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OPENING: Air Corps Song

ANNOUNCER: This evening WTAM Special Events Department brings you a Special Service Feature. In the studio we have three Air Corps men who have unique combat stories to tell us. They are Lt. Calob Baxter, B-17 Navigator, Lt. James Deal, Pilot, who with serious personal injuries, brought back safely his B-17 Flying Fortress on only two engines to his base in England. T/Sgt. Bill Largent, the Cleveland boy who parachuted from a B-26 to southern France where, for a short period of time, he eventually became Commandant of a hospital which was surrendered to him by the Germans. Mrs. Viola Riley, a riveter on P-47 Thunderbolts, from the American Stove Company, and Frank M. Aldridge, Deputy Regional Director of the War Production Board. These people have been brought here to participate in a round-table discussion in connection with the War Production Manpower campaign. Lt. Baxter, will you give us a brief outline of the work of a Navigator in connection with a bombing mission?

LT. BAXTER: Well, Mr. Kimble, the primary job of the navigator is to get the planes to the target and return. Because a great part of flying over the continent is done above solid cloud cover, this sometimes is a rather difficult task. Recent technical developments have enabled the Eighth Air Force to fly above a solid overcast by the use of precision instruments.

ANNOUNCER: Speaking of the precision flying instruments, Lieutenant, it's possible that Mr. Aldridge of the War Production Board, may have some comment.

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MR. ALDRIDGE: Indeed! a large percentage of all precision flying instruments are made right in this Cleveland Area, when the Army Air Forces started an accelerated production program, for what at that time was believed to be a larger amount than could actually be produced. However, Cleveland's "know how" production men and engineers and skilled labor brought millions of dollars in such contracts to this area. Incidentally, Lieutenant, will you tell us how you happened to get back to this country?

LT. BAXTER: On August 5th, while I was flying on my 26th mission, I was hit by flak as we crossed the German coast on our way in to bomb a synthetic oil plant in the vicinity of Hanover in Germany. Since planes of the Eighth Air Force never return to base even though there are wounded aboard, we knew that we must complete our mission. So we flew on, dropped our bombs at the target and started on our trip home. Upon reaching the Dutch coast some three hours later, my plane left the formation and I was able to navigate the ship safely back to base. First Aid had naturally been given to me by my bombardier. At our base in England, an ambulance was waiting for me and I am now recuperating here at Crile General Hospital.

MR. ALDRIDGE: Lt. Baxter, I am glad you brought up that point. It is easy to understand from your story that though you were severely injured, you stayed on your job until your mission was completed. This is the lesson which our production workers in Cleveland, who are turning out these precision instruments which made this flight possible, must remember when they are tempted to take off that extra minute, hour, or day from their work which is so definitely a part of each combat mission.

ANNOUNCER: To give us all a more complete idea of just what goes on in the air on a combat mission, we will now hear from an Aerial Gunner, Sgt. Bill Largent. Sergeant, will you give us an idea of what you do up there?

SGT. LARGENT: Certainly, My job was sort of a dual one -- I was both Radio Man and Gunner on a B-26. My job was to maintain communication with the ground while we were on our bombing missions. Then, over the target, I was a Turret Gunner in the event that we were jumped by enemy fighters.

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ANNOUNCER: As Turret Gunner, did you ever have an opportunity to shoot down enemy planes attacking you?

SGT. LARGENT: During the Salerno operations, we participated in one of the great air battles of the Mediterranean and I was fortunate enough to get confirmation for destroying one Messerschmit and one probable German fighter.

ANNOUNCER: Will you tell us, Sergeant, about your last exploit over southern France?

SGT. LARGENT: Last August, while on a bombing mission of enemy coastal defenses in the Toulon area, our plane was shot down and it was necessary for me to bail out at 10,000 feet. I had been wounded in the right arm just before bailing out. During my descent I was fired upon by the German ground force. Fortunately, they missed, but upon alighting, I broke my leg. After hiding out for a couple days, it was necessary for me to surrender to the Germans for necessary medical aid.

ANNOUNCER: And is that when you were taken to the hospital where you met the German Rear Admiral?

