

The



Star

Issue 61

"We Speak Their Names"

June 2011

Family Told Mission a 'Go,' Then Abruptly Cancelled

Fed. Budget Cuts Thwart Recovery of Leist B-17



The B-17 crew shot down off the coast of Holland, February 4, 1944. S/Sgt. Leist is kneeling, far right.

Editor's Note: This article was written after Adrian Leist Caldwell was assured her father's submerged B-17 was slated for recovery by a U.S. military forensics team this August. In April, the mission was cancelled. The article is published in its original form, followed by the latest developments, in order to show the emotional highs and lows of an active MIA recovery case.

by Adrian Leist Caldwell

March 18, 2011

Many of you have travelled the long journey with me as I searched for information about my father's B-17. It crashed into Grevelingen Bay off the coast of Walcheren Island, Holland, as it returned from a bombing mission to Frankfurt, Germany, on February 4, 1944. It already was crippled by flak when a Luftwaffe fighter made the final attack.

All ten brave, young men aboard lost their lives that day. Three bodies washed up on shore near the village of Ouddorp, Holland, within three days of the crash. Another one, the navigator, was found in April on the opposite side of the bay. My father, S/Sgt. Leroy E. "Babe" Leist, the tailgunner, is still among the missing.

For more than ten years my husband and I have concentrated our search to the area of the Ouddorp beach. We have had many

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Indianapolis Chosen for Retreat, 2012 Conference

by Ed Peters - President,
AWON Board of Directors

I am pleased to announce that the AWON Board of Directors has selected Indianapolis, IN, as the site of the 2012 AWON National Conference.

The conference will be chaired by Walt Linne, with help from Barbara Kelly and other local AWONers. The conference will be held in October 2012. There are a number of WWII-related sites in Indianapolis, and we are anticipating an exciting conference.

Also, the bi-annual AWON Board Retreat meeting will be in Indianapolis, from October 6-9, 2011. This, like all board meetings, is open to all AWON members. If you are in the area, or just want to attend, please join us. Contact any board member for details.

With the recent choice of Indianapolis as the site of the 2012 AWON National Conference it seems a good time to review the process used by the board to select a location for the conference. There are four major criteria used in the process.

The first criteria is geography. AWON conferences rotate around the country. They generally rotate from the east, middle, and of the country, then the western United States. The 2008

National Conference was in Tucson, AZ. The 2010 National Conference was in Annapolis, MD. The 2012 National Conference will be in Indianapolis. The 2014 conference will be in the western part of the country.

The second criteria is the presence of AWON members. Planning a conference for 150-200 people is a complicated and time-consuming process. We have found from experience that the process of chairing and planning a conference is much more difficult when the chair does not live in the conference city. It is vital that the AWON Conference Chair, and other AWON helpers, live in or very near the conference location.

Another factor taken into consideration is affordability. The AWON Board of Directors tries to select locations that are reasonably priced. Cost considerations include hotel accommodations, airfares, transportation, meals, and how much AWON will have to charge for a conference registration fee based on costs from the hosting hotel.

Finally, the board considers how the potential host city fits in with our WWII interests. Host cities should have some connection or sites related to WWII, including, but not limited to, museums and national cemeteries.

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Post on ListServ Leads to Second Surprise

Daughter Discovers Errors on Dad's Plaque by Accident

by Mary Ruth Thier Klimow

When my mother got the telegram about my father, 1st. Lt. Joseph J. Thier, we were living in Belle Harbor, NY, a section of Rockaway Beach in Queens. The Rockaway peninsula juts off Long Island near John F. Kennedy International Airport. Inbound and outbound planes fly over Rockaway.

My mother and father were Brooklyn born and bred, but we moved to nearby Rockaway for the fresh ocean air recommended for my allergies. I remember very clearly when I was about four or five years old, in 1946 or 1947, planting a tree for my father in what was to become the Belle Harbor Memorial Circle. I had not been back there since we left in 1948.

But on a visit to the New York City area in late summer 2005, we needed a car to drive to a family wedding. I knew there would be a lot of time on Sunday before turning in the car, and it seemed like a good time for a return visit to Rockaway, it being so close to the airport. My husband was agreeable, but although I had the street location of the memorial, I did not know where it was exact-

ly. We found it easily.

There was a monument in the center with 17 now mature trees forming a circle cut in the middle by the



Mary Ruth Thier Klimow standing next to her father's tree, Memorial Day, 2006.

street; each tree representing a WWII casualty from Rockaway. I walked up to the tree nearest the car, and the bronze plaque beneath it took my breath away. We parked right at my father's tree.

But when I regained my composure, I noticed that my father's last name, Thier, was misspelled as Their (which was common all my life), the middle initial was wrong (L instead of J), and, the date of death was wrong. At that point, I knew I was sent there for a reason.

