we get to learn and experience new things all the time?"

**Sharon Crowley Connor:** "In Sept '05, I went to Yap Island in the far Pacific and held a small memorial service for my dad and the other 21 men involved in the B-24 mid-air collision that killed them all. In my blog I wrote: 'I ended my words to my father, but it didn't feel like goodbye. I told him I'd be seeing him...' Returning to the dock, even as salty sea spray prickled my skin, I felt peaceful. My father had fallen into the sea 62 long years ago and now his presence was being recognized. He was there, and he knew we were with him. I was happy. He knew I'd come a very long way to see him as soon as I'd learned where he was. Could I have asked for more? I FEEL GOOD. So 'closure' is not the word I would use for my experience. It was a first-time visit and a hello and a promise to see him again. And I was at peace."

**Ed Peters:** "For myself, as I think for my mother, closure is about the freedom to move forward without the past (the loss) being the driving force in my life. Closure in the sense of completion is meaningless for me. My whole life has been informed by the awareness of loss; not simply the loss of my father but the temporary loss of my mother and the nearly total rearrangement of what my life "would have been." Sometimes my life was about those losses or about the anger of having them. I think I am past that now and have closure in the sense that the past is what it is; the pain is just part of who I am. As my mother said: it never goes away. It can never be closed or completed, it can only be accepted or recognized as what it is."

*O'Keefe,*  
*continued from front page*

were made aware of. It was their way of creating for us a sense of normality. What we didn't know wouldn't hurt us. But it does depending on the sensitivity of the child. Your senses become much keener to your surroundings and to what people say. Years go by and we lived in the shadows of our fathers never really knowing the complete story. That is until we mature and the wondering takes on a different form. Not wondering if, or when, he might magically appear or that some massive mistake was made. No, we start to wonder what type of a person he was or would have been had he lived. It gnaws at you little-by-little wanting to force some sort of closure.

In my particular case it took me 54 years to decide to come to grips with my feelings and undertake this journey that may or may not provide anything more than I already knew. I made the decision that I would do everything possible to "discover" my father. Little did I know where this journey would take me over the next seven years.

### Out of the Starting Gate

It was a slow start that did not really get moving until I found my father's letters to my mother after she passed away in 1992. I had accumulated some information but it was not nearly enough for me to paint the spiritual picture I seemed to be determined to paint. Contacting the government was time consuming and took years to get even the minimal amount of records. Seems his records were a victim of the fire at the Record Center in St. Louis in the early

1970's. Every request to secure information from the government met with some excuse followed by their instructions to try again in a few months.

I can recall one day reaching a high level of frustration to the point I called the Government Archive Center in Washington and was told they would call me back. They did and the person I spoke with said that his records, "were out for review." "Really," I said, "Must be important because the man has been deceased for nearly 60 years." No answer on the other end of the phone. Situations like this were common but

***The most important discovery about AWON was that the feelings I had throughout my childhood were not unique to me.***

it seemed to energize me even more to continue the journey. There had to be a way.

The Internet is a wonderful thing. I learned how to use it and how to use the various search engines. One day while browsing I discovered the American WWII Orphans Network (AWON). This was the real beginning of my journey. I joined and subsequently ordered some of the books. It was a treasure trove of shortcuts. Following some of the

paths resulted in finding various departments within the government that were able to send me documents they had on file of my father. It seemed like the journey was picking up speed.

The most important discovery about AWON was that the feelings I had throughout my childhood were not unique to me. Thousands upon thousands of World War II orphans had in some form or another felt the very same thoughts and feelings. I was not alone by any stretch of the imagination.

### The Big Breakthrough

One day, while browsing the Internet attempting to find some information on the 39<sup>th</sup> Field Hospital I really struck gold. One of the doctors assigned to the 39<sup>th</sup> was mentioned by his son who was creating a family home web page. Based on this information I cold called him and he in turn put me in contact with the daughter of one of soldiers who was writing a history of the unit. Could this be? Did I dig far enough to hit a payload? Little did I know what was to lie ahead of me.

I called and spoke with her for some time. She said indeed she was writing a unit history based on years of research her and her husband had already accumulated. She then sprung something on me that I was totally not expecting to hear. "Did you know that the unit has a reunion every year?" You could have knocked me over with a feather. She then gave me the number of the First Sergeant for the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon. Needless to say I immediately called him. "Yes," he said. "It will be in Troy, Missouri, in two weeks." He

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then extended an invitation to come which I immediately accepted. Talk about timing.

I arrived in at the hotel in Troy. My plan was to check in and do some snooping to see where they were holding the meeting. As I was checking in at the desk this burly voice coming from one of the side rooms called out, "Hey, O'Keefe, get in here!" I spun around and this group of men and some of their wives were in the room talking. As I went into the room you could feel the suspicion. I really felt eyes peering into my very soul. You know that stare, what is he doing here and what does he want? It was obvious that, even after some 60 odd years these men were nervous about bringing up what happened to my father. It was like they were facing someone from the family for the first time, not knowing what to say. It was a really strange situation and somewhat uneasy, not for me but for them.

For two days I met and spoke with the men really not getting much other than they remembered my father and what a great guy he was. Some of the men who were more comfortable told me some stories but for the most part it was cordial. But I was beginning to see the men getting more relaxed with me. Some of the men were beginning to understand my purpose.

After their big reunion dinner we were meeting at the home of the reunion host. The entire group was there. I felt I had to say something to the entire group. I asked the host if I could speak and he immediately granted permission. I related over the next hour or so the story of my mother and how she had made a wonderful life for my brother and

me. I also told them of growing up in the shadow of a man I really did not know and how I was on a journey of discovery. A journey for me to understand what kind of man my father was and perhaps establish some sort of legacy to pass onto my family. I also told them that they had collectively more actual memories of him than were ever possible for me.