ST. LARGENT: Yes, little did I know at the time that our forces had landed in southern France. The fact that the Free French forces of the interior were extremely active in southern France made it possible for my being back in the United States. The German Rear Admiral decided it would be more comfortable to surrender to American Forces than to be at the mercy of the French Forces of the interior. So, as I was the only American in the vicinity, surrender negotiations were made to me. The Rear Admiral came to my room and explained the situation to me through an interpreter and asked me, if in the event he relinquished his command of the hospital to me, would I give him protection for the German wounded in the hospital, nurses, and surgical staff. I said, "Well, Admiral, I won't make a deal with you but I will accept your unconditional surrender and attempt to make contact with the American Forces."

ANNOUNCER: Sergeant, how big a hospital was this?

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SGT. LARGENT: There were 300 patients, 28 nurses, and 7 doctors.

ANNOUNCER: So you found yourself in command of a pretty big establishment, didn't you?

SGT. LARGENT: Yes, it was quite a surprise to have such a large group of men and officers under my command.

ANNOUNCER: And how did you establish contact with the American Forces?

SGT. LARGENT: Two German doctors and myself went out in a French Packard ambulance and finally managed to establish contact with a tank column that was moving so rapidly without opposition that he would be unable to send any of his men with me. After a little persuasion, he did give me one American soldier, who spoke fluent German, and an American flag which we raised over the hospital. I remained at the hospital for two more days until American medics arrived and took over the hospital and evacuated me back to an American Hospital in Italy near our Twelfth Air Force Headquarters, and eventually back to the United States.

MRS. REILLY: If I may break in a moment, Sergeant, when you mentioned going back to the Twelfth Air Force, it comes pretty close to me because my son, Leonard, is a Corporal in the ground crew for that outfit.

ANNOUNCER: Mrs. Reilly, who just commented on the Twelfth Air Force, is a war worker on aircraft with the American Stove Company, here in Cleveland. She certainly is doing her part to carry on the work for you men overseas, because she's wearing a winged pin signifying that she is one of the 100 percenters in production work. Mrs. Reilly, incidentally, what are the requirements for wearing those wings?

MRS. REILLY: A perfect attendance record as well as a high production record.

MR. ALDRIDGE: Let me congratulate you, Mrs. Reilly, on behalf of the War Production Board, and I know that the men here from overseas also congratulate you for your part in supplying them with the equipment they so badly need. Our goal in Cleveland is to get each one of the 300,000 workers to make the same sacrifice that you have made in order to attain the perfect attendance and production records.

Really, this is not asking much but it will contribute far more than any one of us has any idea, to the early ending of the war.

ANNOUNCER: Mrs. Reilly, specifically, what are you working on?

MRS. REILLY: We make the cowls for the P-47 Thunderbolt.

LT. DEAL: You know what we used to call those fighters when we were overseas?

ANNOUNCER: Lt. Deal, we'd like to know.

LT. DEAL: We called them "our little brothers".

ANNOUNCER: Lt. Deal, one question seems to lead to another -- we'd like to know why you men in the heavy bombers called them your "little brothers"?

LT. DEAL: Anyone that can do the job that they do in escorting us and protecting us from enemy fighters, I, for one, am willing to call "brother".

ANNOUNCER: Lt. Deal, would you give us some instances in which they proved their brotherliness?

LT. DEAL: Well, on one occasion on a mission to Munich the Wing in which I was flying with was attacked by 15 enemy fighters and they were taking a heavy toll of us until our "little brothers" came along and drove them away. Our target that day was a vital one and a lot depended on our reaching the target. If it hadn't been for the bravery and daring of our fighter pilots and the superior performance of our fighter ships, the mission might have failed.

ANNOUNCER: Lt. Deal, will you tell us about your last mission?

LT. DEAL: In June, of last year when the robot bomb attacks on England were at their height, the Eighth Air Force was detailed to aid the RAF in the destruction of the robot bomb launching ramps on the Pas De Calais. Late in the afternoon of June 24th I was a member of a group of B-17's, who had been detailed to drop bombs on these targets. We were flying at 27,000 feet and met very little opposition except for light flak. We got to our target safely and dropped our bombs, which, incidentally, reconnaissance photos showed later to produce heavy damage. We turned away from our target and I headed for home thinking to myself that it was a "milk run".