During the long flight back to California, I had time to think through my course of action to have the plaque replaced with a correct one. It began with writing a letter to

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New Multi-Year Renewal Rates Go Into Effect in June

You now can renew your AWON membership for one, three or five years. Three- and five-year memberships offer a discount. For details, see the renewal form on page 19.

...Plaque, from page 3

the New York City councilman for that area of Queens. I received a quick response from a woman in his office who already contacted the local veterans groups that maintained the memorial.

The procedure then stalled for several months because the American Legion post had been closed and the memorial was turned over to another veterans group. They need to find the new man in charge of the memorial.

A few weeks went by without word until I heard from the president of the local garden club. The garden club ladies plant the flowers and maintain the memorial because the veterans are too old for the heavy work. However the garden club did not have the funds to pay for a new plaque, and neither did the veterans.

I sent a message that I was willing to pay for the replacement and then things moved swiftly. The foundry that made the incorrect plaque contacted me. The incorrect plaque actually is the second plaque for my father. It replaced the original that had been taken, along with some of the others, many years ago. The veterans had to rely on sketchy records and old memories to replace the ones missing. Unfortunately, we had no family in the area they could contact.

I was invited to be the guest of honor at the 2006 Memo-

rial Day parade to place the wreath on the main monument and to unveil the new plaque under my father's tree. It was a beautiful warm sunny day, American flags were everywhere, including by each tree plaque. At the end of his introduction, the last commander of the American Legion post finished with, "Welcome home,



Above, 1LT Joseph J. Thier, and below, his fourth and corrected plaque.



Mary," which brought tears to my eyes. I felt I was home, again.

After I laid the wreath, everyone applauded and cheered. People came over and thanked me for being there, and for my father's sacrifice. I felt like it was his homecoming, too, long overdue. I knew he would be proud.

But there was one glitch on this wonderful, old fashioned event: the last name was still misspelled on the new plaque!

By the time I called the foundry the next day, they already knew of the mistake and had the reason for it. The lettering was set by computer and their computer, like mine, will automatically correct Thier to Their, and no one proofread carefully enough to pick it up. Within a few days, the plaque was changed again, and my new friends in Belle Harbor emailed that the correction was made.

My story ended here until fellow AWONer Joan Murry Marlow of Larchmont, Long Island, saw my March post about the plaque on the AWON ListServ.

"Saw your posting ... and was very moved. Just wanted to let you know that I live about 15 minutes from Belle Harbor. If you want me to go and see your Dad's tree, just let me know."

I hadn't seen the fourth, correct, plaque, so I was thrilled with her generous offer. Now, finally, the story and the plaque are complete. My job is done, but I still have to manually correct the spelling of my maiden name.

Editor's Note: For more photos, including aerial views of the Memorial Circle at Belle Harbor, go to: <http://www.westpoint.org/family/awon/events/belleharbor>.

Bowers Letter Touches Stranger 66 Years Later

By Ben Weber

See You Someday

Those are the fateful words Army Pfc. Rex Bowers wrote January 19, 1945, as he rested from ten grueling days in combat near Bastogne, Belgium. When I first read them it struck me he seemed to have a premonition he would not make it home. At that moment I knew he deserved to have his story told.

Writing to his family back in the small Idaho town of Burley, he wrote of the ordeal, saying, "It's really rough and I don't mean maybe. A lot of the time a guy goes on sheer guts." Six days later - on January 25 - the Battle

of the Bulge ended, and Pfc. Bowers was killed. He survived barely 16 days in combat before vicious German machine gun fire struck him down in northern Luxembourg. The 24-year-old soldier left behind his parents, his wife, and three young children.



PFC Rex M. Bowers

The story of this heroic veteran likely never would be known had it not been for the dogged determination of his oldest daughter, Marilyn Bowers Jensen. I met Marilyn at last year's reunion of the 35th Infantry Division Association. My wife, Sherry, and I attended to honor my uncle who was one of eight inductees into the division's hall of fame. Marilyn told me about her father and, later, I got more information from her, the AWON website and other sources.

Marilyn was five when her dad was killed. Growing up, she learned little about her father. Her mother never spoke of him and it was too painful for her grandparents to say much.

In 1992, after the death of her grandfather, Marilyn found a shoe box full of letters. She later wrote, "It was the first time that I had seen my dad's handwriting or heard his voice through his writings." She resolved then to learn more about her father and the circumstances of his death 47 years earlier.

She searched two years for leads until one day she spoke with combat veteran Jim Graff, who served in the same 134th Infantry Regi-

New Address?

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Dues Due?

Email address and email updates to Database Manager Gerry Morenski at dutiem@comcast.net.

If you are on the AWON ListServ and your email has changed, notify Moderator Judy Hoffman at jghoffman@satx.rr.com or Moderator Judy Hathaway at judy0305@yahoo.com

Want to know when your dues are due? Check the address label on the back cover. If your membership has expired or is about to, please renew using the form on page 19.