**"I was there  
on the scene  
when your  
father died.  
How much  
do you  
want to know?"**

That any information they could give me would be deeply appreciated. The break in the clouds seemed to be immediate because the stories about my father came fast and furious. Unit documents and photographs were offered to me. The information was almost overwhelming.

The next morning as everyone was getting ready to depart for home, my father's First Sergeant, "Smitty", cornered me along with a few of the men. "I was there on the scene when your father died," he said. "How much do you want to know?" It was a very strange and emotional few minutes, more for the men of the 39<sup>th</sup> it seemed than for me. I said to Smitty, "Everything you feel comfortable telling me." Smitty then told me every detail he could

remember about that day down to the last detail. Several reunions later one of the doctors related the story to me of how he was assigned to take my father remains to Graves Registration and what that trip was like. The barriers were broken and I was accepted. I can never describe what that feeling was like.

What do I do now? For one thing, I have made a vow that I will attend their reunion down to the last man. These men and their wives have become family. Over the past few years I can truly say that I am blessed that I have so many "fathers and mothers." I just wish that I had discovered them sooner.

*This is not the end of the story! O'Keefe's story will continue in the September issue of The Star, with the book he wrote and the surprising turn of events that led to the final chapter.*

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## **Hamilton to Talk on Dad's OH Roots and Naval Career**

Norma Nicol Hamilton invites AWON "Buckeyes" to a presentation she will give in July.

She will speak at the Allen County Historical Society in Lima, Ohio, on Sunday, 27 July 2008, at 2 p.m.

Norma's father, Cdr. George Beaton Nicol, USN, a Lima native son, was born and raised in this northwest Ohio town. He lived there his first 17 years until he left for the United States Naval Academy in June 1930.

Norma's talk will focus on her father's life in Lima and subsequent 15-year career in the Navy. All are welcome - and it's free!

For more information email Norma at: [rlhnh@comcast.net](mailto:rlhnh@comcast.net).

# AWON Connections

Pictures and Stories of Members  
Gathering Around the Country



Nine AWONers and three prospects met in Tupelo, MS, in early February, for some Southern hospitality in honor of "Yankee" Gerry Morenski, who was visiting Adrian Caldwell in Tupelo. Everyone met for lunch at Harvey's restaurant. Members drove in from Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky. Standing from left to right are: Jerry Baker, Ruth Malone, Jean Hollis (Ruth's sister), Gerry Morenski, prospective member Susan Mitchell, Ben McClland, Robert Caldwell (Adrian's husband) prospective member Andy Lawhon. Seated from left to right are: Giselle Baker (Jerry's wife), new member Linda Norwood, Bonnie Oates, Adrian Caldwell and Sondra Davis.  
*Adrian*



The SoCal AWON group met in San Marcos, CA, in February, at Johnny Carino's Italian restaurant. They enjoyed good food, a private room, and a table for memorabilia. Six AWONers and three spouses were in attendance: Roger and Sharon Crowley Connor, Lorin McCleary (and wife Roberta), Vic Muller, Linda Hallack Porter (and husband Bob) and Barbara Merryman Swenson (and husband Dick). "The conversation centered mostly around our fathers (and a brother

in Vic's case), and our search for information about them," reports Roger. "Vic brought us up to date on the memorial to his brother he is having built in Germany. Lorin gave us some of the early history of AWON and shared his and Roberta's excitement about the house they are building in northern New Mexico. We also talked about the November 2008 AWON conference in Tucson. Sharon is co-chair with Penny LeGrand Hopkins. All at the luncheon hope to attend the Conference." This was Lorin's first SoCal luncheon. "We were pleased and honored to have him with us," Roger adds. "Lorin is one of the First Founders of AWON and helped Annie Mix get the organization off the ground." Pictured, from left, are: Bob and Linda Porter, Lorin and Roberta McCleary, Roger and Sharon Connor, Vic Muller, and Barbara and Dick Swenson. The SoCal AWON group plans to meet again in August. *Roger*



A huge gathering was held in York, PA, in April at Hoss's Steak and Sea House. There were a total of 23: 18 orphans, four spouses, and one aunt, from at least four states. After gathering and welcoming new members, they enjoyed lunch and conversation. "Some orphans had corresponded with each other, but had never met face to face until they got to York, so it was nice to see them together and talking," comments Lynne Lecrone. There was time to share fathers' stories and look at pictures. Pictured in the front row, from left, are: Nancy Morrell, Phyllis Louis, Donna Allen, Barbara Van Aulan, Caroline Jackson, Lynne Lecrone and Ken

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Noll. In the back, from left, are: Ken Sills, Harry Potter, Maggie Fenstermacher, Sue Perko, Gail Eisenhauer, Eugene Fromm, Janice Buterbaugh, Jeanne Rhinehart and Norm Burkey. Not pictured are Orphan Al Reinecker and Family Member Mary Lee Orbert (niece). Spouses who were present included: Dick Allen, Mary Burkey, Betty Fromm, Gail Null and Lynne Lecrone's paternal aunt, Annabel Bare. There were five who met for dinner the night before at Ruby Tuesday's: Gail, Mary Lee, Sue, Harry, and Lynne. And about nine headed to a sandwich deli after the luncheon to continue their conversations. "It was a wonderful time to be together and remember our fathers," concludes Lynne, who is planning another gathering next April. "Thanks to all who came and shared their time with their AWON brothers and sisters." *Lynne*



Fife, WA, was the site of another Washington State get-together at the Poodle Dog restaurant. Pictured front row from left are: Shirley Santini, Linda Chauvin, Judi Kramer and Shari Haxby. In the back row from left are: Barry Barr-Finch, Jim Ehrlar and Cliff Marks. *Barry*



