



Est. July 1971 ▶ Bentonville, AR

March 2019 ▶ Vol. 49, Issue 88



▶ Note From The President

"Your limits are somewhere up there, waiting for you to reach beyond infinity".

General Henry H. Arnold, Commander, US Army Air Forces, Chief of the Air Corp (1938-1941)

Dear Association Members and Friends,

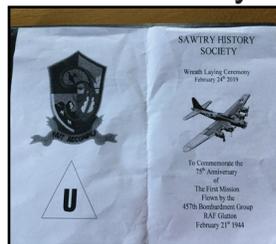
The USAAC 457th Bomb Group (BG) (Heavy) has a very special place in the history of World War II and its role in bringing Hitler to his knees. This year we celebrate the establishment of the 457th and are pleased that you are part of keeping heroes and legends alive! You will note that our Fireball (Association Newsletter), Website, Facebook, and reunions are dedicated to this important timeline.

In honor of this auspicious year, I ask you to help the Association in several ways. Keep your membership active, recruit new members, especially younger members of your families, and make every effort to join us at the reunions and association meetings so that we can continue the legacy of freedom. We are always in need of stories and pictures of our veterans for the newsletter. My 12 year old granddaughter who was very close to her Great Pop, recently commented, "Great Pop was such a great man for being in the war. I thank God that he did. Who knows where we would be today if he hadn't."

Let's remember the 457th! *Fait Accompli!*

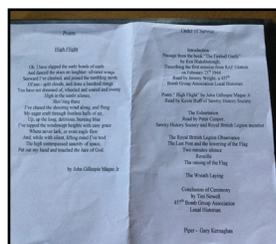
Nancy Enriquez Archuleta, Interim President

▶ Wreath Laying Ceremony 2019 (Glatton, England)



"It is very gratifying to know that our friends in England are taking the time and making the effort to remember, honor, and actively ensure that those who served with the 457th Bomb Group during the war will never be forgotten. In a like manner, it is necessary and fitting that those of us in the U.S. honor, support, celebrate, and appreciate all of you in England who give of your time and make the effort to keep the memories alive." Kurt Gunderson, Board of Directors, 457th BG Association

"It must have been a moving ceremony. We sincerely appreciate everyone who participated in honor of our fathers." Trisha Mach Robertson, Board of Directors, 457th BG Association



Gary Kermaghan, Billy Corner, Msg Christopher Chuctata



Tim Newell

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► **Special Report**
State-Side Reunion 2019

COMMEMORATING 75 YEARS
“Fait Accompli”
October 3-6, 2019
The National WWII Museum
New Orleans, Louisiana

FUTURE NOTIFICATIONS:

Information and updates will be emailed.

Find Updates Here:

Website: <http://www.457thbombgroupassoc.org>

Facebook: <https://tinyurl.com/y7855qt7>

► **We Like You**

Like us on facebook!



This is a hot spot for posts and pictures, and a forum for our 457th family and friends to gather, share stories, and ask questions. Go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1408261252566363> or use: <https://tinyurl.com/y7855qt7>

If you haven't already - **like us today!**

Agenda

- *Recognition -Reunion Coordinator
- Historians -Website Master
- Board of Directors *Unfinished Business
- *Reports *New Business
- President -Board Elections
- Treasurer *Announcements
- Newsletter Editor

► **Mini-Reunion 2017 (Glatton, England)**



We want to thank our host Angela and Tim Newell for a wonderful time!

► **Upcoming Mini-Reunion 2020 (Glatton, England)**



“Tim and I are pleased that the 457th (Association) will return to Glatton during 40’s Weekend at the village of Holme. From re-enactments to antique autos accompanied by local food, entertainment and fun, you will be transported to the days the 457th was an everyday part of life here. We look forward to seeing you.!”

► Highlight

Glimpse of Reunion 2019

OPERATION BIG WEEK

When plans were made for Operation Overlord (invasion of France) it was clear that the biggest threat for a successful invasion would be the German Luftwaffe. The German Luftwaffe needed to be destroyed and the USAAF and RAF needed to regain control over the skies.

So on February 20th, 1944 Operation Big Week or Operation Argument was launched. Huge armadas of B-17's and other bombers were sent into Germany to destroy aircraft factories, factories where airplane parts were made and Luftwaffe airfields. Huge numbers of American fighters escorted the bombers but their main goal was to destroy as many German aircraft and very experienced German pilots as they could.

