

THE FIREBALL

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VETERANS DAY



HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

A Veterans Day Message

In 1921, an unknown World War I American soldier was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. This site, on a hillside overlooking the Potomac River and the city of Washington, D.C., became the focal point of reverence for America's veterans.

Similar ceremonies occurred earlier in England and France, where an unknown soldier was buried in each nation's highest place of honor (in England, Westminster Abbey; in France, the Arc de Triomphe). These memorial gestures all took place on November 11, giving universal recognition to the celebrated end of fighting in World War I at 11 a.m., November 11, 1918 (the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month). The day became known as "Armistice Day."

The first celebration using the term Veterans Day occurred in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1947. Raymond Weeks, a World War II veteran, organized "National Veterans Day," which included a parade and other festivities, to honor all veterans. The event was held on November 11, still designated as Armistice Day. In 1954 a bill was passed and signed by President Eisenhower changing November 11th from Armistice Day to Veterans Day.

My family's history of service dates back to WWI. My father, Pvt Stevie B. Parker deployed to France in 1918 with the 142nd Field Artillery Regiment, Arkansas NG deployed to France. The unit was certified for combat on November the 8th, 1918 and before they were moved to front lines the Armistice was signed on November the 11th, 1918.

Pvt Parker became LT Parker in the inter-war years serving as an Army Chaplain in the Civilian Conservation Corps camps located in the West and



SGT John B. Parker, Infantry and Chaplain MAJ Stevie B. Parker, post chaplain at Fort Riley, circa 1942

Southwest parts of the nation. Chaplain (MAJ) Parker and his four sons all served during WWII, CPT James Parker, Army
(continued on next page)

Glatton, England Mini-Reunion 2022



INVITATION

May 28-30, 2022 (proposed)

Tim & Angela Newall
Our 457th BG English Historians
Invite you to attend our mini-reunion
in Glatton, England
RSVP by Dec. 31, 2021

We are prepared to host a 2022
Reunion in May on condition that
we have definite numbers no later
than Dec. 31, 2021.
(Primary issue is related to
transportation)

Please send your email to:
457thbgnewall@johno.com
Subject: Glatton 2022

(Continued from front page)

Transportation Corps, LT John B. Parker, 457th BG, LT George E. Parker, 457th BG, and Cadet Raymond L. Parker, Army Air Cadets. Post WWII my brothers, nephews, and my son continued to serve during peacetime and wartime.

The point I am trying to make with this short family history intertwined with the story of Veterans Day is that it is not about when or where you served, whether in Peace or War, in the states or in combat, it is about your service and the fact that you served.

Veterans Days is a day where we honor all those select few men and women who make up the 7% of the population, who stood up, raised their right hands, served in this great nations Armed Forces without hesitation and knowing what the future might bring. To all of these great men and women who volunteered to stand-up and keep our nation safe and strong we salute you on this Veterans Day!!

By George E. Parker, 1LT, 748th Squadron, 457th Bombardment Group (H)



1Lt. George E. Parker
2019 New Orleans Reunion

Nov. 1944, In Glatton, England

November 11, 1944 was a Saturday, and there were no Special Orders issued that day in Glatton, per the Daily Bulletin. The mission previous to Nov 11th was on the 9th, (mission #147), and was to Metz, France, with no losses reported. On Nov 8th, however, there was a mission to Merseburg, Germany, with no losses to enemy action, but there was thick haze over the Channel, and the "Arf 'N' Arf" was in a collision, and all crew members were lost. The "Arf 'N' Arf" was easily recognizable as it was a combination of the front half being a salvaged older olive drab plane, with the back half of a newer all-aluminum plane.

"How the 457thBG Memorial Site Came to Be".

By Will Fluman Jr.
Son of Will Fluman, Pilot
750 Squadron

In the Spring of 2002 my Dad, my sister Candy and I returned to Peterborough for another Reunion at Glatton.

A few weeks earlier my mother Phyllis had suddenly passed away and Dad was reluctant to go but the 3 of us pressed on to attend the Reunion.

We had about 35 folks attend that year and spirits were high.

On our second day we all drove out to the old church to visit the cemetery where the "Stone Aiman" statue lives.

As usual we stopped at the corner of Conington Lane and the Old North Rd to admire the old water tower.

Dad's hut where he lived during his time at Glatton was practically under the tower in 1944-45

He turned around towards the group and said "Phyllis always said we should put a monument here". The men nodded in agreement as they had talked about it since the late 70's, but no one knew where to start.... except our friend Raymond Pobgee. Ray was the 2-time Mayor of Peterborough and he cared deeply for the folks of the 457.