...continued on page 18

...Cuts, from front page

wonderful, and some not-so-wonderful, Dutch who have assisted in the research and search for my father's plane, using side-scan sonars and divers. Even a contact with the Royal Dutch Hydrographic Lab was kind enough to do a back trace from where the bodies were found using the winds and seas at the time in 1944.

Then in March 2009, a boat dredging the Europoort channel near Rotterdam, hit the top of the plane. Fortunately, a fine German gentleman and Luftwaffe historian, Heinz Schneider, kept the parts that appear to be the top turret and a .50 caliber machine gun. The gun still had the serial number clearly visible. He traced the serial number back to the Missing Air Crew Report, then to the 100th Bomb Group Foundation, and eventually to me. This was the huge break we needed and prayed for over so many years. Last summer Maj. Paul Petersen, head of the Dutch Air Force Salvage Team, conducted a search for

the plane but could not relocate the bomber.

My husband and I then attended a Family Update meeting sponsored by the Department of Defense POW/



S/SGT Leroy E. "Babe" Leist

Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) in Baton Rouge, LA. We fully expected to hear the usual tone of no money. Instead, we learned that JPAC (Joint POW/MIA Accounting

Command) already had been to Holland to procure all necessary permits from the Dutch government for a joint effort by the Dutch Air Force Salvage Team and JPAC to do extensive sonar searches in the area. They have allotted 43 days - July 24 through September 4 - for the search. They told us when they find the fuselage they will send in U.S. Army divers to search for remains. They were very positive and encouraging in all aspects of the operation. They were as excited as we were!

We also learned that Congress has passed the FY2010 Defense Authorization Act mandating DPMO and JPAC direct more assets to the recovery of WWII MIAs. I highly recommend anyone with an MIA father go to the

DPMO or JPAC website and sign up. You will be given a case worker. There are Family Update meetings each month in a different part of the country. The schedule is also on the DPMO website (see box at left).

I know some may feel their father is not recoverable because he may

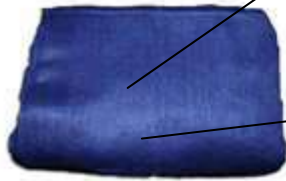
If your father is MIA you can attend a Family Update meeting by the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO). Officials discuss current recovery efforts and meet one-on-one with families to talk about their specific case. Family members also can provide DNA samples at meetings. The remaining meetings for 2011 are:

June 25 - Princeton, NJ
October 15 - Wichita, KS
November 19 - Savannah, GA

You must register in advance to attend a meeting so that analysts can be prepared to discuss your case. To register, go to:
http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/family_events/

New AWON Logo Product!

Wrap your dad around you any time with this new cotton/polyester fleece-backed blanket. The 50 x 60 inch royal blue blanket features gold-stamped (not embroidered) lettering with *American WWII Orphans Network* and *In Their Memory*, centered above a stamped gold star. Add your father's name and rank above the text. The approximate half-inch lettering and gold star will be centered on the edge of the short side of the blanket.



(actual example)

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Use Bookstore order form on page 10

be lost at sea, but you never know what miracles await.

UPDATE: April 25, 2011

We just received word from my Casualty Assistance Officer that the mission to locate and recover B-17G #42-37975 and the remains of S/Sgt. Leist and five of his fellow crewmembers in August has been cancelled due to budget cuts. Not postponed, but cut. No explanation, no apologies or words of encouragement for a future operation, just CUT.

I am devastated to say the least. We were told at the



Adrian and her father

February Family Update meeting that the mission was approved, funded and not subject to budget restraints. I had patiently waited two years for that special day when Johnie Webb, Deputy

to the Commander for Public Relations and Legislative Affairs for JPAC, told me, "Adrian, this is your year." He was as happy as me to tell me all the plans, and even presented me with the operations order.

We have waited 11 long years for this mission, and now to have it removed from the active list at the last moment is just about more than we can stand. DPMO's motto is "Promise Kept." JPAC's motto is, "Until They are Home." It does not sound very encouraging at this moment. I vascillate between tears and anger.

Remains of Eleven Airmen Found in Papua New Guinea

The remains of 11 previously missing WWII U.S. airmen were buried with full military honors in February and March following their identification.

According to the Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO), on November 20, 1943, Army Air Forces T/Sgt. Charles A. Bode, 23, of Baltimore, MD, and ten other B-24D Liberator crew members, took off from Jackson Airfield, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, on an overwater mission near the northern coast of the country.

During the mission, the only radio transmis-

sion from the crew indicated they were 20 miles northwest of Port Moresby. Subsequent searches failed to uncover any evidence of either the crew or the aircraft.

Following WWII, the Army Graves Registration Service conducted a search but concluded in June 1949 that all were unrecoverable.

