



748th
Squadron



749th
Squadron

THE

457th BOMB GROUP
ASSOCIATION



"THE FIREBALL OUTFIT"



750th
Squadron



751st
Squadron

THE 457TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION NEWS

ESTABLISHED JULY 1971 - BENTONVILLE, AR

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2003

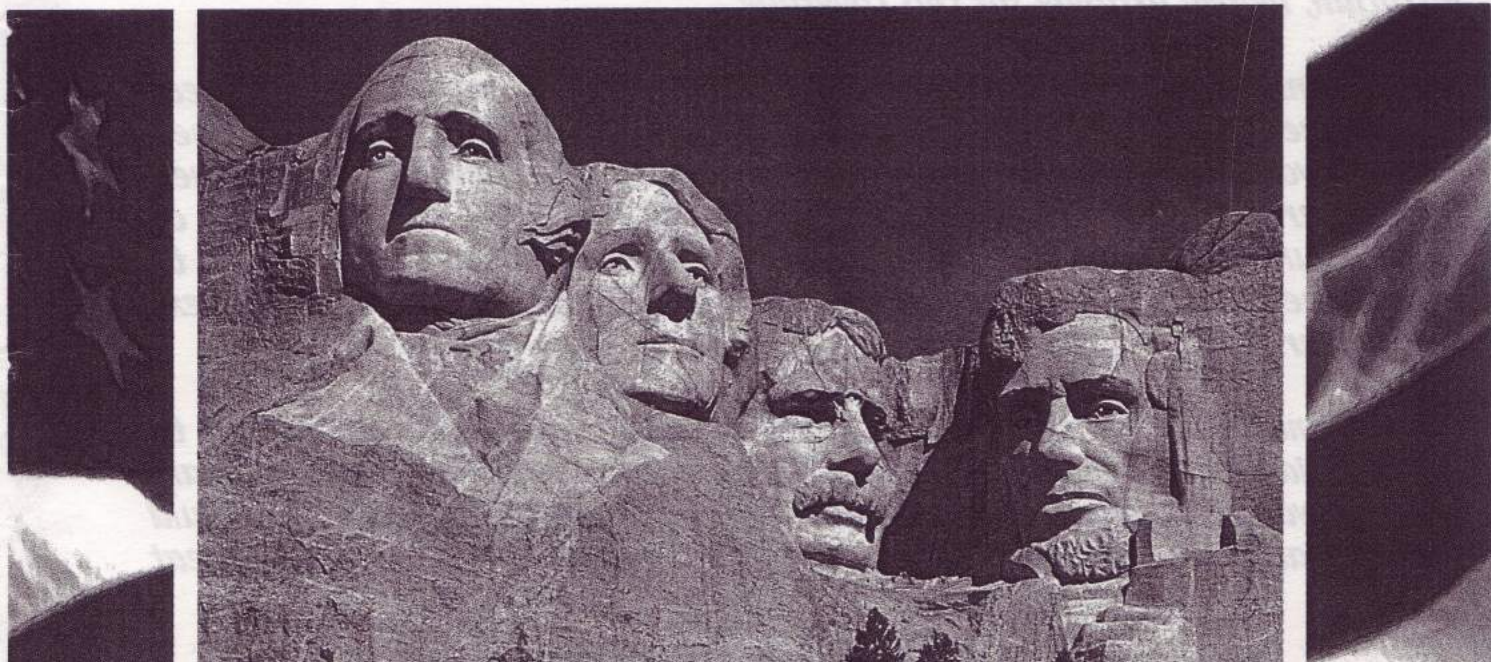
VOLUME 33

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South Dakota

2003 Reunion

August 28 - September 1





THE PREZ SEZ...

There is generally a more patriotic attitude in our country today. Hardly a week goes by without an article in one of the local newspapers honoring some historic battle, military unit, or specific veteran from WWII. Although there are a number of reasons for this increased public recognition, we certainly support all efforts to honor our fellow veterans. These actions are totally consistent with our association's objective to honor and preserve the memory of the 457th Bomb Group. With your support, we have recently completed or are currently considering projects which promote this objective.

We are very proud of the outstanding 457th Memorial Window in the Chapel of the Fallen Eagles at the Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum. A few of us were able to visit there in October and found that the window is even more dramatic than the photographs we had seen. When you visit there, you will be very pleased.

As you know, the Commemorative Air Force B17-G, "Sentimental Journey", bears the tail markings of the 457th. As further recognition of our Bomb Group, the Board has authorized the preparation of an attractive framed plaque relating "The 457th Bomb Group Story". This plaque will be placed in the museum at the home base of this airplane, at Falcon Field, Mesa, Arizona. Don Nielsen is handling this project and an article on this will appear in a future Newsletter.

457th recognition is not limited to this country. We had some very favorable publicity in the Peterborough, England press regarding our Memorial Window design which included an image of the Conington Church. Ray Pobgee, English Historian, helped arrange for this coverage.

In the Yonne area of northern France, a local group is now arranging to erect a monument to the Eighth Air Force in honor of four B-17s which crashed there. Two of these aircraft were from the 457th. "You Never Know" crashed September 10, 1944 and "El Lobo II" on March 19, 1945. The dedication of this monument is scheduled for August of this year. We have been invited to attend the ceremony and hope to have more specific information for the next Newsletter.

Finally, and most importantly, the Board has decided to renew our efforts to erect a Glatton Memorial Monument. This had been considered several years ago but was abandoned when local approval could not be obtained. We would like to place the monument in the area of the old main gate near the Great

North Road. Ray Pobgee has made some local contacts and we are very encouraged with the response. We are now considering some preliminary designs and will review this with you when we have more specific details. We know this will be expensive but you have always been generous in your support of worthy causes. Placing this monument to recognize the location of the Glatton Air Base where we served in 1944-45 is a worthy cause.

I hope you will soon be making your arrangements to join us at our Rapid city reunion and I look forward to seeing you there. If you know someone who would like to attend but may be hesitant about traveling alone, consider offering to join with him on the trip. You'll both feel good about it.

--Will Fluman

A BIT OF TRIVIA FOR THE HISTORY BUFFS AMONG YOU...

Gutzon Borglum's vision for Mount Rushmore, America's "**Shrine of Democracy**", was no less than "the formal rendering of the philosophy of our government into granite on a mountain peak." His monument to America was a grouping of four leaders who brought the country from colonial times into the 20th century. The most prominent position went to George Washington, commander of the Revolutionary Army and first U.S. President: **"The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the Republican model of government are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally staked, on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people."** Next was Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, 3rd President, and advocate of westward expansion: **"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."** To the far right was 16th President Abraham Lincoln, whose leadership restored the Union and ended slavery on U.S. soil: **"Let us have faith that right makes might and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it."** If Borglum had a hero of his own, it was 26th President Theodore Roosevelt, who promoted construction of the Panama Canal and ignited progressive causes such as conservation and business reform: **"We, here in America, hold in our hands the hopes of the world, the fate of the coming years; and shame and disgrace will be ours if in our eyes the light of high resolve is dimmed, if we trail in the dust the golden hopes of men."**

The Washington head was formally dedicated in 1930, followed by Jefferson in 1936, Lincoln in 1937, and Roosevelt in 1939. Borglum died in March 1941; The final dedication was not held until 50 years later. Son Lincoln Borglum supervised the completion of the heads.

Carving stopped in October 1941, on the eve of our entry into World War II. Borglum himself might have commented that the time had come to defend the principles Mount Rushmore preserved in stone.

2003 REUNION
AUGUST 28 - SEPTEMBER - RAPID CITY, SD

HOSTS: JOHN AND ALBERTA WELCH

John reports: "The motel and the Chamber of Commerce display great enthusiasm for our coming, and I'm sure we'll enjoy their hospitality."

Hotel:

Ramkota Hotel, a Best Western
2111 N. LaCrosse Street

Activities to include:

Friday: Tour of Ellsworth Air Base and Museum

Buffet lunch

Evening: Memorial Service

Saturday: Visit to Mount Rushmore and Crazy Horse Memorial
followed by

Buffet dinner and music show

Sunday: Non-denominational Church Service

Business meeting, Photo sessions

Social hour and Banquet

followed by live dance music

featuring "oldies" by 'The Easy Sounds'

John and Alberta have planned some optional activities for
those who arrive in time on Thursday...

Black Hills Passion Play

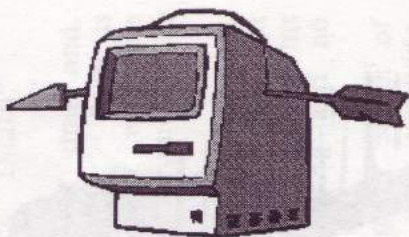
or

An evening of gambling in Deadwood

(both of these activities will depend on having enough people
who are interested in participating)

Registration forms and detailed information to
be included in the next newsletter...

