

457th Bomb Group Association



748th Squadron



749th Squadron



750th Squadron



751st Squadron

ESTABLISHED JULY 1971 – BENTONVILLE, AR

March 2010

VOLUME 40

ISSUE 72

***"WE...WHO BELIEVE IN FREEDOM AS DEEPLY AS WE DO,
WOULD RATHER DIE ON OUR FEET THAN LIVE ON OUR KNEES."***

Franklin D. Roosevelt

RETURN TO GLATTON

2010

**Peterborough, England
May 29 – Registration
June 1 – Closing Banquet
Flumancl@aol.com--(717)-432-1067**

457TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

PREZ SEZ...

By all accounts, the Colorado Springs Reunion was a big success in spite of the typical Colorado weather. Of course, the week after the reunion we had our usual September 70 degree temperatures again. Nancy and I would like to thank everyone who helped make Colorado Springs so successful. Debs Carter was wonderful in the PX along with Jane Pobgee, Trisha Mach, Lori Barnett, Erin Pobgee, and others; Chris and Carl Sechrist once again provided us with a whole room full of displays and designed the program for the banquet; Melinda and Cindy McCurry and their brother Eric and wife Joanna helped in so many different ways, most notably helping George Grau when he became sick enough to have to go to the hospital. Justina Sechrist sang a spine-tingling "America the Beautiful" a capella, and brother Cameron proudly presented the American flag with Chris Cronin carrying the British flag at the Banquet. Speaking of Chris Cronin, he accepted an invitation to be the newest British Historian. Bob Day's granddaughters were in charge of a very enjoyable lunch in Cripple Creek. I know we are forgetting to mention others who helped, but we appreciate all the help we had and couldn't have done it without you. **THANK YOU ONE AND ALL!**

We also very much thank our British friends who made the trip over the 'pond' to celebrate another reunion with us: George and Jane Pobgee, Richard and Erin Pobgee, Tim and Angie Newell, and Chris Cronin. We will have reunion pictures provided by Michelle Hanley in the next newsletter. Perhaps the highlight of the reunion would be the marriage proposal from John Parker to Nancy because "she doesn't have a husband and needs help". (She said no!) (We didn't ask what kind of help she needs.)

The next stateside reunion was very enthusiastically approved by the members in attendance and the Board of Directors to take place in Savannah in 2011. Lori Barnett, who hosted the last Savannah reunion, will once again take charge. Will Fluman Jr. told us about a B-17 donated to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum. It is being fully restored and will be on static display.

The new website is well under way with hours of time put in by the Fluman family, and Carl and Chris Sechrist. We all owe them a great deal for tackling the problems of the old website and seeing that we get up and running again with a new and improved website.

My project during my term as Association President is to update the Memorabilia collection. Much of our Memorabilia is in a disorganized mess. I will be working these next two years to update, organize and improve the appearance of our Memorabilia. If you have pictures you would like to see added to our books, please send a copy to me. It is helpful if you can attach names to faces.

It is a pleasure to be able serve the membership of the 457th Bomb Group Association as President for these next two years. ---Joe Toth



www.457thbombgroupassoc.org

ANNOUNCING
THE NEW WEBSITE
OF THE
457TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION.

This site is dedicated to the brave men of the 457th and their families for their service and eternal sacrifices made to our country and all humanity during World War II.

Please note that not all links on the site are up and running. It takes blood, sweat, tears and time to complete a project such as this one. Once done, however, this will be the premier site of any bomb group out there.

HELP WANTED

Dear Members of the 457th Bomb Group Association,

I'm sure everyone has noticed that newsletters are not being published on a regular basis as they once were.

I have to be perfectly honest and upfront with you. I have been doing the newsletters since 1999 and was helping Mickey Briggs with them before that. Quite frankly, I'm a bit burned out.

With the job I have now, I am not usually home until after 6:30 in the evening. That is a long day for me and doesn't leave much time for anything else.

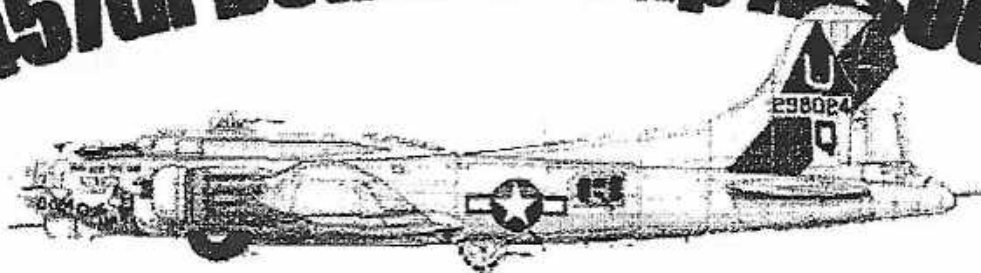
I know that the newsletter is a very important part of our Association and without it, communication stops. Other Associations have folded without a newsletter to kind of keep it all together.