During the reunion a presentation will be given by Erwin deMooij about Operation Big Week and the part the 457th Bomb Group played. What missions did we fly, how many planes were used or lost, how many men did we lose, what were the targets, etc. Let's take a closer look at what happened from February 21st to February 25th, 1944.

► Highlights

Netherlands American Cemetery

by Erwin deMooij,



In October of 1944 Captain Joseph Shomon of the 611th Graves Registration Company (GRC) walked into the city hall of a small Dutch village named Margraten. He received orders to find a location for a cemetery for the newly formed 9th army. The 9th army, half a million men, was being prepared for attacks on the Ruhr and Rhine and many casualties were expected. A piece of land of 74 acres was found suitable and taken for the new to build cemetery.

When the work started on the cemetery in November of 1944 it was raining constantly turning the land into a mud hole! Men were struggling to work under these conditions, trucks and bulldozers got stuck in the mud and the gravel, that was going to be used to build the main road to the cemetery, just vanished in the mud. Eventually logs were tied together and gravel was poured over the logs finally finishing the main road to the cemetery. The local farmers didn't know about the cemetery being built on their land until, in most cases, it was

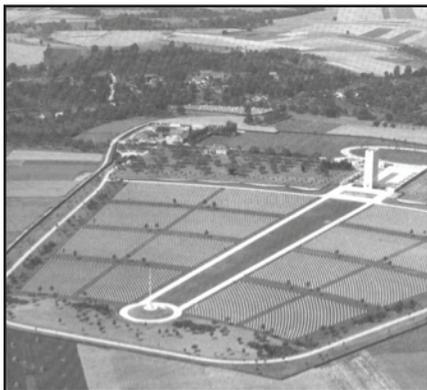
too late. Farmers went to the city hall to talk to the major or went to complain at the cemetery but work had started and would continue no matter what. All the farmers could do now was to get their crops off the land before the bulldozers started to plough the land.

The 9th army didn't want their soldiers to be buried on enemy soil. So, after a battle, men from the 611th Grave Registration Company immediately started their work identifying the bodies and doing the necessary paper work. The bodies were taken to collection points and from there taken to Margraten, sometime as far as 372 miles away from the battle field!

When arriving at Margraten the bodies were cleared of ammunition and then put in the stripping line. On the stripping line the body was searched for personal belongings. Then a cross or a Star of David was placed on the body and one part of the dog tag. The other part of the dog tag was nailed to the cross that would be placed on the grave. Then the body was wrapped in white cloth and placed in a grave. After a harsh winter everybody worked very hard to get the cemetery ready for the first Memorial Day on May 30th 1945.

Just after the first Memorial Day the 611th Graves Registration Company was replaced by the 603rd. General Eisenhower decided that all the cemeteries in Germany were to be closed and all the bodies be moved to Margraten, making it the second largest cemetery in Europe

(Henri-Chapelle in Belgium was the biggest and was closed because it reached its maximum capacity). On March 30th 1946 the last body arrived at Margraten setting the count on 17.742 Americans, 1.026 allied troops with 700 of them being Russian and (on a plot opposite of the cemetery and behind tall trees) 3.075 German bodies. 1946 was also the year that locals started adopting graves, sending photos and letters to relatives in the US and most of all started taking care of their soldier or airman. This tradition is still very much alive and there is a waiting list for people who would like to adopt a grave! In 1948 the cemetery was modified with a visitor building, trees, plants, paths, grass, graves were leveled, etc.



On April 22nd, 1947 the Secretary of War decided that 10 cemeteries would be permanent cemeteries with one of them being Margraten. First the German cemetery, opposite of the American cemetery, was cleared of the 3.075 German bodies who were to be reburied at Ysselsteyn (Netherlands). At Ysselsteyn a total of 31.585 German soldiers are buried with 6.000 of them not identified.