Four AWON ladies spent a four-day weekend together in late February early March in Fenwick, DE. They were, from left: Lynne Lecrone, Jeanne Rhinehart, Janice Buterbaugh, and Gloria Layne. Lynne, Jeanne and Janice arrived on Friday and

they picked up Gloria at the local police station Saturday morning (editor's note: how much was bond?) The foursome stayed in a new condo. "It was a time for relaxing, talking about our dads and our grandparents, reminiscing about past conferences, laughing, dining, taking many tours and of course, shopping," says Janice. Gloria talked about her trip to Margraten with her AWON brothers and sisters. "What a wonderful and emotional trip for them - The Margraten Kids. Lynne, Jeanne and I were wishing we could have been with them," Janice adds. *Janice*



Four AWONers enjoyed the tulips and spring weather during the Pella Tulip Time Festival in Pella, IA, May 1. Pictured at member Sherrie Clark's home are, front row from left: Sherrie Clark and Pat Morrison. In the back are Terry Boettcher and Carla Sue Holcomb. Terry explains that the overwhelming majority of the population of Pella is third and fourth generation Dutch. The opening ceremony on the town square had the singing of the Star Spangled Banner followed by the Dutch National Anthem. The American and the Dutch flags are flown together all over the public areas. "I saw a T-shirt for sale that said, 'If you ain't Dutch, you ain't much,'" Terry says. *Terry*

**2008 AWON Conference**  
**"Healing Ourselves"**  
**Tucson, Arizona Nov. 7-11, 2008**  
**Westward Look Hotel**  
**Plan to Attend!**

**Registration Form**  
**AWON Saguaro Sunset Conference 2008**  
**Tucson, Arizona November 7-11, 2008**  
 Please return by September 1

**AWON Confab  
 set for Tucson  
 in November**

**Y**ou won't want to miss the 2008 AWON Conference in Tucson, Arizona, Nov. 7 - 11. The conference committee has planned four days of activities, sessions, and workshops. And plenty of free-time has been set aside for site-seeing.

The conference gets underway Friday night with a WWII-era sing-along to get everyone "In the Mood."

On Saturday presentations will be given by the American Battle Monuments Commission and the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command will update. Dr. Vamik Volkan will discuss the healing process, and several AWONers will share their personal stories of healing.

Of course no conference would be complete without AWON's traditional Sharing Circles, and the AWON's Veterans Day Memorial Service in honor of our fathers at the prestigious Pima Air and Space Museum. We'll also get a tour.

There's much more, so come spend a few days with your fellow orphans!

Return the registration form to the left by Sept. 1. Hotel information is on the next page. Information about placing a memorial ad in the conference program is on page 19.

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Guests: (name and relationship to member and if a veteran):  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Is this your first AWON Conference? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

**Registration Fee** (includes banquet):

Active Member	\$175	\$80 deposit	\$ _____
Inactive Member	\$200	\$100 deposit	\$ _____
Guests	\$150	\$75 deposit	\$ _____
Guests (no banquet)	\$90	\$45 deposit	\$ _____

Total registration fee/deposit enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate choice and number of banquet entrees:

beef \_\_\_\_\_ chicken \_\_\_\_\_ fish (salmon) \_\_\_\_\_ vegetarian \_\_\_\_\_

**Name Tag Information** (please print clearly):

Full Name (include maiden name): \_\_\_\_\_

State of residence/telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Other guests attending (designate if veteran): \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Serviceman's name: \_\_\_\_\_

rank first middle last  
 Branch \_\_\_\_\_ Date KIA/MIA \_\_\_\_\_ Country KIA/MIA \_\_\_\_\_

Cemetery where buried or memorialized: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail registration form with check or money order payable to **AWON** to:  
 Sharon Crowley Connor  
 1640 Tenth Ave. Unit 303  
 San Diego, CA 92101-2875

# Self-Understanding Reached in New Books

**S**tories can be told in different ways. For Imogene Woods it started with a list of names. For Lois Brown Klein it began in a stack of notebooks.

Research on Woods' book, *The Ordinary Infantrymen: Heroes Then, Heroes Again*, began when the author searched the letters of her war-dead father and found information that was both puzzling and somewhat contradictory.

When the detailed research route didn't yield the needed information, she turned to a list of the men in her father's company. What she uncovers when she contacts these men surprises her as she learns about

her father, his company, other infantrymen, the war, and herself.



Woods graciously has donated all proceeds from her book to AWON.

With degrees in English

Literature and Psychology, Klein chose poetry to express her grief and shame from losing her father.

In *A Soldier's Daughter*, Klein brings together poems that were once relegated to notebooks and shared with no one.

"With my discovery of AWON, I realized it was time to gather these poems together and let them speak to others who have struggled with similar loss," Klein explains. "I finally could break through the Wall of Silence. This memoir-in-poems is the journey many of us have taken from the barely conscious understanding of childhood to the search for meaning in adulthood."

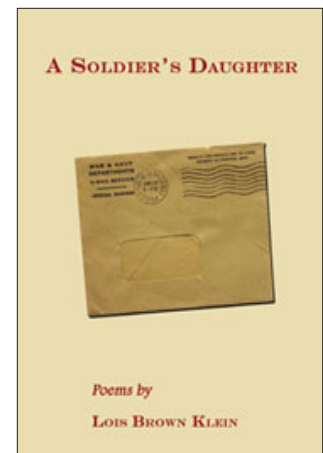
Poet Barry Spacks writes on the book's back cover, "With a clarity like glinting brook-water, Lois

## Important Hotel and Transportation Information

**Hotel:** Call for reservations at 1-800-722-2500. Ask for the American WWII Orphans Network special rate. Reservations can be made beginning March 15. Book early to ensure your rate. **Total** per night, including resort fee & taxes, will be \$126.17 single/double and \$138.82 triple/quad. **You will need to book four nights.** A credit card will be required to guarantee the reservation.

**Cancellation Policy:** Failure to cancel a reservation **14 days** prior to arrival will result in a charge of one night's room and tax. If you need to cancel from October 6<sup>th</sup> to 14 days prior to your arrival, contact Penny LeGrand at 800-518-7338 x 226, and she will attempt to find someone to occupy your room.