ANNOUNCER: What is a "milk run", Lieutenant?

L.T. DEAL: Theoretically, a "milk run" is a mission in which everyone comes back safely and one in which there was little to no opposition. But, this wasn't the "milk run" for me. We were headed toward the coast of France and the English Channel when suddenly a puff of black smoke appeared in front of me at exactly my own level. Instinctively, I started to react but by then it was too late because the next thing I knew, there was a loud explosion, an odor of burning powder, and a hot searing sensation in my right leg followed closely by two more loud reports which were the second and third hit that my ship received.

ANNOUNCER: Lieutenant, what was this black cloud of smoke you just described?

L.T. DEAL: The black cloud of smoke was flak from anti-aircraft battery on the ground. Immediately after being hit, I looked at my instrument panel and noticed that the fuel pressure on my No. 2 engine had dropped to zero, which to me, was an indication that my gas line had been hit. Immediately I feathered that No. 2 engine and within another moment, I had to feather No. 1 engine. After giving the plane first attention, I finally got up enough nerve to look to see if my leg was still there and was very much surprised to see that it was. Immediately I called my Bombardier and Navigator and told them that I'd been hit and my Bombardier and Navigator and told them that I'd been hit and my Bombardier came up to give me assistance. My leg was bleeding freely and to stop that he applied a tourniquet and administered a shot of Morphine. At that time, my only desire was to pass out of consciousness which I proceeded to do only to be aroused by my co-pilot shaking me violently trying to awaken me. I looked over at my co-pilot and couldn't make out what he was trying to tell me and I really didn't care and passed out again. This time he succeeded in forcing me back to reality and it was then I found out that if we were going to get back, I would have to fly it myself because he told me that the co-pilot's controls and the automatic pilot control were shot out and I was pinned in my seat. We stayed with our formation until we got out over the English Channel away from possible enemy interception and then took off alone for home base.

(MORE)

We were losing altitude at the rate of about 500 feet a minute and had to throw several machine guns and ammunition and part of the radio equipment out to lighten the ship enabling us to hold our altitude. As we reached our field I asked the crew members if they didn't want to bail out and they told me that they didn't want to, that they'd stick with me.

ANNOUNCER: The boys were right, weren't they?

LT. DEAL: Yes, we made it and the ambulance, firetrucks, and crash wagons were waiting for us at the end of the runway when we pulled in.

ANNOUNCER: Did they get you out of the plane immediately?

LT. DEAL: No, it took several hours. However, fortunately enough for me, on landing I passed out of consciousness while they were hacking away attempting to extricate me from the wreckage of the cockpit.

LT. BAXTER: Incidentally, Lt. Deal forgot to mention that for this accomplishment, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

ANNOUNCER: Yes, and I believe we had another omission in our discussion. Mrs. Reilly, the B-17's these men have been talking about are pretty close to your heart, aren't they?

MRS. REILLY: I should say they are. My son-in-law, Robert Teany, is a crew chief in a B-17 base in England. My little granddaughter Gloria, has had two B-17's named after her. The first one, like Lt. Deal's, never flew again after its encounter with flak but it did succeed in returning its crew to England.

ANNOUNCER: In concluding, Mr. Aldridge, will you please make a few comments in closing this discussion?

MR. ALDRIDGE: These dramatic stories that we have just heard express exactly the reason why here in Cleveland today, the Air Forces, Ordnance, Navy, VMC, and the WPB are striving to awaken Cleveland workers and management to the responsibilities of producing the weapons with which these men carry on the battle. Every wasted hour may mean a Cleveland boy's life. Your efforts here are just as important as theirs over there and no matter how insignificant your job may seem to you, it all

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ties in with the united effort of winning the war. And, remember, Every Wasted Hour May Mean A Cleveland Boy's Life.

ANNOUNCER: You've just been listening to a round-table discussion presenting Lt. Calob Baxter, Lt. James Deal, T/Sgt. Bill Largent, Mrs. Viola Reilly and Frank M. Aldridge, of the WPB. If you are not in an essential war job at the present time, call at the nearest office of the USES. There is an important war job waiting for you.

THE END