691 Russians were reburied at the Russian cemetery at camp Amersfoort (Netherlands). Because temporary cemeteries were closed, for instance the temporary American cemeteries at Son and Molenhoek (Netherlands), the total amount of bodies at Margraten reached 18.000. At the end of 1948, all 18.000 bodies at Margraten were excavated, undone of clothes, cleaned and wrapped in white sheets. A team of specialists worked hard and painstakingly to identify those bodies who were known only to God. Then the bodies were placed in bronze caskets. Those caskets, who were to be repatriated, were also placed in a wooden crates to prevent damage to the bronze casket and to make it easier to transport them to the US. About 10.000 American soldiers were to be repatriated from Margraten. They were taken by trucks to Belgium (first Liège and then Antwerp) before being shipped to the States. In total 170.783 Americans were to be repatriated. 8.301 Americans found their last resting place at Margraten cemetery. Their caskets were covered with the American flag until it was placed in its permanent grave. Every day mass burials took place at Margraten and at the end of every day a memorial service took place. In the spring of 1949 the American army handed over the cemetery to the ABMC, the America Battle Monument Committee who manage all overseas cemeteries. Starting from 1950 the cemetery work started on the chapel, the walls, the tower and eventually the wooden crosses and Stars of David were replaced by marble ones.

In 1960 the cemetery was finished and officially opened by queen Juliana of the Netherlands.

Total graves: 8.301 (actually 8.302 men are buried at Margraten but one grave holds two unidentified soldiers), Crosses: 8.122, Stars of David: 179, Missing: 1.722, Brother pairs: 40 and Medal of Honors: 6

From the 457th Bomb Group 17 men (1 F/O, 6 Lt's, 10 Sgt's) are buried at Margraten and 25 men (1 Capt, 11 Lt's and 13 Sgt's) are on the wall of the missing.

The information in this article was taken from websites and the book 'From farmland to soldiers cemetery. Eyewitness accounts of the construction of the American cemetery in Margraten'. Many books have been written about the American Cemetery at Margraten. On the internet you can find a lot of information about the cemetery and the adoption program which is unique.



© Raimond Spekking



► In Memory



Charles Osborne

June 12, 2018

Charles “Don” Osborne passed away on June 12, 2018 in Bakersfield, California at the age of 95. He was born near Fellows, California on November 7, 1922.

After graduating from Taft High Don moved to Long Beach, California. He joined the military and was trained as a B-17 gunner, flying thirteen successful missions over Europe. Osborne’s plane was shot down over Germany in October 1944. Don spent over 7 months as a POW before being liberated at the close of the European campaign.

Osborne earned several medals and citations, including the Purple Heart and 6 Bronze Battle Stars.

After Osborne was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army, he went to work for Santa Fe Energy Co. in Fellows, Ca. He worked for 37 years, working his way up from driving a garbage truck to Manager of Operations for Central and Northern California. Don married Dorothy Inez Boyd in 1947 and they were married for 56 wonderful years.

After retirement Don wrote a book, “Bail Out”, about his story of WWII and being a POW.

When reflecting on his experiences, Don said: “I don’t think of myself as a hero. I placed my trust in God and tried to live my life one day at a time. When I think of the thousands that died, I think God had a hand in what happened to me.”



Antonio Enriquez

March 20, 2017

Antonio (Tony) Holguin Enriquez folded his wings on Monday, March 20, 1917, surrounded by his loving family. He was preceded in death by our mom, Elisa, who we also remember as a war hero! She volunteered in service to her country in the community, in the hospitals and in the fields. Born in Las Cruces, New Mexico on May 30, 1923, Tech Sgt Enriquez, (BTG and AAG) served his country honorably in the United States Army until his discharge in September of 1945. It wasn’t until his active participation in the DAV and Honor Flight that Dad started talking about his experiences in the 751st Sqd, 457th BG and B-17. He poignantly remembered shipping out on the Queen Mary in New York City to the sound of a band playing Don’t Fence Me In. He talked of the black outs, the fear of making friends, the rain and gloom,

and finally, the joy of victory. Our visit to Glatton was a real highlight of his life. We remember Dad for his sense of humor, his love of God, dedication to Family, and Preservation of Freedom!

Donald Nielsen

April 24, 2018

Donald Nielsen a past president of the 457th Bomb Group Assoc., passed away April 24, 2018, at the age of 95. He serviced as a pilot in 1944-45 in the 751st. He and his wife, Sandra, enjoyed the reunions, both in England and stateside.

