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AUG 30 1944

Honorable Harley M. Kilgore,

United States Senate.

Dear Senator Kilgore:

This will acknowledge your letter of August 12 with reference to the procurement of self-sealing tanks for troop carrier aircraft.

The information you have to the effect that the Army has placed an order for 2500 sets of self-sealing tanks for troop carrier aircraft is correct. The decision to procure these tanks was not, however, made as a result of unanticipated losses in the Normandy invasion.

As a matter of fact the losses of troop carrier aircraft in the Normandy invasion were less than expected and were relatively light. The loss rate for troop carrier aircraft was roughly  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$  during the early and difficult phase of the invasion. Personnel casualties of all categories were even less, amounting to less than 1.8% of troop carrier crew members airborne during the same period.

Your attention is invited to the fact that troop carrier operations were concentrated in a  $2\frac{1}{2}$  day period. Prior to the night of June 5 troop carrier aircraft were employed solely in training and other non-combat operations. Our other combat aircraft, however, were committed to a sustained aerial offensive in which losses in excess of  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$  percent per mission were by no means unusual and for which self-sealing tanks were essential.

It is now possible to procure self-sealing tanks in sufficient quantities to make them available to all troop carrier aircraft without appreciable interference with their procurement for other aircraft engaged in constant combat operations. Self-sealing tanks for troop carrier aircraft will be made available to overseas theaters in kits

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so that they may be installed prior to operations for which they would appear to be required, and removed when, as outlined in my letter of last May, there is no requirement for them and they would unnecessarily impair performance.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) ROBERT P. PATTERSON

Acting Secretary of War

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