I asked Ray if we could acquire the land... He smiled and said.... "maybe" (with a smile).

Within 3 months Ray had either, prodded, cajoled, pressured or bribed the folks who owned or oversaw the plot. He then coerced or convinced the local authorities and the county officials that this was an important project and then.... we were on our merry way to a Monument Site. Our goal was a dedication in 2004.

Dad and I got to work designing what the Monument would look like, the dimensions of the site, flag poles, benches, sidewalks, Chain fences, and hedge for the back.

Fundraising became a priority as no one really knew what the cost would be.

Our initial goal was \$25,000 and seemed perfect until we realized the stone alone would cost 20,000. But there was no turning back.... when it hit 50,000 a few months later Dad said he thought that was the limit.

But I said "We will get the money, just make it bigger". So we did. The final cost came in at \$64,000 and change.



457thBG Memorial



Mr. Will Fluman, Sr. & Will Fluman, Jr.

I strung the chain link fence on Friday afternoon the day before the Dedication Ceremony on Saturday. (the contractor was running late)

The following day nearly 400 local folks showed up for the unveiling and dedication speeches delivered by Ray Pobgee, Dad, and others. There was a flyover of the B-17 Sally B and 3 vintage RAF fighters... and an Emissary from the Queen and other Dignitaries made lofty speeches it was really special.

Everyone who attended that day felt that something really special had come to be.

The best part of the day was an invitation to lunch at Tim and Angie Newell's home just down Conington Lane.

It was a wonderful day in the backyard for everyone... and they of course invited the whole Village

Prior to the Dedication not any of us actually knew Tim and Angie but they had been watching the building of the Monument Site for many months and surprised everyone with a wonderful luncheon.... and many more in the years to come.

In 2006 we dedicated the "Watertower Monument" which was a tribute to the old tower that still stood over our site. It was my idea to add a second Monument to memorialize the Tower as it was really the only thing left standing from the old field. And it was important that future generations understand why it was there. Tim Newell oversaw the completion of that project and actually set the 800lb stone practically by himself complete with a row of flowers around it

We had a little speech that Day in the rain. I was reluctant to speak but Dad insisted it was my turn ...

As the years have gone by I often think of that day and I think of the 457 bg battle motto: It is "Fail Accompli"

It is on the 457 patch on their jackets when they went on every mission...

I often heard the Men refer to it as "Mission Accomplished", but Dad (who had studied Latin in high school) said it really meant "it is finished".

I often look back on that sunny day in May 2004 and I think "Fail Accompli"

Love to you all ... Will & Adele
(Photos courtesy of Will Fluman, Jr.)



Water Tower Monument Dedication

On This Day

(Nov 11, 1944)

Veterans Day / Armistice Day

Unlike Memorial Day, Veterans Day pays tribute to all American veterans—living or dead—but especially gives thanks to living veterans who served their country honorably during war or peacetime.

On the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month, in 1918, a temporary peace, or armistice, was signed, and the fighting of World War I came to an end. In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed that November 11th would be Armistice Day in the United States. Then, in 1938, Armistice Day became to be known as a national federal holiday. A day to be in honor of the veterans of World War I. Congress changed "Armistice" day to "Veterans" day in 1954. This action would be to honor all veterans of all wars, to include World War II, and the Korean War. Veterans Day was celebrated on the fourth Monday of November in 1968, but later changed in 1978, by President Gerald Ford, back to November 11th. So, in 2021, we celebrate and honor all American veterans on Thursday, November 11th.

THANK YOU, to all our veterans, for your sacrifice and service.



Gunner Hangs by Toes From Ball Turret

A USAAF BOMBER STATION, England
- Aug. 29

Hanging by his feet from the ball turret of a Fortress, thousands of feet in the air, gave S/Sgt. Aubrey R. Bartholomew an upside down view of Nazi fighters pressing home an attack during the USAAF's England-North Africa shuttle raid.

Bartholomew tumbled from his turret when the door came off on the outward flight near Regensburg. Luckily, his toes hooked the range pedal of one of his guns. He hung there, without a parachute, and with enemy fighters attacking his formation, until he lifted himself "up by the toes." When Bartholomew, a Canadian-born gunner on the Raunchy Wolf, arrived back in Britain, he received word his four-year quest for U. S. Citizenship had been approved.

(Submitted from online newspaper clipping.)