In 1984, the government of Papua New Guinea notified U.S. officials of a WWII crash site in a ravine in Morobe Province. A U.S. search and recovery team investigated the site in late 1984 and located B-24 aircraft wreckage. They also recovered human remains but were unable to complete the mission due to time constraints and the threat of landslides.

From 1984 until 2004 multiple teams from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) attempted to access and excavate the location but the threat of landslides made recovery too dangerous to continue. During a site visit in 2004, local villagers turned over human remains they had previously removed from the area.

T/Sgt. Bode was buried February 11, 2011, in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. Remains from Bode and the remaining crew were buried as a group on March 24, 2011, at Arlington. In addition to Bode the crew consisted of 1st Lt. Richard T. Heuss, Berkley, MI; 2nd Lt. Robert A. Miller, Memphis, TN; 2nd Lt. Edward R. French, Erie, PA; 2nd Lt. Robert R. Streckenbach Jr., Green Bay, WI; T/Sgt. Lucian I. Oliver Jr., Memphis, TN; S/Sgt. Ivan O. Kirkpatrick, Whittier, CA; S/Sgt. William K. Musgrave, Hutsonville, IL; S/Sgt. James T. Moran, Sloatsburg, NY; S/Sgt. James B. Moore, Woburn, MA; and S/Sgt. Roy Surabian, Medford, MA.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, Bode's remains were identified using mitochondrial DNA.

...Indianapolis, from page 2

On another note, many members have suggested New Orleans as a conference site. It has a very strong relevance to WWII, with the National World War II Museum located there. New Orleans also has a compelling connection as the home of Andrew Higgins and Higgins Industries (designer and builder of landing craft or "Higgins boats" and PT boats).

But as attractive as New Orleans is as a site for a AWON national conference, it has never been selected for two reasons. First, no AWONers live in or near New Orleans. In fact, there are no AWONers in Louisiana at all. Second, the cost of staying in New Orleans is extremely high, and we are very reluctant to hold a conference where some of our members cannot attend due to the cost. The AWON Board continuously keeps New Orleans in mind and if the situation changes, it will return to the list of possible sites.

We hope to see you in Indianapolis this October at the AWON Board Retreat, or the 2012 National Conference the following October. If you live in the western United States, now is the time to begin thinking of possible sites to host the 2014 AWON National Conference.



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

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AWON Mourns Passing of Widows, Orphans

AWON regretfully reports the passing of the mothers of two AWONers, and the passing of two orphans.

Margaret (Zehner) Francis Kenter of Teutopolis, IL, passed away March 17, 2011, at the home of her daughter, AWONer Barb Francis Kelly, in Indianapolis. She was 89.

Margaret was first married to 2nd Lt. George R. Francis, who was killed in France on September 21, 1944. She then married James V. Kenter.

In addition to Barb, Margaret is survived by son Jeff Kenter, six grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, four sisters and one brother.

AWONer Judith Dixon Underwood, 69, of Mullins, SC, passed away February 12, 2011. She was the daughter of 2nd Lt. James



Left, Margaret and 2LT George R. Francis; right, Margaret and Barb at Francis' grave at Lorraine American Cemetery.



T. Dixon and the late Hope King Dixon. She is survived by a son, a grandson, two great-granddaughters, two step-grandsons, and two half-brothers.

Adeline (Roberto) Casey Schneider, 96, mother of AWONer Cathy Casey of Philadelphia, PA, passed away February 16, 2011. She married T/Sgt. Lawrence J. Casey and then Maxwell J. Schneider. She

is survived by three children, six grandchildren, one great-granddaughter, and one sister.

AWONer Roger D. Gamble, 68, of Arroyo Grande, CA, passed away February 26, 2011. He was the son of Pfc. Opie Gamble and his wife, Myrtle. He is survived by his wife, Bernice; two sons; four grandchildren; a brother; a sister; and his mother, Myrtle Parks.

'Flowers of Memory' Website to Honor Normandy Fathers

If your father, grandfather or uncle is buried or remembered at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial, AWON Normandy Ambassador Jean-Marc Lesueur wants to know.

Lesueur belongs to Les Fleurs de la Mémoire, or "Flowers of Memory", a group of 720 French citizens that takes care of hundreds of graves of American servicemen, including many AWON fathers, at Normandy.

Every Memorial Day, and many times throughout the year, members go to the cemetery to visit the grave of a serviceman they have adopted, say a prayer, and leave flowers. Some families have passed this tradition down several generations.

Lesueur told AWONer Janice Ott Buterbaugh that his organization wants to have the names of all AWON fathers, grandfathers,

brothers and uncles for their website. They also would also like to have a photograph of every serviceman.

"They are always trying to find more ways in which to honor our WWII soldiers who gave their lives for their freedom," Janice wrote to the AWON ListServ. "I am amazed at the different ways they do this and feel honored that they do for our fathers who will always be honored forever in Normandy."

Janice noted that the gratitude members of Les Fleurs de la Mémoire feel for the Americans continues with their children.