**Shuttle Service:** Tucson International Airport is 20 miles from Westward Look Resort. Arizona Stagecoach Shuttle Service 877-782-4355 or [www.azstagecoach.com](http://www.azstagecoach.com) offers \$74 Double Roundtrip, \$62 Single Roundtrip.



Klein gives us a memoir-in-poems that details 'the real story' of a life, a brilliant work of reclamation, deeply moving, containing all of childhood's magic and yearning, all of a grown woman's wisdom, hope and celebration."

Both books are available in the AWON Bookstore.

## JPAC to Begin CBI Searches

The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) has met with Indian officials in Delhi to discuss crash site excavations in Arunachal Pradesh State.

Site visits will begin this fall.

There are more than 1,300 MIAs in the region known as "the Hump" or the China-Burma-India Theater of operations.

It is not known in which country a specific plane was lost, but JPAC analysts estimate more than 400 Americans are unaccounted-for in this region.

# Members Invited to Join New Far East Group

by Nancy Kragh

The American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor (ADBC) was formed by men who were in the military in the Far East when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the Philippines on December 7-8, 1941. With the exception of a few who escaped and became guerillas, these men and women became prisoners of war from April/May 1942 until the

war ended in 1945. Their last annual convention will be held in 2009.

Over the last several years, the descendants who have been attending these conventions have been taking an increasingly active role in helping to run them.

Last year the ADBC asked us to formalize our organization and, starting in 2010, conduct our own conventions with them as our guests. By the time you read this we will have completed our organizational meeting at the ADBC convention in Louisville in early May and elected our first board of directors.

I would like to invite any AWON members whose father died as a result of being in the Far East at the outbreak of the war in the Pacific to join the new group. The stories and friendships made through this organization - both POWs and descendants - have been a high point of my search for my dad. Many of the descendants were born after the war, but I have found that they also suffered from the "wall of silence". The fathers didn't talk either. Some eventually talked

and wrote biographies; many did not. There are people in the group that have done extensive research and are truly an encyclopedia of information. If you would like more information, please contact me at [nkragh@hotmail.com](mailto:nkragh@hotmail.com). You can also check the ADBC web site: [www.west-point.org/family/adbc/](http://www.west-point.org/family/adbc/).



## AWON Bataan Death March Markers in Place

Patty Temte reports that the two markers sponsored by AWON have been placed and are located within a kilometer of each other in the area of Abucay, Bataan.

The markers were a stop during a tour of the Philippines and Bataan in May by Valor Tours.

AWON members raised \$1,225 for FAME (Filipino-American Memorial Endowment) for the restoration and maintenance of two markers along the route of the Bataan Death March.

Pictures coming soon!



## Look Like a Star!



*Brand New!*

*Introducing a Gold Star crystal pendant.  
Add some AWON sparkle to your neckline.  
(chain not included)*

*Two Sizes Available*

*1-1/8" (28mm) • \$10 plus \$5 p&h*

*1-1/2" (40mm) • \$20 plus \$5 p&h*

Order Form on Page 24

# AWON Dutch Friend Offers Help to Shaules After Reading *Star* Article

One never knows when or where the next lead will come.

In the March 2008 issue of *The Star*, member Anne Shaules had an article about her visit to her father's grave at Luxembourg American Cemetery and Memorial. In it she mentioned the planecrash of her father, 1LT Edward C. Lehnhausen, on Oct. 18, 1944, in Holland. That is what got Hans Van Toer's attention.

Hans is one of AWON's many devoted Dutch friends. Member Gerry Morenski knows him well:

"Hans has always been a terrific help to orphans who are looking for information on the precise location of their dad's death," she says. "He takes photos, travels to sites... and he has personally picked up a few AWONers and escorted them to the spot. No charge...just what he feels the Dutch owe to Americans."

Van Toer contacted Morenski after he read Shaules' article. He noticed the date and began to wonder if he had information



Hans Van Toer

about the crash in his files. After some research he found out the exact time and place of Shaules' father's crash:

"This plane crashed at 13:30, three kilometres northwest of the town of Middelburg in the province Zeeland, very close to a German Westwall bunker by the

village Buttinge," he emailed Morenski. "I was wondering if Anne knew this. Is it possible for you to get her e-mail address?"

Van Toer also offered to get pictures of the crash site because he was going to visit Zeeland, near the North Sea, in the future.

"That way she would have some pictures to remind her of her father. And if you speak to her in person tell her that her story was very fascinating."

Van Toer did get in touch with Shaules. She says Van Toer will be traveling to Zeeland with his family in August, and will drive an hour out of his way to take pictures of the crash site.

## AWON Saguario Sunset Conference 2008 Memorial Page Form

If you would like to have a memorial published in the conference program book, complete the form below and include a photo(s) or email an image. Forms and payment **are due by August 18**. If you send photos by mail, **do not send originals**. They will not be returned. 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) \$25 \_\_\_ 1/8 page \$50 \_\_\_ 1/4 page  
\$100 \_\_\_ 1/2 page \$200 \_\_\_ full page

Message to accompany photo (enclose separate sheet if necessary):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Make check/money order payable to **AWON Conference Printed Program**, and mail form, photos and payment to:  
Norma Nicol Hamilton 5259 Marione Dr. Carmichael, CA 95608-5710  
Email: rlhnnh@comcast.net

### Moving? New Email?

Please contact Ann Mix if you change your address or your email. We don't want you to miss a single issue of *The Star* or any other AWON news:

Ann Mix  
P.O. Box 822  
Moses Lake, WA 98837  
mixmoseslake@aol.com

# List Tips & Topics

News, stories and information found on the AWON ListServ by **Rosalie Francisco**



## *Links to Pictures of National WWII Memorial*

After a request from Janice Buterbaugh for a link to a panoramic view of the WWII Memorial we received these links:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/mmedia/360/042904-20p.htm>

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/graphics/wwiimem/flash.htm>

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/gallery/2004/05-29-dedication/flash.htm>

<http://www.awon.org/dc/openpage1.html>

<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2004/summer.trips/interactive/flash.wwii.memorial.ap/frameset.exclude.html>

<http://www.cnn.com/2004/TRAVEL/05/27/WWII.memorial/index.html>

☆☆☆☆☆

## *Advice Before You Visit an Overseas Cemetery*

For those visiting overseas cemeteries, Kathey Ames says the best advice was to contact the American Embassy and the cemetery you are going to visit before you go. "The Superintendent of the cemetery sent a car and driver to pick up my daughter, friend and myself in Florence, Italy and took us the 7+ miles to the cemetery."