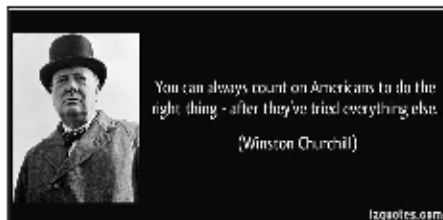
Mission 217

For as long as I can remember I have known very little about my father's military service, but as is typical of many veterans he did not want to talk about his wartime experiences. Eventually I decided to write a biographical document about his military service.

My research began with the 457th Bomb Group Association's website. While reading the 'Mission Reports' one mission stood out, Mission 217 on March 24th, 1945. The mission narrative mentioned that one aircraft (43-38854) was hit by flak which took off 9 feet of the right wing. I do not know why that particular mission stood out, but when I found out why, I was dumbfounded. Several years ago my father and I were talking about something - I can not remember what - and I must have mentioned the loss of 9 feet on the right wing of an airplane during a mission. In one of the rare times my father said anything about his military experiences it caught me by surprise. I do not remember my father's exact words but it was something like, I was flying the airplane on the right and I watched the damaged airplane roll over on its back over the top of my airplane, go out of control, and drop out of formation.

I will never know what my father's thoughts and reactions were during that event, but he survived that event and that is the most important to me. Something was at work on that day that goes far beyond my understanding, and I will forever be grateful.

By Kurt Gunderson



You can always count on Americans to do the right thing - after they've tried everything else.

(Winston Churchill)

iqquotes.com

Fun Facts About Veterans Day

- The World War I armistice was signed on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918.
- There are around 9 million veterans over the age of 65.
- Around 1.6 million veterans are women.

Operation Hydra

British Intelligence learned of a V2 Research and Development Center at Peenemünde, Germany. Dr. Walter Thiel was a German chemist in charge of developing the rocket motor and fuel for the V2 rocket. He worked directly for Wernher von Braun and helped develop Peenemünde as a rocket development site. Polish slave labor provided the intelligence on the facility to the OSS which passed it on to the British Intelligence. On the night of 17 August 1943, the RAF bombed Peenemünde. Thiel and his family were killed in the raid as they took cover in bombing trenches near their quarters.



Peenemünde Rocket Center





In Memoriam

Robert D. Beltz

(Jan. 16, 1925 - July 30, 2021)

My uncle Robert D. Beltz passed away on July 30, 2021. Another of the Greatest Generation flown west. He will be missed.

MILITARY | FIRST LIEUTENANT | B-17 NAVIGATOR 750TH SQUADRON

Flew his first mission over Kassel Germany on January 1, 1945. The 457th Bomb Group last mission was also Bob's last mission over Seddin Germany on April 20, 1945.

—Provided by Mike D. Riley (nephew)



Robert (Bob) Beltz, 96, passed away on July 30, 2021. He leaves behind his loving family, friends, and his beloved Clarkdale, Arizona.

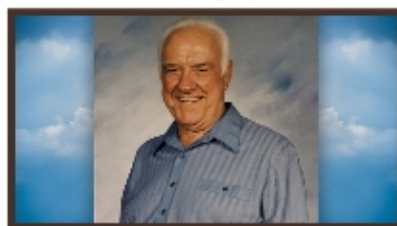
Bob was born in Winfield, Kansas on January 16, 1925 to Carl and Nellie Beltz. His family moved to Clarkdale in 1928. He graduated Clarkdale High School in 1943. He then went on to graduate from the University of Arizona with a bachelor's degree in business in 1949.

Bob proudly served in the Army Air Force from July 11, 1943 to September 9, 1945, during World War II. He served as a 1st Lieutenant in the 457th Bomb Group; 450th Squadron; stationed at Glatton Station, England. He flew as a Navigator on the "B-17 Flying Fortress" and flew 26 combat missions over Germany.

He was recalled to serve in the "Korean Police Action" from May 5, 1951 to July 24, 1952 at Pusan Air Base, South Korea. He served as a Navigator-Bombardier, flying 51 missions over North Korea in the "B-26 Invader", a two-engine bomber. His dreams came true when he got to retire from his job as business manager at Hal Watkins's Chevrolet in Southern California and move back to his beloved Clarkdale to live in his father's house, build a work shop, and spend time with many of his childhood friends in the Verde Valley. They fondly referred to themselves as the "River Rats from Poverty Flats".

