

# 457th Bomb Group Association



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November 2025 Issue 101

## 457th Group Association 2026 England Tour

Tour Dates: May 21 - May 26, 2026

The 2026 457th BG Association UK tour itinerary has been updated and finalized, and it looks to be an excellent experience. For those who went on our tour a couple of years ago, there are a lot of new items on next year's tour.

A brief outline of the tour is on page 9. A more detailed description of each day can be found on the tour website: <https://www.tours-international.com/usaaf-457th-bomb-group-2026-england-tour>.

Registering for the tour is done through the tour website. To register for the tour, use the password: **FaitAccompli** (all one word, capital F and capital A).

Please consider joining us for this great experience. And thanks to all those who have already indicated their interest in the tour.



### This Issue:

President's Message.....	2
Finding Glatton.....	3
Honoring Bud Schuelke.....	4
From the Skies over Europe to the Stars.....	5
457th in the News.....	6-7
Final Flight of the Silver Queen.....	8
Highlights of 8th AFHS Reunion in CO.....	9
From the Editor.....	9
2026 England Tour Itinerary.....	9
Book Review.....	10
457th BGA Business Meeting in CO.....	10
Membership Form.....	11



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## President's Message

November 2025

As noted elsewhere in this issue, we held our annual stateside reunion and our annual business meeting at the beginning of October in Colorado Springs. Once again, the 8th Air Force Historical Society put together a great program for the attendees from all the different bomber and fighter groups, including tours to the Garden of the Gods, the US Air Force Academy and the National Museum of WWII Aviation, as well as evening dinners that provided many opportunities for meeting with people representing other elements of the 8th Air Force of WWII.

If you haven't attended one of these annual meetings, I encourage you to do so in the near future. Thanks to those of our members who did attend and were at our annual business meeting, and thanks to those who attended via zoom call. We held our election for VP, Treasurer and a Board of Directors position. Since there were no other nominations besides the incumbents, we were able to dispense with that bit of business fairly quickly, and elected them by acclamation. Congratulations to Bob Parker (VP), Adele Gilmore (Treasurer) and Cleo Giachino (Board) on their re-election. I look forward to continuing to work with you.

Those who know me know that, since I retired a few years ago, my days are primarily spent on two activities. One involves my dedication to the sport of track and field, working as a national and international official as well as serving on several national committees and teaching training clinics for officials. This activity is my primary focus during the first part of the year, from January through July. The rest of the year, August through December, I'm able to focus more on activities related to the 457th BG Association.

Some of that time is spent on my duties as president of this organization, but most of the time over the past few years I've been working on organizing and digitizing over 1,800 photographic images from my father's collection of materials he brought back from Glatton after the war. That phase is mostly completed now, and the next phase will be digitizing and editing the 12,000 feet of 16mm movie film my father brought back. Along the way, I've also digitized over 3,000 pages of the 457th BG's Daily Reports, which Erwin de Mooij has now made available on our website.

More recently I've been privileged to organize and digitize collections of photographs sent to me by the children of two of the photo techs who worked for my father in the 457th's Photo Section. These three collections are now ready to be distributed to museums and other interested groups, as well as being placed on our website. Just a few days ago I received another collection of photographs from the daughter of a 457th headquarters officer, and I will be going through this process with this 'new' material. It's work I enjoy doing, and I'm more than happy to be able to contribute my efforts to the preservation of the history of the 457th Bomb Group.

Also in this issue you will find information on our tour at the end of next May to the UK and Glatton. The tour itinerary looks great, and we've had a good response as far as interest from the membership. Please take a look at the information about the tour and please consider joining us. It will be a great experience!

And as always, please take a moment on Tuesday, November 11, to remember our veterans, past and present.

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

# Excerpts from “Finding Glatton”

## Finding Glatton A Ball Turret Gunner’s Son Returns

By Gerald H. “Jerry” Bradley  
USAF (LTCOL RET)

1944-45, assigned to the 750th Squadron, of the 457th Bomb Group. He was a small man, approximately 5’6” and a young 150 lbs. As such, when his crew was mustered for B-17 crew training, he was relegated by his Aircraft Commander to the Ball Turret. Never to complain and always ready to serve, he dedicated himself to mastering his assigned position in the Sperry Ball Turret, which hung perilously below the B-17.

During my younger years, my father, like many survivors of WWII aerial combat, never spoke of his role in the skies over Europe. He was a survivor, having completed 35 missions during the closing brutal months of the War in 1945. He was, in his mind, just one of many. He was lucky, and he survived.

As his son, a baby boomer, born in the Summer of 1946, one of my childhood memories was seeing his WWII A2 jacket and his Army issued survival knife, which he used for hunting after the war. Later in my life I realized that these mere items had helped to motivate me, as a young boy, to look at the sky and seek to become a U.S. Air Force pilot. It is amazing how small and simple occurrences can serve as motivation for a boy’s dream. I knew that I belonged in the air.

Fast forward to 1976. I noticed in a professional aviation magazine that the 457th Bomb group had formed an association and was having a reunion not too far away from where my mother and father lived. He attended and generally, but not overwhelmingly, enjoyed the event.

In 1986 my father passed. In going through his things, I found pictures, an official discharge record, several Air Medals, and the Distinguished Flying Cross. In addition, in his possessions was a Spiritual Almanac for Service Men, in which he kept date, target hit, oxygen time, total time, and B-17 tail numbers, as well as a graphic ink drawing of his impression of the flak encountered. Also in his possessions, I found a silk aviator’s neck scarf, which was made from his Ball Turret chest parachute. On one of his missions his parachute was pierced by German 88 Flak passing through the turret and the parachute, just missing my father.

In 1988 my wife and I took a European vacation.

My father, Lila B. Bradley, was a member of the “Greatest Generation.” At age 23, he enlisted in the US Army Air Corps and ultimately found himself serving our Country as a gunner on a B-17 replacement crew in



Left: SSgt. Lila B. Bradley. Right: LTCOL Jerry Bradley

Our first stop was England. (Their search for ‘Glatton’ ultimately led to Polebrook which was the airbase for the 351st BG but after some misdirection, twists and turns, inquiries and conversations, they were finally led to a pub called “The Admiral Wells.”)