May 2003



***Please note that email addresses for Joe Toth, Unit Contact/Board member has changed, as well as that for Willard Reese, WebMaster.

457th Email Directory

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***Toth, Joe

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This directory will be updated as additions and corrections are received. If you would like yours included, email it to Nancy at

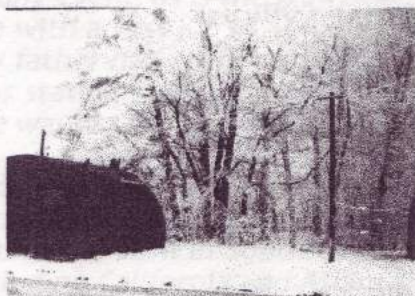
mylittldarlings@aol.com

457th BOMB GROUP

WINTER 1944/'45

John B Wilson

DO YOU REMEMBER
THIS PERIOD OF 8TH
AIR FORCE SERVICE
IN THE UK? ...THE
FOG... THE COLD...
THE SNOW ? ... I AM
SURE YOU DO !



A few reminders for
December may help

4th Due to bad weather
the first mission of the
month to Kassel was not
flown until this day.

5th All flying personnel
attended a special POW
lecture in the Base
Theatre.

6th Merseburg bombed.
No losses but four planes
received major, and nine
minor damaged.

9th Stuttgart-Boblingen
airfield attacked. No
losses. The Mobile Blood
Bank was at the Station
Dispensary.

11th Thirty-six planes
bombed the marshalling

yards at Frankfurt. All
crews returned.

12th Lt. Montell C
Higgins crew were lost on
Mission 159 to
Merseburg. It was Mud
Control Day on the Base.

15th Bad weather
grounded 8th AF until this
day when missions
recommenced. The
Group sent a 36 plane
formation to attack the
Kassel marshalling yards.
No losses.

16th Germany
commenced ARDENNES
OFFENSIVE. 8th AF
were under pressure
to assist allied ground
forces however, bad
weather persisted until
19th December thus
effectively grounding air
operations.

19th Under difficult
flying conditions the
457th bombed
Gemund, Germany but
results were un-observed.



Six aircraft managed to
land at Glatton
before fog closed-in. The
rest of the Group
were diverted to RAF
Portreath. It was 3 days
before they returned to
base. The NCO Club held
a Christmas Party.

21st A Christmas party
for local children was
held. Planned for 75
apparently 225 attended!
(Great party!).

23rd While returning
from Portreath, Lt
Hendrickson's plane
crashed in poor weather
conditions. Only one
survived.
Officers held their
Christmas Party with
music by the "Fireballs"
Dance Band.

24th Thick fog shrouded
the base early morning ,
resulting in a late take-
off. Six aircraft were
airborne when the fog
closed-in. The next plane,
flown by Lt. Carl
Sundbaum, crashed and
blew up off the end of
the runway. It was early
afternoon before 34 more
planes could mount a
mission through the
persisting fog. While
heading out over the
North Sea, orders

cancelled the mission and bombs were jettisoned in the sea. Local weather conditions prevented landing and aircraft were diverted to Eye and Horham. Few crews were therefore on base Christmas Eve.

25th XMAS DAY. A tea dance for enlisted men and their guests was held in the Aero Club 1500 to 1800 hours.

26th BOXING DAY. As it was holidays, 2 other cadet friends and myself, visited Glatton and saw some of the diverted crews return. The box camera photo below shows '798 flown by Capt. Wade Knudson returning to base. Fog clamped down again during the afternoon and liberty run and limited local bus services were withdrawn so 749th Operations staff billeted us overnight and the Military Police contacted our parents to assure them we were safe...and quite happy. We were loaned warm B10 jackets and had a great time with plenty of Hershey bars and Lifesavers as an added treat.



27th Despite poor flying conditions, rail targets in Western Germany supporting the battle front were attacked. Mission 163 was flown to Gerolstein railroad bridge.

28th The USO Show "Going to Town" was presented at the Aero Club. About 1000 men attended the two performances.

29th Marshalling yards at Bingen bombed on Mission 164. Air Commander, Major Stann awarded Silver Star for gallantry in action.

30th Marshalling yards at Kaiserlautern were attacked.

31st Thirty Six Group planes bombed marshalling yards at Krefeld. New Year's Eve parties on the base turned into noisy affairs including a number of fights. 3 men were charged with disorderly conduct for wrecking a barracks.

JANUARY 1945

1st. NEW YEAR'S DAY. Major Spencer led the Group to bomb marshalling yards at Kassel for Mission 167.

Further missions were flown 2nd, 3rd, 6th and 7th without loss but on the 10th while attacking Euskirchen airfield, Lt. Fred Gauss experienced engine problems and the crew were forced to bail out over Belgium. He delayed his bail out too long and his parachute failed to open. The Eighth were grounded two days due to atrocious weather conditions including heavy snowfalls. Glatton ground personnel were employed with shovels to clear the runway prior to Mission 173 to Maximiliansau on 13th January. Lt. Irwin Popham's plane was hit and exploded over the target. Planes were diverted to RAF Woodbridge, Suffolk, where fog dispersal equipment was used to burn-off the fog. As most of the Group were still at Woodbridge only 12 planes were available to participate in the bombing of Cologne railroad bridge the next day.

Missions continued through 17th, 20th, 21st but a further loss occurred on 22nd January when bombing synthetic oil plant at Sterkrade. Hit by flak near Recklinghausen, Lt. Arthur Jellinek and crew were forced to bail-out. They were subsequently made POW's.

28th Mission 179 to Cologne. After dropping bombs, the plane flown by Lt. William Boyes left the formation with one engine feathered. It later crashed near Coblenz. Two crewmen were killed, one evaded and six were captured to become POW's. A special movie show was held on the base to celebrate the third anniversary of formation of the Eighth Air Force.

29th Thirty six planes led by Major Stann bombed Siegen with no battle damage or casualties. Seven missions were scrubbed due to bad weather including the last day of January when fog closed in prior to the Group getting airborne after briefing to bomb Berlin.

My particular thanks go to S/Sgt. Sam Silverman, Sgt. Elbert Schott, Cpl. Sam Connor of 749th Operations and to Harold Adams and Wilson A. Morris the two motor transport drivers who, together with the Officers, made us most welcome during all our visits to Glatton

Hey, it will soon be winter 2000, .

.MERRY CHRISTMAS
& HAPPY NEW YEAR
to all my Yank friends.
JOHN



L-R: Don Holmes, Don Bridges, Sam Silverman, and John Wilson



The two Don's with Elbert Schott outside 749th Operations



John Wilson and Sam Connor

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE GREENEVILLE SUN ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2002...

Old House Is Empty, But American Spirit Still Resides In Shadows
by BOB HURLEY, columnist

The old house is still standing, but just barely. You wouldn't want to live there. You couldn't.

The doors and windows are mostly gone, and spiders, bumblebees, groundhogs and snakes now hide where children once played and slept.

Nobody has been at home here in years, and Ralph hasn't been here since that hot summer day in 1940 when he walked out to the main road, hitched a ride to town and left for the U.S. Army.

It is a ghostly place. There is no future here among the rotting timbers, only a past to dwell on and the present moment to sense the spirit that is so American.

I was standing in front of the old place, just me and the cows, and I am not ashamed to report to you that my eyes filled with tears during this week of remembrance.

The tears were not for the old house, not even for Ralph, the soldier, because I never knew him, but I was so moved by the overwhelming sense of gratitude that this place and millions more just like it produced the people who produced the spirit that dictators and terrorists hate but can't destroy.

The cows and the butterflies and the katydids and an overly sentimental columnist are free to come and go here, because tyrants and terrorists have failed to quench the spirit that resides even in places where nothing is left but the memories.

As the images of September 11 keep playing in our heads, I have come today to reassure you that the same American Spirit and the same American Resolve that took young Ralph W. Smith from his boyhood home at Chuckey is still alive and thriving all around us, even while some of us, namely me, have to be shocked from time to time to get it.

The old house that had brought me to this pasture signaled an end to something I did not want to end. I lingered long at every corner. I inspected windows and doors and falling timbers in a way that is very unlike me. I had come to love Ralph in a very

strange and wonderful way, even though he had been gone from here for four years by the time I was born. And I knew I would soon leave him as all the pieces of his story had now come together and I would have to move on to the next one.

We will each deal with Sept. 11 in our own way because that is how we do it here in America, which is another little fact that drives the terrorists crazier than they already are because they can't stand that kind of fierce independence and freedom.

You might choose to commemorate our own Day of Infamy by stealing away for an hour or two of meditation or you might choose to hold a laughing grandbaby and be reminded of the awful price that has been paid in order for you to enjoy such a treasure.