At one time he was active in the Clarkdale Historical Society and shared his many stories. His passions included driving to Sycamore Canyon and around the Verde Valley to enjoy it's beauty. He has left behind two daughters, Debbie Warren (husband, Stan), and Nancy D'Angelo (husband, Gary); granddaughter, Miranda Pecsok (husband, Mike) and two great-grandchildren, Mila and Merrick Pecsok (whom he never met, he was born 8/5/2021) and loving niece and nephew, Karen Shaffer (husband, Mickey), Mike Riley (wife, Kareen). Proceeded in death by his parents, Carl and Nellie Beltz, and brothers, Ervin and Duke.

Those who knew him will understand "Thanks for stopping by".



—Information was provided by the family.

An Airman's Prayer

by

Chaplain John Eastwood

*God guard and guide us as we fly
Through the great spaces of the
sky;*

*Be with us as we take to air
In morning light and sunshine
fair.*

*Eternal Father, strong to save,
Give us courage and make us
brave;*

*Protect us whereso'er we go,
From shell and flak and fire and
foe.*

*Most loved member of our crew.
Ride with us up in the blue.*

*Direct our bombs upon the foe
But shelter those whom Thou dost
know.*

*Keep us together on our way,
Grant our work success today.*

*Deliver us from hate and sin,
And bring us safely down again.*

*O God protect us as we fly
Through lonely ways across the
sky.*



WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to our new members! Our other members, please make sure your dues are up to date and paid before Dec 2021, thank you!

Gerald Hayden Bradley
Judith Burt
Charles Darwin DeYoung
Clive Dodson
Steve (Mary Ellen) Donovan
William Herron
Sarah Hood
Sara Kelsall
Mike & Cathy Kaurich
Benjamin Kaurich
Peter Simpson
Lt. Thomas J. Tredici & Lucia Tredici
Carolyn DeLoach
Mike Riley
Brant Messer

FUTURE NOTIFICATIONS

Information and updates will be emailed which you are able to unsubscribe if you wish.

FIND UPDATES HERE:

Website: www.457thbombgroupassoc.org
Facebook: <https://tinyurl.com/y7855qt7>
8th AF: www.8thafhs.org

We Like You, Like us on Facebook



This is a hot spot for posts and pictures, and a forum for our 457th family and friends to gather, share stories, and ask questions.

Go to: www.facebook.com/groups/1408261252566363
or use: <https://tinyurl.com/y7855qt7>

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

Visit the website today at www.457thbombgroupassoc.org to subscribe online for membership, or, fill in the form below and mail in your subscription and dues to Adele Gilmore, Treasurer.

457th Bomb Group Association: Membership Dues & Subscription Form

► Dues

Annual Dues: \$25 per person (per Year)

Note About Lifetime Memberships:

Per the Association and Board meeting held in October of 2019, this is the only membership category available. Life memberships are honored and all WWII Veterans are granted honorary lifetime membership.

► Mail form, check payable to: 457th Bomb Group Association

Attention: Adele Gilmore, Treasurer
3070 37th Avenue S, St. Petersburg, Florida 33712

check applicable:

- ☐ New membership
☐ Renewal ☐ Address Change

► Donations

Your Contributions Count!

The 457th Bomb Group Association continues to undertake new projects, as well as maintain those that have been completed over the years.

Please consider a donation to support our ongoing Projects Fund.

Contributions should be mailed to

Adele Gilmore, Treasurer
3070 37th Avenue S, St. Petersburg
Florida, 33712

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

Are you a (check one):

☐ Fireballer ☐ Relative of Fireballer ☐ Other: _____

If you are a relative:

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

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

Retired Military? _____ Rank: _____

Comments: _____

Send my Fireball newsletter by: ☐ mail ☐ email

► Bulletin Board

Newsletter by mail or online?

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

Our Departed Veterans

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

**Sheila Vester, Association Secretary at
716.864.9150**

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

Notes from the Editor:

We would appreciate it if all members (including Board members) would check their electronic and mailing addresses for accuracy.

If anyone has information about deceased members or obituaries, please forward those to us for the next Stateside Memorial Service.

Thank you!

Thank you, to Mr. George E. Parker for your beautiful article, and photos. Thank you, to Mr. Robert Parker for submitting your dad's article and photos. Thank you, Mr. Eric Zemper for allowing us to use your dad's beautiful photos.

Thank you Mr. Will Fluman, for your great article and photos.

Thank you, to Mr. Kurt Gunderson for submitting articles

Thank you, to Erwin de Mooij for all of your tech support.