That being said, I need help. I would ideally like for someone else to step up and take over. Maybe it's time for a new format anyway. I could continue to help but need someone else to be in charge.

So, how about it...anyone willing to take over the Newsletter Editor's job? In a perfect world, we should have 4 newsletters a year. Cindy and Melinda McCurry are going to be doing the mailing of the newsletter, but I need someone to take over my part as Editor.

Please let me know if you are willing and able.

The 457th Bomb Group Association



March 2010

WHO: All members of the Association

WHAT: Address update required

WHEN: NOW

WHERE: Nancy Toth
453 Sunset Lane
Pueblo, CO 81005

WHY: Effective May 1, 2009, the U.S. Postal Service tightened up their regulations for bulk mailing. If we continue to mail newsletters to incorrect addresses, we can be fined and/or have our mail permit withdrawn.

In an effort to keep that from happening, we are requiring that the attached page be completed and mailed back to Nancy by May 1, 2010. If we do not receive the information from you, your name will be dropped from the mailing list.

We do NOT want to drop anyone from the mailing list who wants to continue receiving the newsletter, but saving printing costs and mailing costs has become a priority for the Association.

HOW: Complete the back of this page and mail it by the deadline.

**IF, AT A FUTURE DATE, YOUR INFORMATION CHANGES,
PLEASE NOTIFY NANCY RIGHT AWAY TO AVOID BEING
DROPPED FROM THE MAILING LIST.**

Sincerely,

Your 457th Bomb Group Association Board of Directors

6
NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____ - _____ - _____

EMAIL _____

Mark which of the following applies to you:

_____ I am a Fireballer in _____ Squadron (748th, 749th, 750th, or 751st)

Job during WWII service: _____

_____ I am Related to a Fireballer: Name _____

Deceased _____ or Living _____

Relationship _____

Squadron _____

_____ I am interested in Aviation History

WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE THE NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL? YES NO

If YES, make sure we have a correct email address for you. If you change your email, be sure to notify Nancy at: nancytoth@comcast.net

If you are a widow of a 457th man, you are entitled to continue receiving the newsletter. Please let me know if you no longer want to receive the newsletter.

MAIL COMPLETED FORM TO: Nancy Toth
453 Sunset Lane
Pueblo, CO 81005

MEMORIAL SERVICE – COLORADO SPRINGS 2009

The following 457th members have passed away since the 2007 Reunion and were honored at the Memorial Service at the 2009 Reunion

KENNETH L. ANDERSON

SIDNEY A. BACON

DONALD D. BECK

JOHN BOUZOUDES

ANDREW BROWN, JR.

OLIVER G. BURGESS, JR

LLOYD R. BURKE

ANTHONY H. COLIN

MICHAEL J. DENITTI

SAMUEL E. DIKE

CHAMPE DOBLER

JACK GASSMAN

JOSEPH W. "JIGGS" HAMILTON

BENNIE W. JOHNSON

MELVIN J. KEIFFER

DONALD R. LALLKY

WILLIAM "BILL" MACH

PERCY MACK

LARRY MCDONNELL

HERB PARIS

BRYAN "PETE" PETERSON

WILLARD "HAP" REESE

DANIEL D. RICE

RUSSELL SELWYN

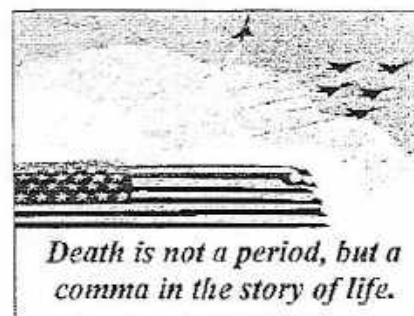
JERRY SILVERMAN

HARMON A. SMITH

HARLAN J. VAN DIELEN

CLINTON E. WELLS

R. C. ZEAGLER



Flak Fills the Sky

German antiaircraft guns dealt a blow to Allied planes, men, and morale

German air defense

After World War I Germany built up its air defenses, creating a network of artillery, radar, smoke machines, and fighter bases. The main offensive weapon of German ground-based air defense was the 88, a powerful medium-caliber gun. The first 88s could shoot a 21-pound high-explosive antiaircraft shell at a muzzle velocity of 2,630 feet per second—at a daunting range of 25,000 feet. It quickly developed a reputation as a formidable opponent of Allied aircraft.

