

## Target for Tonight Mission 15 Meulan-Les-Meureaux 12/13 December 1943

Captain Vince Rizzoli USAAF grimaced as he drank what passed for coffee in the RAF mess.

“What the hell do they use to make this stuff – sump oil?”

“Only on a good day. The rest of the time they use dishwasher from the Sergeant’s mess,” drawled Pilot Officer Keith Snow as he finished the last of his bacon and egg. “So tell me Vince, what did you make of that mission?”

“Well I wanted to see what difference a full moon would make but with the weather we had I didn’t see much of France just saw the nightfighters more clearly. What the hell happened just before take off?”

“Oh you saw that. Well a couple of the kites that took off before us pranged one another in the dirty weather. Always a risk with such low cloud and in the dark.” PO Snow lit a cigarette and offered the pack of Woodbines to his visitor.

“You know, when I was looking out of the Astrodome as we crossed the English coast I looked down I saw an Me110 flying below us. He was so close I could see the darned turquoise-blue cockpit lighting. He either didn’t see us or he didn’t have that new fangled upward firing cannon we’ve heard about,” said Vince as he lit his cigarette. “Tell me why did the rear gunner ask ‘Can you hear me mother’ when you asked them to check in?”

“Oh that’s a catch phrase of Sandy Powell. He’s a popular entertainer on the wireless off the Halls - what you would call Vaudeville.”

“And when we had that brush with that flak barge just off Calais why did the Upper Gunner say ‘TTFN’?”

“Ta Ta For Now. Don’t you listen to the wireless here? That’s another catch phrase from ITMA.”

“ITMA what the hell is that?”

“It’s That Man Again. Tommy Handley.”

“So when we were over France what was the Flight Engineer all hot and bothered about?”

“We had a hydraulic failure which meant that we were going to have to lower the undercarriage manually. That was what all that energetic activity was when we circled the field on our return.”

“I must have missed that. I was still picking bits of Perspex out of my jacket after that brush with the Ju88 that bounced us as we came in off the North Sea. He really smashed up your bombsight on his first pass although he didn’t do much damage on his second pass that I noticed.”

“If Yorkie our Mid Upper hadn’t dealt with him first he might have got us on that third pass.”

“Boy did you see that Junkers just come apart in mid air. That was something alright.”

“We’ve had the photo back and it looks like that we managed to get about 40% of our load on target despite the target being mostly obscured. So I hope that enjoyed your little jaunt with us tonight.”

“Yeah thanks. Well I better get back to base and report in. See you somewhere over Europe I guess. And if the Jerries give you any trouble try giving them some of the god dam awful coffee and they will soon surrender.”