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ANNOUNCER

This is Jim Wahl speaking from Honolulu, Hawaii. This afternoon we are privileged to bring you an epic of the Battle of Midway that could not be told until now -- astounding stories of courage, resourcefulness and tenacity which contributed much to the smashing defeat of the Japanese invasion forces launched at America's Pacific outpost on June 3 and 4. Beside me in the studio are some of the young men who flew the Fleet's patrol bombers. They saw the enemy first under dramatic circumstances. Later they struck at him in one of the boldest, most skilfully-conceived blows in naval history. And when he fled, they continued for hours and days, despite foul weather and the weariness that comes from waging modern aero-amphibious warfare, to comb the surface of the ocean lest he return for a last, desperate blow at Midway. To introduce these brave flyers to you, we have Captain Logan Ramsey, United States Navy, who directed the operations of all aircraft plying from Midway during the battle. He deployed his planes over an arena encompassing a half-million square miles. Come in, Captain Ramsey.

RAMSEY

I shall not occupy much of the time allotted us, because these young officers have the real stories of the patrol planes. My own job was to coordinate and direct the aerial forces of the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps based at Midway on June 3 in accordance with the orders of Captain Cyril T. Simard, senior officer at Midway.

I believe that his was the first instance in our country's history that units of all three services have gone into action simultaneously against an enemy in obedience to the orders of unified command. They functioned magnificently. The account of the Navy's patrol bombers had to be saved until now

because the men who fly them have been thoroughly occupied until very recently. When the smoke of battle cleared, their work did not end. Besides pushing their long-range searches, they had the arduous task of combing the vast ocean area for survivors. That's a brave story in itself. Beside me is Comdr. Massie Hughes, of Salma, Ala., who acted as the patrol plane group commander in a manner calculated to inspire his juniors. He was ably assisted by Lt. Comdr. Bob Brixner, of Piedmont, Calif., who directed one group, ^{Cop. Hughes} ~~Massie~~, will you give your slant on the battle?

HUGHES

Our job is to serve as the eyes of the Fleet. In fair weather and foul - we had both at Midway during that terrific week -- we must deliver to the officers who direct the farflung operations prompt, accurate information that sets in motion great forces to oppose the enemy. I think we succeeded in this task on June 3 and 4. And here I'd like to introduce Bob Brixner.

BRIXNER

Thank you, Commander. ~~I'm not going to talk about our ground operations. They went along splendidly. But the~~ ^{people} ~~kids~~ up there -- flying -- did what I consider the major part of the job. For example, the officer whom I shall now introduce provided the sort of information Commander Hughes mentioned. He gave it at a moment when the action had not yet been joined -- and when the news he gave to our leaders at Midway and Pearl Harbor very probably tipped the balance OUR way hours before the first bomb fell. He is Ensign Jack Reid, of Paducah, Kentucky. Jack -- will you tell your story?

REID

~~The morning of June 3 began like all the other mornings had since December~~ ^{On} ~~→ We took off before dawn. Our plane headed westward on its assigned search sector, functioning perfectly, with the controls set to the automatic pilot.~~ Hours passed. With binoculars, I was peering through the light haze that hung over the Pacific. Suddenly I saw them. Dark objects on the horizon -- maybe thirty miles distant and dead ahead. It was what we'd been seeking for six months - the Jap Fleet! That was a moment I'll never forget. But to be sure, I turned to ~~Handeman~~. ^{my copilot}

do you see what I see?" He took the glasses. Then he said quietly:
are
"You/damned right I do." We moved closer. Like miniatures on a
backyard pond, there they were. Steaming along calmly in column. I
estimated eight large ships -- later changed my count to eleven.
There actually were seventeen, as I discovered finally, plus a con-
siderable screening force. We coded a quick message that we'd made
contact.

ANNOUNCER

~~That WAS a preview of history! Had the enemy spotted you?~~

REED

~~No, Jim. Not then -- or later. In all, we made three passes
at them. It was only too plain by that time -- they were heading
directly for Midway. We counted battleships, heavy cruisers and
transports. Throttled down, we dogged their trail, watching their
white wakes. We stayed with them several hours..~~

BRIXNER

~~May I pick up the yarn here a moment, Jim?~~

ANNOUNCER

~~Yes, Bob.~~

BRIXNER

All this happened on the morning of the third. Reed's infor-
mation gave Midway almost twenty-four hours to prepare for what
followed. Best of all, his patrol plane found the enemy, reported
them, figured their course -- and eased out of sight without having
been seen by the enemy. That's why the surprise backfired ~~on the~~
~~enemy~~. Well, that night a daring stratagem was evolved. It was a
dozen-to-one shot. We asked for volunteers -- and everybody wanted
to go. The fact that Lieutenant Bill Richards, of Collingswood,
New Jersey, is standing beside me at this moment is pretty good
evidence of the mission's success. Bill, describe your torpedo
attack that night.