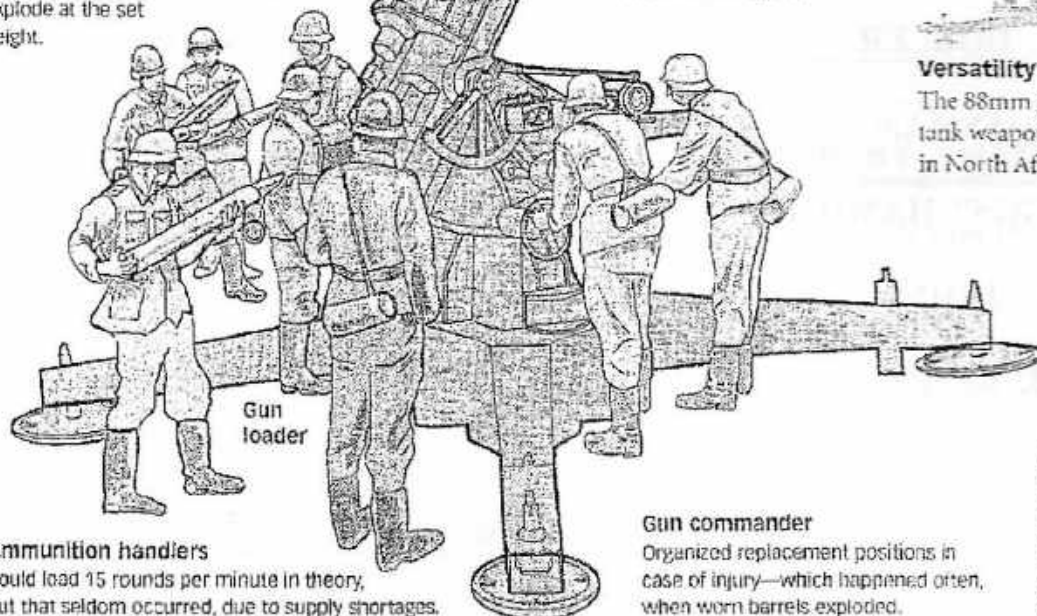
The 88mm Flak 37 Crew

Crews in defensive positions were organized into batteries, and received height and direction data from central fire directors.

Fuse setter, round handler
Dipped the ends of the rounds into the fuse setter, which primed them to explode at the set height.

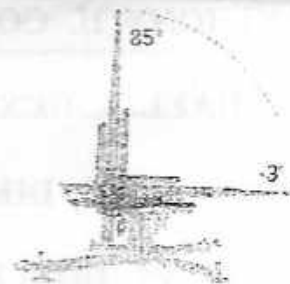
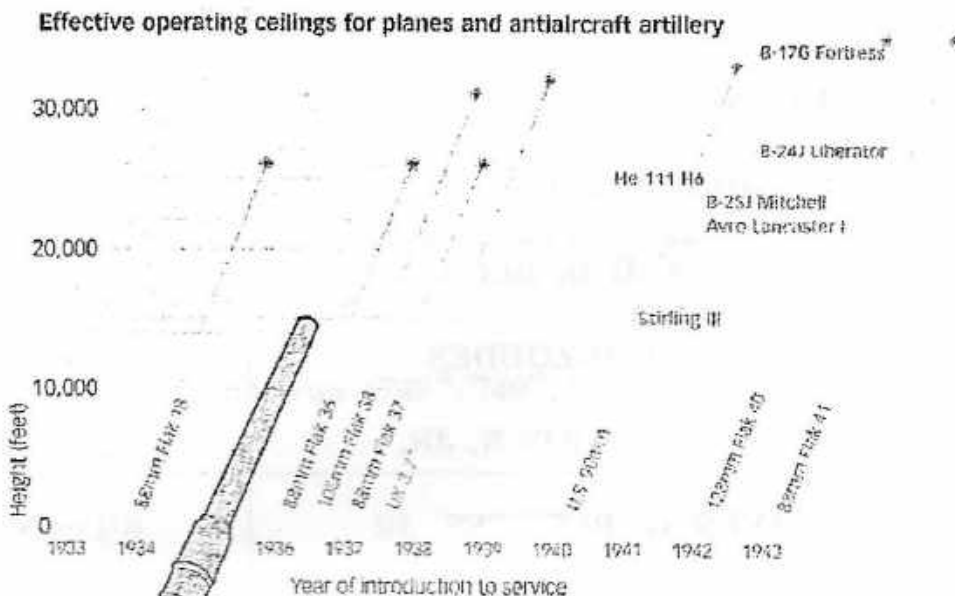
Fuse setter, operator
Changed inputs to match data on the heights of enemy planes.