To make sure your father or family member is on their website, or to send a photograph, contact Jean-Marc at: lesueur.jean-marc@wanadoo.fr.

The website for Les Fleurs de la Mémoire is <http://fleursdelamemoire.free.fr/>.

AWON Connections

Pictures and Stories of Members
Gathering Around the Country



In April, AWONers (left to right) Barry Barr-Finch, Sandra Walker, Joe Lippi and Kathey Ames, and our spouses, attended the annual luncheon of the Northwest Chapter of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. After enjoying the introductions of all the veterans in attendance we viewed a wonderful video presentation by Art Mahler, a friend of Joe's dad, of the trip he and Joe made to Belgium for Memorial Day last spring. *Barry*

bered our mothers for their sacrifices during the war, and for having to rear their children on their own. AWON Board President Ed Peters spoke about the national non-profit organization Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors. It was a wonderful AWON weekend. Pictured in the front row are, from left: Lynne Lecrone, Donna Allen, Sondra Sarles, Donna Pressley and Sue Perko. Middle row, from left: Maggie Fenstermacher, Janice Buterbaugh, Jeanne Rhinehart and Gail Eisenhauer. Back row, from left: Ken Sills, Norm Burkey, Rusty Lerch and Ed Peters. *Lynne*



Eleven members of the SoCal Lunch group met in April in San Diego. The group welcomed first-timers Valery King and Antonetta Niro Bell. Valery is a new member who was "found" by AWONer Vic Muller. They have been corresponding by email for two years, but had never met until the lunch. Antonetta lives in Pennsylvania, but was in town to help care for her sister, Rita, who was recovering from surgery. Barbara Swenson gave a moving presentation about the European trip her daughter arranged for her and husband, Dick, to visit her father's grave. Pictured from left are: Dick Swenson, Bob Porter, Linda Porter,



Thirteen orphans and four spouses attended the annual spring gathering in York, PA, this April. This was the first time AWONer Sondra Sarles joined the group. As usual, we shared stories about our fathers. We also remem-

Welcome New Members

Mollie Fiore Howard, TX, widow of PFC Thomas Fiore, Army
James R. Watson, FL, son of LT James N. Watson, AAF
John A. Greten, OH, son of PFC Vincent R. Greten, Army
Jane A. Perry, OH, dau of PFC Vincent R. Greten, Army
Mary E. Heineman, OH, niece of S/SGT Joseph W. Bobo, AAF
Elizabeth Dalton English, OR, dau of 2LT Carson R. Dalton, Army
Alana M. Hodges, FL, dau of S/SGT Richard W. Ayers, Army
Alana M. Hodges, FL, niece of PVT Gerald L. Ayers, Marines
Kathleen B. Vick, FL, dau of 1LT Louis G. Alphonse, AAF
W. Ronald Chambers, CA, son of PVT Benjamin F. Chambers Jr., Army
Edward J. Deverell, NH, son of PVT Henry J. Deverell, Army
Judy Pinkerton Graves, TX, dau of PFC Ralph C. Pinkerton, Army
James A. Thompson, IL, son of PVT Arthur T. McVicker, Army
Barbara M. Williams, PA, dau of T/SGT Joseph R. Moore, Army
Duayne A. Forsberg, PA, nephew of 1LT William N. Fudge, Army
Robert R. Phillipson, VA, son of 2LT Burton M. Phillipson, AAF
Sandra L. Lyons, VT, dau of PVT Arthur R. McKay, Army

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

Barbara Swenson, Phyllis Mathy, Valery King, Roger Connor, Dale Roybal, Vic Muller, Sharon Connor and Antonetta Bell. *Roger*



Two of the three AWON couples* met in Savannah, GA, in April. Jimmie and Jamie Mc-

Collum drove up to Savannah from Fernandina Beach, FL, to meet Sharon and Roger Connor, who flew in from San Diego. Their day together was topped off with a scrumptious meal on a balcony overlooking the Savannah River. In Savannah, Sharon and Roger visited the huge and impressive Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, where they found and photographed memorials to the fathers of Lorin McCleary and Madeline Teremy. Sharon and Roger then went to Charleston, SC, and toured the aircraft carrier *USS Yorktown*, where they photographed the gun emplacement once manned by AWONer Nick Mott during the Vietnam War. Sharon had never been to either of these cities that were on her bucket list. (*the other AWON couple is the late Michael Kindig and AWON President Emerita Patricia Gaffney-Kindig.) *Roger*

AWON Board Business
14 November 2010

The November meeting of the AWON Board of Directors was held during the biannual National Conference in Annapolis, MD, with conference participants in attendance.

AWON Reports: A packet of director reports, minutes, and financial reports were distributed to the board and AWON members.