☆☆☆☆☆

## *Veteran's Benefits*

Jack Forgy's advice for finding out about veteran's benefits is to start with a toll-free call to the VA at 1-800-827-1000 and discuss the issue with a service rep. You may have a long wait until you talk to someone. You can also visit a VA storefront office for help. If not satisfied with VA go to a counselor from a service organizations such as the VFW or American Legion.

☆☆☆☆☆

## *8th Air Force Website*

Joe Ormond recommends a German website for fellow 8th Air Force orphans; it shows crash sites. There was a recent picture of a memorial to a

member of his father's group posted there. It has a search engine so you can look up bomber and fighter groups and squadrons.

<http://home.arcor.de/fliegerschicksale/englisch.htm>

☆☆☆☆☆

## *Bataan Website by IL High School Students*

Patty Temte was tipped off to a great website about the 192nd Tank Battalion from Bert Caloud, Asst. Supt. at the Manila American Cemetery. It's a Bataan Commemorative Research Project done by Proviso East High School in Maywood, Illinois, and includes history and pictures and personal stories:

<http://www.proviso.k12.il.us/Bataan%20Web/index.htm>

☆☆☆☆☆

## *The Real Story of TAPS*

Rik Peirson updates our knowledge about TAPS: "The Butterfield story of TAPS is correct. The Ellicombe version, touching as it is, is not. A whole TAPS page is on the AWON website as well as a link to the Arlington National Cemetery page where the story is told: <http://www.awon.org/tapspage.html>

"While we're on TAPS, I'll mention Ernie Pyle, the WWII "Soldier's Journalist," as the anniversary of his death was a week ago today, April 18. He was killed by the Japanese on one of the Ryukus Islands while he was an embedded writer. We've had a page on Ernie Pyle on the AWON website for a long time. <http://www.west-point.org/family/awon/pyle>

Anyhow, both the TAPS and PYLE pages are linked from our Members Menu — at: <http://www.awon.org/membersmenu.html>

☆☆☆☆☆

## *Honor Flights*

Diane Hardy Pollard emailed about the Honor Flight program that flies WWII veterans to Washington, D.C. for free. Pollard donated to the group in memory of her father and all WWII veterans. Go to: [www.honorflight.org](http://www.honorflight.org)

# Operation Torch '08 Tour Set September

The Screaming Eagles of WWII Foundation, based in The Netherlands, once again has invited all AWON members to participate in 2008 Operation Torch, an 11-day tour of the battlefields of Operation Market Garden and Bastogne.

The strong friendship between the Dutch and Americans dates back to 1944. Today, the Screaming Eagles of WWII Foundation plans trips for younger generations in order to continue this very special friendship.

Besides American active duty personnel, a special invitation is extended to all veterans of former wars and their family, as well as the original liberators of WWII, their family members or children of those who were killed or missing in action during these operations.

This year's tour is September 12-23, and costs \$2,500 per person, based on double occupancy. Stops include The Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial at Margraten, Bastogne, the

Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery and Memorial, Best, Son, St. Oedenrode, Eerde, Veghel, Heeswijk-Dinther, Eindhoven, Nijmegen, Ginkelse heath Dropzone, "The Island" and Arnhem.

According to The Screaming Eagles of W W I I Foundation which plans this annual tour, this trip is different from other battlefield tours in that it is

organized on a non-profit basis and in cooperation with different groups and individuals whose goals are to remember the sacrifice and keep the memory alive.

For more information contact Joseph Bossi, CSM (Ret.), 2231 Pendleton Dr., Clarksville, TN 37042-5618; cell: 931-624-8060, e m a i l : jmbossi@peoplepc.com.

Note: this article is for informational purposes only. AWON is not involved in the tour.



**Read and download  
The Star online at the  
AWON website. It's  
fast, easy and in color!**

## 2008 AWON Budget

### Revenues

Membership Dues	\$25,000
Bookstore	\$1,500
Interest	\$400
Conference	\$4,000
Donations	\$0
Subscriptions	\$85
Misc	\$0

**Total Income \$30,985**

### Expenses

Newsletter	\$11,000
Telephone	\$150
America Online	\$300
Postage and Shipping	\$1,000
Insurance	\$500
Bank and Credit Card	\$1,000
Supplies	\$1,500
Membership Renewal	\$1,000
Public Relations	\$500
Member Care/Goodwill/Illness	\$100
Regional Coordinators	\$250
Database Manager	\$3,600
Database Supplies	\$1,000
WP Listserv Donation	\$300
Website	\$1,200
Election	\$1,000
WWII Museum Project	\$150
Bookstore	\$2,000
Awards	\$500
Arlington Cemetery Wreath	\$500
Misc	\$500

**Total Expenses \$28,050**

**Revenue over Expenses \$2,935**

WWRM, continued from page 9

one-on-one to discuss individual cases.

We continue to pressure Congress to make WWII MIAs a priority and not leave these men behind. Of the 88,000 missing from all past conflicts, WWII has the most, yet receives the smallest share of the budget. WWRM will testify before the senate on HRes 111, establishing a select committee on POW and MIA affairs.

We continue to advocate for the families of these missing men and to advocate for the men we have left behind.