Gun layers
Manually matched the settings on the elevation and traversing dials according to data from the radar command post.



Ammunition handlers
Could load 15 rounds per minute in theory, but that seldom occurred, due to supply shortages.

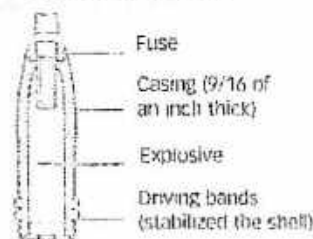
Gun commander
Organized replacement positions in case of injury—which happened often, when worn barrels exploded.



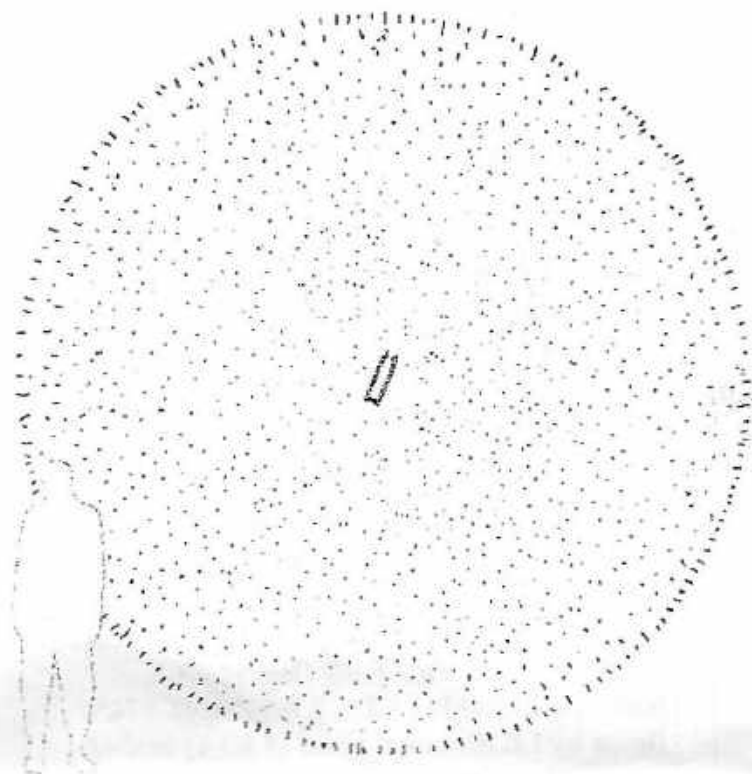
Versatility

The 88mm gun was also a lethal anti-tank weapon: Rommel's troops used it in North Africa and Normandy.

German high-explosive antiaircraft shell



The effects of flak



Shrapnel

In 1944, U.S. Army scientists blew up a standard German anti-aircraft round in a specially constructed wooden room. They picked the pieces out of the wood to determine how much shrapnel was in each shell (approximated above).

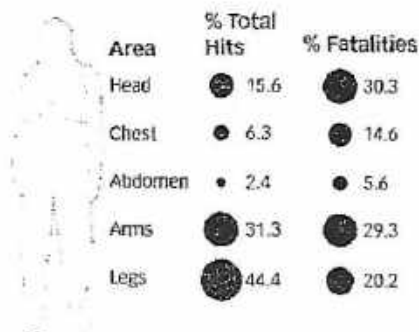
Positions hit by flak

Out of 963 total flak casualties of the U.S. Eighth Air Force from June to August 1944:



1. Pilot 7.7%
2. Copilot 6.6%
3. Navigator 13.2%
4. Bombardier 15.8%
5. Radio operator 8.7%
6. Waist gunner 21.6%
7. Ball turret gunner 5.5%
8. Top turret gunner 8.3%
9. Rear turret gunner 12.6%

The bombardier, at the front of the plane, was an easy target, while waist gunners exposed much of their bodies to flak.



Percentage of lethal flak hits

Half of the Eighth Air Force's casualties from June to August 1944 were due to flak strikes. The other casualties fell to fighter guns and cannon fire. U.S. Army doctors analyzed where air crews were most vulnerable.

New equipment

Helmets were adapted from the standard M1 helmet. Vests and aprons were made from plates of manganese steel, a material that wouldn't shatter on impact. This body armor reduced casualties by 58 percent from 1943 to 1944.

69,682 Eighth Air Force bomber sorties



The cost of flak

The U.S. Army Air Forces lost 18,418 aircraft in combat over Europe—7,821 of them to flak. This table shows Eighth Air Force casualties from April to July 1944—at a point when the 88 was the primary means of German air defense.