Harry Cornell

June 22, 2018

Harry Cornell died on June 22, 2018, at the age of 93. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps at the age of 18 and served as a tail gunner on a B-17 bomber, completing 35 missions over Europe and Germany during World War II. After his service, he returned to Kalamazoo, where he met and married the love of his life, Gertude Bunschoten. They enjoyed traveling and camping together throughout the United States. After retiring from General Electric, he and Gertrude became Florida snowbirds, and they sold at flea markets and festivals in many states.

[continued on page 6](#)

► In Memory (cont.)



John S. Pearson

August 5, 2017

John S. Pearson, 92, of Richmond, Va., passed away August 5, 2017. Born in Keysville, Va., he was the son of the late William Lee and Mary Winslow Pearson. John attended William & Mary College and was a graduate of the Traffic Institute of Northwestern University. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 45 years, Nancy Ingle Pearson, and his granddaughter, Brandi Derr. He is survived by two daughters, Debbie Derr and Beth Pearson; granddaughter, Beth Anne Derr; and great-granddaughter, Darrah Davis.

During World War II, Mr. Pearson was a B-17 navigator in the 748th Bomb Squadron of the 457th Bomb Group. While stationed at Glatton in England, he flew ten combat missions between March 30 and April 20, 1945. After the war, he served for 38 years with the Virginia State Police, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. He then served six years as Executive Director of the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police. During his retirement, he was very involved with the Eighth Air Force Historical Society and the 457th Bomb Group Association, serving as president of the latter in 2011-13. He immensely enjoyed attending reunions of members of the 457th Bomb Group in the U.S. and in Peterborough, England.

-Submitted by Beth Pearson, daughter

► Officers, Directors & Appointments

Nancy Archuleta President (Interim)	narchuleta@chm611.com 611 Holmes Ave. NE, Huntsville, AL 35801	P: 205.425.1674
Vacant Vice-President		
Vacant Vice-President		
Lori Barnett Treasurer	Lpbarnett223@aol.com 3110 Graystone Lane, Apt. 2105, Albany, GA 31721	P: 662.418.8563
Kathy Collins Director	Kcollins18@cox.net Seville Dr, Pensacola, FL 32503	P: 850.206.6670
Gregg Robertson Director	greggwrobertson@aol.com 437 Kailua Rd. Apt. 6103, Kailua, HI 96734	P: 808.721.5389
Trisha Mach Robertson Director	kai967@yahoo.com 1302A Kamahale Street, Kailua, HI 96734	P: 808.799.8854
William Henson Director	wsluffer1@aol.com 885 County Rd. 1600 N Cisne, IL 62823	
Kurt Gunderson Director	kgunderson@briighthouse.com 5701 Burke Way, Bakersfield, CA 93309	P: 661.835.0787
Will Fluman, Jr Immed. Past Pres.	MR-SHORT-CUT@hotmail.com 132 Ore Bank Road, Dillsburg, PA 17019	P: 570.971.5757
James Bass Legal Advisor	jlbass@bassandbass.com P.O. Box 500, Carthage, TN 37030-0500	P: 615.735.1122 F: 615.735.3149
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Gerardo Morgan Newsletter Editor	panforte09@gmail.com 5707 Bent Tree Ct, Colleyville, Tx 76034	P: 817.374.0599
Erwin de Mooij Webmaster/Facebook Admin.	webmaster457thbombgroup@outlook.com Mondriaaniaan 31, Sassenheim, 2172 DG Netherlands	P: 0031612972293

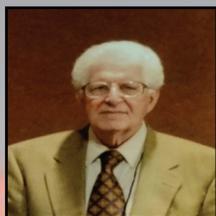
► European Historians

Tim Newell	tim.newell@ymail.com Cemetery Chapel, Stoke Doyle Road, Oundle, Northants, England PE8 5TR	P: 44 1487 830450
Erwin de Mooij	b17research@gotmail.com Mondriaaniaan 31, Sassenheim, 2172 DG Netherlands	P: 0031612972293

► Past Presidents

1973-75: William Willborn	2001-03: Will Fluman (d)	2005-07: James Bass
1976: Howard Larsen (d)	1988-89: Donald Sellon (d)	2007-09: George Grau (d)
1977-79: Bill Siler (d)	1990-91: John Welch	2009-11: Joe Toth
1980-81: Edward Reppa (d)	1992-93: Roland Byers(d)	2011-13: John Pearson
1982-83: Daniel Graham (d)	1993-97: Billy Hightower (d)	2013-15: William W. Siler (d)
1984: William Good (d)	1997-99: Lee Zimmerman	2015-18: Will Fluman, Jr.
1985: David Summerville (d)	1999-01: Craig Harris (d)	
1986-87: Clayton Bejot	2003-05: Don Nielsen	

► Best Wishes!