As for me, I will remember the events of a year ago, all right, and I will be angry all over again. I will be mad enough, in fact, to do something very stupid if only I knew a way to do it. If I were as smart as I'd like to be, and if I had the power and resources, the threat of terrorism would be ended by sundown today.

But I am not very smart, and I have no power. I am only one grain of sand in a sea of people who sweep the American spirit along from one generation to the next.

I do it best when surrounded by the likes of Ralph W. Smith, or rather, by the story he left behind.

In the past few weeks and months, I have met so many remarkable people who have helped me with Ralph's story that I would love to make this a book in order to tell you about all of them. We all know that is not going to happen here, so I will condense it all down to two people who have written their own books about the sweet, sweet spirit of America.

If terrorists hate Americans as much as some reports indicate -- and I'm sure they do -- then I'm sure they hate the likes of James Bass and Cheryl Williams Hall with a passion because these two patriots love America in a fashion we simple can't measure.

"Old House Is Empty..." continued

The Spirit of 9-11 resides so comfortably in James Bass that getting to know him has been one of the highlights of this terrible year for me.

It all started so simply: a letter wound up on my desk from an old World War II bomber outfit, saying they had placed some books in the library here in memory of Ralph W. Smith.

James L. Bass was the man behind the books and the letter so I gave him a call, wanting to know more about this soldier named Ralph.

"Can you tell me any more about his family and what part of Chuckey he came from?" I asked James who lives in Carthage, near Nashville.

"That's about it," he said, referring to the letter that said Technical Sgt. Ralph W. Smith was a native of the Chuckey community.

"The Chuckey Post Office serves an area more than 40 miles wide," I explained to him. "Is there any way to narrow my search?"

"If there is, I don't know it," he said.

That was the end of our first conversation; but there would be many more, because I stuck my foot in my mouth by announcing to him that I could find this Smith family in no time flat.

Well, I didn't, and I'll not bore you with the details about how I called every Smith on what used to be Route 2, Chuckey, and just about every other Smith listed in the phone books of East Tennessee. If you think that can't get a little frustrating, I invite you to try it sometime.

Believe me, I made all the right contacts and talked to all the right people. Except one.

After weeks of futility, I quietly buried my growing stack of going-nowhere notes under the pile that is labeled "File and forget."

There is simply not enough hours in a day to find Ralph in a sea of Smiths, but I didn't have the courage to tell James Bass of my poor performance.

Then, out of the blue one morning, this man who is supposed to be retired and taking life easy called and said he had some telephone numbers for me.

While I had "filed and forgotten," James had been writing more letters and making more inquiries. To cut to the heart of the story, one of the letters was

to the Afton Post Office where a clerk passed it on to Argel Ripley.

"I just looked at the map and saw that Afton was close to Chuckey, so I wrote the post office, asking for assistance," he said.

Argel Ripley, by the way, is the one contact I failed to make back during the heat of battle before I filed and tried to forget. He is not only a former mail carrier on the old Route 2, Chuckey, but his wife, Goldene, is a cousin to Ralph's mother, Ida Smith.

Why didn't I think to ask Afton?

The Ripleys provided all the answers concerning the young man named Ralph who left the old home in the middle of what is now a pasture.

"He was the kind of person you couldn't help but like," Goldene Ripley said of Ralph as we thumbed through a mountain of old photos and other material provided by family members.

"And he was such a good-looking young man," she added. "A lot of girls had a big crush on him, but I don't think he was ever serious with any of them."

When Ralph went away, he never got to return to Chuckey. His parents moved to Knoxville shortly thereafter, and he visited them there a few times during the war.

Then one day near war's end, Ralph died when the B-17 bomber on which he served was shot down by German antiaircraft fire near Munster, Germany. He is buried in an American cemetery in Belgium.

Little is known about Ralph's heroics that day, or any day of the war. There were the medals he received for meritorious service prior to his death, but he was so quiet and shy that not much will ever be known about him.

He was part of the 457th Bomb Group, Eighth Air Force, which was and still is the largest military unit in history, not just World War II. It was the Eighth, you will remember, that pounded the Nazis into submission, filling the skies with bombers and obliterating German cities in a fire storm of steel and death.

Ralph's plane, named "The Tennessee Toddy," was piloted that day by another young Tennessean, Lt. Sherrill Williams, who had grown up in Clinton.

And that's where Cheryl Williams Hall's remarkable story begins. She was a year old when the

"Old House Is Empty..." continued

war claimed her daddy, so she never knew him -- until many years later.

Her daddy and Ralph were part of a crew of nine. They and four other crewmen died, but three survived the blast in the sky and subsequent stints in German prisoner-of-war camps.

And guess what? Cheryl, who now lives in Jonesboro, Ga., found the survivors in a fashion that prompted a huge feature in an Atlanta newspaper.

It is not book-length, but it is close. The story is that good, that compelling and that American.

There are lots of old photographs of him and her together, but Cheryl doesn't remember a thing about her dad. She got to know him through years of searching and finally by spending lots of time with those who survived the explosion that killed him.

Producers from Hollywood read the story and came calling at Cheryl's door, exploring the possibility of turning it into a movie. But she never heard from them again.

Her dad was 23 and skipper of a plane that rained fire on a dictator who thought he could somehow kill the American spirit. Cheryl is now 58, the same age as I am, the mother of two grown children of her own, and the kind of patriotic American who sends a chill up and down my country spine.

I will forward copies of her remarkable story on to Ralph's family, none of whom has yet seen it.

There is still more sadness in her story, I fear, because of the three surviving crewmen she tracked down, two are known to have died in the past few years, and now we are unable to make contact with the third, who lived in Florida as late as a couple of years ago.

The books, by the way, that honor the memory of Ralph W. Smith are at the local library and are titled "Fait Accompli Trilogy."

Some stories I never want to end, and that's what kept lingering in front of Ralph's old home.

Our enemies, old and new, will apparently never get it, but this old house reaffirmed to me that Ralph and millions more like him not only live in America, but more importantly, America lives in us.

OPERATION: LIBRARY PLACEMENT

The Board of Directors authorized the placement of the "FAIT ACCOMPLI" TRILOGY in the home town libraries of those of the group who were Killed in Action or Killed in Line of Duty. The Project got underway in early 2002 and has resulted in the placement of the Trilogy in 52 libraries, including the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library. Prior to the placements, direct contact was made with families of 41 of those who were KIA. In many instances it was the first contact the families had with any member of the 457th for half century.

Two challenges have emerged from the Operation. First is getting the information from the army. The response is very slow. Most of the information obtained on the 52 placements came from sources other than the Army. (Remember, we were part of the Army Air Force and those records were not transferred over to the Air Force after it became a separate branch of the service.) Second, attempting to find family members after fifty years has been difficult. Almost impossible in cities and to a great degree in the rural areas. The largest city where a KIA family has been located is Salt Lake City.

In addition to the placement in the KIA libraries, there have been two placements of survivors, placed in honor of their contribution to the cause.

If you have information on a KIA, the home town or name and address of a family member, please forward the information to James Bass...

**P.O. Box 500
Carthage, TN 37030**

IN MEMORIAM

*"I believe...
stars in the sky are openings
where our loved ones shine down to let us know they are okay."*

The following are reported deceased since last newsletter.

WESLEY C. AKINS

October 23, 2002

Reported by his wife, Albina

Col. Akins was a member of the 749th Squadron Mar '44 to Jul '44. He was shot down over Austria on July 20, 1944. The target for that date was Augsburg, Germany.

LLEWELLYN G. BREDERSON

June 9, 2002

Reported by Don Simonis

Don reports: "Llew and his crew were shot down on the 457th's first mission - February 21st 1944 -Lippstadt. The complete story of the mission is found in "Black Puff Polly" page 35. Llew's copilot, George Barnes, passed away Jan '02."

JOHN A. "HANS" DAHLER

October 16, 2002

Reported by his daughter, Jean Ann Maynard

His notice reads in part: "John was a World War II veteran who enlisted in the Army Air Force in 1942. Overseas, John served as a bombardier in the 457th bomber group, 750th squadron. He flew 30 missions out of Glatton airfield, and received the Distinguished Flying Cross for extraordinary achievement during a mission over Politz, Germany, on 10/7/44. According to John's journal, 'We were the only lead crew left and led the group back. I also received the DFC for hitting the refinery.' After the war, John served in the U.S. Air Force Reserves and was promoted to the rank of Major. He received an honorable discharge on 5/19/1969." John was an active member of the VFW and the 457th Bomb Group Association. He often spoke fondly of attending a 457th reunion in Rapid City, SD, during which he proudly wore his "Coomes Crew" hat and reminisced with four other crew members that attended (Pilot Edmund Coomes, CoPilot Andy Reeves, Gunner Jim Conklin, and one other.)