*Continuation of an article taken from a booklet entitled **AIRFIELD FOCUS** Glatton/Conington by John N. Smith. This is a condensed history of Glatton Airfield and the 457th Bomb Group Association. The first 4 installments were in 3 previous newsletters.*

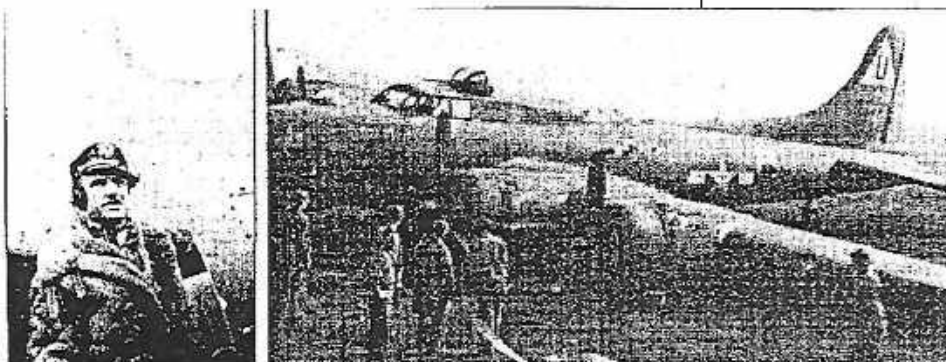
Please note that the article appears below exactly as it appeared in the booklet.

Three days later, on the 27th (May) the 457th led the 8th to Ludwigshaven in Germany to attack the marshalling yards. 36 aircraft took off from Glatton, led by Lt. Col. Luper in the lead PFF B-17 with a total of 344 1st Bomb Division aircraft behind. All 36 457th BG machines bombed the primary target with fair results despite encountering accurate flak, 19 of the Group's B-17s receiving battle-damage. The formation was also attacked by considerable waves of fighters, mainly 109s. The Group lost three aircraft: 42-38055 flown by Lt. Roger W. Dinkman fell foul of a fighter, crashing in the Netherlands. Five of the crew evaded capture, the other five becoming POWs. 42-97460, *De Layed Lady*, piloted by 2Lt. William E. Dee, crashed at Saarlautern, Germany with 1 KIA and 9 POW. 42-31594 *Sweat'er Out*, piloted by 2Lt. Artie J. Whitlow, crashed with 2 evading capture, 2 KIA and 6 POW.

Col. Luper's own B-17, *Rene III*, landed on one wheel due to flak damage, the crew walking away uninjured and the aircraft was repaired to fly again.

On the Group's 53rd mission on 28 May, led by Maj. Hozier, the 457th took off at 1030 hrs heading for German synthetic oil targets again. The 8th Air Force put up 1,341 aircraft that day, the Group going to Dessau and the Junkers aero engine and aircraft factories. They were heavily attacked by fighters and suffered losses. The Group made two runs over the target, but thick haze and smoke obscured it, so Major Hozier decided to attack the secondary, an aircraft factory at Leipzig. Three aircraft were lost: 42-97067 *Black Puff Polly* flown by Lt. Rudolph I. Stohl (1 KIA, 9 POW), 42-97452 flown by Lt. Emanuel Hauf (9 KIA) and 42-31520 piloted by Lt. Clyde B Knipfer (all POW). The Group arrived back overhead Glatton at 1750 hrs.

Group Record: *Two hours later Lt. Conners, who had been given up as lost came limping in with only one engine functioning properly, two burnt out in the target area and three cylinders on a third punctured by enemy fire. He had dropped out of formation, thrown everything movable out of his plane on German towns below and flew all the way alone at 12,000 ft with an airspeed between 115 and 135 mph.*



Col. Luper in combat gear and the results of the one-wheel-down landing on 24 May 1944.

Since becoming operational in the UK, the 457th had completed over 50 missions in a little over three months, with some combat crews completing their tour and returning to the USA in record time, and the pace was hotting up.

2 June, Mission 57 as part of the build-up to D-Day to attack gun control positions in Northern France. 18 aircraft took off to hit 155mm field guns at Hardelot, on the coast between Boulogne and Le Tourquet. It had been a short mission; take-off started at 1015 hrs and the Group returned overhead at 1420 – there were no losses. On return, two B-17s buzzed the field, both crews celebrating 25 missions. For the first time all crews were debriefed at their parking areas.



Mission 59, two days later; target rail communications 8 miles south of Paris. 36 aircraft departed from Glatton at 1950 hrs. The results were good, but due to heavy cloud the formation was forced to return to base at low level.