Financial Report: Treasurer **Norm Burkey** discussed the financial report. He explained *Spirit of '45* costs were unbudgeted expenses, as was a database software upgrade. There was also an initial investment in the archive planning project. Norm reported that AWON's financial position is positive and able to handle the unforeseen expenses. Norm also reported that he now has a single entry spreadsheet which is an improvement over the old system. The decline in overall membership this year is a concern but AWON gained about 35 new members so far this year. The end-of-year letter from the president will be sent shortly and usually results in members renewing. The budget for this year shows a deficit at the moment but most dues revenue is received at the end of the year.

AWON Database: AWON Founder **Ann Mix** retired as database manager. Director **Gerry Morenski** has taken over as interim database manager. Gerry is training to gain more knowledge of the software and is looking for a backup database person.

AWON Member Directory: The pros and cons of a membership directory of all AWON members was discussed. Two issues raised were the expense and keeping the directory up to date. No decision was made on this issue.

Multi-Year Memberships: Member **Diane Pollard** suggested multiple-year renewal rates for consideration.

New Member Process: Board President **Ed Peters** reported that the process for taking in a new member application has been put into flow chart form. The board

will look at improving and simplifying the process.

AWON Archives: Director **Norma Nicol Hamilton** reported on her position as Archives Advocate. AWON's records have historical value and the organization needs to have a conservation plan. She will recruit a committee to develop a mission statement and start investigating a process for conservation.

2012 AWON Conference: The membership made suggestions for the next conference location. Oklahoma City, New Orleans, St. Louis and Indianapolis were among the places suggested. The Midwest is next in rotation for hosting the 2012 National Conference.

Volunteers Needed: Ed Peters reported that there are open volunteer positions for AWON Public Relations Director and Assistant Editor to *The Star*.

AWON ListServ: Director **Judy Hoffman** discussed the listserv. She suggested two changes to the listserv and asked for feedback from attending members. The first is to automatically sign new members up for the server, giving them the option to opt out if they wish. **Janice Buterbaugh** suggested that the New Member packet contain an explanation of server membership. The second is to allow all AWON members on the list. Currently orphan and family members only are on the list. Some of the concerns about expanding the list membership include misuse of quotes, privacy, copyright, understanding orphan issues, and using the list to sell items like books. A discussion and perhaps listserv vote is planned for the future.

Regional Coordinators: Director **Barry Barr-Finch** reported that some areas of the country are still not covered by Regional Coordinators.

Outgoing Directors: Ed Peters recognized outgoing directors **Barry Barr-Finch**, **Bob Meek** and **Bonnie Hellums**, and thanked them for their service to AWON.

Next Board Meeting: The next regular meeting of the AWON Board of Directors will be January 19, 2011.

Judith Hoffman, Secretary

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

AWON Board Business 16 January 2011

Budget and Financial Report: Treasurer **Norm Burkey** informed the board that member applications from 2009 will be shredded this week. To balance the 2011 AWON budget the board voted to reduce by half the budgeted amounts for membership outreach, *Spirit of '45*, and membership renewal. The line item for salary for the database manager was retained but Interim Database Manager **Gerry Morenski** is not drawing a salary from it. The budget was approved.

AWON Bookstore: AWON Bookstore Manager **Walt Linne** reported an additional \$1,000-\$1,500 profit from the convention bookstore sales and quilt raffle.

AWON Database: Board President **Ed Peters** purchased an update to the FileMaker Pro software program AWON uses to manage the database. Gerry is receiving FileMaker Pro intermediate training by The Support Group. Gerry asked to hire The Support Group for monthly tech support for one year. The board approved.

Membership: As of January 16 current membership stands at 460. Gerry noted that numbers will fluctuate as end-of-year renewals continue to come in. There have been 25 new members in the past three months.

Touchstones: AWON Founder **Ann Mix** informed the board that her supply of *Touchstones* is almost gone and that it needs revisions. The board voted to no longer offer the book.

Member Directory: Member **Rondy Elliott** offered to lead an effort to assemble a pictorial directory of AWON members. After discussion no action was taken.

In-Person Board Meeting: Indianapolis was selected

for the in-person board meeting for Fall 2011, date to be determined. AWON has free office space at the American Legion in Indianapolis.

2012 Conference: The board discussed possible sites for the 2012 AWON National Conference, including New Orleans, Indianapolis, Dayton and Colorado Springs. The month of October was suggested as an alternative to November for hosting the conference to avoid cold weather and the holidays. No decision was made.

Membership Committee: Member **Mary Nelson Kenny** was appointed chair of the AWON Membership Committee to examine AWON's membership procedures.

New Director Orientation: New directors **Roger Connor**, **Jerry Pinkerton** and **Judy Hathaway** and recent directors **Bonnie Hellums** and **Barry Barr-Finch** will provide a list of orientation information suggestions for new directors when they join the AWON board. **Judy Hoffman** will use the suggestions to develop a new AWON Policy and Procedure for new directors.