Thank you to everyone for your article submissions.

Thank you Madam President Archuleta, Board of Directors, and Appointees, for allowing me the opportunity to work on this newsletter. Any comments or suggestions may be addressed to Dorothy at:

the457thbgnewsletter@yahoo.com

**Visit the website today at
www.457thbombgroupassoc.org**

► Officers & Appointments

Nancy Archuleta President	narchuleta@chm611.com 611 Holmes Ave. N.E., Huntsville, AL 35801	M. 256-656-9155
Robert Parker Vice-President	rparker15@hotmail.com 509 Pioneer Trail, Harker Heights, TX 76548	M. 254-824-0237
Adele Gilmore Treasurer	pickwickantique@gmail.com	M. 727-433-2550
Sheila Vester Secretary	adksheila@yahoo.com 5001 Transit Rd, Apt. 313, Depew, NY 14043	P. 716-864-9150
Eric D. Zemper Director	P.O. Box 130537, Ann Arbor, MI 48113-0537	
Kathy Collins Director-2 year	Kcollins18@cox.net Seville Dr, Pensacola, FL 32503	P. 850-206-6670
Gregg Robertson Director - 4 year	greggroberson@aol.com 437 Kailua Rd. Apt. 6103, Kailua, HI 96734	P. 808-721-5389
Kurt Gunderson Director - 4 year	kgunderson@brihthouse.com 5701 Burke Way, Bakersfield, CA 93309	P. 661-835-0787
Tisha Mach Robertson Director	kai967@yahoo.com 1302A Kamahele Street, Kailua, HI 96734	M. 898-799-8854
Cleo Glachino Director	jimcleo@ps.net	H. 530-570-1561
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Dorothy Enriquez Newsletter Reporter	the457thbgnewsletter@yahoo.com	



► European Historians

Tim Newell Angela Newell	tim.newell@gmail.com Cemetery Chapel, Stoke Doyle Road, Oundle, Northants, England PE85TR	P. 44 1487 830450
Erwin de Mooij	b17research@hotmail.com Mondriaanlaan 31, Sassenheim, 2172 DG Netherlands	P. 0031612972293

► Past Presidents

1973-75: William Willborn	1988-89: Donald Sellon	2005-07: James Bass
1976: Howard Larsen	1990-91: John Welch	2007-09: George Grau
1977-79: Bill Siler	1992-93: Roland Byers	2009-11: Joe Toth
1980-81: Edward Reppa	1993-97: Billy Hightower	2011-13: John Pearson
1982-83: Daniel Graham	1997-99: Lee Zimmerman	2013-15: William W. Siler
1984: William Good	1999-2001: Craig Harris	2015-19: Will Fluman, Jr.
1985: David Summerville	2001-03: Will Fluman	
1986-87: Clayton Bejot	2003-05: Don Nielsen	

JOIN US IN PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE 457thBG

In his book, *Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck makes the following reference to history.

"HOW WILL WE KNOW IT'S US WITHOUT OUR PAST?"

The Association was created so that the dedication, commitment and camaraderie of those that served in the U.S. Army Air Corps, 457th BG (H) would live on not only for them but for us and our descendants. In order to keep the memories alive and recorded, I am establishing an AdHoc Archives Committee to research, gather and recommend the best methods to accomplish the goal. We are grateful that Eric Zemper has agreed to chair the committee.

Per Mr. Zemper, "Most any museum, except those that are quite small, has the problem of housing more material than they could ever display. The Yankee Air Museum has a huge room full of military uniforms and clothing hung on hangars on long racks, probably numbering in the thousands of items. It's impossible to display more than a very small fraction of those at any one time in the display space they have. My understanding is that they occasionally sell some items, but only if the donation agreement allows for it." The question we hope to address is how to exhibit any memorabilia we have in a way that will best honor the legacy.

Secondly, there are so many letters, memories, and pictures that all of us have stored either in albums, trunks, and closets that may or may not be something we want to share with future generations.

HOW YOU CAN HELP!

1. Volunteer to serve on the Archive Committee and work with Mr. Zemper to create a sustainable way to preserve our history.

2. Readers are asked to comment on something they read that sparked a memory or just a general comment they'd like to make. The result would be comparable to what the Readers Digest and other magazines do.



