

THE 457TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION  
811 NORTHWEST "B" STREET  
BENTONVILLE, ARKANSAS 72712

5 March 1982

TO: All Former Members of the 457th Bomb Group, Glatton, England

FROM: The 457th Bomb Group Monument Restoration Committee

I am asking your help in financing the rebuilding of the 457th BG monument located in the old church yard in Conington, England - right adjacent to our old base.

In 1945 Lester Fried, a member of our S-2, conceived, designed and built a monument in the church yard.. It was dedicated on 30 May 1945 by Colonel Rognor, our Chaplin, Canon Wayne of Conington Church and Fried. (Les Fried is also a member of the current restoration committee.)

The original monument was some six feet tall with the sculptured head of a helmeted airman on top. It faced the runways as if awaiting the return of the planes and men. (Some 86 planes never returned along with some 807 flyers who were killed, missing, became POW's, interned or escaped and evaded.)

The column had a wreath with the Group Motto "Fait Accompli" on the front side. Sometime during the 1970's our current Association President, Dan Graham, visited England and added the inscription, "Lest We Forget -- In Perpetual Memory of Those Valiant American Airmen of the 457th Bomb Group (H) Who During World War II, Gave Their Lives That Freedom Might Prevail."

This monument, although being maintained by some dedicated English civilians, reached an alarming state of deterioration in recent years. In 1979, another effort was made to restore the crumbling monument. This well intentioned effort did not produce satisfactory results in that it did not produce a monument that we could be proud of or that was durable or maintenance free.

At our 1981 Fireball reunion in Colorado Springs, we again discussed our monument. Many attendees were not satisfied with the recent restoration results. It was decided that we should restore or rebuild this monument so that we would have a memorial befitting the sacrifices and dedicated efforts of all our people. (It was not just the flyers that won the air war. They would not have accomplished anything without the dedicated efforts of every person on the base. So this memorial is for all of us.) A committee of five volunteers was established to do the job. We also asked Bernard Bains, a UK citizen from Peterborough, a 457th historian and an attendee at the Colorado Springs reunion, to be our UK representative.

I think everyone wanted to preserve Les Fried's original concept. But all that was left of the original monument was the sculptured head, which had cracked, been cemented back together, painted and now placed on top of an unevenly laid column of painted bricks. In addition to preserving the Fried concept, we wanted a durable monument, something that would not require maintenance and something we could be proud of in an aesthetic sense.



After long discussions with Bernard while he was in the U.S., telephone discussions with committee members, lots of letters with committee members and Bernard, we selected one of four proposals submitted by two contractors. I am confident this will meet the criteria set forth above.

This monument will sit on paving slabs set in a concrete base. The column itself will be of Portland stone which is hard in texture and light greyish in color. It is used as a facing for many British government buildings and is also the stone used on the "wall of the dead" and in the chapel at the American Cemetery at Cambridge. The column has a 3-inch bevelled base slab and three cubic blocks of 18 inches each. A newly carved head, using Fried's original sculpture as a model will be mounted on top. Overall, it will be six feet tall.

Now we need help to pay for it. We have some money from the previous fund and we transferred the B-17 money to this fund. We also have many pledges from \$5.00 to \$200 each. But we need much more. By the time you receive this letter, I will have given Bernard the "go ahead" and Homer will have sent the first check to start the work. The contractor says he can finish in 60 days. So please respond today and help us complete this project. All individuals contributing \$50 or more will receive a 457th Bomb Group Insignia Badge as described in the most recent 457th Newsletter as well as in the 8th Air Force Historical Society News. This is a beautiful badge. Money made from the sale of this badge helps support the maintenance and operation of the Sally B, a B17 with our 457th triangle U marking that flies out of Duxford England. So we are really helping two worthwhile causes. Any money received over and above the amount needed to pay for the monument, the cost of printing and mailing this solicitation plus the cost of badges, will be transferred to the 457th Association general fund.

Please act now including those who have made pledges and make checks to the "457th BG Stone American Fund" and mail them to -

Homer Briggs, Secretary/Treasurer  
The 457th Bomb Group Association  
811 Northwest "B" Street  
Bentonville, Arkansas 72712

I have asked Homer to publish a financial report in the Newsletter on this project when it is complete.

Sincerely,

*Thomas A. Goff*

Thomas A. Goff, Committee Chairman  
Joseph Falcone  
Lester Fried  
Leslie R. Peterson  
Neil C. Schroeder