



American WWII Orphans Network

www.awon.org

Dear Speaker,

Thank you for joining the Speakers Bureau and becoming an active messenger of the compelling stories of our fathers, our experiences as war orphans and of AWON. Some of you have extensive public speaking experience while many have none and have expressed anxiety about getting started. Hopefully, this will be useful to you in some way. I truly believe you will benefit from telling your story and that you will be enriched when you sense how much it means to others. Since your hosts have invited you to speak, you can assume they will be a receptive audience. Be confident, you have a true human-interest story and no one can tell it better than you can.

THE PURPOSE OF THE SPEAKERS BUREAU IS TO:

- Honor our fathers
- Publicize AWON: what we provide, successes, goals and needs
- Find other WWII orphans
- Pay our respects to those who fought in WWII
- To personalize the consequences of war
- Generate income for AWON – donations from hosts are welcome

The information was prepared to give you support in the development of your presentation and to keep our message to the public consistent. The outlines are offered as general guides. Not all components will apply to everyone and I'm certain you will have many other things to say that are not included here.

FORMAT FOR PRESENTATIONS

The outline consists of four parts:

1. My Father
2. The War Orphan
3. The American WWII Orphans Network
4. Conclusion

I have included a list of suggested organizations where you can send enclosed information to publicize the your interest in speaking. WWII veterans groups are our first priority because their remaining time among us is passing so quickly.

Please contact me if you have any questions, comments or suggestions. As your experience as a speaker grows I hope you will share your expertise with the rest of us. We can learn from each other's success. Above all, enjoy the experience!

In their memory,
Patricia Gaffney-Kindig
Daughter of 2LT George P. Gaffney, Jr.
President of the Board of Directors
1675 Glen Moor Parkway
Lakewood, CO 80215
303 233-4361/303 238-9820
Email: Pabi@ATT.net

GETTING STARTED

Send the AWON brochure (available through the AWON bookstore) with a cover letter explaining who you are and that you are available to speak to veterans groups, civic and religious organizations and educational institutions in your area. Be sure to include your contact information. You may find it helpful to keep a list of where you have sent the information. All of the suggestions below can be found in your local phone book:

Social Studies & History Departments of local public school systems
History & Psychology Departments of universities/colleges in your area
Veterans groups such as the American Legion and VFW
Veterans Hospitals
Your Father's Military Unit
Air Museums
Senior Centers
Local churches and synagogues
Business organizations
Civic organizations such as Elks, Lions, Rotary Clubs, Shriners, Masons etc.
Other

VISUAL AIDS

Visual aids create another dimension that will greatly enhance your presentation. If you have maps, they can be mounted & framed or mounted to a foam core backing, available at any art supply store. The audience will appreciate seeing items like your father's wings, you may want to wear them, and medals which can be mounted for display. Be careful not to distribute original or one of a kind items such as letters or 'the telegram' that inadvertently may not find their way back to you.

TO PREPARE YOUR PRESENTATION:

Describe *your* father and *your* personal experience as a war orphan using the outline as a guide to organize your thoughts and materials. You may find it helpful to write a full narrative of what you want to say using the following outlines, then prepare a list of key words so you don't have to read it word for word when presenting. It is helpful to type them in a large font so you can easily see them while speaking. I put words in *italics* or **bold** type that I want to emphasize. The key words will help to keep you on track so your presentation has structure with a beginning, a middle and a conclusion.

Start your presentation with a question or statement such as, "I am a war orphan and I want to tell you my story". This will get their attention and defines the beginning of your talk. Plan to speak for about 45 minutes with time for a question and answer period at the end. Speak slowly and clearly, there is a tendency to speak too fast when we're nervous.

Be confident, *you know your story*, it will be difficult to stop telling it once you start!

Remember to give out the website address and phone number: www.awon.org and 540 310-0750

SPEAKERS BUREAU
SUGGESTED ORGANIZATIONAL FORMAT FOR PRESENTATIONS

Part One

I. My Father

- Name
- Date of Birth
- Hometown
- Family History
- Education
- Marriage

2. Father's Military Service

- Training-Where & When.
- His Military Unit
- Theater of War/Specific Battles He Fought In
- Date/Circumstances of His Death

3. Reactions to My Father's Death

- "The Telegram"
- My Memory
- My Mother
- Siblings
- Father's Parents
- Information From the Government/Military
- Letters from Father's War Buddies
- Burial Site - How the Decision Was Made
- The Funeral

4. The Wall of Silence

Part Two

I. The War Orphan

- War Orphans Education Assistance Act of 1956 – Public Law (Often referred to as our "G.I. Bill")
- Memories of My Father
- My Childhood
- Relationship with My Mother
- Mother's Memories of My Father
- My Father's Personal Effects - The Suitcase or Box in the Attic
- Photographs of Him
- Stepfather/Siblings/Grandparents
- My Thoughts/Fantasies & Yearnings about My Father
- Wall of Silence
- My Education – "G.I. Bill"
- My Adult Life
 - Military Service
 - Marriage(s)/Divorce
 - Children
 - Career