Conference Chair: Judy Hoffman will revise and update the AWON Policy and Procedure for Conference Chair, with assistance from members **Sharon Crowley Connor** and **Penny Legrand**.

Meeting Schedule: Due to a number of issues in process and new directors joining the board, the AWON Board will hold monthly teleconference meetings in February, March and April.

Next Board Meeting: The next regular meeting of the AWON Board of Directors will be February 20, 2011.

Judy Hathaway, Acting Secretary

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

AWON Board Business 20 February 2011

Financial Report: Treasurer **Norm Burkey** gave the financial report. Renewal reminders have brought in more than 20 renewals. AWON Bookstore income came in \$1,000 over budget in 2010. Dues payments totaled \$2,700 in January and more than \$4,000 in February.

AWON Database: Interim Database Manager **Gerry Morenski** gave a database update.

Dues: The board approved three tiered membership levels, effective June 1, 2011. Basic dues will be \$25 for one year, \$70 for three years, and \$110 for five years. Sponsor level will be \$50, \$140 and \$220, respectively; and Gold Star level will be \$100, \$280 and \$440, respectively.

Membership: **Ed Peters** discussed ideas to streamline the internet membership application process. He will look into it further.

AWON ListServ: The board agreed to continue the ListServ as it functions now, with only orphans and family members as users. The board approved automatically signing on new members to the ListServ, with the option to opt out, effective immediately.

In-Person Board Meeting: The in-person board meeting date was set for October 6-9, 2011, in Indianapolis. Gerry will contact **Walt Linne** about hotel accommodations and activities.

2012 Conference: The board approved holding the 2012 National AWON Conference in October in Indianapolis.

Membership Committee: **Patty Temte**, **Gerry Morenski**, **Kathy Le Comte**, **Norm Burkey** and **Billie**

Myers Meeks were appointed to the Membership Committee, chaired by **Mary Nelson Kenny**.

New Director Orientation: **Judy Hoffman** will chair the Board Member Orientation committee consisting of **Jerry Pinkerton**, **Judy Hathaway**, **Roger Connor** and **Barry Barr-Finch**.

Next Board Meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting of the AWON Board of Directors will be March 20, 2011.

Judith Hoffman, Secretary

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

AWON Board Business 20 March 2011

Financial Report: Treasurer **Norm Burkey** gave the financial report. Renewals have slowed down to normal since the January rush.

AWON Database: Interim Database Manager **Gerry Morenski** gave a report on database updates.

Membership: As of March 19 current membership stands at 751.

Membership Committee: Committee Chair **Mary Nelson Kenny** reported that the committee will assess the membership process and streamline if needed. They will then focus on membership outreach and retention. Mary suggested developing an ad that members could take to local newspapers on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. The board agreed to test this in targeted areas this Memorial Day, if feasible.

Public Relations: The board approved **Norma Nicol Hamilton** contacting a PR firm she is familiar with for American WWII Orphans Network

suggestions for assistance with AWON's publicity and public relations.

In-Person Board Meeting: Gerry is working with **Penny LeGrand** for Indianapolis hotel arrangements, October 6-9.

2012 Conference: **Judy Hoffman** is working with Penny on hotel accommodations in Indianapolis for the 2012 National AWON Conference.

New Director Orientation: The board approved the new AWON Policy and Procedure for new board directors.

Spirit of '45: **Roger Connor** agreed to be AWON liaison to *Spirit of '45* and then gave an update on AWON's role this year. AWON will provide poster-sized photos of AWON fathers to march in the Memorial Day parade in Washington, D.C.

AWON 20th anniversary logo: The board approved Webmaster **Rik Peirson**'s request to use the 20th anniversary logo he designed on the AWON website.

Reading Armed Forces Day Parade: Norm Burkey reported that, as in the past, he and his family will march in the Reading, PA, parade with an AWON banner with any other AWONers who wish to join him. He will have AWON brochures to hand out.

Next Board Meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting of the AWON Board of Directors will be April 17, 2011.

Judith Hoffman, Secretary

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



AWON Project Leaders

Listed below are the names and contact information for AWON's on-going projects. Contact these people to volunteer, contribute, or learn more:

Regional Coordinators

Barry Barr-Finch

barrfinch@clearwire.net

Frequent Flyer Program

Roger Connor

rmcusa37@gmail.com

Knit Your Bit Project

Norma Nicol Hamilton

rlhnnh@comcast.net

Margraten Liaison/Fund

Gerry Conway Morenski

dutiem@comcast.net

Mama Jo Memorial Fund

Dave Stanek

davestanek@att.net

Memorial Day Wreath Project

Sharon Crowley Connor

sharoncc Connor@gmail.com

National WWII Museum Campaign

Chickie Shields Berry

chkebry@msn.com

Reading Air Show

Norm Burkey

normanburkey@verizon.net

Spirit of '45 Campaign

Roger Connor

rmcusa37@gmail.com

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**

...Bowers, from page 5

ment as her father. As the two spoke, Jim realized he knew Marilyn's father. The two had joined C Company together and fought in the same battles of early January 1945. Incredibly, Marilyn had discovered a soldier who was there when her father died. Gradually, the account of her father's last days came together and Marilyn finally found peace knowing the intimate details of the battle that took his life.

