



Unloading bombs and supplies at Bron, France. Fall, 1944, See letter below

Dear Bud Markel:

I was intrigued with the display of all the mission records at the reunion in Washington D.C. The mission I was looking for, I do not know the date it occurred. The Mission started with the order that all guns are to be removed from all turrets, and the belts of ammunition and cans, or boxes holding them are to be removed also. Then they totally removed the ball turret and placed boards over the hole in floor. They installed fuel cells in the front bomb bay, and in the rear bomb bay on the right hand side they built a wooden floor. On this floor they placed (six) wooden boxes of fifty caliber ammunition, and (six) five gallon cans of aircraft engine oil. On the left side they carried (3) five hundred lb. bombs, and in the rear, in the area of the waist guns, they put (15) empty 55 gallon metal drums.

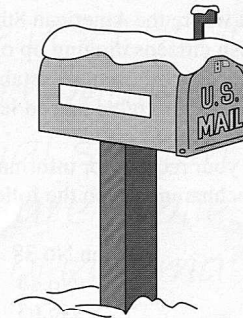
After the planes were loaded, that evening I was told they decided there should be a ground crew member make the trip, since the planes would be landing at a field away from home base, and if some service should be required to get them back to home base, the ground crew member could make the decision as to what would be required.

I was elected to make the trip, so I went to Group Hdqs. for briefing. They explained the Allied Army had invaded southern France as a diversionary tactic, but after the invasion of France at Normandy on the sixth of June the German army decided to withdraw to the north to make their stand there. This left the Allied Army advancing faster than the supply lines could keep up. The Air Force had a fighter base at Lyon that needed supplies so we would deliver these supplies to them. They were supporting the ground forces in the northern part of France .

First we would not be flying in formation, since there was no reason for a bomb pattern and there was no way to defend each other since there are no defensive guns. This Rhone River valley was known as a flak alley at one time, but it was not challenged recently . The advice was to fly at low altitude as to not attract fighters, and if you were damaged badly the only recourse was to bail out. This was right up Lt. Kenneth Rounds alley, so we flew up the river at an altitude that seemed as though we could look into the upstairs windows of the villas that lined the river.

When we arrived at Lyon, Lt. Rounds put that heavily loaded plane on a concrete paved runway so gently all one could hear was the screech of the tires, but before he could bring it to a stop we came to the end of a short runway. After we helped with the unloading, we decided we could give them another 300 gallons of

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gas out of our Tokyo tanks. Then we took off to return to Torretta arriving just before dark.

I don't know how many of this type missions were flown, all I can say is my turn didn't come up again. I think the load we carried would support one fighter for one day.

Regards

Art Aldene 827-124

P.S. In the Fall-Winter 1997 Flyer I was identified as one the members at the dedication of the plaque. Flattery will get you nowhere), I was there, however I was wearing my dark blue B-24 shirt in the picture.



Louisville, KY

Dear Bud:

In the later part of 1997, I was contacted by Dick Olson, the son of my copilot on the mission of June 13, 1944, when we were shot down. He is interested in his dad's crew, and details of the mission. This has resulted in my going back over my records and bringing back events that occurred some 50 years ago, things that I had long forgotten.

Dick has been kind enough to supply me with information and copies of pictures obtained from you. I received a package containing the Torretta Flyer showing a picture of my crew and the aircraft we flew overseas in April 44. Vivacious Lady and the aircraft we were flying that day were one and the same.

The Flyer also included a copy of a narrative of the days John Hassen the engineer, Howland, and I spent together after being shot down. This was written at the request of members of my high school of 1940 for our 50th class reunion in 1990.

I never talked much about my military life around my family and have not shown much interest in reliving the past, certainly not as much as young Dick Olson. In that regard I appreciate very much the interest Dick Olson has shown and your interest by including all of it in the Torretta Flyer.

Bud I have never received any of the medals and decorations due me. Due to the interest of Dick Olson I have decided to obtain my medals and decorations. Can you help we with this request?

Walter Chapman