Part Three

I. American WWII Orphans Network

- Ann Bennett Mix-Founder-1991
 - Father-Sidney Worthington Bennett KIA Italy 1945
- How/When I Found AWON
 - My Reaction
 - Mother's Reaction
 - Sibling Reaction
 - Reactions of Spouse & Children, Friends & Co-workers
 - How I've Benefited
 - Acquiring Information About My Father
 - Finding Father's Military Unit/Friends.
 - Making an Emotional Connection to My Father
 - Finding Others Like Me
 - Long Delayed Grieving & Healing
 - Finding the Courage to Tell My Story
 - Opportunities to Memorialize My Father
- 'Linking Objects' to My Father
 - Wings & Medals
 - Photographs
 - Letters
 - His Family, Childhood Friends & War Buddies
- Sense of AWON Family
 - I'm Not Alone
 - Breaking Through the Wall of Silence
 - Grieving & Healing Together
 - On-line Discussions
 - Newsletter-The Star
 - Conferences/Regional Gatherings
- My Pride
 - As His Son/Daughter
 - What It Means To Tell My Story
 - Memorializing My Father
- AWON's Mission
 - To Support American Orphans of WWII
 - To Find War Orphans
 - To Honor the Memory of Our Fathers & All Who Served
 - To Personalize the Consequences of War
- AWON's Successes
 - Research for Records & Information-Assistance from AWON Member Jack Forgy and Ann Bennett Mix's book Touchstones 2nd Edition
 - Flight Records
 - MACR-Missing Air Crew Reports
 - Individual Deceased Personnel File
 - Unit Diaries
 - Morning Reports
 - Military Medical/Dental Records

Part Three Continued.....

- Information Regarding the Circumstances of Father's Death
 - Identifying Place of Burial in Overseas Cemeteries or
 - Name on Walls of Missing or Memorials
 - Burial Markers in National Cemetery for Fathers MIA
 - Flowers Placed at Memorials Worldwide
- Connecting Orphans & Father's Military Units
- Widow's Benefits Restored to Some of Our Mothers
- Database of Nearly 5000 Orphans & Families
- More than 850 Active Members and Growing as of 6/04
- On-line Communication for Members
- 'Our Fathers' Memorials at www.awon.org
- Publication of Lost in the Victory & Touchstones (2nd Ed.)
- Travel by More Orphans to Fathers' Overseas Cemeteries
- Newsletter 'The Star' Published Quarterly
- AWON Bookstore
- Formation of a Board of Directors 1996
- Visit to National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis 1998
- Memorial Service at Ft. Rosecrans in San Diego 2000
- Acknowledgment of WWII Orphans by Senator Dole and VIP Seating for AWON Members at WWII Memorial Dedication on Veteran's Day November 11, 2000
- Members of AWON have attended the National Security Seminars at the Army War College in Carlisle Barracks, PA annually since 2001. Invitation is by nomination.
- Involvement of Ann Bennett Mix in Proposed Design of WWII Memorial – Gold Stars
- AWON members participation in Dedication of National WWII Memorial, May 2004
500 Tickets provided for seating with veterans/Founder seated on dais/Bob Dole as keynote speaker at AWON conference on same weekend. 220 orphans attended w/330 family members
- Wreaths laid at overseas cemeteries and Arlington on Memorial Day annually
- Group of 24 members and 30 family members visit fathers' graves at the Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial in Margraten, Holland on Memorial Day 2005
- Publication of In Their Memory: The American WWII Orphans Network by Turner Publishing Co. March 2005
- Photo Album: *Our Fathers, Portraits of Men Who Died in WWII and the Children Who Love Them*
- Conference Videos
- Photo Exhibits of Fathers
- PowerPoint Video of Fathers

AWON's Future Goals

- To Find and Support More WWII Orphans
- To Petition the Government to Send Orphans to Father's Graves in Overseas Cemeteries
- To participate in Community and World Events Related to WWII
- To Meet Our Continuing/Growing Needs
 - Financial
 - Volunteers
 - Grant Writers
 - Business Expertise
 - Legal Expertise
 - Public Relations
 - Database Manager
 - Newsletter *The Star*

Part Four

Conclusion

1. Question & Answer Session

- People will want to talk to you after your presentation. Allow some time in your schedule.
- It will be helpful to have personal cards (like business cards) to hand out or you will find yourself writing your name and address many times over

2. Taking Notes

- You may find it helpful to take notes on what you want to include or eliminate next time. Also, note what was very successful or where you need to strengthen your presentation.

3. Toastmasters International

Toastmasters International provides training in public speaking. Go to www.toastmasters.org for more information and to locate a club in your area.

