

LOWELL THOMAS' BROADCAST

FROM 9th AIR BASE

GERMANY

April 17, 1945

GOOD MORNING, EVERYBODY: The big news

~~over here~~ in Germany yesterday was that first encounter, the first friendly meeting in the air you might call it, of the Russian and American fliers. It perhaps included a brief passage at arms. But it ended with some friendly wing dipping and then each flew back to his base to tell about it. And I tried to tell about it from this same mobile transmitter, from which I am broadcasting tonight-- here deep in Germany. But radio transmission was not good last night, and I doubt that you heard me.

I am referring to it again tonight because I today have been with a group of American airmen who again ran into the Russians. All this is historic and

important, because we have been waiting over here for the junction of the American and Russian armies; we have been looking forward to the time when they would meet here in Germany. We have decided this would be more important than the taking of Berlin, which is no longer a vital strategical center. For Berlin, the once great German capital, is now a scene of desolation and starvation.

Today Lieutenant Fred Canada, a Texan in a Mustang fighter, ran into two flights of Russian pursuit planes, just east of Dresden. The Russians were flying our P-39s which Fred himself had flown before coming to Europe. With Lieutenant Canada were Lieutenant Francis J. O'Connell, and Lieutenant Tom Mills, -- Ohio lads.

These meetings in the air with the Russians are what all of our flying people over here are talking about today. For a long time they had been speculating as to when it might occur, and what might happen. They hoped no one would be shot down, that there would

be no inter-Allied incident, to cause bad feeling. And the American airmen are glad the first meetings, in the air, with the Soviet fliers, have taken place.

Canada and his pals belong to the hottest air outfit I have encountered -- the Pioneer Mustang Group, the 354th of the Ninth Air Force; the first to fly Mustangs, P-51s, in combat. Of all the fighter groups in the air for Uncle Sam the lads of the 354th, led by Colonel George Bickel of Nutley, New Jersey, and Lieutenant Colonel Jack Bradley of Brownwood, Texas, claim to hold the all-time record for destroying enemy aircraft. In their mess hall they have a big scoreboard at the top of which are the words: HUNS IN HELL; followed by the huge score they have rolled up. Here is that score: Nine hundred of Herman Goering's planes destroyed; plus fifty-three probables; plus four hundred and five damaged. And while I was there the 901st was chalked up. They were particularly elated over this one because it was what our fliers call a "jet job,"



one of these incredibly fast new German planes that you see one moment and the next you don't.

Two of the lads I was with today were cruising blithly along a few days ago, when they suddenly encountered an enemy airmada of ninety pursuit planes. And the two took after the ninety! That's how hot our airmen have been of late. They shot down five of the Jerries, and got home safely. Colonel Jack Bradley told me that his outfit has averaged fifty German planes destroyed for every one of our Mustangs the enemy has gotten. There are sixty aces in this Pioneer Mustang Group. Topping the list is a young Lieutenant, Bruce Carr, from Union Springs, New York, with twenty-four; then Colonel Glen Eagleston of Alhambra, California; with a score of 20½; and Colonel Texas Jack Bradley with seventeen.

The story of Lieutenant Bruce Carr is one of the great air sagas of the war -- how the first outfit