IN MEMORIAM

GARRY DeYOUNG

May 4, 2002

Reported by wife, Mary, son Frank, and several members of the Association

Garry was crew chief of the plane "Miss Cue" s/n 42-31505. His notice reads in part: "In August 1941, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. During World War II, he served as a Master Sergeant in England, and was stationed with the B-17 Bombers in the 457th Bomb Group. While in the Air Force, he received six Bronze Stars and the Good Conduct Medal. He received 4 Honorable Discharges after 14 years of service. During the 1960s, he was chief writer for the Minnesota Highway Department and was co-founder of the Minnesota Institute of Philosophy. He owned and operated a nursery and was active with his nursery research up until the last few weeks."

FREDERICK L. EXLEY

May 11, 2002

Reported by his son and Craig Harris

Frederick was assigned to the 748th Squadron. He was the tailgunner on Major Ed Dozier's crew that flew from the states to England in early 1944.

RICHARD HENRY GARDNER

February 9, 2002

Reported by son Richard C. Gardner

Richard passed away after a long battle with Alzheimer's Disease. His son says: "The one thing he always remembered was his 457th Bomb Group Newsletters which he stacked over the years in a file box. His time in the service never left him. He could recite the day and time of every mission he had been on during WWII. He was a "turret gunner" with the 457th and went on 30 missions. He has medals and news clippings that he safeguarded in a scrapbook. He was a proud American. The name of his plane was "The Jayhawk". He will be missed by many."

CHARLES O. GUNDERSON

Reported by Ray Hoadland

Ray says: "'Bud'" - as he was known to his friends and fellow crew members, was 81. He was a pilot and flew with the Ray Hoagland crew. He was a member of the 750th Squadron."

IN MEMORIAM

AUGUSTUS JULIAN HARRIS

May 25, 2002

Reported by Clayton Bejot

Julian was a copilot. He flew 35 missions during the summer of 1944, finishing in late October. His notice reads in part: "Julian worked for Texas & Pacific Railroad in administration and retired in 1963. He was a CPA in private practice until 1969, when he joined the staff of the city of Grand Prairie as comptroller, retiring in 1985. He was treasurer, deacon and elder at First Christian Church."

BILLY EARL HIGHTOWER

February 17, 2002

Previously reported in the April 2002 newsletter. Repeated here with additional information from Gladys.

"He served his country in WWII as a Radio Operator/ Gunner on a B-17 bomber in the 8th Air Force, flying 27 combat missions over Germany. He was wounded on June 14, 1944, one week after D-Day in Europe, and was returned "Back to the States." After the war, his comrades elected him president of their 457th Bomb Group Association. He was a holder of the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Purple Heart, the European Theatre ribbon with three battle stars, and the Presidential Unit Citation. Billy became a member of New Braunfels High School faculty in 1958, and, except for a six-year interruption as an Administrative Supervisor at Gary Job Corps Center in San Marcos, continued his work as a teacher and counselor at New Braunfels High School until he retired. After retirement, he taught Driving Safety classes in the school district's Community Education Program for nine years."

Reported by Willard "Hap" Reese

This note from Willard: It is with great sadness that I must report the death of two of my old crewmates. Both died in the same week from the same malady (prostate cancer)

JAMES McCLOSKEY

November 23, 2002

James died in Palo Alto Veterans Administration Hospice with his wife and most of his family at his side.

CLAIR HETRICK

December 1, 2002

Clair died at home in New Kensington, PA with his daughter and loved ones by his side.

Pictures sent by Roland O. Byers

IN MEMORIAM

McCLOSKEY/HETRICK (cont)

Willard says: "Both of these men suffered terribly over the past few months. I followed their illness and talked with them when they were able. They will be sorely missed by me, their family, and all those who loved them. I have fond memories of both from those war years long ago and a renewed fellowship established just a few short years ago when all the surviving crew members were gathered at the Association Reunion in Savannah, GA. Jim and I were the only two crew members to attend the reunion in Colorado Springs, but both Jim, Clair and I were at the reunion in Gettysburg, PA. How important those reunions are! There are only two of us left now."

CLYDE B. KNIPFER

April 26, 2002

Reported by Jerry Silverman

Jerry reports: "We lost a pilot and good friend, Clyde B. Knipfer, a member of the 751st Squadron, pilot. He was 88 years old. He had been ill for a considerable period of time. Clyde and his crew were shot down on May 28th, 1944 on a raid to Dessau. All of his crew became prisoners of war. His experience is related in Roland Byer's book, "Flak Dodger".

His notice reads in part: "He served in the Air National Guard in Savannah and flew missions in Korea and Vietnam. A longtime member of the Atlanta Athletic Club, he was an avid golfer. At age 72, he shot his age!"

GEORGE LANGOWSKI

September 3, 2002

Reported by John Pearson

George was with the 748th Squadron and was a member of 8AFHS.

JAMES HARVEY LATIMER

October 16, 2002

Reported by Ken Blakebrough

Pilot in the 750th Squadron. Was at Glatton about the same time as Will Fluman and Ken Blakebrough-Spring of 1945. Copilot was Jack McMillen who died earlier in '02.

HOMER E. REICH

April 15th, 2002

Reported by son Dale on the 457th website Guestbook and by his wife Charlene and member Richard Gibbs

Homer was tail gunner on Dale Jeffers Crew, 749th SQD, and flew many missions on 828 "Remember Me?"

IN MEMORIAM

SHERMAN ROBERTS

October 2002

Reported by James Bass

DICK SEELY

Reported by Lee Zimmerman

"Today is the day that Dick Seely always called to remind us of our anniversary. Now that Dick is done the least we can do is pause and remember all that he meant to us. Thanks Dick for keeping all those ME-109s off our tail and telling us when they were at the rear. Thank you, God, for Dick Seely." Zim

MORRIS SHUFF

September 1, 2001

Reported by wife Joan

Joan reports: "Morris was a Life Member of the 457th Bomb Group, 750th Squadron and flew 34 missions as pilot of a B-17G from Glatton. He arrived in January 1944 at Glatton and came home in July 1944. He had 9 crashes and survived. He was decorated with two Air Medals, the Distinguished Flying Cross, Presidential Citation and the French medal "Crown of Thorns". His B-17 was named the "You Never Know". He was planning on attending the reunion in Colorado Springs but didn't make it. He and Clyde Jolley, who passed away in March '01, were good friends during the service years and they were planning to meet, after 55 years, but Morey missed that reunion also."

QUENTIN P. THOMPSON

June 10, 2002

Reported by nephew David S. Thompson

David reports: "Quentin was a 2/LT, a B-17 pilot in the 748th Squadron. His airplane was shot down 18 Mar 45. The entire crew parachuted down safely and were POWs until the end of the war. Prior to and after the war, he was a noted musician performing with many of the 'big bands'."

TAPS

Day is done
Gone the sun
From the lakes
From the hills
From the sky.
All is well,
Safely rest.
God is nigh.

Fading light
Dims the sight
And a star
Gems the sky,
Gleaming bright
From afar,
Drawing nigh,
Falls the night.

Thanks and praise
For our days
Neath the sun,
Neath the stars
Neath the moon
As we go
This we know
God is nigh.

IF YOU KNOW OF A DECEASED MEMBER WHO HAS NOT BEEN MENTIONED IN THE NEWSLETTER, PLEASE LET NANCY KNOW.

NEW LIFE MEMBERS...

Larry Battisti...749th SQD...Tail gunner with
pilot Wm. McCall
8580 W. Foster Unit #504
Norridge, IL 60706

Joseph Blake...751st SQD...Bombardier
9764 Gerald Drive
St. Louis, MO 63128

Edward J. Celani...751st SQD...Ball Turret
Gunner with Pilot Vernon Terrill
18801 Tortuga Dr.
Hudson, FL 34667-6461

John J. Kearney
2254 Termino Ave
Long Beach, CA 90815-2515

Jerry J. Perillo...749th SQD...Armament-Ord.
37 Fairmount Terrace
West Orange, NJ 07052

James Wilson "Jim"...748 SQD...served as
both Pilot/Copilot with Pilot
Wayne Tweten
97 Kingsgate Rd, Apt H-11
Lake Oswego, OR 97035-2372

NEW MEMBERS...

Robert T. Benos Bob...son of Nicholas T.
Benos, deceased, who
was Ball Turret Gunner on
"That's My Baby" with
Pilot E. Salo
5151 Old Plum Grove Road
Palatine, IL 60067

Lindsey Todd Darnell...grandson of Charles
Darnell...751st
SQD, Charles was
one of Joe Toth's Pilots
6010-10 Anchor Village Lane, Lot 10
Southport, NC 28461

Thomas J. Elliot "Tom"...749 and 750 SQD
supply & special services
309 West Broad St.
Eufaula, AL 36027-2011

Renzo Ferrera "Rezz"...nephew of Life
Member Adam Santora
590 Albert Blvd.
Corunna (not sure if that's spelled
right)
Ontario, Canada NON-IGO

NEWMEMBERS...(cont.)

