

ABORTION OF AIRCRAFT # 475D-752nd

Lt LESTER J. SKIDMORE JR.

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We were scheduled to fly 305H of the 754th Squadron. Due to mag trouble in #2 engine, we were forced to remain on the ground. No spares were available at the time. We waited while repairs were made on 305. Again the engine failed to function properly. By that time, Flying Control had 475D of the 752nd Squadron ready. We made take off one and a half hours late. By flying an interception course, we managed to intercept the 20th Bomb Wing at the Zuider Zee. About fifty miles from the IP, oil pressure dropped to zero on #1 engine and the prop ran away. We feathered the engine. I contacted fighters and they promised to ride me through the target. By pulling 43 inches, I managed to hold my altitude though I was falling behind. At no time previous had I pulled more than 40 inches. I knew that the 96th Wing was behind me, so it was my belief that if I could hold my altitude, I would be able to bomb with them. At the co-ordinates 5238N-0952E, number three engine became rough and the engine instruments started to fluctuate. I picked a target of opportunity and bombed to the best of my ability without a bombsight. By that time, I had dropped to 15000 feet and was still going down. We jettisoned all loose equipment with the exception of guns and ammunition. I managed to hold 14000 feet. We were unable to re-contact the fighters, so withdrawal was made over our inbound course at 14000 feet without escort. I decided to cross the Channel rather than continue in enemy territory, as two jet propelled aircraft were seen to our left. We contacted Air/Sea Rescue and kept them informed as to our position. Number 3 engine was still acting up and I was afraid of losing it completely. #2 and #4 were smoking from using excess power. Upon reaching the English coast, I contacted the tower and was instructed to try to make Woodbridge. There the ceiling was 150 feet, but I managed to land with the assistance of the navigator through Gee fixes, with no injury to personnel or aircraft.

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