



Elections Completed at 2024 Annual Meeting

The 2024 Reunion and Annual Membership Meeting was held in conjunction with the meetings of the 8th Air Force Historical Society on September 25-29 in New Orleans. The membership meeting and elections were held on Friday morning, the 27th, and attendance was made available by electronic means for those members who could not attend in person. Following a summary of the year's activities by the officers and board of directors, presented by President Eric D. Zemper, the primary order of business was addressed: elections for two officers and two board positions.

As required by our Bylaws, a nominating committee was appointed to solicit nominations for the positions of president and secretary, which are elected in even-numbered years for two-year terms, and for two board positions. Normally, only one of the four board positions is elected each year but, with the passing of Gregg Robertson, the remaining three years of his term must be filled at the next annual meeting. After calling for nominations in the May newsletter, by email and by postings on the website, the nominations committee received *(continued on page 2)*



This Issue:

President's Message.....	3
2024 Annual Meeting.....	4
In Memoriam.....	6
Bulletin Board.....	7
Membership Form.....	8

Note Regarding This Issue of the Newsletter

Because the position of Newsletter Editor is still vacant, once again this issue has been put together by the Association President, Eric D. Zemper. As a result, it may not be quite the quality and scope of coverage of previous issues.

Anyone interested in volunteering to be our Newsletter Editor for this twice a year publication, please contact Zemper at zemper@msu.edu.

Annual Meeting (continued from page 1)

only one nomination for each of the four positions: President – Eric D. Zemper (incumbent); Secretary – Lynda Thomas (incumbent, appointed by board to fill a vacancy); 3-year board term – Dorothy Enriquez (incumbent, appointed by board to fill a vacancy); 4-year board term – Eric J. Zemper. (The incumbent in the 4-year board term was Kurt Gunderson, who chose not to seek re-election for another term.) President Zemper made one final call for nominations from the floor and, hearing none, the slate of nominees from the Nominations Committee was elected by acclamation. President Zemper, on behalf of the Association, acknowledged and thanked Kurt Gunderson for his several years of service on the board. Zemper then welcomed his son as a new member of the board.

There followed a brief memorial service for those members and veterans who had passed away in recent months:

Alvie Kirkendall – 750th Bomber Squadron

Billy Morse – Ground Crew Chief, 749th Bomber Squadron

Paul Topplestein – Photo Section

Albert G. Williams – 751st Bomber Squadron Engineer/Top Turret Gunner (POW)

Gregg Robertson, board member and spouse of former board member Trisha Mach Robertson

A moment of silence was observed in their honor and memory.

There was a brief discussion of when to schedule the next Association tour to Glatton and the UK. The board had previously decided to use the tour group that had arranged last year's tour, and that the next tour should be in 2026 or 2027. Whether the tour should take place in May (for Memorial Day) or in August/September was discussed, and it was decided to seek further input from the membership (see note on page 3).

As noted by President Zemper, next year's annual meeting will be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the 8th Air Force Historical Society in Colorado Springs, Colorado, on October 1-5, 2025. The 2026 meeting will be held at the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum in Pooler, Georgia, just outside of Savannah.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned. (Minutes of the meeting were emailed to all members for whom we have email addresses.)



President's Message November 2024

This 'President's Message' marks the start of my second two-year term serving as president of our Association, having been re-elected at our recent annual membership meeting. When I first started in this position a couple of years ago I wasn't too sure what to expect, being quite new to the organization. But with the advice and help of some of the 'old hands' who've been around for a while, things have gone well, in my opinion. Thank you Nancy Arhuleta, Will Fluman, Adele Gilmore, David Bass, Bob Parker, Erwin de Mooij, Tim and Angie Newell, Dorothy Enriquez, Kurt Gunderson, Lynda and Paul Thomas, Cleo Giachino, Chris Sechrist and everyone who has served on the board of directors that I've had the pleasure of working with.

With the help of all these people, we've been able to make some good progress, starting with the process of rewriting and adopting a new set of Bylaws and Operating Procedures that provides us with the framework for an efficiently running organization in the future. Along with the new organizational documents came the decision to hold our annual stateside meetings in conjunction with the 8th Air Force Historical Society, which relieves our Association of the time and expense of doing all the planning and logistical work for each year's meeting. Closely related to that was the decision by the board to hire a tour group to arrange our successful visit to Glatton and the UK last year, thus saving us much additional cost and effort. Operating under the new Bylaws, we now are having quarterly board meetings, taking advantage of the availability of electronic means of meeting together to discuss Association business. We have adopted a formal annual budget, and have been actively reminding people to pay their annual dues and soliciting donations, which are the two primary sources of income for paying for our operations. We've been providing active support to Erwin de Mooij in his work maintaining and expanding our website, which has been gaining a reputation as one of the largest and most informative of any of the bomb group websites. And at the suggestion of my son, Eric J. Zemper, who now is a newly elected board member, we are developing a virtual museum of 457th artifacts and publishing a high quality coffee table-style book of 457th BG photographs.

So, I believe it's been a productive couple of years for our Association, and I look forward to our journey ahead. Finally, please take a moment on Monday, November 11, to remember our veterans, past and present.

Eric D. Zemper, PhD
President, 457th BG Association

What's Your Preference?