Loretta Hamilton...sister of Hershel Wilson
(deceased)
501 University Blvd.
Norman, OK 73069

Andy Kuzemchak...750th SQD...Tail gunner
with pilot Hugh Arnold
4189 Baird Rd.
Stow, OH 44224

Joseph S. McNichol "Joe"...son of Frank J.
McNichol of the 748th
SQD...Frank's pilot was
Lt. James R. Chinn
15000 SW 86 Ave.
Miami, FL 33158-1927

Richard Naish...pilot at Flying Club
Conington-Glatton
6 The Grove, Wistow, Huntingdon, UK
PE28 2YD

Frederick T. Schuller...750th SQD...Navigator
with Pilot Fred Stevenson
This membership is a gift
from Frederick's daughter,
Linda Little, who is hoping
they will be attending the
reunion in South Dakota
26905 Sudbury Drive
North Olmsted, OH 44070

George R. Taylor "Bobby"...749th SQD...
Engineer/Gunner with
Pilot Wendel Tague
on "Battle Baby"
2215 Harris Circle, NW
Cleveland, TN 37311

Kathleen White...widow of John W. White,
deceased, who was Pilot
on "Hamtramack Mama"
with Lee Zimmerman.
2201 MacIntosh Ave
Bishop, CA 93514

Robert A. White "Bob"...son of John White,
deceased.
Rt 1, Box 1091
Crowley Lake, CA 93546

PLEASE LET NANCY KNOW RIGHT AWAY IF...

☐ YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED A MEMBERSHIP CARD,
OR A LIFE MEMBER CARD

--OR--

☐ YOU HAVE RECENTLY JOINED OR HAVE
UPGRADED TO A LIFE MEMBERSHIP AND WE
HAVE NOT PUBLISHED YOUR NAME IN A
NEWSLETTER

PLEASE NOTE: Gary Isker, nephew of Paul Isker, would like to make contact with any one who knew Paul. Gary can be contacted at...

13393 410th Ave.,
Waseca, MN 56093-1408
(507) 635-4439

Letter from Don Simonis:

After reading our latest newsletter, I came upon it for the second time. On page 16 - in Jack Elliott's report, it says, "During WWII, the 457th won 6 Battle Stars and a Presidential Unit Citation.

Years back, in 1993, I was sent 2 Bronze and 1 Silver Star and a Presidential Unit Citation: 7 battles and campaigns: Rhineland - Southern France - Central Europe - Normandy - Northern France - Air Combat Europe - Ardennes.

That's what's on my discharge papers. It probably does not mean much, but let's give our outfit all the credit it can have. I was brought into the unit in September of '43 and was in till the end. Sincerely, Don Simonis

Letter from Ray Pobgee to Will Fluman which accompanied the newspaper article on the opposite page...

Dear Will,

Many thanks for your recent e-mail and notes for John & Gordon. I enclose a copy of the piece from the "Peterborough Evening Telegraph" and I am very happy with it. As a result of this appearing, I am to speak later this morning on the local Radio Station about the 457th and Peterborough.

On the week-end of the 28th of this month (September), there is an exhibition to be held in the Peterborough Museum called "We'll Meet Again" -- an exhibition about Peterborough in World War 2. When the museum contacted me, they suggested that a small exhibition on the 20th Fighter Group would be acceptable. I explained to them the folly of their ways and John Walker & I will now put together a small exhibition on the 457th for that occasion. My logic is that it is not only the duty of historians to look back, but also to keep to the forefront that history, to remind the present population of the City of their past and why we are here today. As you will see, the paper contacted Jim Bass. In fact, I gave them your name, Jim's name and Craig's, knowing that they would be able to contact one of you in the time scale they allowed.

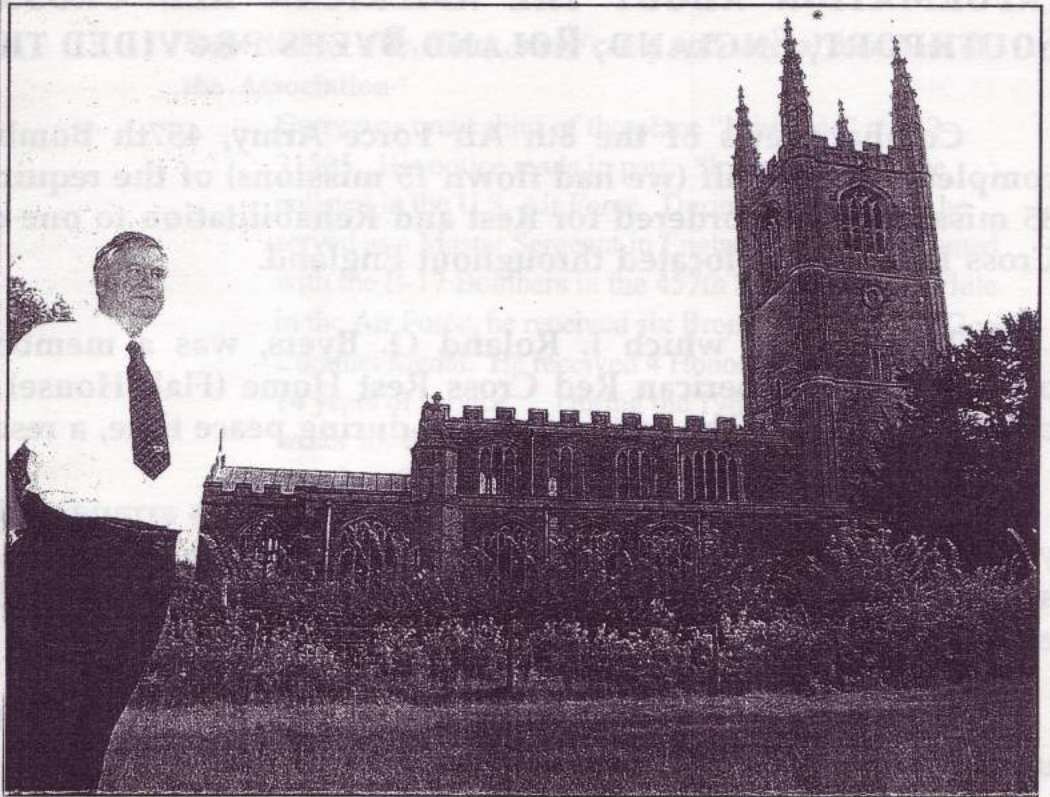
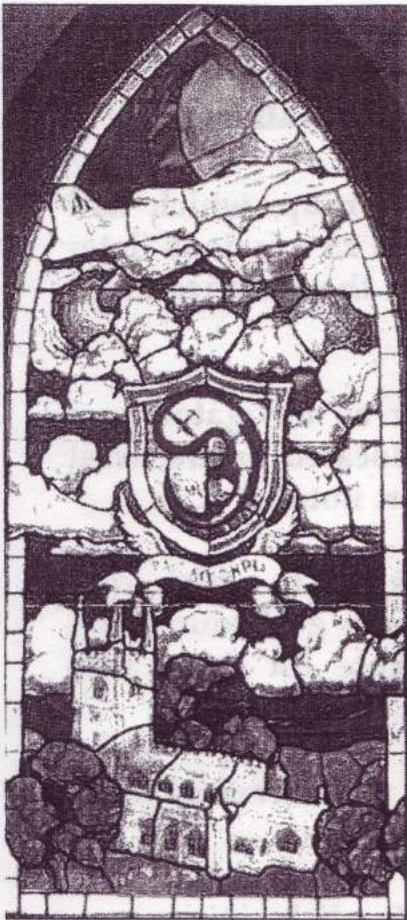
Hope you approve.

Kind Regards,

Ray.



23, Eastern Avenue,
PETERBOROUGH
PE1 4PH



WINDOW KEEPS CHURCH FRESH IN AIRMEN'S MINDS

GARETH ROSE, News Reporter

THE beauty of a church has been captured forever in stained glass in an American chapel.

It is many years since members of the 457 Bomb Group looked down on Conington Church, and knew that they were close to their Glatton base.

The soldiers of the American Airforce who were based in Cambridgeshire during the Second World War, used the distinctive building near Peterborough, as a way of knowing where to land.

They have decided to recreate the church in a stained glass window in the Chapel of the Fallen Eagles, in Savannah, Georgia, in America.

One of the members of the Bomb Group, James Bass, 82, from Tennessee, said: "To keep the image of the church fresh in our minds we decided to recreate it in a stained glass window.

"The chapel was built to remember those who lost their lives in the Second World War, and was designed to resemble an old-fashioned English church like Conington.