Upon entering, I recalled my father telling me that he and his fellow crew members had waited in a pub, near local train tracks, when taking leave for London and I knew this was the place.

Hearing an American accented voice at the next table speaking to someone who appeared to be the pub manager, I turned and asked, “Excuse me, are you planning a military reunion?” The American speaking said “Yes.” I ask, “Which unit?” He answered, “The 457th Bomb Group.” The American speaking was Mr. Don Sellon, at that time 457th Bomb Group Association’s president. The other American was a Mr. Golf, a former 457th Bomb Group Navigator. The Englishman was Mr. Bernard Baines, who I

later learned, was an English 8th Air Force historian.

After lunch the group gave us a tour of the abandoned Air Base and the Church with the monument. Don Sellon, had been a very young pilot during the war and had vivid memories of landing a damaged B-17 on the old runway. There were also concrete pads where former Quonset huts and barracks stood. One

of these pads would have been the location for the Quonset hut serving as the quarters in which my father lived with other gunners.

Once home, I copied my father’s log data and sent it to Mr. Baines. About a month later, I received a large envelope in the mail containing copies of official 8th Air Force combat photos of aircraft in which my father had flown. There were photos of aircraft in combat in which my father and his crew were flying on that specific mission picture. Since his aircraft commander, Lt James Holden, could be identified from these orders, Mr. Baines was able to include a post-mission photo of Lt. Holden’s first mission. This was also my father’s first mission. In this photo, I could see my father, standing under the B-17’s nose, with the aircraft’s number clearly visible.

There were far too many random coincidences during this quest for me to believe that I was not guided to find where my father had served during WWII. I choose to believe that I was destined to discover the base and the photos. I also believe I was guided to this location.

I had returned and found my father’s WWII base. It was meant to be. My discovery of my father’s untold experience was a kind of closure for me as a legacy son of the “Greatest Generation!”

# Honoring Harland “Bud” Schuelke: Patriotism in Peace and Purpose

Harland “Bud” Schuelke lived to be 99, passing away quietly in his sleep on the morning of August 24, 2025, in the Neenah home where he had raised a family, coached young ballplayers, and hung a prized musky on the wall. Born December 14, 1925, in neighboring Menasha to Ervin and Esther Schuelke, Bud grew up during the Great Depression, learning early the value of hard work and the comfort of a tight-knit community. A 1943 graduate of Neenah High School, he stood on the cusp of adulthood, the world engulfed in war and without hesitation, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps, ready to defend the freedoms he had always known.



The path from Neenah to the European theater began with rigorous training. Bud was selected for one of the most demanding and dangerous crew positions on the B-17 Flying Fortress: Ball Turret Gunner. Training took place stateside—first at gunnery school, then at operational training units where crews learned to function as a single organism. Instructors drilled into him the grim statistics: ball turret gunners had among the highest casualty rates in the 8th Air Force. Bud accepted the risk.

Bud shipped out in the spring of 1945 and arrived at Glatton on April 9, 1945. Far from a quiet airfield, the base thrummed with the final, frantic push of the air war. In the eleven days between his arrival and the group’s last combat mission on April 20, the 457th flew nine missions. Three B-17s failed to return, twenty-three men were missing in action, and six were killed. The roar of engines, the smell of high-octane fuel, and the sight of ambulances racing across the perimeter road were daily realities.

Yet Bud’s crew never flew a combat sortie. The 457th already had more than enough experienced crews to fill the roster, and replacements like Bud were held in reserve. He later told his son Mike that they were simply told to “fly around and orient yourselves to the area.” On training hops over the English countryside, they practiced formation flying, tested equipment, and familiarized themselves with local landmarks—preparations that would never be put to the ultimate test.

Everything changed on May 8, 1945, when Victory in Europe was declared. The tension that had gripped Glatton for over a year evaporated overnight. What had been a combat base transformed into a staging area for redeployment. Bud’s duties shifted to inventorying gear, guarding hangars, and helping ferry battle-worn B-17s to storage depots. He stood watch over rows of Fortresses—some patched with fresh aluminum, others still bearing the scars of their final missions.

The 457th was tasked with ferrying liberated POWs back to England. With the officers making the flights, the job of unloading the frail, emaciated prisoners fell to the enlisted gunners grounded at Glatton. They also had to scrub down their stripped-down B-17—guns removed, no toilet installed—before it headed back across the Channel for the next load of exhausted survivors.

Bud mustered out in 1946 and on October 5 he married Shirley Mathison in a simple ceremony surrounded by friends and family. They settled in Neenah, where Bud began a 40-year career at the Neenah-Menasha Wastewater Treatment Plant. Starting as an operator, he rose



through diligence and expertise, earning Operator of the Year in 1979. He chaired the Lake Michigan District of the Wisconsin Wastewater Operators Association in 1981 and 1982 and remained a life member long after retirement in 1988.

Work was only part of the story. Bud poured energy into his community. For 15 years he managed the Boys’ Senior League Baseball program, charting lineups, umpiring rainy doubleheaders, and teaching teenagers the same lessons of teamwork he had learned in a bomber crew. Through the First United Methodist Church, he delivered Meals on Wheels, stocked shelves at Vallhaven Care Center, and tutored at Hoover Elementary. He joined the Neenah Club and the Neenah-Menasha Retired Men’s Fellowship Club, trading stories over coffee and cards.

Bud and Shirley raised four children—Lynn, Mark, Mike, and Lori—instilling in them the values of service and perseverance. Summers meant “up north” vacations to a cabin where Bud taught generations to cast a line and clean a fish. In 1987, his patience was rewarded with a 44-inch musky that still hangs as a testament to quiet persistence.