Official Record: *'...the Thames Estuary was crossed under very poor visibility conditions and hundreds of invasion craft were observed.'*

Glatton was socked in with bad weather, so the Group landed away, returning next morning.

Invasion Day - 6 June 1944, the 457th was targeting coastal defensive positions on the

Cherbourg peninsula, but with unknown results for cloud obscured the targets. Official records say *'...this was the 60th Mission for our Group. The feeling of all personnel is impossible to record.'*

Life at Glatton Camp was improved when on 11 June bus transportation was laid on to provide nightly trips into Peterborough for all personnel on the base. Two civilian 50-seat buses returned back to the Camp at 2230 hrs from the Bishops Road Bus Station.

The next day saw more reasons to celebrate for Jim Luper was promoted to full Colonel and quite a celebration was in order at the Aero Club.

14 June – Maximum Effort. The Group put up 60 aircraft to attack the airfields at Le Bourget and Melun. There were no enemy fighters and flak was regarded as only *'...light to moderate'* but it was very accurate and the Group lost six aircraft: 42-102464 flown by 2Lt Scharles L. Blackwell with four evading capture and five POW; 42-31568, pilot 2Lt William F. Rogers with seven evading capture and two POW; 42-97062, pilot 2Lt Malcolm E. Johnson with six KIA and four POW; 42-97579 *Local Mission*, flown by 2Lt Roy W. Allen with nine evading capture and one KIA; 42-31618, pilot 2Lt James Lapaze with five KIA and four rescued after coming down in the English Channel.

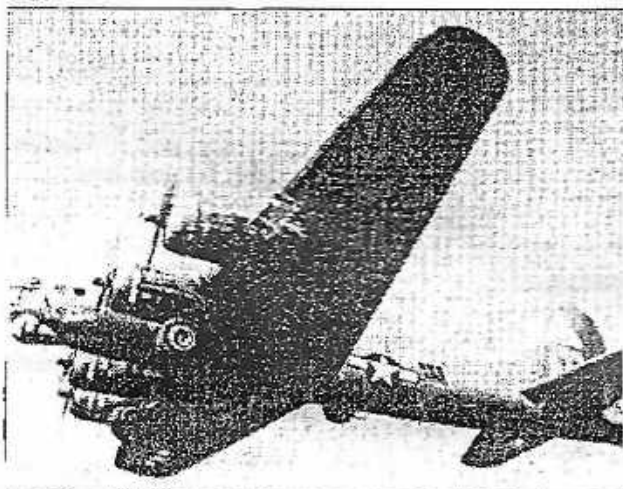
A further B-17 (identity unknown) caught fire and with the cockpit filling with smoke the pilot gave the order to bail out. Thinking that the rest of the crew had departed safely, he proceeded to bail out himself. However, the other crew members managed to control the fire and Capt. Syptak brought the aircraft back to base with no further 'loss' of personnel!

20 June and the 71st mission was an early departure (0446 hrs) to bomb Hamburg.

12
The Group flew as far north as Louth in Lincolnshire to assemble before setting off across the North Sea. Results of bombing the oil refineries was regarded as 'good', with one aircraft 42-31615 *Snafusk Shamrock* flown by Lt. William F Bomer lost with three KIA, seven POW. 18 aircraft were to suffer battle-damage due to flak and Fw 190 attacks.

The same day the Group sent 12 aircraft to attack Watten but due to 10/10th cloud over the target Poplingo airfield was hit instead.

42-31615 Snafusk Shamrock lost on Mission 71.



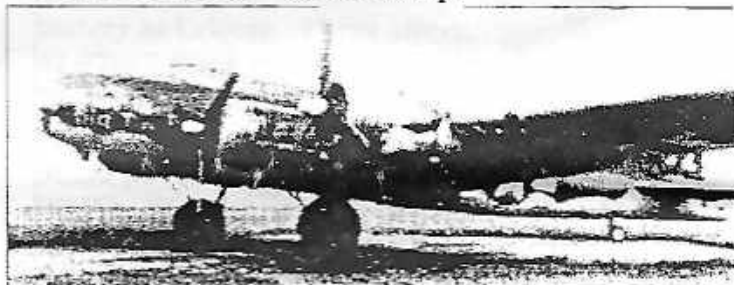
Mission 73 to Berlin the next day saw 42-107015 was badly damaged and landed in Sweden where the crew of nine were interned. 42-36156 crashed in Germany with five KIA, four POW.

