

BROADCAST OF
BOMBING MISSION

NBC - AUGUST 16, 1943 : 2200Z - 2215Z

LE BOURGET, FRANCE

First radio broadcast of a Flying Fortress in actual
combat.

Lt. General Jacob L. Devers, CG ETO
Major Howard L. Nussbaum - Observer
Captain Thomas Witt - Pilot.

RICHARDSON

This is Stanley Richardson in London. The National Broadcasting Company is bringing you tonight the results of a unique experiment. A little more than fortyeight hours ago a Flying Fortress of the 8th United States Army Air Force took off from Britain to bomb Le Bourget Airfield just outside of Paris. There was nothing unusual in that. But in that plane was one addition to its regular crew of ten. He was an officer with a small portable recording apparatus, and that officer recorded his own description of the flight, including two brushes with enemy fighters and the bombing of the target. Thus for the first time an on-the-spot recording has been made of what goes on inside an American heavy bomber in combat. And now here is Lt. General Jacob L. Devers, Commanding General of the European Theater of Operations in the studio with me to introduce that recording to you.

GENERAL DEVERS

Never before has a civilian population been so well or so quickly informed of the progress of a war. This is possible because of recent scientific advances, especially in radio. It is strategically advisable because never before has the civilian population been so directly involved. What you will hear today is the result of an experiment, the testing of a new device which may have great tactical value to our Army. Its future possibilities of providing information to the public can be judged by yourselves.

GENERAL DEVERS (Continued)

The device is a magnetic wire recorder which was installed in a Flying Fortress previous to last Monday's raid on a Paris airplane factory. The comments of the Observer, Major Howard Nussbaum, were recorded, as well as the voiced of the Pilot, Captain Witt and the members of his crew taken directly from the plane's intercommunication system. These men deserve high praise for their gallantry. From the time our heavy bombers hit the Channel Coast they faced determined enemy opposition. Through flak and enemy fighters they drove straight to the target, and then battled their way home. This is aerial warfare of deadly intensity, and our crews are facing an ordeal by fire difficult to imagine but once realised, almost impossible to overestimate.

Perhaps you will have a clearer understanding of what this means when you know that this same crew took part in another operation on Sunday. When they returned to their base at dusk, the heavy bombers of the Royal Air Force could be seen overhead, winging towards Italy. This was round-the-clock bombing. A complete recording, four hours long, was made during the raid. You will hear only a few small portions and these are not intended as a comprehensive account. That would necessarily include the careful planning by General Eaker, Commanding General of the Eighth Air Force, his staff, and all the other officers working in operations. It would have to include the work of ground crews, the indispensable contribution of the Service Command, the co-ordinated efforts of the Fighter and Bomber Commands.

GENERAL DEVERS (Continued)

All these are imperative to a sustained and unrelenting assault on Nazi Europe.

You will hear the words spoken by the members of one crew as they face danger and carry out their mission. Such phrases as "nine o'clock" and "eleven o'clock" may be strange to you. They indicate the direction from which enemy fighters are attacking. Thirty seven enemy planes were knocked down. You will not hear machine gun bursts because at the time this action took place, all the crew were wearing oxygen masks, and with the exception of the Observer, all the men used throat microphones. These can only pick up the individual's speech. The Observer's lip microphone was enclosed in his oxygen mask. But even if you hear no gunfire - either on this recording or at any other time - you are fighting this war as well as the men in this bomber. It is you who provide the Army's weapons, and here is a chance to meet our fighting men as they use them - at the moment when they prove their courage and their devotion to duty. Now we pick up the voices of its crew as they speed towards the Continent just a little more than fortyeight hours ago to bomb the Nazi-held airfield at Le Bourget near Paris.

NUSSBAUM

It is now 8.20. Zero Hour is at 8.45. In exactly twenty-five minutes, at Zero Hour, every plane, every bomber, every fighter on this

operational mission

PILOT

Pilot to Tail Gunner. Check your glasses and see if you can get the number of that aircraft to the right of us.