Bud was preceded in death by his wife of 62 years, Shirley, and his sister Betty. He is survived by his children: Lynn, Mark, Mike and Lori; 8 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren. He is also survived by numerous nieces, nephews, and a community that will miss his gentle presence.

A funeral service celebrating Bud’s life was held on Saturday, September 13, 2025, at First United Methodist Church, in his hometown of Neenah, Wisconsin. He was laid to rest beside Shirley in the Shrine of Heaven Mausoleum at Greenlawn Memorial Park.

Though Bud Schuelke never fired a shot in combat, his story is no less heroic. He trained for war, shipped overseas, and stood on a base in England where 739 airmen lost their lives in air combat. His story echoes that of countless late-war enlistees who trained, shipped out, and stood ready—only to see peace arrive first. Their patriotism was no less real for lacking a battlefield. Bud carried that same readiness into civilian life, meeting every obligation with steadiness and grace.

In the end, Bud Schuelke’s legacy is not found in flak-scarred skies but in the lives he touched on solid ground. He was ready for war and excelled in peace. That, perhaps, is the truest measure of a hero.

Rest easy, Bud. The watch is relieved.



December 1944. Sioux City Iowa AAB, B-17 Fortress, Crew #9820”. L to R back row: unidentified; Lt John H DeVoe, navigator; Lt Gale Nordstrom; unidentified; Lt Ray Hoagland, pilot; **Cpl Harland Schuelke, ball gunner.** L to R front row: Sgt George Paulos, radio - gunner; Cpl B. B. Boggs, engineer; unidentified.

# From the Skies Over Europe to the Stars: The Evolution of American Air and Space Power

*Editor's Note: Attendees of the 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion in Colorado Springs, Colorado, the first week of October, had the privilege and honor to hear keynote address by General Stephen N. Whiting (below), Commander, US Space Command, Peterson Space Force Base, Colorado.*



In the thunderous roar of B-17 Flying Fortresses over Nazi Europe, the seeds of modern space power were sown. The 8th Air Force's WWII daylight raids pioneered strategic air warfare, propelling U.S. military innovation from European battlefields to orbital domains.

Today, U.S. Space Command counters hypersonic and satellite-killing threats, a direct evolution from the "Mighty Eighth"—including the 457th Bombardment Group.

Activated January 28, 1942, in Savannah, Georgia, the 8th Air Force relocated to England under Brigadier General Ira C. Eaker for precision bombing. Its first mission was August 17, 1942, with 12 B-17s hitting French rail yards. By 1944, under Gen. Jimmy Doolittle, it fielded over 2,000 bombers and 1,000 fighters per sortie, suffering 47,000 casualties—half of all USAAF losses in Europe.

The 457th Bombardment Group, activated July 1, 1943, at Geiger Field, Washington, trained on B-17s and deployed to RAF Glatton in early 1944. Nicknamed the "Fireball Outfit," it flew its first mission February 21, 1944, during "Big Week," targeting German aircraft plants.

Over 236 missions and 7,086 sorties, the 457th struck oil, rail, and fuel targets, supporting D-Day with pre-invasion rail bombings and Cherbourg strikes. Its costliest day was November 2, 1944, over Merseburg, losing nine aircraft and Col. James R. Luper.

Technologically, the 8th and 457th advanced with Norden bombsights, radar jamming, and P-51 escorts, crippling the Luftwaffe. Gen. Henry "Hap" Arnold's 1945 *Toward New Horizons* report foresaw space as the next frontier.

The 8th joined Strategic Air Command (SAC) in 1946.



Postwar, the National Security Act of 1947 created the USAF.

The USAF's early milestones marked a shift from WWII tactics to Cold War strategy: independence in 1947 focused it on strategic air power; the 1948–49 Berlin Airlift demonstrated non-combat dominance with 2.3 million tons delivered; the 1950s brought jets like the B-52 and nuclear alert postures; and in the 1960s, the 8th's B-52s dropped 80% of bombs in Vietnam's Rolling Thunder campaign. WWII V-2 captures via Operation Paperclip sparked space ambitions.

Explorer 1 launched in 1958; USAF became DoD's space agent in 1961. Milestones followed: NASA (1958), GPS precursors (1970s), Air Force Space Command (1982), USSPACECOM (1985). Gulf War (1991) showcased GPS-guided precision.

Technology evolved dramatically: B-17 radar jamming grew into global electronic warfare satellites; V-2 ballistics advanced to hypersonic vehicles exceeding Mach 20; and the Norden bombsight's mile-wide accuracy became meter-precise GPS munitions.

Drones like the RQ-4 Global Hawk trace roots to WWII radio-controlled aircraft. Reestablished in 2019 amid Chinese and Russian ASAT threats, USSPACECOM—led by Gen. Stephen Whiting at Peterson SFB—unifies space operations.

The 2019 Space Force, largely drawn from USAF personnel, redesignated AFSPC as Space Operations Command (SpOC). The 8th Air Force now links nuclear bombers to space-based warning networks.

From the 457th's fireballs over Big Week to 2025 orbital war games, America's military spans unimaginable domains. Flak vests became debris shields, but the ethos—innovation, valor—endures. The 457th's sacrifice demands vigilance: resilient rockets, secure comms, eternal mission. As Arnold envisioned, we've gone beyond the atmosphere—yet the fight continues.

PHOTO CREDIT: Defense News. <https://www.defensenews.com>

**Did you know** ... that of the 34 airmen from the 457th buried at Cambridge American Cemetery in England, the first to be interred was 2Lt Owen Baylis Coffman, pilot, 748th Squadron. His story will be in the next issue of *The Fireball* so stay tuned.



## Still Available 457th Merchandise

baseball hats \$25.00 USD  
 polo shirts smaller sizes \$20  
 challenge coins \$12  
 coin case (stand up) \$3  
 red pen \$2 (quantity discounts)

Contact  
 Richard Barnes  
 cell/text: (801)295-5762  
 Inquire for shipping cost

# Homefront Headlines ...

Corporal Harland L. Schuelke, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ervin Schuelke, 616 Knight avenue, has joined the veteran 457th heavy bombardment group of the British Air force in England. He is a ball turret gunner on a B-17 Flying Fortress. He is a graduate of Neenah high school.