"So when we were told the 457 Bomb Group could choose the design for one of the four stained glass windows running along one wall, we knew exactly what we wanted it to be."

The recently-finished window has already met with the approval of an honorary member of the 457 Bomb Group -- former Peterborough City Mayor, Cllr Ray Pobgee.

He said: "They were the first group to visit Peterborough in my first year as mayor, and, as I am interested in aviation anyway, we kept in touch.

"Last year they even made me an honorary member.

"But when you think that we are talking about people who were in their early 20s in 1945, you realise they won't be able to come to Peterborough quite as often from now on.

"So I think it is wonderful they have erected this window to help them remember us."

PHOTO ABOVE:

Ray Pobgee, former city mayor and ex RAF sergeant, outside Conington Church, which a group of US airmen have immortalised in a stained glass window in their chapel in Savannah, Georgia.

IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST FROM JOE TOTH FOR PICTURES AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE AMERICAN RED CROSS REST HOME IN SOUTHPORT, ENGLAND, ROLAND BYERS PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING:

Combat crews of the 8th Air Force Army, 457th Bomb Group, which had completed about half (we had flown 15 missions) of the required 25 missions (later 35 missions) were ordered for Rest and Rehabilitation to one of the American Red Cross Rest Homes located throughout England.

The crew of which I, Roland O. Byers, was a member as navigator, was ordered to the American Red Cross Rest Home (Flak House) located on the west coast of England. The rest home was, during peace time, a resort hotel.

When we visited the rest home the Red Cross arranged dances to which local young ladies were invited for dancing and conversation. A nearby golf course was available for rounds of golf. A swimming pool was available for those who enjoyed swimming.

Food was prepared well by the staff of the rest home and was served at times unlike that at usual military establishments.

I have thought about the rationing of food, to which the English civilian was subjected, after I was invited to the home of one of the young ladies, to whom I was introduced from Southport. The meal was well prepared and must have used up many of the ration tickets allocated to the family.

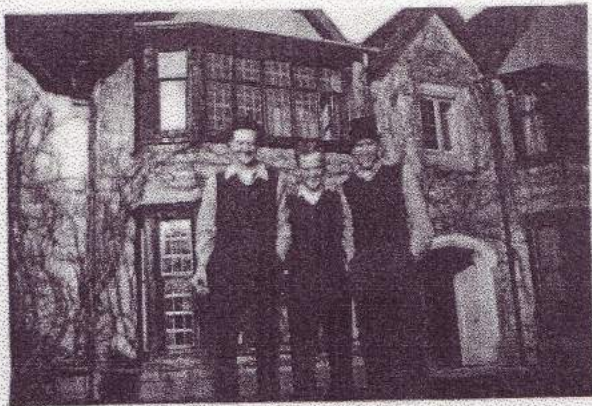
Did the 'Rest and Rehabilitation' at the rest home achieve its intended purpose of relieving the anxieties of the combat crew member? I can only speak for myself and I did enjoy my visit to the Rest Home. Although I did not feel the fear that many combat crew members had to contend with, my psychological tendency of mind was different than some combat crew members I flew with. I volunteered for a second tour of missions after I completed my first tour, as did many other combat crew members.

During my second tour, I was ordered to a second Flak leave at Forzdown, an American Red Cross Rest home located near Winchester England, in south central England. The leave was during Christmas week in 1944. An English military officer had donated his home, an English manor house, to the Red Cross for use as a rest home. The home was managed by three American Red Cross Women, aided by the staff of the home who remained to work at the home. The names of the Red Cross members were Marian Pederson, Jeanne Helber, and Kathleen Regan.

I recall that the butler, 'Inch' by name, would wake us up each morning with a glass of orange juice.

Pictures sent by Roland O. Byers

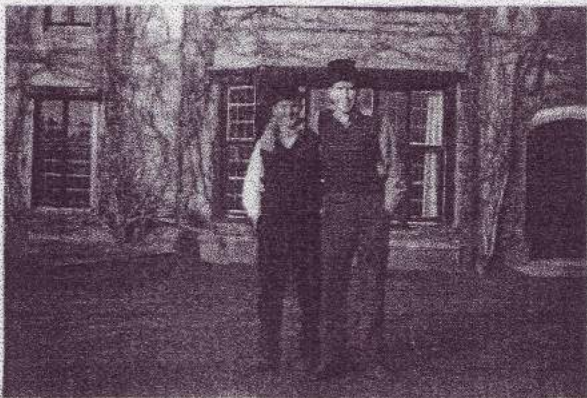




UMOFF, LOWER, STUTZMANN



LOWER, BYERS



LOWER, STUTZMANN



STUTZMANN, LOWER, UMOFF, RED CROSS



UMOFF, BYERS, LOWER, STUTZMANN



FURZDOWN

Roland Byers...Alexis Paul Umooff...Charlie Lower...Ralph Stutzmann visited 'Furzdown', American Red Cross, near Winchester, England over Christmas of 1944. All were flying a second tour of combat, and had been original members of the 457th Bomb Group - 750th Squadron.

The three Red Cross Ladies were, Marian Pederson, Jeanne Helber, and Kathleen Regon. (All signed my 'short snorter' money!)

The civilian clothing was supplied by the Red Cross - including the 'plug' hat and 'stovepipe hat'.

Received from Gordon Townsend...

RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON

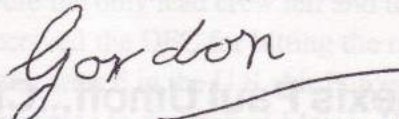
On 26th September, 1944, Tom Angott of the 749th Squadron took off with his buddies on Aircraft B17 42-32079, piloted by 2nd Lt Carl H. Gooch, not knowing that he would not return to Glatton until 26th September 2002.

English Historian, Gordon Townsend, received a call from a tour guide saying that she had spoken to Roger Freeman and he suggested she telephone Gordon. She said she had a Mr. and Mrs. Tom Angott on her tour which eventually was scheduled to go to the rededication of the American Air Museum at Duxford. Tom Angott told her that he wanted to go to Glatton to return from the mission that his B17 was shot down on 26th September 1944. Gordon conversed with John Walker and they both agreed to meet Tom and Nancy at Glatton, arranging the usual tour of the base area. What Tom did not know was that a flight had been arranged for him by generous cooperation of Julie at the Peterborough Flying Club.*** Gordon also had a chance meeting at Peterborough Museum with William Thompson (and his wife) who was a pilot of the 749th Squadron, who were staying at the Bull Hotel. Gordon had a conversation with Bill and told him of the next day's arrangements.

John Walker agreed to pick up Bill and his wife, and bring them to Glatton to meet Tom and his wife. From the point of the meeting, we could hardly get a word in. We started off at the water tower near the old A.1. and progressed through the village to the 749th domestic site. (See photos opposite page) Then on to the Memorial and into the Church, after which we made our way down to the terminal building on the airfield. John had brought several volumes of our library and both men found photos of themselves and their aircraft. Undoubtedly, the highlight for both men was the flight. Taking off and landing on the old long runway certainly made their trip. After some refreshments at the "Bell Inn" at Sawtry, we sent them on their way to Cambridge.

Yet another memorable return visit. One interesting comment. They both said they did not know that the English Historians existed. We have been found by accident. Ha Ha!!!

Our fond regards from Gordon and Ros Townsend and John and Sylvia Walker.



*** New 457th member, Richard Naish, is the go-to-guy if you would like to fly from the old Glatton Air Base the next time you are in England. He writes on behalf of the Flying Club, Conington...

"On behalf of the Flying club, I would like to extend an open invitation to any ex-aircrew who would like to fly with us from the airfield during your next visit. Our pilots would be delighted to do this at no cost to those who would like to fly once more from Glatton."

Contact Richard via email and he will make the necessary arrangements.

rnaish@rnaish.plus.com

Left: John Walker
Center: Tom Angott
Right: Bill Thompson
at 749th Domestic Site-Glatton



Left: Tom Angott
Center: Bill Thompson
Right: John Walker
at 749th Domestic Site-Glatton

The following is an excerpt of a newspaper article telling of 4 B-17 gunners who were reunited nearly 60 years after the War. Even those these men weren't part of our group, their stories are included here because their stories are your stories. They were with the 15th Army Air Corps out of Italy flying missions in the European theater.

*"We were all sticking our necks out for the other guy.
I imagine we had to develop a quick bond."*

Veterans reunite to relive memories of WWII

The Associated Press

Azel Penuel stood beside Woodrow Harrison's chair and leaned over the dining room table, holding his worn, leather-covered diary in one hand and, with the other hand, tracing the words Harrison had written in his own makeshift diary.

Both diaries were turned to the same date-- June 23, 1944.

Both men had written sparingly, mentioning that several 100-pound incendiary devices had failed to fall from the B-17s bomb bay as it flew over Romanian oil fields at Ploesti, but offering no other details.