## 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 pictures to the editor in Word, WordPerfect, RTF, or in the body of an email. High resolution jpeg, bitmap, gif or tiff images are preferred. Text and pictures also can be mailed. Photos returned upon request.

•Please keep text to one page (500 to 1,000 words), including pictures.

•Email short articles about resources, queries, book/movie recommendations, and general information for the List Tips column to the assistant editor.

•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  
September Issue  
is August 1**

## New VA Benefits Book Available

A new edition of the handbook *Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents* by the Department of Veterans Affairs, updates the rates for certain federal payments and outlines a variety of programs and benefits for American veterans, along with a listing of toll-free phone numbers, Internet addresses and a directory of VA facilities throughout the country.

The 2008 edition of the 153-page booklet also provides an overview of programs and services for veterans provided by other federal agencies. The handbook can be obtained from VA's website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

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*MIAs,  
continued from page 4*

In 2000, three hunters came across aircraft wreckage, but when a JPAC team arrived in 2002, the hunters couldn't relocate the site. It finally was found in 2004.

Now identified are CAPT Robert L. Coleman, 1LT George E. Wallinder, 2LT Kenneth L. Cassidy, 2LT Irving Schechner, 2LT Ronald F. Ward, T/SGT William L. Fraser, T/SGT Paul Miccias, T/SGT Robert C. Morgan, S/SGT Albert J. Caruso, S/SGT Robert E. Frank, and PVT Joseph Thompson.

## AWON Board Business 20 Jan 2008

**Reports:** Reports by the Financial Officer, Assistant First Inquiry Coordinator, AWON Margraten Liaison, and Public Relations, were submitted and reviewed.

**Finances:** Financial Officer **Doni Morrison Troglio** recommended the board invest part of AWON's general funds in an interest bearing account. Doni will research account options at Bank of America, where AWON funds are deposited, and report back at the March meeting.

**2008 AWON Conference:** Conference co-chairs **Sharon Crowley Connor** and **Penny Hopkins LeGrand** reported on the preliminary schedule, speaker line-up, and proposed registration fee for the conference. Board Director **Barry Barr-Finch** is researching possible corporate underwriting for the conference. The board unanimously approved setting the conference fee for active members at \$175 as recommended by the conference co-chairs. The board unanimously approved a conference per diem of \$50 for the Founder, plus an airfare allowance of \$400.

**Conference Display: Nick and Darlene Mott** submitted a request to make a conference display showing the dates and locations where fathers died. The Motts intend for the display to encourage discussion and bonding among conference attendees. The display would require information from the AWON database which is protected for privacy. The board unanimously approved the display.

**AWON Perpetual Calendar:** The board reviewed Pat Morrison's project to create a perpetual father memorial calendar of AWON fathers' dates of death. The board approved Pat seeking participants via the AWON Listserv and *The Star* (not through the database), but she reported that she does not have enough names. The board decided to continue the project as initially approved.

**Policies and Procedures:** The board unanimously approved revisions to the AWON Nominations, Elections and Ballot Counting policy and procedure.

**Next Board Meeting:** The next telephonic meeting of the AWON Board of Directors is March 16, 2008.

**Norma Nicol Hamilton**, Secretary

This is a condensed version of the minutes. For the complete minutes, please visit the AWON website.



# AWON BOOKSTORE

## Price List and Order Form



### BOOKS

(Authors in **bold** are orphan or family members)

<p><u>New!</u> <i>A Soldier's Daughter</i> by <b>Lois Brown Klein</b> \$17.00</p> <p><u>New!</u> <i>The Ordinary Infantrymen: Heroes Then, Heroes Again</i> by <b>Imogene Woods</b> and Twelve WWII Infantrymen \$15.00</p> <p><u>New!</u> <i>Full Fathom Five: A Daughter's Search</i> by <b>Mary Lee Coe Fowler</b> \$29.95</p> <p><u>New!</u> <i>Now I Know - A War Orphan's Journey of Discovery</i> by <b>Thomas G. Ratliff</b> \$17.95</p> <p>____ <i>When Your Number's Up: Meritocracy Goes to War</i> by Raymond S. Ross, PhD. hardcover \$20.00 softcover \$10.00</p> <p>____ <i>Sporty Course</i> (bomber pilots) by Col. Jack Swayze <span style="float: right;"><b>New price!</b> \$10.00</span></p> <p>____ <i>The Hotton Report</i> (about The Battle for Hotton) by Robert McDonald \$13.95</p> <p>____ <i>World War II: A Legacy of Letters - One Soldier's Journey</i> by <b>Clinton Frederick</b> \$26.95</p> <p>____ <i>In Their Memory: American WWII Orphans Network</i> by Turner Publishing Company \$49.95 2-5 books - \$43.16 per copy 6-12 books - \$37.77 per copy</p> <p>____ <i>The Fighting Tigers: The Untold Story Behind the Names on the Quachita Baptist University WWII Memorial</i> by William Downes \$24.95</p> <p>____ <i>The War Journey of Major Damon "Rocky" Gause</i> by Maj. Damon "Rocky" Gause, foreward by <b>Damon L. Gause</b> \$21.95</p> <p>____ <i>Love, Honor and Cherish: The True World War II Story of a Screaming Eagle and a Courageous Woman</i> by <b>Sandra Bonilla Thompson</b> \$23.00</p> <p>____ <i>Touchstones: A Guide to Records, Rights &amp; Resources for Families of American World War II Casualties</i>, second edition by <b>Ann Bennett Mix</b> \$21.95</p> <p>____ <i>No Greater Sacrifice, No Greater Love: A Son's Journey to Normandy</i> by <b>Walter Ford Carter</b> \$24.95</p>	<p>____ <i>Soldier's Son</i> by <b>Ben McClelland</b> \$28.00</p> <p>____ <i>D-Day + 60 Years: A Small Piece of Airborne History</i> by Jerome J. McLaughlin \$25.00</p> <p>____ <i>They Also Served: Women's Stories from the World War II Era</i> by Jeanie Sutton Lambright hardcover \$35.00 softcover \$24.00</p> <p>____ <i>Finding Billy</i> by <b>Diana Thompson Dale</b>, niece \$16.95</p> <p>____ <i>Father Found</i> by <b>Duane Heisinger</b> \$13.95</p> <p>____ <i>I Can Hear the Guns Now: A WWII Story of Love and Sacrifice</i> by <b>Thomas G. Ratliff</b> \$20.95</p> <p>____ <i>An 8th Air Force Combat Diary</i> by John A. Clark \$49.95</p> <p>____ <i>When I See a Forty and Eight... I Remember World War Two</i> by Jacques Adnet \$12.00</p> <p>____ <i>Love Always, Ben</i> by <b>Huey Tyra</b>, nephew \$19.95</p> <p>____ <i>For Those Who Love, Time Is Not</i> by <b>Kay Brigham</b> \$30.00</p> <p>____ <i>Lost in the Victory: Reflections of America's Orphans of WWII</i> by <b>Susan Johnson Hadler</b> and <b>Ann Bennett Mix</b> \$32.50</p> <p>____ <i>After the Liberators: A Father's Last Mission, A Son's Lifelong Journey</i> by <b>William C. McGuire II</b> \$16.95</p> <p>____ <i>Shobun: A Forgotten War Crime in the Pacific</i> by <b>Michael J. Goodwin</b> \$19.95</p> <p>____ <i>Laughter and Tears: The Art of Captain George Rarey</i> by <b>Damon Rarey</b> (leather-bound) \$39.95</p>
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### The Star NEWSLETTERS