TAIL GUNNER

Tail Gunner - Roger. Four two eight.. I think it is four two eight. Roger.

PILOT

Thank you. Roger.

NUSSBAUM

As I said, at 8.45, which is in about twentyfive minutes, all the planes on this mission, whether they be bombers or fighters, will be in the air on the way to the target. That is known as Zero Hour. I can now see the wing ahead of us. It is in perfect formation. They are scheduled to go into the target two minutes head of us. We have not as yet made our rendezvous with our fighter escort.

BOMBARDIER

Altitude 10,000 feet. Put on your oxygen masks. We are at oxygen level.

TAIL GUNNER

Tail Gunner. Roger.

NUSSBAUM

As you can hear, we are going on oxygen now. I have just put on my mask, and it may make my voice sound somewhat muffled.

Crews generally go on oxygen at around 10,000 feet. The pilot will check the crew every 10,000 feet altitude or so to make sure the men are still on oxygen and are all right.

It is now exactly 8.48, and we are somewhere out over the English Channel. In just two minutes we are to rendezvous with the fighter escort, all P.47

Thunderbolts, - the bomber crew's best friend. The Navigator is working over his maps closely now. That rendezvous is desperately important. If we

are too early for it, our Thunderbolts might never find us, and if we're late, they'll use up all their gas circling and waiting for us, and won't be able to take us as far as Paris.

We're right on the nose! Three huge formations of Thunderbolts are sweeping down on us from the North West. They're a good deal higher than we are. That is precision timing for you, especially when you remember that these Thunderbolts took off from different air fields 10 or 15 minutes ago, rendezvoused first with each other, and then came out here to meet us, at a precise time when we would be passing a given pin point on the map.

The time is exactly 9.02. We are at bombing altitude

PILOT

Calling all to man your guns!

BOMBARDIER

Bombardier to Navigator - man your guns!

NUSSEBAUM

We are now flying over enemy territory. Our parachutes have been adjusted. We have put on helmets to catch any flak that might be coming our way.

BOMBARDIER

Bombardier to Pilot - go ahead.

PILOT

Go ahead.

BOMBARDIER

I'm going back to pull the pins out of the bombs now.

PILOT

Roger

NUSSEBAUM

That was the Bombardier to the Pilot. He is now leaving the bombardier's compartment and going back to the bomb bay to pull the pins from the bombs. We are getting ready for business.

BOMBARDIER

That guy at twelve o'clock seems to be hit!

PILOT

Pilot. Roger. Roger.

NUSSBAUM

The flak is coming up ... This is
certainly flak-infested....

RIGHT WAIST GUNNER

Flak 4.30 high!

TOP TURRET GUNNER

There! Four fighters right above
us - four fighters!

PILOT

Are they 47's?

TOP TURRET GUNNER

Yes, sir, they're 47's.

PILOT

O.K.

NUSSBAUM

We are nearing the target. We can
see the field from here, and just
beyond that we can see Paris itself.
We are getting some very bitter and
determined opposition, they're
giving us just about everything
they have....

TOP TURRET GUNNER

... something around I think.

PILOT

Cut the goddam fussing around and
get on the ball!

Flak Flak Flak

TOP TURRET GUNNER

Enemy eleven o'clock level.

NUSSBAUM

We are being attacked! We're being
attacked! A Focke Wulf 190 is
coming in on us.

PILOT

Get at your guns! Get at your guns!

NUSSBAUM

The guns are going - A Focke
Wulf came in at about eleven thirty

PILOT

Report. Report.

TAIL GUNNER

Tail Gunner Roger.

LEFT WAIST GUNNER

Left Waist Gunner Roger

RIGHT WAIST GUNNER

Right Waist Gunner Roger.

BALL TURRET GUNNER

Ball Turret Roger

RADIO OPERATOR

Radio Roger

NAVIGATOR

Bombardier Navigator Roger

PILOT

O.K. Boys, keep your eyes open now.