RICHARDS

Yes, sir! You see, making a torpedo attack at night with patrol
planes is something new. Few of us had even practiced it. But when
word came from Jack Reid that dozen large ships were heading for
Midway, it looked like our big chance. We took four flying boats,
loaded in the torpedoes, and headed west, hours before midnight.
My boat took the lead. Behind me, in formation, came Lieutenant

-4-

Bug Davis, Ensign Gaylord Propst, and Ensign Allan Rothenberg. We ALL got back safely. Here's Propst and Rothenberg to say Hello. You first, Gaylord --

PROPST

Thanks, Bill. Hello! I'm darned glad to be here!

RICHARDS

And now, Allan.

ROTHENBERG

I'll second Gaylord's sentiment! Hello!

RICHARDS

Okay, fellows. First thing we knew, we were driving into bad weather. What had begun as a night merely as black as the inside of a coal mine, got really dark. We separated -- and Allan, here, never did find us again. He had to attack by himself. Luckily we broke into the clear again as we neared our targets. From about eight miles, as we literally crept toward them at high altitude, we saw the Jap formation. There were ten or twelve large ships, all right, steaming along as unconcerned as geese. Two columns of them -- hell-bent for Midway. I gave the high-sign at precisely one-thirty a.m. We started down. Each of us picked a nice, fat objective. Mine was the biggest ship in the enemy force -- what I thought was a carrier. At less than a thousand yards I ^{dropped} ~~loosed~~ my tin fish. Then I shoved forward the throttle and pulled up over the Jap's stern. For the first time, we saw that it wasn't a carrier at all -- but a big transport filled with troops.

ANNOUNCER

Did your torpedo hit home?

RICHARDS

Right on the button! My rear-gunner reported heavy explosions and he moved away. Propst, here, flew in second position in our three-plane formation. Tell them about it, Gaylord.

PROPST

The Japs were just waking up from their surprise when my plane started in. I'd selected a transport, too, and got a hit. As we hung away, the sky began to light up like Coney Island on the fourth of July.

Page 4

...my's anti-aircraft fire had opened up. We caught some
...snuel, and Davis got a lot. But we all got away in fine shape,
even Allan, who tackled the whole mess alone.

EUGELS

That's the end of Story Number Two aside from Propst's forced landing when he ran out of gas. He was picked up three days later. Number Three concerns Lieutenant Howard Ady, of San Antonio, Texas, and Lieutenant Bill Chase, of Altoona, Pa., who used their fifteen-ton flying boats to play hide-and-seek with the Japs on the morning of June 4 -- and acquire information that may well have decided the course of the battle. They found the enemy's carrier striking force aiming at Midway from the north. Ady was the first to sight the carriers while Chase saw the mass flight of Jap planes heading for the island. Howard, you tell the story.

ADY

We were doing the "usual", just at dawn that morning, when we happened to sight a twin-float seaplane whistling along on a opposite course from ours, about 120 miles from Midway. He didn't see us. We knew then that the Japs must be darned close. They were. -- We bucked through intermittent rainsqualls for another thirty minutes, flying pretty low -- when we ran smack into that Jap carrier fleet. It was like watching a curtain rise on the biggest show in our lives. You see, the enemy was ^{also} emerging from ^a the bad-weather "front", ~~too~~. Two carriers, two battleships, cruisers, destroyers. A magnificent sight! We slipped back into the cumulus clouds and throttled down. Then we skirted their flank and picked them up from the rear. Midway lay less than two hundred miles away -- and they were steaming straight at it!

ANNOUNCER

Were these the carriers whose planes attacked that island, Howard?

ADY

They were. They were just about to deploy into formation for launching the fighters and bombers that Bill Chase saw a few minutes later. Big guys, they were. The KAGA and AKAGI -- which not long afterward took a pasting from the Army, Navy, and Marines, and got sunk for their pains. Behind them came a third carrier of the SORYU class. I didn't know it then. Well, we

got off a hurry-up code message giving their course, speed, bearing and distance from Midway.

ANNOUNCER

Will you pick up THE STORY AGAIN MR. BRIXNER -
What did you do next?