News-Record, Neenah, Wisconsin  
Saturday, May 19, 1945

## Lt. John Angier Of New Haven To Marry English Girl



Miss Doris Hutchinson

Special to the Free Press  
NEW HAVEN, Nov. 14.—Mr. and Mrs. Byron Clark of New Haven announce the engagement of their nephew, First Lieut. John Francis Angier, (shown below) to Miss Doris C. Hutchinson, 614 Gladstone st., Peterborough, England.

The wedding is to take place as soon as Miss Hutchinson arrives in the States.

Lieut. Angier bought the Keese farm, north of Middlebury, on Route 7, and has taken possession. He is boarding with Mr. and Mrs. Keese for the present.



## LIBERATED JOPLIN MAN UNAWARE MOTHER DEAD

JOPLIN, Mo., May 25.—(Special)—A message received here from a young air corps sergeant announcing that he had been freed from a German prisoner of war camp will never be received by his mother, to whom the wire was sent. She was killed in an automobile accident here on last January 13.

The sergeant, Harold W. Pannell, 21, a prisoner of war since the Flying Fortress on which he was tail gunner was shot down in Germany on November 2, wired his mother, the late Mrs. John Pannell here, saying that he "hopes to be home soon."

His father, John Pannell, who opened the message, said that word of the mother's accidental death had been sent to Sgt. Pannell, but that he evidently had never received it.

The Springfield News-Leader  
Springfield, Missouri · Saturday,  
May 26, 1945

## Prisoner Lt. Earl M. Morrow

First Lt. Earl M. Morrow, husband of Mrs. Nell Brawly Morrow of 1111 Howard Avenue, has been a German prisoner of war since November 2, the War Department recently notified his wife. Stationed in England with the Eighth Air Force and piloting a Flying Fortress, Morrow has been overseas since July.

Prior to entering the service on August 18, 1942, he was employed by the General Electric Company of Schenectady, N. Y. Lieutenant Morrow attended Iowa State College at Ames, Iowa, and is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert R. Morrow of Granville, N. Y. He has a brother and sister serving in the armed forces, Lt. (jg) Robert R. Morrow, U. S. Navy, stationed at New York City; and Cadet Nurse Carol Robert Morrow, U. S. Nurse Corps, Watertown, N. Y. His wife is making her home temporarily with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Brawly, at the above address.



1942, he was em-

ABOVE: Nashville Banner, Nashville, Tennessee, Wednesday, January 17, 1945

LEFT: The Burlington Free Press  
Burlington, Vermont · Thursday,  
November 15, 1945

## Concord Flier Wins Air Medal

Concord, Aug. 2.—Second Lieut. Charles E. Barrier, son of Mr. and Mrs. S. H. Barrier, has been awarded the Air Medal at an Eighth AAF Bomber station in England.

His citation says:  
"For exceptionally meritorious achievement while serving as a pilot of a B-17 Flying Fortress on a number of sustained bomber combat missions over Germany and enemy occupied Europe. The courage, coolness and skill displayed by Lieutenant Barrier on these occasions reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States."

Prior to his entry into the army air forces in 1942, Lieutenant Barrier attended the University of North Carolina.

The Salisbury Post  
Salisbury, North Carolina · Wednesday,  
August 02, 1944

## Completes Training



CPL. PAUL ZALUSKY

son of Mr. and Mrs. John Zalusky Maryd, has completed final phase training as an armorer gunner of a heavy bombardment unit, at the Army Air Field, Ardmore, Okla. Cpl. Zalusky entered the service on April 26, 1943, and received air force gunnery training at Tyndall Field, Fla., and armament training at Lowry Field, Colo. He received his promotion to Corporal in August 1943. His brother Louis, is a member of a Cavalry group. He has four other brothers and four sisters.

Pottsville Republican  
Pottsville, Pennsylvania  
Wednesday, July 19, 1944



SAFE—Sgt. Burnell L. Scheivert, above, 26-year-old turret gunner, was reported in a telegram received by his wife last Tuesday as missing in action since March 24. A telegram from Sgt. Scheivert himself to his wife, received Thursday, informed her that he is "safe." He is the husband of Mrs. Helen Rabenstine Scheivert, Smith Station, and a son of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond N. Scheivert, 17 Westminster avenue.

The Evening Sun  
Hanover, Pennsylvania · Saturday,  
April 14, 1945

## LT. DON SCHICK MEETS DEATH

Another young life was sacrificed on the grim altar of war when 2nd Lt. Donald H. Schick met death in England while in the service of his country. Lt. Schick, who was the 21-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry A. Schick of 41 North Long street, was the co-pilot of a B-17; the exact date and in what manner he met death are not known as yet. His parents received a telegram from the War Department on March 8, advising them that Lt. Schick had lost his life in an aircraft accident in England.

Lt. Schick was born October 5, 1923, in Buffalo. When the family moved to Williamsville 7 or 8 years ago, he entered the Williamsville High School, receiving his diploma there in June, 1941. That summer he enrolled at the Buffalo Aeronautical Corp., where he studied aeroplane mechanics. In the fall he began employment at the Bell Aircraft Corp.

Don enlisted in December, 1942, and left here in February, 1943. He received his wings at George Field, Ill., in April, 1944, and went overseas last October.

Just prior to his death he had returned from a vacation at a rest house in England. How many missions the Lieutenant made is not known by his parents, as he rarely commented on military affairs, fearing violation of the power of censorship which was entrusted to him. However, he did make many missions over the continent. His last letter to his family was written on February 18.

Don was Mr. and Mrs. Schick's only living child; a brother, Stuart, died several years ago.