BOMBARDIER

At twelve o'clock level there seems to be something burning - some plane or something.

TAIL GUNNER

Flak six o'clock! Six o'clock level

BOMBARDIER

Bomb bay doors being opened!

PILOT

O.K. Open bomb bay doors.

RIGHT WAIST GUNNER

Three 47's at three o'clock high.

NUSSBAUM

Our bomb bay doors are open

PILOT

Roger.

TOP TURRET GUNNER

There's something at twelve o'clock high.

BOMBARDIER

Don't bother me now, please! On the level there, boy, please!

NUSSBAUM

The Bombardier is working with his bomb sights now. There's been a lot of flak. Our pilot has been taking evasive action. The bombardier wants the ship - he needs the ship level -- we're levelling off.

The flak is really coming up --
some more bursts! The sky is - the
sky is just black with little puffs
of smoke.

BOMBARDIER

Bombs away!

NUSSBAUM

The bombardier has just dropped his
bombs and we are leaving the field.
We are taking a wide turn to try to
avoid the flak. We will be going
due East now.

RIGHT TAIL GUNNER

Watch there - one o'clock low - some
enemy fighters!

NUSSBAUM

We are directly above Paris now.

RIGHT WAIST GUNNER

Flak four o'clock low! Flak four
o'clock low!

NUSSBAUM

Paris is just about four miles directly
below. There is not a cloud between
us and the ground. I can see the
Eiffel Tower -

BOMBARDIER

Where?

NUSSBAUM

Right out there just about one
o'clock - see?

BOMBARDIER

Yes, that's what it is!

The first in really coming up
some more tonight. The way is - the
very is that black with little marks
of smoke.

CONFIDENTIAL

Somebody

MURKIN

The controller has just dropped his
hands and we are leaving the field.
We are talking a while then to try to
avoid the field. We will be going

REPLY THAT BUNNET

the first now.

Water there - one check low

enemy fighters

MURKIN

RIGHT FIRST CHECK

to one directly above Tania now.

High four check low

check low

MURKIN

There is just about terminal directly

below. There is a cloud between

on and the ground. I can see the

CONFIDENTIAL

level tower -

What?

MURKIN

Right out there just about one

CONFIDENTIAL

check - see?

Yes, what's what is it?

NAVIGATOR

Attack! Attack! *-- one o'clock!

NUSSBAUM

We are being attacked - there go our guns! -- It was an ME 109, a Messerschmidt 109. It came in at eleven o'clock right to the left of our nose. It swooped down on us, and under as our guns fired. If we missed him, the Ball Turret Gunner got his chance, I guess.

RICHARDSON

At this point the small recording apparatus became temporarily disconnected. The Fort was on its way home, and the remainder of the voyage was so short that the crew knew they were going to get back safely. They celebrated in mid-air by singing while one of them played the harmonica. Listen to them!

RADIO OPERATOR

(Singing) "The Stars at night,
are big and bright,
Deep in the heart of
Texas...."

CO-PILOT

Hey, cut that out! Cut that out!

RADIO OPERATOR

Cut what out?

CO-PILOT

That singing!

PILOT

Yeah, that's because it's Texas -
that's why you want it cut out!
All right! everybody take their
hats off, we're going to sing the
National Anthem now.... At ease.

(Crow begins "Deep in the Heart
of Texas")

(Tail Gunner comes in with
"Pennsylvania Polka")

RICHARDSON

This is the first recording ever made inside of a Flying Fortress in
combat. For this unique recording of air warfare, the National
Broadcasting Company is indebted to Lt. General Jacob L. Devers,
Commanding General of the European Theater of Operations, Captain Witt,
who piloted the Fortress, and Major Howard L. Nussbaum, the Observer
with the recording apparatus who gave you the description.
This is Stanley Richardson returning you now to New York.