“Best Wishes to Joe DeLucia of Saddlebrook, NJ as he approaches his 95th Birthday!
 Joe has announced his retirement as Bomb Group VP after many years of service to the organization.
 He has attended many past reunions including numerous trips to Glatton Field.
 Currently Joe continues his lecture tour speaking to school students and various groups about his experiences in the 8th AF during 1944-45.”
 Fait Accompli, Joe!



457th Bomb Group Association: Membership Dues & Subscription Form

► Dues

Annual Dues: \$25 per person (2 years)
Life Dues:

Age	Cost
under 60	\$110
61 - 65	\$90
66 - 70	\$75
71 +	\$60

► Mail form, check payable to:
457th Bomb Group Association
 611 Holmes Ave. NE,
 Huntsville, AL 35801

check applicable:

- New membership
 Renewal Address Change

► Donations & Travel fund

Your Contributions Count!

Please consider a donation to support our Travel Fund and ongoing Projects Fund.

Contributions should be mailed to

Bill Henson
 885 County Rd. 1600 N
 Cisne, IL 62823

Name _____ Nickname _____ Spouse _____
 Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip (+4) _____
 Phone _____ email _____

Are you a (check one):

- Fireballer Relative of Fireballer Other: _____

If you are a relative:

Name of Veteran _____ Relationship to you _____
 Birth Date of Veteran _____ Squadron # _____ Rank _____
 Dates Assigned _____ Duties _____
 Plane Name _____ Plane # _____ Pilot's Name _____
 Plane Name _____ Plane # _____ Pilot's Name _____

POW? / Evadee? _____ Captured Date: _____ Escape/Release Date: _____

Retired Military? _____ Rank: _____

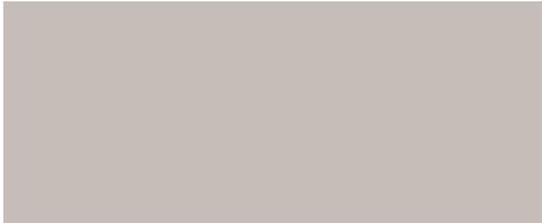
Comments: _____

Send my Fireball newsletter by: mail email

457th Bomb Group Association

611 Holmes Ave. NE,
Huntsville, AL 35801

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Visit the website today at www.457thbombgroupassoc.org

▶ **2019-2020 Calendar of Events**

▶ **March, 2019**

Winter/Spring newsletter

▶ **July, 2019**

Summer newsletter

▶ **October 3-6, 2019**

Association meeting Director & Officers elections

▶ **October 3-6, 2019**

State-Side Reunion in New Orleans

▶ **November, 2019**

Fall newsletter

▶ **Editors Comments**

Dear Members of the 457th Bomb Group, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Chris Sechrist for her tireless work in producing such a magnificent newsletter. I have volunteered to assist in this endeavor and have just begun to understand how much work Chris put in to this project. I know there will be a learning curve associated with this, so I ask for your patience as I learn the ins and outs of publishing this lifeline of information on our association.

Respectfully,

Gerardo Morgan, *editor*

Visit the website today at www.457thbombgroupassoc.org

Newsletter by mail or online?

I hope you have had an opportunity to see the full color **FIREBALL** newsletter online. www.457thbombgroupassoc.org We will continue to print and mail a black & white version of the newsletter but we are always looking for ways to conserve funds. If you would like to be notified by email when a new **FIREBALL** issue is available, **in lieu of a printed version** please contact **narchuleta@chm611.com**

We will send you a link that will take you directly to the latest newsletter. Remember to let us know if you change your email address.

- Gerardo Morgan, *editor*

Our Departed Veterans

During each of our State-Side reunions a ceremony is held to honor those veterans who have passed away since the previous State-Side Reunion. Please let us know if your dear Veteran has passed away, by contacting:

Nancy Archuleta
narchuleta@chm611.com

We will add the name to a list of those who will be honored during the next State-Side Reunion.