Friday morning the students of the Williamsville High School gathered in assembly in memory of Lt. Schick. Principal Walter J. Herrington read "The Sermon on the Mount," and Lawrence Hemink sang the 23rd Psalm. In commenting on Don's death, Mr. Herrington paid tribute to his fine character, and discussed the qualities which go to make up that character. When Don was in school he not only did excellent school work, but was prominent in the extra-curricular activities, especially dramatics.

The Amherst Bee  
Williamsville, New York · Thursday,  
March 15, 1945

Hawkeye — Staff Sgt. William A. Scharnhorst, Jr., husband of Mrs. Iva Scharnhorst, of Hawkeye, has been awarded an Oak Leaf Cluster to his Air Medal. Sergeant Scharnhorst is a waist gunner of a B-17 Flying Fortress and is a veteran of many of the Eighth air force's huge daylight bombing assault missions over Hamburg, Frankfurt and Cologne. A graduate of the Hawkeye public school in 1929, Sergeant Scharnhorst was employed as a clerk by the Rath Packing Co. until he entered the army air forces in June, 1943. He recently has completed his tour of 35 missions and is expected home on leave in the near future.

The Courier  
Waterloo, Iowa · Sunday,  
November 26, 1944

# ...News of the 457th

## SGT. R. C. TEMPLIN LANDS IN ENGLAND



We have been informed that Sgt. Robert C. Templin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Templin, Fremont, recently landed in England where he is now stationed. He is a member of a bombing squadron, formerly stationed at Herington, Kans.

He is a graduate of Stanton high where he was active in music. He also attended Wayne State Teachers college one year.

We quote from a letter to his parents:

"We put some extra lights in our tent today. Yes, I would definitely like to have the Stanton Register. I have been thinking about writing to the Ponts about it."

ABOVE: Stanton Register, Stanton, Nebraska, August 17, 1944

RIGHT: The Morning Call Paterson, NJ · December 05, 1944

## Staff Sgt. Mack, Jr., Back from England

S/Sgt. Percy A. Mack, Jr., is spending a 30 day furlough at the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Percy A. Mack, Cornwall, S. Ct.

S/Sgt. Mack has recently returned from England where he was stationed with the eighth air force. He participated in 30 bombing missions over enemy territory.



Percy Mack, Jr. the air medal with four oak leaf clusters, also the presidential citation, one battle star and the good conduct ribbon. Following his furlough, S/Sgt. Mack will report to Atlantic City, N. J., for reassignment.

The Burlington Free Press  
Burlington, Vermont  
Tuesday, May 22, 1945

## DeLuccia Completes 32 Bombing Missions; Speaks Of "Nerves"

Atlantic City, N. J.—Out of 22 bombing missions over enemy territory, two taught Technical Sergeant Joseph DeLuccia, son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank DeLuccia, of 82 East Twenty-fifth street, Paterson, the futility of worrying, he admitted at the A.A.P. Redistribution Station here.

"Both times I put my nerves in a terrible state sweating out fires that never started while flying at 20,000 feet," said the fortress radio-gunner.

"On the first of my three missions to Berlin one of our engines hissed out on account of mechanical trouble and we couldn't feather the prop. But we crossed the target on three motors with the prop on our fourth spinning wildly. Then flak pierced our number two engine and it started to throw large gobs of oil. There's where the danger of fire came in and I started to worry and fret," the Paterson sergeant revealed.

With enemy fighters hovering in the distance the sergeant's fortress dropped out of formation and dove into some cumulus clouds as the prop's crank shaft snapped. The crippled plane, still throwing oil, wasn't detected by the fighters and made it back to base safely.

"But I sweated out every minute of the return trip," said the sergeant.

The second time Sgt. De Luccia worried about a fire that never occurred was over Southern France.

"We were bombing marshalling yards from a height of 17,000 feet when flak ripped a hole in our gas tank that was sixteen inches in diameter. Gas sprayed our entire plane and we all stood by helplessly worrying. Fire was uppermost in all our minds, particularly mine, but nothing happened and again we reached base safely. I guess it just doesn't pay to worry," philosophized the Paterson gunner.

Sergt De Luccia wears the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters and the ETO ribbon with three stars. He entered the service in February, 1943 and was sent overseas in June, 1944. Prior to his enlistment he had been employed by the Western Electric Company, Clifton, N. J.

While at the Redistribution Station here the sergeant will be examined by doctors and interviewed by personnel experts to determine where the experiences he gained overseas may best be used by the Air Force.

## Lt. Kenneth Kentner, Wounded in Germany To Come Home Soon

Lt. Kenneth E. Kentner, of the U. S. Army Air Forces based in England, wrote recently to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Kentner of West Plains, Route 1, that he may come home soon.

Lt. Kentner, who is a pilot on a B-17 bomber, was shot down during a raid over central Germany on March 24, and was wounded in the right leg and thigh. He was in a hospital in Belgium for three weeks, but later was sent to a rest center in



## Clifton J. Rabideaux

An oak leaf cluster to his Air Medal was awarded S-Sgt. Clifton J. Rabideaux, son of Mrs. Stella Morrissette, Cloquet. He is a ball-turret gunner of a Flying Fortress and is a veteran of many Eighth air force daylight precision bombing assaults against the Nazi war machine. Recently promoted to corporal while serving with the 687th medical complementary unit, is Richard C. Wilson, who has been in England since April, 1944. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence E. Wilson, 208 Parkland avenue.

The Duluth News Tribune  
Duluth, Minnesota · Tuesday,  
February 27, 1945

## Nicola Toscano Awarded Medal

Sergeant Nicola Toscano, son of Mr. and Mrs. Antonio Toscano, 753 East 224th Street, has been awarded the Air Medal, for "meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight." He is on duty at an Eighth Air Force base in England.

Mount Vernon Argus  
White Plains, New York · Friday,  
November 03, 1944

England, from which he wrote his mother an unusually beautiful Mothers Day letter.

He had flown several missions over enemy territory before being wounded.

Lt. Kentner was graduated from West Plains high school in 1940. He received much of his training in Pullman University in Washington and in the Air Academy at Santa Ana, Calif. He received his commission at La Junta, Col., in June of last year. He has a wife and little daughter, Linda Carol Kentner, who are with relatives in Pueblo, Col., during his absence.