Squadron, Group and Wing assemblies had always been a problem due to poor weather. A typical example was mission 79, the raid on Leipzig on 29 June. Take-off commenced at 0455, with 7/10th cloud at various levels and dense contrails caused five other Wings to abandon the mission. The 457th had considerable trouble in assembling their own formation so the squadrons of the Group became split up on their way to the target. Of the 21 aircraft Lt. Albert Gumulauskas' 43-37562 was hit by flak and crashed, the crew becoming POWs. The Group landed at

Glatton at 1345 hrs with 15 B-17s flak damaged.

41-2578, a B-17E universally known as the 'Grand Old Lady of the 8th' for she had been around since the 8th Air Force was formed, serving with numerous units, arriving in the UK at Polebrook in June 1942, taking part in the very first 8th Air Force raid. Eventually she was declared 'war weary' and assigned as a 'hack' with the 482nd BG at Alconbury. '578 arrived at Glatton for use as a target tower and by late 1944 was painted up in red, white and blue stripes for better identification. By 1945 the aircraft moved again, this time to the 20th Fighter Group at nearby Kings Cliffe where it was renamed *Big Tin Bird*. It eventually finished up on the Burtonwood scrapheap.

41-2578 Big Tin Bird, one of only two B-17E's Flown by the 457th Bomb Group.



For the first three days of July the Group was on stand-down due to bad weather. The time was not wasted however, for on 1 July the Red Cross organised a Garden Fete at nearby Conington Castle. The event was opened by Col. Luber. On 3 July the Stations 'Fireballs' dance band, under the direction of Sgt. Phil Falappino, performed away from the base; so popular were they, they had been asked to perform an evening engagement at St. Ives. Next day it was announced that all 457th personnel were now entitled to wear the Bronze Star on the ETO ribbon.

To be continued next issue.

Due to increasing attacks on London and the Home Counties by V-1 Flying-bombs, between June 29 and July 5, the 81st mission saw the 457th making attacks on the French mainland, bombing both the launch and supply sites. Take-off was at 0636 hrs and the last aircraft had returned to base by 11.20 hrs. Then it was reloaded and re-armed before the second mission of the day. Take off was at 1700 hrs again to the V-1 sites, this time five miles east of St. Omer. All were back at base by 2126 hrs.

Mission 83 was back to the Leipzig-Taucha aero-engine factory in an attempt to complete what was started on 29 June. The Group was still using one B-17G model in combat, but this day 42-30731 being flown by Lt. Jack B. Owen suffered fuel transfer problems from its Tokyo tanks, and despite jettisoning the bomb load, it was forced to ditch in the Channel with the loss of four crew. This time the raid was declared successful.

Disaster struck on 11 July during assembly on mission 86, target Munich. En-route to Felixstowe, a 748 BS B-17 flown by Lt. Gazzele had its left wing tip catch fire and blow off. Soon the rest of the wing was ablaze. The aircraft did a loop, then quickly lost height, disappearing into the clouds. As the crew were bailing out, the aircraft exploded, blowing the pilot clean out of his aircraft. The wreckage crashed near Watton. Sadly, three crew were killed. Results of the raid were 'good' with no further losses occurring to the group.

Mission 87 was back to Munich again and, as the weather was poor, this was to be a PFF attack with 36 aircraft departing into solid overcast. Formation join-up was not achieved until Felixstowe. Approaching the target 42-35122 *My Buddy* of the 748th BS, being flown by Lt. Gerald L. Kerr, was seen to be falling out of the formation with one engine smoking, presumably hit by flak. It was not seen again, but later was confirmed to have flown into a mountainside in Switzerland. Also heading for Switzerland, but with a happier outcome, was 44-6111 *Hell's Belle* being flown by Lt. Ed Kozel. The aircraft had been hit during the bomb run and lost a propeller. All the crew were interned.

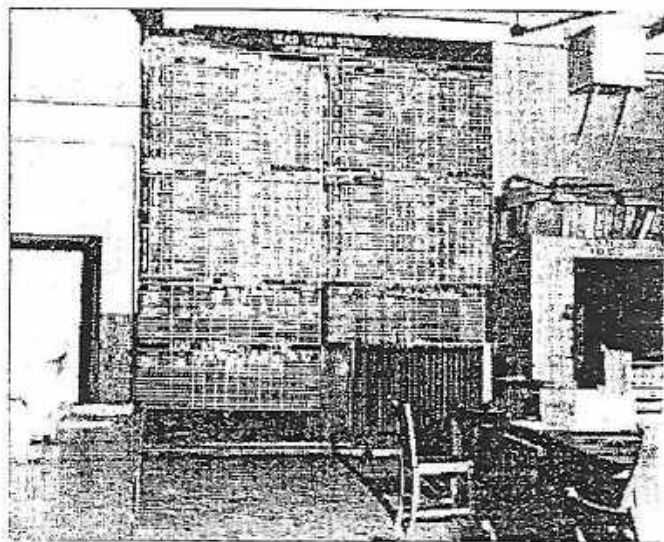
Following intelligence reports that the Me 163 rocket fighter had become operational, the 457th headed for Peenemunde for mission 90 during the early hours 18 July, for this experimental station was thought to be a centre of production for hydrogen peroxide, this tiny fighter's fuel. Bombing was rather widespread despite light flak. The return journey was over the Fw 190 plant at Anklam, so the opportunity to take photographs for future missions was taken!