- \_\_\_\_ \* Individual issues \$2.00 includes P&H
- \_\_\_\_ \* All archived issues: \$35.00 includes P&H
- \_\_\_\_ \* Special! Most recent five issues: \$7.50 includes P&H

**More AWON Merchandise and Order Form on Other Side**



# AWON BOOKSTORE

## Price List and Order Form



### VIDEOS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>___ <i>AWON 2004 Conference &amp; WWII Memorial Dedication</i><br/>Special \$15.00</p> <p>___ <i>We Speak Their Names: A Tribute to Our Fathers</i><br/>produced by Patrick Tierney and <b>Terry Boettcher</b><br/>was \$15.00 Special \$10.00</p> <p>___ <i>AWON 2000 Conference: Journeys - Finding Our Fathers</i><br/>by Justin Taylan was \$15.00 Special \$10.00</p> | <p>___ <i>Sleep My Sons: The Story of the Arisan Maru</i><br/>by <b>Shawnee Brittan</b> \$30.00</p> <p>___ <i>Fools and Heroes: A Film about Two Grandfathers, Both Artists, One a World War II Fighter Pilot, the Other a Conscientious Objector</i><br/>by granddaughter <b>Ondine Rarey</b> and Luigi Falomi \$30.00</p> <p>___ <i>The War in Europe</i> by <b>Shawnee Brittan</b> \$30.00</p> |
|---|---|

### AWON Logo Products

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>___ *AWON Note Cards with Envelopes<br/>(pkg. of 20) \$20.00</p> <p>___ Windbreaker ___ white ___ blue \$40.00<br/>(circle size: S M L XL 2X 3X)</p> <p>___ Denim shirt ___ short sleeve ___ long sleeve \$40.00<br/>(circle size: S M L XL 2X)</p> <p>___ Golf shirt ___ white ___ blue \$35.00<br/>(circle size: S M L XL 2X)</p> <p>___ T-shirt (AWON Dedication)<br/>Was \$15.00 Special \$10.00<br/>(circle size: S M L XL 2X 3X)</p> <p>___ Hat \$15.00</p> | <p>AWON Gold Star Crystal Pendant (no chain included):</p> <p>___ Gold Star Crystal Pendant 1 1/8" (28mm) \$10.00</p> <p>___ Gold Star Crystal Pendant 1 1/2" (40mm) \$20.00</p> <p>___ Charm bracelet (Italian) with AWON in gold letters \$48.00</p> <p>___ extra charms (please circle):<br/>Gold Star \$12 Purple Heart \$12 American Flag \$9</p> <p>___ * Lapel pin \$10.00</p> <p>___ *AWON auto magnet \$6.00</p> <p>___ * Magnetic WWII Memorial picture \$1.00</p> <p>___ * Magnetic AWON picture holder \$2.00</p> <p>___ * AWON holiday ornament \$10.00</p> |
|--|--|

### Order Form

Postage and handling: \$5 for each item. Items marked with an asterisk (\*) include P&H. For multiple purchases: Up to \$40: \$9 P&H \$40-\$60: \$10 P&H Over \$60: \$12 P&H

Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Type: Visa M/C  
 Washington State residents add 7.8% sales tax: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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 email: bookstore@awon.org

For more information and color photos go to: [www.awon.org/bookstore/bookstore.html](http://www.awon.org/bookstore/bookstore.html)

# Teremy Doesn't Give Up on Plaque for Father, Crew Killed in German Massacre

by Madeline Rogers Teremy

In 2004, Sidney Eugene Brown, the only living surviving crew member of the Russelsheim Massacre, in which six members of an American B-24 crew were killed by a German mob, told me how much he wanted to erect a memorial plaque to the crew in the memorial gardens at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Pooler, Georgia.