## Fresno Gunner Is Missing After Raid On Germany

Mr. and Mrs. Mike Villane of 304 Stanislaus Street have received from the war department notification their son, Staff Sergeant Anthony Villane, 20, a Flying Fortress radio operator-gunner, has been missing in action since a raid on Germany September 28th.



Villane was based in England. In his last letter to his parents, received September 20th, he reported he was "getting along fine" but said nothing concerning the number of missions in which he participated.

The young flier was born in Fresno and attended the Columbia Elementary School and the Edison Technical High School.

He entered the army air forces two years ago and went overseas in April of this year.

He has six brothers and two sisters.

The brothers are Pete Villane of 445 Stanislaus Street, Ralph Villane of Knoxville, Tenn.; Mickey Villane of San Jose, Private Matthew (Marty) Villane, who is serving with the army signal corps at Burbank, and Leonard and Lawrence Villane, seaman first class, twins, who are serving with the navy in New Caledonia.

The sisters are Misses Rafaella and Palmera Villane, who live with their parents.

The Fresno Bee, Fresno, California  
Friday, October 20, 1944

## Charles City Soldier Is Awarded Air Medal

Charles City—Second Lt. Myron L. Kruse, 23 year old son of State Representative and Mrs. William Kruse of Charles City, has been decorated with the air medal, it was announced by the commanding general of the 8th air force in England. The citation was for sustained bomber combat operations over enemy occupied Europe.

Lt. Kruse is a graduate of Rockford high school, class of 1939. He was active in sports and a member of the football, basketball and track teams. Prior to his entry into the army air forces on June 11, 1942, he was engaged in operating a large farm with his father.

ABOVE: Globe-Gazette, Mason City, Iowa · Monday, July 31, 1944

LEFT: West Plains Weekly Quill  
West Plains, Missouri · May 31, 1945

# FINAL FLIGHT

## "Silver Queen"

#42-97137

On April 20, 1944, the skies over northern France became a graveyard for one of the Eighth Air Force's iconic B-17 Flying Fortresses. Aircraft 42-97137, nicknamed *Silver Queen*, was on its final mission with the 457th Bomb Group, stationed at Glatton, England. Delivered to the Army Air Forces just months earlier, this bomber met a violent end during a strike on a German V-1 rocket launching site. Hit by accurate flak, *Silver Queen* exploded in mid-air, claiming eight lives and leaving only two survivors as prisoners of war. The incident, detailed in Missing Air Crew Report (MACR) 4058, underscores the brutal cost of the Allied bombing campaign against Nazi "No Ball" installations.

*Silver Queen* (serial number 42-97137) began its journey at the Cheyenne Modification Center on January 30, 1944. It moved to Kearney, Nebraska, on February 16, then to Presque Isle, Maine, on February 28, before being assigned to the 751st Bomb Squadron (751BS), 457th Bomb Group [H] at Glatton on March 9, 1944.

Piloting the aircraft on its fateful mission was 2nd Lt. Walt Milne, Capt. Bob Ensminger was co-pilot. Pilot 2nd Lt. Carl Gamblin was flying in the tail position as it was a lead aircraft. This was a deputy lead plane in the 457th's "B" Box, flying in the number 2 position.

The target was a "No Ball" installation—a ski-shaped launching ramp for V-1 flying bombs—located south of the village of Gorenflos, approximately ten miles southeast of Abbeville, France. Other Eighth Air Force units struck similar sites in the Calais and Cherbourg areas that day. The 457th Bomb Group dispatched two boxes in



a new twelve-plane formation. Bombing results were excellent. However, flak was moderate but deadly accurate.

Flying as deputy lead in the "B" Box, *Silver Queen* took a direct flak burst at the radio compartment.

Eyewitness accounts from MACR 4058 paint a harrowing picture. 2nd Lt. Charles R. Hunnicutt, navigator aboard aircraft 42-31520 (flying number 4 position in the same box), reported: "Aircraft 42-97137, flying number 2 position in 457th 'B' Box, got a direct hit from an anti-aircraft-gun-fire shell. The ship seemed to explode between Ball Turret and Radio Room. As the plane fell out of formation in a dive, the Waist Gunner in our ship noticed two men blown clear of the plane, with no chutes. The crippled ship fell for about 2,000 feet and then it broke in two between the Ball Turret and Radio Room. No fire was noticed and none of the crew on our ship saw any chutes. The ship was not observed hitting the ground."

The group's mission narrative adds: "One anti-aircraft shell hit the Deputy Lead plane of the B box, piloted by Lt. Walter S. Milne, at the radio compartment, and exploded inside. The remnants of the craft plummeted nose down." The aircraft broke apart between the tail wheel and the waist door, crashing near Bailleul, four miles south of Abbeville (eyewitnesses approximated seven miles southeast). It impacted with a terrific explosion.

Eight crew members were killed in action: **Walt Milner-top left in photo** (Pilot), **Capt. Bob Ensminger, bottom right in photo** (Co-pilot), **John English, top right in photo** (Navigator), **Ed Cannon, bottom middle in photo** (Bombardier), **Lyle Johnson** (Radio Operator), **Helner Beck** (Ball Turret Gunner), **Alton Schaffner, bottom left in photo** (Waist Gunner), and **Ralph Haldiman** (Waist Gunner). Two became prisoners of war: **Jerome Fogleman** (Flight Engineer/Top Turret Gunner) and **Lt. Carl Gamblin, top middle in photo** (Tail Gunner). Gamblin, flying in the tail due to the lead configuration, and Fogleman landed near each other close to where the nose section crashed.

*Silver Queen* was one of many B-17s lost in the intense "No Ball" campaign, aimed at disrupting V-1 threats before D-Day. John English had arrived at Glatton just six weeks earlier, per records from the American Air Museum in Britain.