In 1995, Marilyn and her family joined the Graff family on a journey to the village of Weiswampach, Luxembourg. It was there, 50 years earlier, the winter battle was fought to liberate the town. On that tragic day of January 25, 1945, Pfc. Bowers and his unit emerged from the woods west of town. As they struggled through deep snow in bitter cold to attack enemy positions, they were met by heavy

mortar, machine gun and tank fire. These brave men attacked repeatedly, but fanatical enemy resistance slowed their advance. Sometime in the afternoon, Pfc. Bowers was killed in combat.

It was a spring day when Marilyn stood in the woods near the soldiers' foxholes and looked out on a terrain of rolling hills leading to town. As she walked the battlefield where her father died, she could see the village ahead and make out the church steeple once occupied by German snipers. She walked up the steeple and saw for herself the enemy's commanding view. Today, a bronze and stone monument, erected by the town's grateful citizens, stands in honor of her father and 11 fellow soldiers who died in that historic battle.

During the years following discovery of her father's past, Marilyn has devoted herself to helping many others learn about their fallen family mem-

bers. She has written articles about her father and, through her association with AWON, serves as an important resource for families in search of loved ones.

When Pfc. Bowers wrote the poignant words, "See you someday," one can hear his longing to reunite with his family. His devoted daughter fulfilled that wish. In the process, Marilyn Jensen has assured that her father's life and supreme sacrifice are known through the ages.

On Memorial Day, we honor the fallen men and women of our armed forces who earned our profound gratitude. We also have the opportunity to honor their families who have long suffered in silence. But this Memorial Day I especially want to honor Pfc. Bowers and his daughter, Marilyn, for her generosity in helping others, like myself, find out about family members lost in war.

American WWII Orphans Network

Application, Registration & Renewal Form

- ☐ I would like to become a member
☐ Register my father/family member and me only
☐ Renew my membership

Information about You

(please print clearly)

Name _____
Spouse's Name _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
Phone _____ (home, work, cell, other)
E-mail _____
Relationship to Serviceman _____
Your Date of Birth _____
Would you like to receive *The Star* electronically? Y N
Where did you hear about AWON? _____

Information about WWII Serviceman Who Died

Be as complete as possible. If you do not have some of the information, leave it blank and we may be able to provide it to you. Do not delay mailing the application for lack of information.

Name _____
Last First M.I.
Birth Date _____ Date of Death _____
Place of Death _____
Where Buried _____
Military Unit _____
Service Number _____

Additional details about serviceman's death and/or service: (rank, medals, etc.)

Home Town and State _____
Wife's Maiden Name _____
Did widow remarry? Y N
Names and addresses of your siblings with same father, and/or additional family members:

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

Membership Levels

Any child of a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, Coast Guard or Merchant Marine, who was killed, remains missing in action, or who died in the line of duty or later died of wounds or injuries sustained during World War II, is eligible to join as an **Orphan Member**. Any direct relative is eligible to join as a **Family Member**. Any individual, including friends of those killed in World War II, those who wish to participate in AWON activities, or organizations with an interest in and compatible with AWON's purposes and goals, are eligible to join as an **Associate Member**.

Check Your Membership Category:

☐ Orphan ☐ Family ☐ Associate

Dues Options

Basic annual membership dues are \$25. Sponsor, Gold Star and Multi-year memberships also are available:

	1 Year	3 Year	5 Year
Basic	\$25	\$70	\$110
Sponsor	\$50	\$140	\$220
Gold Star	\$100	\$280	\$440

AWON greatly appreciates gifts beyond these levels.

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

I give permission to AWON to release my name, address, email address, phone number and relationship to and pertinent information about the serviceman to other members. I understand the list of members is confidential and will *never* be sold or given to any other organization or business. I hereby release AWON from any liability that may arise from the release of information.

Signature (optional) _____

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

Mail form and payment to:

Norm Burkey
AWON Treasurer
308 Colgate Dr.
Forest Hill, MD 21050

Editor, The Star
869 S. Columbia Ave.
Springfield, IL 62704-2342

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The Star

"Breaking Down the Wall of Silence"

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AWON Mission

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

AWON Directory

Address Corrections

Gerry Morenski dutiem@comcast.net

Archives

Ann Whelan O'Connor awolaojr@earthlink.net

Bookstore

Walt Linne bookstore@awon.org

Dues

Norm Burkey normanburkey@verizon.net

First Inquiry Coordinators

Patty Temte AWON@aol.com

Janice Ott Buterbaugh janicebuterbaugh@gmail.com

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