A Message from the President

To honor our veterans and our history, instead of presenting something from my desk, we are including Mr. Bill Siler's President Review of September 2013. As you can see, we are still facing the same successes and issues. A huge Veterans Day salute to founders of the Association! Sincerely, Nancy Archuleta

Found in Sept 2013 Newsletter: Bill Siler, president

President's Review

Dear Fireballers, Thank you for this privilege of serving another term as president of our civil association. Recognizing that many contributed more and are more deserving than myself, it is indeed personally humbling as reflection rolls back the 42 years since our organization was founded based on our 457th WWII experience. It is not unusual for letters of this type directed to members to typically draw conclusions and advise operational changes that frequently require time to test and thus judge their worth. That is not being proposed at this point but some ideas are offered herein for members to consider and offer much needed critical feedback and/or alternative methodology in dealing with future controlled and uncontrolled events. Very likely there are superior approaches to some existing or developing problems that regular and associate members can contribute to the solution of, downgrade or upgrade the importance thereof, or offer plans for these or problems not noted in this communication. In some cases previous officials or Board of Director action may have dealt with certain issues and my awareness remains blank; hopefully a matter soon to be corrected. Recent contribution of sums greater than normal from new members intended for projects contemplated but lacking definite establishment may need to be held in separate accounts with provision for return to donors in the event of future developments whatever that may be. Whatever the future of the 457th Association is to be, we all recognize it will differ greatly from that enjoyed in the past. This may require revision of the Bylaws effecting change in nearly all aspects of operations, Membership response to this request for feedback can be valuable in considering such issues as dues and future funding of operations, reunion continuation and resultant re-planning, committee assignments, etc. Additionally, consideration should be given to the possible situation of the younger generation assuming more responsibility in the organization structure and continuing operations. They may desire to get some kind of pledge from present members as to their willingness to support such continuation. It would be my great pleasure to greet all who can find the time and develop the effort to join other "fireballers" at the Bull in Peterborough next May. Thanks, from your grateful president, William (Bill) Siler.

A Message from the Editor

Should anyone have any comments regarding newsletter articles, or would like to submit your own article for review, please feel free to email your submissions to: the457thbgnewsletter@yahoo.com

We'll be happy to include your comments or articles in future newsletters.

Thank you,
Editor

457th Hangar Gift Shop

457th Hangar is available with many items for sale, such as books, polo shirts, patches, pens, caps, etc. Contact Gina Morgan at 457thHangar@gmail.com for a complete list of items with pricing.



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Visit the website today at www.457thbombgroupassoc.org to subscribe online for membership, or, fill in the form below and mail in your subscription and dues to Adele Gilmore, Treasurer.



"Sometimes, it's not really just luck."

Elmer Bendiner was a navigator in a B-17 during WWII. He tells this story of a World War II bombing run over Kassel, Germany, and the unexpected result of a direct hit on their gas tanks. "Our B-17, the Tondelayo, was barraged by flak from Nazi anti-aircraft guns. That was not unusual, but on this particular occasion our gas tanks were hit.

Later, as I reflected on the miracle of a 20 millimeter shell piercing the fuel tank without touching off an explosion, our pilot, Bohn Fawkes, told me it was not quite that simple. "On the morning following the raid, Bohn had gone down to ask our crew chief for that shell as a souvenir of unbelievable luck. The crew chief told Bohn that not just one shell but 11 had been found in the gas tanks. 11 unexploded shells where only one was sufficient to blast us out of the sky. It was as if the sea had been parted for us. A near-miracle, I thought.

Even after 35 years, so awesome an event leaves me shaken, especially after I heard the rest of the story from Bohn.

"He was told that the shells had been sent to the armorers to be defused. The armorers told him that Intelligence had picked them up. They could not say why at the time, but Bohn eventually sought out the answer. "Apparently when the armorers opened each of those shells, they found no explosive charge. They were as clean as a whistle and just as harmless.

Empty? Not all of them! One contained a carefully rolled piece of paper. On it was a scrawl in Czech. The Intelligence people scoured our base for a man who could read Czech. Eventually they found one to decipher the note. It set us marveling. Translated, the note read:

**"This is all we can do for you now.....
Using Jewish slave labor is never a good idea."**

This story is confirmed in Elmer Bendiner's book, The Fall of Fortresses.

(Submitted by Kurt Gunderson - Thank you!)

PLEASE JOIN US

Become a member of the 457th Bomb Group (H) Association and receive our newsletters. Fill out the Membership form included in this newsletter on page 5.

Please visit our website at:
www.457thbombgroupassoc.org
Find the Membership form online on our website.

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facebook



Like and follow us on Facebook at:
www.facebook.com/groups/1408261252566363

