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"Flying For Freedom"

THE EXPERTS WERE IMPRESSED



The group of R.N.Z.A.F. officers, including the Deputy Chief of Air Staff and the Secretary, who attended the preview of "Flying for Freedom" at the 22B studio. With them are Bryan O'Brien and M. S. Bullivant of the CBS staff

THERE was an impressive row of wings and ribbons on the uniforms of officers of the R.N.Z.A.F. who assembled the other day to listen to a preview of the new ZB feature *Flying for Freedom*. They were there because the National Commercial Broadcasting Service wanted to hear what some real flyers thought of this new serial. "We are sometimes blamed for putting on blood and thunder" explained the programme manager. "Well, this isn't blood and thunder. We think this is the real thing; something that the boys in the Air Force could listen to with advantage, and that is why we have asked you along—to get your expert opinion on it."

IN securing the material for his story, Hubert Chain, who wrote *Flying for Freedom*, lived with and flew with Canadian, British, Australian, New Zealand and American personnel at the major training fields in the R.C.A.F. training programme. He flew in pursuit ships at Uplands, Ottawa—the advanced training station. He flew a 350-mile bomber course at Malton, Toronto. He observed the unified squadron training tactics at Rockcliffe, and lived at the Port Albion station where pilots and bomber crews who have been on active operations are sent for six months of study and relaxation. From these experiences Chain built up his story—not that *Flying for Freedom* is, properly speaking, a story. Each incident is complete in itself, though the same four flyers—the Australian "Cob", the American "States", the Canadian "Crash", and the Englishman "Bill"—turn up in each episode right through the serial. It is from real men that these stories were culled and from the files of the R.C.A.F. These are stories of frays, air battles, bombing raids, and examples of work by different units—all showing how the same degree of skill, the same care, and the same courage is needed by everybody taking part.

It is not only exciting incidents that make up this story. The idea is to give a picture of the life of the lads from the time they begin their training. So the first episodes are at a training station in Canada. But there is exciting incident, too, as the instructors recall experiences of

their own or use as examples the stories of heroic and careful work done by men of various units of the Air Force. "We tolerate no foolhardy flying", says the Air Commodore to the young men as they assemble to begin their training, and that note is struck again and again.

"There are no unimportant details in flying", says the instructor to the young trainee who has forgotten to switch off his recognition lights while in the air. It is because these men have been trained with thoroughness that they bring their planes back after night upon night of adventure.

AND that was the verdict of the assembled experts on flying who listened to as much of the programme as could be squeezed into their limited time.

"This should be immensely popular", said one officer. "And very useful, too. We want young fellows, and their mothers too, to know what life in the Air Force is like".

"This will make them all want to be pilots more than ever", said another. "As it is, we have difficulty in persuading them that they can do just as good jobs as gunners, observers, and navigators."

"Yes, that was a good point that it takes good brains to be a navigator", remarked a third. "And the programme showed the need for co-operation, that a crew must all work together to get the right results."

"There is one aspect of this serial which impresses me very favourably," said one of the most important-looking of the wing commanders. "Here is an opportunity, hitherto almost lacking, of permitting members of the public to gain some idea of the work, effort, and training that is necessary before you can have an air force at all. The public is always interested in raids and sensational flights. Here they have the chance of gaining an insight into the preliminaries essential to building up competent crews to deliver the bombs."

"We'll encourage the lads to listen in," was the verdict, but it is doubtful if much encouragement will be needed.

"*Flying for Freedom*" will be heard from the ZB stations on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8 p.m., beginning at 22B on November 10.