We anticipated arranging this when we attended the 491<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group reunion at the museum in 2004. To our dismay, we were told

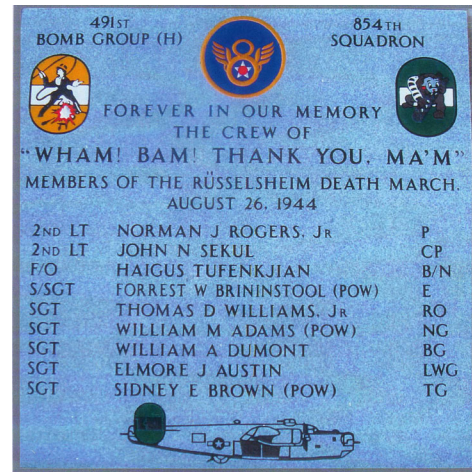
that all the walls were full and they were not accepting any more plaques. The other options available, such as a bench or a tree, would not allow us to list all the names of the crew together, which was not acceptable to Gene. Sorrowfully, we gave up the idea.

Then in March 2007, my husband and I stopped at the museum to drop off an updated copy of the DVD that I made about my father, pilot 2LT Norman J. Rogers Jr. To our joy, we found out that they had opened more space for crew plaques. We immediately began to contact the families of the crew that we knew about.

We all collaborated on the design and cost of the plaque and finally, in November 2007, the plaque was added to the memorial gardens.

Fifteen families participated, representing Sidney "Gene" Brown, Forrest Brininstool, William Adams, Haigus Tufenkjian and Norman Rogers Jr. We all also continue to remember John Sekul, Thomas Williams, William Dumont and Elmer Austin.

As the plaque is inscribed, they are "Forever in Our Memory."



## AWON Board Business 16 Mar 2008

**Finances:** The current total balance in all AWON accounts is \$51,874.24. A six-month CD was opened for \$35,000, leaving \$16,874.24 in the operating account.

**AWON Founder Per Diem:** To be more specific about its January action, the board approved a per diem of \$50, not to exceed \$250, for the AWON Founder to attend the 2008 AWON Conference.

**Membership Committee:** Bob Meek plans to form a committee to create a questionnaire to send to the membership. The purpose is to get input from former members concerning their reason(s) for not continuing as active members.

**Disruptive Members:** The board discussed how to handle former members who have become disruptive and/or intrusive; either as members or since leaving the organization.

**War College:** Gerry Morenski has been invited to attend the U.S. Army War College. Gerry received well-deserved congratulations from the board.

**Next Board Meeting:** The next telephonic meeting of the AWON Board of Directors is May 18, 2008.

**Ed Peters, Acting Secretary**

This is a condensed version of the minutes. For the complete minutes, please visit the AWON website.



### FAST FACT

**Five current U.S. senators served in World War II:**

**Daniel Akaka (HI)**  
**Daniel Inouye (HI)**  
**Frank Lautenberg (NJ)**  
**Ted Stevens (AK)**  
**John Warner (VA)**

**And one is a Medal of Honor recipient:**  
**(Daniel Inouye)**

*Hoffman, continued from page 2*

There were some comments on “cliques” at conferences, as well as people worrying about “not fitting in.” What follows is my own opinion and it does concern me a great deal, particularly for new members. Those of us who have been in AWON for quite a few years have made good friends. We see them sporadically and look forward to spending rare time together at conferences. This is normal human behavior and in no way is meant to be exclusionary.

You, as a member, must be proactive in finding friends. I find, among orphans, this is a difficult thing for some as it is for me. I encourage every “old” member attending the Tucson Conference to at least say hi to every new member. If you, as a new member, see a group of people talking and laughing, go introduce yourself and join in. If you stand on the outside and make no effort to meet others, you will miss the best of what constitutes AWON conferences and that is finding friends.

At the suggestion of one of our “older” members, name tags will be color coded by father's branch of service. You can strike

up a conversation with anyone about where your dad served, where he is buried, where you grew up, etc. There will be time Friday night for new members to meet the board. We are looking forward to talking with all of you. If, at the Tucson Conference, you feel as if you don't ‘fit in,’ please see me or any other board member. We will try to help you find a group with like interests to “adopt” you.

Sharing Circles were mentioned on several responses. Some said there wasn't enough time for all stories to be told. Others said that they had resolved their issues and suggest a “move on” or “what next?” group. One person suggested more facilitator training. This is difficult given that members, who have been in AWON a while, volunteer to serve as facilitators. They are given instruction by trained facilitators but, as you know, it takes time and practice. Please remember that your fellow members are doing the best they can with this difficult job and I am sure that we are all grateful for those who volunteer to serve in this capacity.

All conference suggestions will be saved for future boards and conference chairpersons. Details

regarding the Tucson Conference are set.

### **BOARD MINUTES**

Minutes of board meetings are on the web site. One member suggested that more detail be included. Minutes include time and date of meeting, attendance, topics of discussion, motions, and votes. That's it. Details of discussion are not included in any formal minutes of any meeting of any kind of board or council. Only the outcome of the discussion, should be documented in any set of minutes. If you have an interest in further information about a particular subject, please contact any board member.

### **FUTURE PLANS**

Most responders answered that an archive of our stories as orphans is our greatest priority. Runner-up was finding a place to archive AWON's memorabilia. Most suggested seriously discussing this issue with the National WWII Museum in New Orleans or the Veterans' History Project of the Library of Congress.

Tied for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place were making a documentary of our stories, and expanding membership categories. Responses varied

greatly with some members adamant about keeping AWON just for WWII orphans, and others wanting to include orphans of all wars. Given this split, perhaps the current orphan and associate categories will remain a good compromise. This board has discussed the documentary idea and will report back on this at a later date.

In 5<sup>th</sup> place was surveying former members. This is under consideration by this board. Last place was fund raising for today's war orphans with most responders commenting that today's orphans have a different atmosphere than we did in that, with today's emphasis on keeping the memory of the parent alive for the child, they will not suffer from the issues many of us shared. Many responders commented that, already, there are camps for war orphans, sharing circles at young ages, and financial aid from not-for-profit organizations and the government.

Your board of directors will discuss these results and your suggestions and, hopefully, make some progress toward some of these goals in the future. I thank all of the responders for their input.



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 www.awon.org



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

# AWON Directory

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