The mission narrative erroneously states "four of the crew parachuted to safety," but MACR 4058 and eyewitness reports confirm only two survivors, with no parachutes observed.

Decades later, survivors like Carl Gamblin shared their stories at reunions, such as the 1995 event in Reno, Nevada. Art Hoffman (whose father, Arthur N. Hoffman, was the 751st Squadron Navigator and knew John English) remembered that reunion and Gamblin recalling being captured by German soldiers or Luftwaffe personnel. He saw English and Cannon dead in the nose section before being led away.

Art Hoffman reflected: "As a small child in the early 1950s... hearing my father inside the house say: John English, 'shot down.' That name has stayed with me for over 75 years and will always stay with me."

The price of freedom was steep. Eight young men perished in seconds, their sacrifice a reminder that blood, like liberty, doesn't come cheap. *Silver Queen's* story endures in MACRs, veteran testimonies, and histories like *The B-17 Flying Fortress Story*, ensuring their valor is never forgotten.



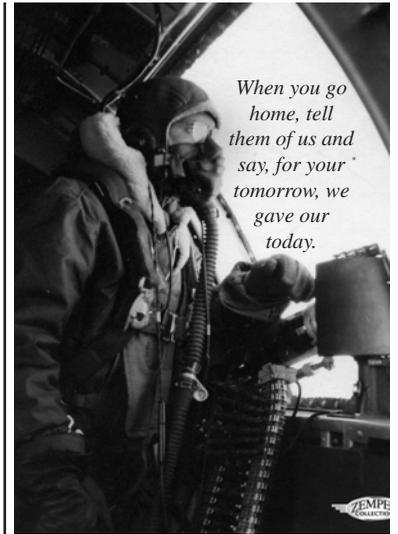
## 457th BGA Joins 8th Air Force Historical Society's Milestone Reunion in Colorado Springs

Members of the 457th Bomb Group Association participated in the 8th Air Force Historical Society's Annual Reunion, held October 1–5, 2025, at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Colorado Springs. The event coincided with the Society's 50th anniversary, bringing together veterans, members, and guests for five days of remembrance, education, and fellowship. Highlights included keynote speeches by General Gregory M. Guillot of NORAD and General Stephen N. Whiting of U.S. Space Command.

Next year's reunion will be in San Antonio, Texas.



**PHOTOS:** Top Left: 457th BGA President Eric Zemper holding a zoom meeting. Top Right: L-R, Rolland Digre, Eric Zemper, & Lynda Thomas. Far Left, 8th Air Force Historical Society business meeting. Left, Brigadier General Paul W. Tibbet IV. Right: Max & John Lewis. Below Left: Dawn Bass, David Bass, Mai Hall & Douglas Hall. Below: David Bass, Rolland Digre, Eric Zemper, Paul & Lynda Thomas.



## -----FROM THE EDITOR...

As I edit this Veterans Day edition of *The Fireball*, my thoughts return to the 8th Air Force Historical Society's 50th Anniversary Reunion in Colorado Springs. It was a profound gathering to honor the legacy of the Mighty Eighth and a vivid reminder of the unbreakable bonds forged in the skies over Europe during World War II.

Only a few veterans were present, none from the 457th, marking a paradigm shift in the 8th's reunions: from comrades gathering to remember and share their wartime experiences to descendants coming together to honor and cherish their memory. The task of stewardship has clearly passed from the veterans to us — their children and grandchildren. We carry the torch now.

In this issue, you will find tributes to a number of our veterans, an article about the B-17 *Silver Queen*, along with my report on the United States Space Command, which links our B-17 legacy to today's aerospace frontier.

Let's commit to keeping the flame of the 457th alive. Share your stories, information, photos. Reach out to fellow members, and join the ongoing mission to honor those who served. Together, we can ensure that *The Fireball* never dims.

Carolyn DeLoach, Editor

[charltonhistoryandmore@gmail.com](mailto:charltonhistoryandmore@gmail.com)

## 2026 England Tour

Tour Dates: May 21 - May 26, 2026

### Tour itinerary:

#### Day 1 – Thu 21 May

Arrival into London Heathrow airport  
Short afternoon orientation tour of London  
Visit Imperial War Museum  
Overnight London Millennium Gloucester hotel

#### Day 2 – Fri 22 May

Breakfast  
Visit RAF Biggin Hill airfield and museum – Battle of Britain  
Visit Chartwell home to Sir Winston Churchill  
Dinner and overnight London Millennium Gloucester hotel

#### Day 3 – Sat 23 May

Breakfast  
Visit Windsor Castle  
Visit Twinwood Airfield and Glenn Miller Museum (boarded plane before disappearing) to be confirmed  
Dinner and overnight Peterborough Bull hotel

#### Day 4 – Sun 24 May

Breakfast  
The Water Tower and Memorial  
Glatton Airfield (Station 130)  
Pub lunch  
Conington All Saints  
Stone Airman  
Dinner and overnight at the Peterborough hotel

#### Day 5 – Mon 25 May – Memorial Day

Breakfast  
Madingley Cemetery  
Duxford IWM  
Punting tour of Cambridge  
Dinner and overnight Cambridge hotel

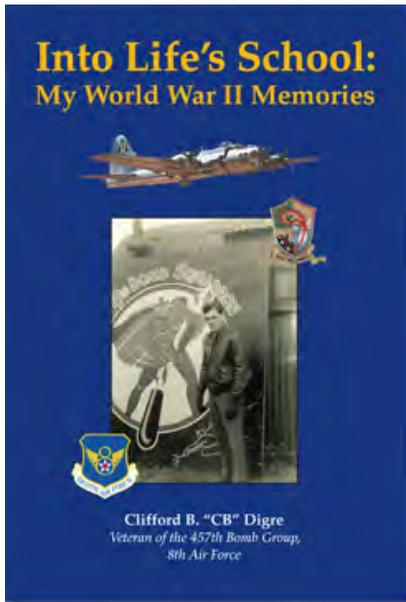
#### Day 6 – Tue 26 May

Breakfast  
Transfer to London Heathrow airport

# Book Review

## Another look at “*Into Life’s School: My World War II Memories*”

by Clifford B. “CB” Digre



As a historian and writer with a deep interest in the 8th Air Force, I was thrilled to receive a copy of Cliff Digre’s *Into Life’s School: My World War II Memories* last month from his son, Rolland, at the 8th Air Force Historical Society reunion in Colorado Springs. Though I wasn’t a member of the 457th Bomb Group Association when Nancy Toth’s glowing review appeared in the June 2009 newsletter, I can now echo her enthusiasm—and then some. I devoured this 332-page gem in one sitting, unable to put it down until the final page.