But for the four men gathered around that dining room table -- Penuel, 81; Harrison, 80; Dale Grothusen, 83; and Clarence Grover, 78 -- those few words were all it took to bring back the memory of that June day and of the other days and nights the men spent together during their World War II tour.

Nearly 60 years later, the men still recall that day vividly. And they still feel that unexplainable but undeniable bond established during about six months in 1944. "They were an unusually compatible group," said Penuel.

Being together on those bombing runs -- eight-hour flights, on average -- also caused the men to develop a close bond. The temperature in the plane dipped well below zero, and the men wore sheepskin-lined leather jackets and jump suits equipped with small electric heaters.

After each bombing run, the men would line up to get their 2 ounces of whiskey from the medic.

"He had a list, and when you got yours, he'd cross your name off the list," Dale Grothusen said. "Nobody was to get more than one."

Harrison said most of the men lined up for their shot.

"If the runs didn't scare you," he said, "it was when you got in bed after that you felt a little queasy. You had to get over the shakes before you could get to sleep."

Most of the flights, the 10 man crew were together, but occasionally, the men filled in on other crews.

Sometimes, the planes went out several days in a row. Sometimes, several days passed without a run.

"It was better if you went every day," Frothusen said. "When you went two or three days without, that's when it got bad. You had more time to think about it -- that's when I got nervous."

the crew was based in Foggia, Italy, and there wasn't much to do," he said. The men spent most of their down time writing letters, playing poker and pulling practical jokes -- like putting .30 caliber ammunition in the burn barrel.

Harrison flew his first mission March 28, 1944. He flew his last mission June 23, 1944.

His makeshift diary mentions only that some incendiary devices got stuck in the bomb bay, and that he had to kick them out. But as he sat with his fellow crew members, Harrison recalled how he had to carry an oxygen tank in one hand as he climbed out onto the plane's 8-inch-wide catwalk at 20,000 feet, then clip the wires from the bombs with his free hand and kick the bombs out of the bomb bay.

"I could either carry the parachute or the oxygen," Harrison said. "I knew I needed the oxygen."

IMPORTANT NOTE TO 457TH MEMBERS:

IF THE NUMBERS "02" APPEAR AFTER YOUR NAME ON THE MAILING LABEL, THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER UNLESS YOU GET YOUR DUES PAID RIGHT AWAY.

I MARRIED A YANK IN THE USAF

BY BETTY E. CAPOZZI

I grew up on the village green in Yaxley. My parents were farmers and our home became a home away from home for many airmen of the 457th and other nearby bomb groups. I had two brothers and a sister. My oldest brother served with the British Eighth Army. I was a young girl and was lectured by my parents about behavior in the company of our Yank friends. Through the Yanks we learned a lot about the United States and the way of life in the States.

With war time demands one could sit for exams and if proficient could graduate from school and move on to service in the armed forces or a factory involved in war time production. I passed the exam and went to work at a factory in a small town near Peterborough engaged in making parachutes.

I learned to do ballroom dancing with the dream of becoming professional. I danced at all the local ballrooms in and around Peterborough and as far away as Blackpool. None of my Yank friends could ballroom dance and none had the desire to learn. They all knew "jitter buggin" and "jivin" so I learned to "jitter bug" and "jive" and along the way won several contests at the local ballrooms.

The bomber formations came over our farm and we, as all locals who lived near the bases, would count the number of planes going out, giving them a thumbs up, and repeat in the afternoon when they returned. We use to say, "Wish we could go and see where they dropped that load." This wish came true in 1957 when our family visited Germany and viewed some of the places bombed by the 8th Air Force. We also visited the concentration camp at Belsen and last but not least went to the Berlin Wall and wrote, 'We were here. The Wade family of Yaxley, 1957.'

In April 1944, I met a young medic named Paul Capozzi who was stationed at Glatton. In addition for caring for the sick and wounded at the hospital he rode the ambulance and would aid in removing the wounded from the bombers when they returned from a mission. He also went to many of the burials at Cambridge. He got permission for me to visit the hospital at Glatton where I could visit and talk to some of the sick and wounded. There I had the opportunity to contribute a little extra to the war effort and I would sit and talk to the men, some lonely and sick not only in body but also in heart.

Paul became the love of my life and we were together until he left with the group and returned to the States in June 1945. When he left he promised one day he'd return and we would marry. However, things did not work out immediately as we expected. He was shipped to Japan for four years.

I returned to ball room dancing, ultimately turning professional. In July 1949, I received a letter from Paul saying he was on his way back to England to marry. We married December 28, 1949 and were stationed in England for two years. We came back to the States in 1952 and afterwards I traveled almost twice around the world with Paul while he was in the service.

We retired from the service in 1969 and lived in England for seven years until the passing of my parents. We came back to the States in 1975. There were four children born to our marriage. Paul died in 1993.

As a little girl the B-17 "Sentimental Journey" was my envy of all the B-17's because she had a beautiful lady painted on the side and above all my name, Betty, was painted on it too. Through my eyes I never saw Grable, only my name. I prayed me and "Sentimental Journey" would make it together through the cruel war - and we did together.

NOTE: Betty Capozzi resides in Loma Linda, CA

...457th BOOKS...

THE "FAIT ACCOMPLI" TRILOGY

FAIT ACCOMPLI, a historical account of the 457th Bomb Group from 1 July 1943 until its disbandment in August 1945, the reactivated 457th Operations Group, a listing of the KIA's and MIA's and more. Over 400 pages. \$33.00 includes shipping. Hard cover only. ISBN 0-9648925-0-2 **Compiled by Homer Briggs and James L. Bass, Edited by John F. Welch**

FAIT ACCOMPLI II, a pictorial account of the 457th Bomb Group. Over 350 selected pictures tracing the Group from Camp Rapid to Glatton to Sioux Falls, including some then and now photographs. A total of 224 pages preserving the heritage of the Group for you and future generations. \$33.00 includes shipping. Hard cover only. ISBN 0-9648-925-1-0 **James L. Bass**

FAIT ACCOMPLI III, an anthology of accounts taken from remembrances of former members of the 457th Bomb Group plus added information of interest. This third and final edition is being printed as you read this and will be available in December. Watch for further details. **James L. Bass**

To order: Make check payable to JLB Publications.

Send to: JLB Publications - Box 500

Carthage, TN 37030

FLAK DODGER

BLACK PUFF POLLY

by Roland O. Byers, Lt. Colonel USAFR (Ret.)

The stories of 40 men, shot down during WWII, while flying as crew members in the B17-G, 8th Air Force, 457th BG. Most were POWed by Germans, others escaped with help from French and Belgian underground.

Now available at PawPaw Press - P.O. Box 9191

Moscow, ID 83843

RINGSIDE AT THE FIREWORKS

by Norman Erbe

This book is a memoir of a small town Iowa preacher's son, Norman Erbe. A gripping story of combat on 32 B-17 missions over Nazi Germany gives you a first hand view of the air war over the European Continent as seen and experienced by Norman Erbe. He piloted his B-17 bomber with the 457th Bomb Group of the 8th Air Corps during the D-Day invasion of June, 1944. Erbe was elected Iowa

Attorney General and then Governor of the State of Iowa after which he served seven years as a federal executive.

\$14.95 plus 5% tax and \$2.50 postage

To order: Make check or money order payable to Toreador Press

Send to: Toreador Press - P.O. Box 25218

West Des Moines, IA 50265

DEAD ENGINE KIDS

by John Welch

Available now at \$12.00 each plus \$2.50 shipping

RB-36 DAYS AT RAPID CITY

by John Welch

Available now at \$25.00 each plus \$2.50 shipping

You can order either of these books from:

John Welch

2933 Country Club Dr.

Rapid City, ND 57702-5218

NEW BOOK by KEN BLAKEBROUGH

Titled "A B-17 Co-pilot Remembers",
subtitled "An 8th Air Force Memoir",
is an autobiographical work in which I present my personal
experiences as a pilot during Hitler's War.

Beginning with the first days of my aircrew being assembled in
Nebraska to the conclusion of the attack on Berlin, I create a
profile of the eventful life of an airman. Included are details of
the camaraderie of the men, the beauty and companionship of
the women who brightened the dark days, and the sheer misery
of war.

The chronology recollects wartime experiences and continues
through to a current listing of the whereabouts of aircrew and
friends from this era with whom I have maintained contact.

This narrative has 90 pages,
26,500 words, 19 photo pages,
soft cover, size 8.5" x 11".