Crew briefing. The board behind shows the 751st BS radio call signs.



Picture at left:
Inside the windowless Operations building, showing the 457th Lead Team Status board. This building still exists to this day; albeit as a pile of re-enforced steel enmeshed pile of concrete rubble!

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE.



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MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

New ☐

Renewal ☐

Address Change ☐

Fireballer? ☐

-or-

Relative of a Fireballer? ☐

Other? ☐

If a relative, name and relationship of the Veteran to you _____

Name _____ Nickname _____ Spouse _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip + 4 _____ + _____ *

* (Must have the zip +4)

Phone _____ Email _____

Birthdate _____ Squadron # _____ Rank _____

Dates Assigned _____ Duties _____

Plane Name and # _____ Pilot's Name _____

POW?/Evadee? _____ Date of capture/escape/release: _____

Retired Military? _____ Rank _____ Comments: _____

NOTE CHANGE IN TREASURER BELOW. DO NOT MAIL TO JOHN PEARSON.

***** DUES INFORMATION

Annual Dues: \$25 for 2 years

-or-

<u>Life Dues:</u>	Under 60 years of age:	\$110.00
	61-65 years of age:	\$90.00
	66-70 years of age:	\$75.00
	71+ years of age:	\$60.00

Make checks payable to: 457th BG Assoc.

Mail this form and check to: Lori Barnett, Treasurer
457th Bomb Group Association
304 Old West Point Rd
Starkville, MS 39759

THE 457TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

2007-2009 OFFICERS & APPOINTMENTS

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<u>FAST WEBMASTER</u>	<u>WILLARD REESE</u> (dec.)	
<u>PAST SEC/TREAS/NL ED</u>	<u>MICKY BRIGGS</u> Tel: (479) 273-3908	811 NW B St – Bentonville, AR 72712

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Tel: 44 1733 202183 (same number for FAX) Email: pobgee@tesco.net

JOHN WALKER

29 Chancery Lane – Eye, Peterborough PE6 7FY ENGLAND
Tel: 44 1733 222994

TIM NEWELL

Virginia Cottage Church Lane Conington Peterborough PE7 3QA
Tel: 44 1487 830450 Email: tim.newell@ymail.com ENGLAND

RICHARD POBGEE

Flat 2 4 Church Street Whittlesey Cambridgeshire PE7 1DB ENGLAND
Tel: 44 1733 701872

CHRIS CRONIN

85 Runley Rd Luton Bedfordshire LU1 1TX ENGLAND

PAST PRESIDENTS

1973-75 – William Wilborn
1976 – Howard Larsen (dec)
1977-79 – Bill Siler
1980-81 – Edward Reppa (dec)
1982-83 – Daniel Graham (dec)
1984 – William Good (dec)

1985 – Dave Summerville (dec)
1986-87 – Clayton Bejot
1988-89 – Donald Sellon
1990-91 – John Welch
1992-93 – Roland Byers (dec)
1993-97 – Billy Hightower (dec)

1997-99 – Lee Zimmerman
1999-01 – Craig Harris (dec)
2001-03 – Will Fluman
2003-05 – Don Nielsen
2005-07 – James Bass
2007-09 – George Grau

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457th Bomb Group Association
453 Sunset Lane
Pueblo, CO 81005-1140

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Sheila Ann Holtzen.....09
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WINSTON CHURCHILL (1874-1965)

British Prime Minister. He began his career as a correspondent in the Boer War, where he was captured by Louis Botha, who later became the prime minister of the Union of South Africa. He held nearly every post in the British government at one time or another. He was:



Churchill

Undersecretary to the Colonies	1906
Privy Councillor	1907
President of the Board of Trade	1908-10
Home Secretary	1910-1911
First Lord of the Admiralty	1911
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	1915
Minister of Munitions	1917
Secretary of State for War and Air	1919
Undersecretary of the Colonies	1921
Chancellor of the Exchequer	1924-29
First Lord of the Admiralty	1939
Chairman of Armed Services Cmtee.	1940
Prime Minister	1940-45
Minister of Defense	1940
First Lord of the Treasury	1940
Prime Minister	1951-55