Clifford B. “CB” Digre, a 457th radio operator from Hendricks, Minnesota, served with distinction in the European theater from 1944 to 1945. What sets his memoir apart is its raw authenticity, drawn from a small notebook he carried on missions—scribbling notes whenever the opportunity arose, followed by detailed journal entries once back at Glatton while his crewmates headed to the pubs. As Cliff explained in his preface, this book was his way to preserve his combat diary, letters, shipping orders, crew conversations, and recollections for his

grandchildren. He elaborates without embellishing, creating a vivid, unvarnished portrait of life in the 457th Bomb Group.

The narrative follows young Cliff from rural Minnesota through training, transatlantic voyages, and 35 combat missions as radio operator (and occasionally ball-turret gunner). We feel the bone-rattling vibrations of B-17s, the terror of Luftwaffe intercepts, the camaraderie in the barracks, and the quiet moments of reflection that shaped “the greatest generation.” Interwoven are 160 photographs, mission loading lists, and track charts in Appendix C, all printed on high-quality 60-pound archival paper in a clean 11.5-point Times font. The four-color cover graces both hardcover (\$25) and paperback (\$15.95) editions—perfect for any 457th veteran’s shelf.

Cliff’s storytelling is tender, funny, sad, and gripping, as described in the endorsements from past president James Bass (“one first-class book”), Randall Stutman (son of a crew member), and retired USAF member Glenn, who stayed up all night reading it. Nancy Toth rightly called it a “page-turner” in her 2009 review; I second that motion.

Cliff passed on November 25, 2012, at age 89 in Prior Lake, surrounded by Bernice (his wife of 65 years) and their four children. His legacy endures not only in this book but in MISCO, the loudspeaker empire he built from a postwar radio-repair shed, and in his service to the 457th board and reunions. *Into Life’s School* is essential reading for anyone seeking the human side of our bomb group’s history.

Order yours at [www.intolifesschool.com](http://www.intolifesschool.com) or via PayPal (continental U.S. only; contact [service@intolifesschool.com](mailto:service@intolifesschool.com) for elsewhere).

You won’t be sorry.

Carolyn DeLoach, Newsletter Editor

## 2025 Annual Meeting in Colorado Springs, Colorado

The 457th Bomb Group Association held its annual stateside reunion and our annual business meeting on October 3, 2025 in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in conjunction with the annual meetings of the 8th Air Force Historical Society. The primary business was the election of two officers and one board position, as noted on the our president’s letter on page 2. As there were no nominations, Bob Parker (VP), Adele Gilmore (Treasurer) and Cleo Giachino (Board) were re-elected. The UK Tour in May was discussed as well as the 2026 business meeting in San Antonio, Texas. There followed a brief memorial service our veterans who had passed away this year.

Normand R Menard, 748th



Harland “Bud” Scheulke, 750th



George E. Parker, 748th



James J. Rodel, 748th



# 457th Bomb Group Association Membership Dues & Subscription Form

New                       Renewal                       Address Change                      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

748<sup>th</sup>                       749<sup>th</sup>                       750<sup>th</sup>                       751<sup>st</sup>                       Group)

457th Duty (if known, e.g., Gunner, Crew Chief, Mechanic, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip/Country \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the appropriate box(es):

To reduce printing and USPS mailing costs, we recommend you get your newsletter (PDF) by email:

457<sup>th</sup> Veteran

Send *The Fireball* newsletter by email

457<sup>th</sup> Spouse

I'd prefer to receive a hard copy of the newsletter

Family Member of 457<sup>th</sup> Veteran      Name of Veteran \_\_\_\_\_

Your relationship to veteran \_\_\_\_\_

Other      If other, please explain here why you wish to join the group \_\_\_\_\_

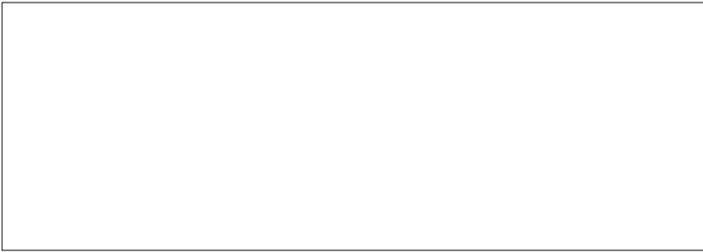
## ***PLEASE JOIN US***

***Become a member of the  
457th Bomb Group (H)  
Association  
and receive our  
newsletters.***

***Fill out the  
Membership Form above  
or visit our website  
[www.457thbombgroupassoc.org](http://www.457thbombgroupassoc.org)***

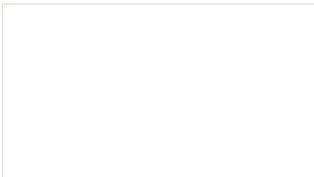
**An annual dues of \$25 payable to  
457th Bomb Group Association  
will help defray costs of newsletters,  
mailings and the website  
throughout the year.  
(Cash or checks only, no credit cards.)**

**Please mail your payment  
and this form to:  
*Adele Gilmore, Treasurer  
3070 37th Avenue S  
St. Petersburg, FL 33712***



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

457th Bomb Group Association  
c/o Carolyn DeLoach  
Charlton County Historical Society  
20 Cypress Street  
Folkston, GA 31537



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**Check us out online!**