THE DEDICATION READS:

*"This story is dedicated to the
American Warriors
who served at Clatton.
2 Timothy 4:7"*

To order your copy of "A B-17 Co-Pilot Remembers"
contact Ken Blakebrough
28432 Borgona - Mission Viejo - CA - 92692
(949)770-5021 ardenken@juno.com

News Release

"After 57 Years,
Woman Uncovers Mystery of Brother's Death"

Amazing stories frequently stand the test of time and,
because they do, deserve to be shared with others. Such is
the true story of Lt. Hershel Wilson, a B-17 pilot who was
shot down in WWII, but whose full truth did not come to be
known and memorialized until the year 2001.

Loretta Hamilton-Geary was just fourteen years old
when the fated telegram from the War Department arrived at
her Oklahoma farm home. There were no details about his
death, no body, no funeral, no formality of grieving and no
way to say goodbye.

After wondering and searching and through a series of
seemingly inconceivable events, she brought the surviving
members of his flight crew and some of his fellow prisoners
of war together in reunion - including one from Australia
who had personally witnessed the killing of her brother.
These veterans came from three continents to celebrate and
remember their fellow soldier who was executed at the hands
of enemy captors. They met 'Lil Sis and Wilson's daughter,
who never had the opportunity to meet her father. His sister
and daughter completed the pilgrimage by visiting the fallen
hero's Belgium grave.

"This was truly coming full circle," says Hamilton-
Geary. "I urge people to never give up hope, for fortuitous
circumstances often have a way of revealing themselves."

Loretta says, "I wrote it to inspire others. I want
people to know that they, too, can keep their hopes alive to
honor the brave men and women who served our country.
Theirs is a story of courage and deserves to be told."

Coming Full Circle, by Loretta Hamilton-Geary, is
available in major bookstores or you can contact
Excelsior Cee Publishing, P.O. Box 5861, Norman. OK
73070, (405)329-3909, Email ecp@oecadvantage.net for
more information.

Loretta Hamilton-Geary is a new member of the 457th Bomb
Group Association and attended the England Reunion 2002.

ON DECK



As I have mentioned, and as is almost certainly the experience of many of the offspring of the veterans, I was aware of and had an interest in my father's (Les Peterson, R-O/G, 750th) participation in WWII from as early as I could remember. Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on how you look at it) when my kids were growing up, they only heard second hand stories about their grandfather in a war as distant to them as The Great War is to me. It just wasn't the same for them as it was for me.

Despite that, my daughter, Nicole, eventually developed an interest not only in my father's service, but my mother's (Mildred) as well, since she had enlisted in the WACs when my father joined up. My mother is very proud of the fact that on her granddaughter's office wall is a picture taken (and probably processed by Mildred...that was her photography job) of a C-47 at the airbase where she was stationed. It was a training command for airborne troops, so there were plenty of C-47s to be seen.

In any event, as is the way of life, Nicole grew up, went away to college, and embarked on her adult life with a first job in St. Louis. Digressing for a moment, this too, excited my mother since she and my father had spent some memorable time there in 1945 after his missions were completed and he was stationed at Scott Field for a time (second time; he was there for radio school in 1943) while she was at George Field across Illinois, near Vincennes.

Nicole met Jon, the man she would marry, in St. Louis and for this story, the paths taken so theirs could cross is of brief interest. She, raised in Chicago, schooled in southern Illinois, and living in St. Louis; he, born in South Carolina, raised in Florida, schooled at Clemson, and lived in various places including California and Atlanta, was on temporary assignment in St. Louis when they met. It's hard to imagine two more widely disparate life journeys.

During that exciting first few years together they learned the usual things about each other, as young folks do, including family history. It seems that Jon's mother's uncle, Doug Rice, had served in WWII as had Nicole's grandfather, Les. Nicole was well aware that it was the 457th with which Dad had served, so she was flabbergasted when on a visit to Uncle Doug she found out that he, too, had been in the 457th!

Just the other day, she sent me a clipping from the newspaper in Doug's home town, which chronicled his experience with the 457th, 751st Squadron (ball turret). It was a short one. He arrived at Glatton some time after D-Day and flew his first mission on 6 August, to Genshagen. I looked in my father's combat record and found that he had been on that mission, too; his 3rd. Doug's fate, however, was far different.

According to the group mission list in James Bass' Fait Accompli, one 457th ship (Lt. Frost's A/C) was lost on that mission; Uncle Doug's! He, of course survived, although four crew members didn't, and he spent most of the remainder of the war at Stalag Luft 4. I wouldn't think he had time to make too many acquaintances at Glatton.

Nicole signed Uncle Doug up in the 457th BG Association, and he's been getting the newsletters, but I can imagine he might not feel the same call for sharing of experiences as many of the rest. After all, he was only there for one mission! I'm told he went to the 8th AF reunion, so perhaps he's on the path to meeting some other veterans, possibly some other POWs and can join in the bonds of fellow warriors who survived that noble enterprise.

Imagine the odds of two young people meeting each other far away from home, who homes themselves were so widely separated and who had grand relatives who both went to war in the same outfit. Jon and Nicole are so suited for each other, it just has to be some grand design; call it kismet!

--ROD PETERSON

ALAN'S ANECDOTES

An elderly couple had dinner at another couple's house, and after eating, the wives left the table and went into the kitchen. The two elderly gentlemen were talking, and one said, "Last night we went out to a new restaurant, and it was really great. I would recommend it very highly."

The other man said, "What's the name of this restaurant?" The first man knits his brow in obvious concentration, and finally said to his friend, "Aahh, what is the name of that red flower you give to someone you love?"

His friend replies, "A carnation??"

"No, no, the other one," the man says.

"A poppy?"

"Naahhh," growls the man. "You know, the one that is red and has thorns."

His friend said, "Oh, you mean a rose."

"Yes, yes, that's it. Thank you!" the first man says. He then turns toward the kitchen and yells, "Rose, what's the name of that restaurant we went to last night?"

If FED EX and UPS were to merge, would they call it FED UP?

If lawyers are disbarred and clergymen defrocked, doesn't it follow that electricians can be delighted, musicians denoted, cowboys deranged, models deposed, tree surgeons debarked, and dry cleaners depressed?

The Cough...

The owner of a drug store walks in to find a guy leaning heavily against the wall.

The owner asks the clerk, "What's with that guy over there by the wall?"

And the clerk says, "Well, he came in here this morning to get something for his cough. I couldn't find the cough syrup, so I gave him a bottle of laxatives."

The owner says, "You idiot! You can't treat a cough with a bottle of laxatives!"

The clerk replies, "Of course you can! Look at him; he's afraid to cough!"

WWII 8TH AIR FORCE VETERAN AND HIS MOPED...

A hip young man goes out and buys the best, most expensive car on the market...a brand new Ferrari GTO, \$500,000. He takes it out for a spin and stops at a red light.

An old WWII Vet on a moped, pulls up next to him. The old man looks over at the sleek, shiny car and asks, "What kind of car ya' got there, sonny?"

The young man replies, "A Ferrari GTO. It cost half a million dollars!"

"That's a lot of money," says the vet. "Why does it cost so much?"

"Because this car can do up to 320 miles an hour!" states the young man proudly.

The moped driver asks if he might take a look inside.

"No problem," replies the owner. So the old man pokes his head in the window and looks around. then, sitting back on his moped, the old man says, "That's a pretty nice car, all right...but I'll stick with my moped!"

Just then the light changes, so the guy decides to show the old man just what his car can do. He floors it, and within 30 seconds, the speedometer reads 160 mph. Suddenly, he notices a dot in his rear view mirror. It seems to be getting closer! He slows down to see what it could be and suddenly WHHHOOOOSSSSHHH! Something whips by him going much faster! "What the heck could be going faster than my Ferrari?" the young man asks himself. He floors the accelerator and takes the Ferrari up to 250 mph. Then up ahead of him, he sees that it's the old man on the moped!

Amazed that the moped could pass his Ferrari, he gives it more gas and passes the moped at 275 mph. WHOOOOOOOSSH HHH! He's feeling pretty good until he looks in his mirror and sees the old man gaining on him AGAIN! Astounded by the speed of this moped, he floors the gas pedal and takes the Ferrari all the way to 320 mph. Not 10 seconds later, he sees the moped bearing down on him again! Suddenly, the moped plows into the back of his Ferrari, demolishing the rear end. The young man stops and jumps out. Unbelievably, the old man is still alive. He runs up to the mangled old man and says, "Oh my God! Is there anything I can do for you?"

The old Vet whispers.....,

"Unhook...my...suspenders...from...your...side-view...mirror!"

..PX....PX....PX....PX....PX....PX....PX....PX....PX....PX..

ITEMS		PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL AMT.
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ANY 5 or more pins or patches.....		\$4.50 ea	_____	_____
Return to Glatton Button..1998 Peterborough, England....		\$1.50 ea	_____	_____
NEW HATS...Royal Blue.....		\$12.00ea	_____	_____
PENCILS...imprinted with "457th BG".....		5 for \$1.00	_____	_____
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A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity;
an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.
-Sir winston Churchill

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