ADY

~~Our patrol had hardly begun, Jim. Leaving the Japs, we continued north. At about 250 miles from Midway, we found our second twin-float seaplane. Only this baby was close-aboard. Lieutenant Maurice Smith, my co-pilot, said, "Lets' go get him!" And I said, "Okay, Snuffy, lets!" Unfortunately he beat it into the clouds, faster than we could travel -- and that's the last we saw of him. MR. BRIXNER, HE PROBABLY had fifty rounds of our machinegun bullets to speed him along, I think. MR. BRIXNER -~~

BRIXNER

Now we come to the last of this epic. For most of the Fleet the Battle of Midway ended on June 6 when the Japs fled northwest. If anybody deserved a rest, it was the pilots of the patrol squadrons, who had flown night and day with little rest, fourteen hours at a stretch. But they didn't get that rest. Commander Hughes will tell you why.

HUGHES

Here's why, Bob: the battle, moving north and west, left behind it a sea literally filled with rubber life-rafts. Some contained survivors. Many were empty. We know that our final job would be to sweep that vast area for pilots forced down in the action. Dog-tired from their long period of patrolling -- and the strain of the battle itself -- our boys turned to again. The last of them got back only a few days ago. Lieutenant Norm Brady of Canborn, Iowa, got this exacting assignment: "Go out 390 miles on course so-and-so. A patrol plane has been shot down there forty-eight hours ago. You will observe the weather on your way out, particularly the wind direction, and make your search plan on the spot. Look for

a yellow rubber-boat with survivors. Bring them back " Norm did, bring them back. One of the four survivors of the ten officers and men who had been in that plane will tell you his moving story. Her is Philip Fulghum, 20 years old, Second-class aviation ordnanceman of Portland, Oregon.

FULGHUM

Thank you, Commander. On the morning of June 4, we were scouting the Jap occupation force which had been reported aiming at Midway. We found it about 6:30 a.m., fifteen miles off our star-board bow. We saw four or five cruisers, a lot of destroyers and some larger ships just visible on the horizon. We closed in. The enemy destroyers started throwing anti-aircraft fire at us, so we went into a cloudbank. I manned our bow-gun. Pretty soon three Jap aircraft swung at us from different directions. Two took diverging courses and raked us aft. The third zoomed up toward our bow -- and on his second pass I brought my gun to bear. I managed to get some long bursts of tracer-fire into him. This killed his machine-gunner, so I finished my can of ammunition by spraying the forward part of the Jap plane. At last accounts he was heading for the water -- out of control.

WAHL

How was your own plane taking all this, Philip?

FULGHUM

We were getting hit pretty hard. The heavily-armed Japs on our tail managed to get some cannon-fire into one of our fuel tanks, and gasoline poured through the ship. Suddenly, it ignited. We'd been trying to escape the Japs by entering the clouds at less than 1000 feet, but hadn't been very successful. Well, I figured it was time for me to leave my position in the nose. I saw that our co-pilot was dead. The pilot was still trying to fly the plane even though he'd been badly wounded. Then he said our aileron controls had been shot away. We were starting down in a pretty steep glide when I managed to climb back into the navigation compartment -- only to find the whole interior of the ship a mass of flames

ANNOUNCER

That was a desperate predicament, Philip. What did you do?

Page 7

I did what I could. Because the wing-bombs seemed to be getting hot, I set both racks on "safe" and released them. Then I started for the after-station -- and found that our ammunition was blowing up. I ducked under the navigator's table to wait for it to expend itself. Our chief radioman had donned his steel helmet and was calmly tapping out our position. He didn't seem to have been hit. So I went aft, where I found our machinist. Just as I was reaching for my life-jacket, the plane hit the water^{or} at 140 knots. The impact threw me forward through two bulkheads and when I picked myself up I saw that both our gunner and another machinist were dead, beside their guns. One of our two remaining officers had been badly wounded in the stomach. Ensign Lea McLeary, the navigator, was all right, though. Somehow, we all got out. I was last to leave. Things got pretty confused about this time, but I think the machine-gun blister popped open and I just floated out. We got the life-raft inflated. As we were transferring medical supplies and food from the plane, which was sinking, two Jap fighters dove at us, straffing. We went into the water for protection. When they left, we crawled into the raft, and paddled out of the way of the burning gasoline on the water.

ANNOUNCER

What happened then, Philip? Were you picked up soon?

FULGHUM

Not very soon. Mr. McLeary estimated that we lay about 150 miles west of Midway. We rigged a jury-sail with my silk scarf -- but the wind started blowing us toward Tokyo, so we gave that up. Mostly we just bailed and pumped, because the raft had several holes which we couldn't patch. After almost sixty hours in the water, Lieutenant Brady's patrol picked us up. They took us back to Midway. And then we went to bed.

ANNOUNCER

Thank you, gentlemen -- all of you. This has been an inspiring firsthand account of a part of the Battle of Midway about which little has been known until now. You have heard from the airmen who operate the "eyes of the Fleet" -- the big patrol planes. Their was an epic that America won't soon forget. This is Jim Wahl, turning you now ***