After last year's successful trip to London and Glatton (see the November 2023 newsletter for pictures of the trip), your Association board of directors has been thinking about arrangements for the next tour. We have decided to plan a tour every three to four years, which means the next one would be in 2026 or 2027. Everyone was pleased with the arrangements made by the tour group that worked with us last year, so we likely will use that organization again. A major question is whether we should plan to go in late May, for the Memorial Day celebrations in the UK, or in August or September, as we did last year. The advantage of going in late May is being able to take part in the impressive Memorial Day ceremonies, primarily at the American Military Cemetery at Madingley. The disadvantage is that the weather often is not the best at that time of year. The primary advantage of going in August or September is that the weather is usually quite nice at that time of year; but, of course, we won't have the memorial ceremonies to attend.

Still having time to consider things before we have to make a decision, the board would like to solicit input from the membership. If you have any thoughts of possibly joining the tour to see the Glatton airfield where the 457th BG was based, and many other interesting sights in the UK, **please let us know your preferences (2026 or 2027? Late May or August/September? Any other thoughts or suggestions?).** We probably will need a minimum of 15 participants in the tour (last year we had 17).

Please send any comments to Eric D. Zemper at zemper@msu.edu.

2024 Annual Meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana

The 457th Bomb Group Association held its annual meeting on September 25-29 in New Orleans, Louisiana, in conjunction with the annual meetings of the 8th Air Force Historical Society. The primary business for this year's annual membership meeting was the election of two officer and two board positions, as noted on the first page of this newsletter. Members participated in two tours arranged by the 8th AFHS, which included a ride on a paddlewheel riverboat on the Mississippi River, and a bus tour of New Orleans. Attendees also had unlimited access to the National WWII Museum, which was just across the street from the main hotel. There also were dinners on three of the evenings. Our Association had a hospitality suite, which hosted a number of visitors to view a display of photographs and films of the 457th BG and Glatton airbase. *Please mark your calendars for the next annual meeting: October 1-5, 2025 in Colorado Springs, Colorado.*



The riverboat 'Natchez', a steam paddlewheel boat, which took us on a leisurely tour on the Mississippi River, including a luncheon of typical Cajun fare.



The paddlewheel at the stern of the boat



The Dixieland jazz trio that provided entertainment



Association members relaxing on the promenade deck (L-R): Erwin de Mooij (Sheila Vester is hidden behind Erwin), Cleo Giachino, Lynda Thomas and Paul Thomas (standing)

2024 Annual Meeting (cont.)



An example of some of the interesting architecture seen around the city



Touring a New Orleans cemetery, where no one is buried below ground because of the high water table



One of many displays in the National WWII Museum; a German 88mm Flak gun



Overview of the closing dinner in the National WWII Museum



The Liberty Belles entertain during dinner



Dinner attendees (L-R): David Bass, Eric D. Zemper, Paul Thomas, Cleo Giachino, Erwin de Mooij, Sheila Vester



IN MEMORIAM



George E. Parker October 21, 2024 (99 years old)
College Station, TX

LT George Parker was a co-pilot in the 748th Bomber Squadron. He flew 17 missions, starting two weeks after his 20th birthday at the end of February 1945, through the 457th's last mission in April of 1945. On two missions George had to help get his badly damaged aircraft back to Glatton. He is the father of 457th BGA Vice President Robert Parker.



Albert G. Williams September 24, 2023 (101 years old)
St. Clair Shores, MI

TSGT Albert Williams was an engineer and top-turret gunner in the 751st Bomber Squadron. Williams' plane was shot down over Erfurt, Germany, on November 20, 1944. After bailing out, he was captured and spent six months in Stalag Luft I, then liberated in May 1945 by Russian soldiers. His book entitled '*Falling Down for the Count*' chronicles his experiences in the war and as a POW.

Gregg Robertson December 2023 (79 years old)
Kailua, Hawaii

Gregg was a board member of the 457th BG Association, serving alongside his wife Trisha Mach Robertson, who passed away a year earlier. Trisha was the daughter and Gregg was the son-in-law of TSGT Bill Mach, a member of the Photo Section of the 457th BG.



Bulletin Board

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1986-87 Clayton Bejot	2003-05 Don Nielsen	

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

Find us at:

www.facebook.com/groups/457thbombgroup

www.facebook.com/groups/457thbombgroup

Newsletter by mail or online?

We hope you have had an opportunity to view the full color **FIREBALL** newsletter online at

www.457thbombgroupassoc.org

We will continue to print and mail a black and white version, 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 at

zemper@msu.edu

Newsletter Editor Position Available

The 457th Bomb Group Association is looking for a Newsletter Editor. If you are interested in volunteering for this position, please contact Eric Zemper at zemper@msu.edu

Newsletter Editor Responsibilities

Member in good standing.
Soliciting content, writing and editing content, and ensuring electronic or hard copy distribution to the membership at least twice per year.
Knowledge of word format and publishing applications necessary.



457th Bomb Group Association

c/o Eric D. Zemper
P.O. Box 130537
Ann Arbor, MI 48113

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Visit the website today at www.457thb9mbgroupassoc.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, FL 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 _____ E-mail address (Please print clearly) _____

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