

Adeline

(REVISED)

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Program No. 1

LT. TED SHERDEMAN

"WE WHO FIGHT"

February 4, 1943
9:00-9:30 P. M.

PLACE: CBS Radio Theatre #3
53rd and Broadway

RECORDED BY: Columbia Recording Corp.

1. PFC Dana Babcock, U.S.M.C.
2. British Merchant Seaman Fulton
McKillican
3. Parachute Tester Adeline Gray
4. Pharmacist's Mate Wheeler Lipes, USN
5. Brig. General Stuart C. Godfrey,
Chief Air Force Engineer
6. Ambulance Driver Croswell Bowen

NARRATOR: John Nesbitt

MUSIC BY: Fort Slocum Band,
Director T/Sgt. A. M. Small

NESBITT: Keep the Home Fires Burning... That's a great old song and it's especially appropriate for "We Who Fight," because the civilians of America are not only keeping the home fires burning... They're keeping them aglow in steel mills and war production plants all over the United States. The factories of America are fighting on the home front to outproduce the Axis. Recently the workers of a parachute company in Connecticut gathered at an airport to watch the initial test of a new type of chute.

SOUND: PLANE WARMING UP IN BACKGROUND... KEEP UNDER...

NESBITT: In front of a hangar a plane is standing in readiness waiting to take the tester up for the first jump... Nearby two men are talking...

VOICE #1: Well, we should know in a few minutes whether Nylon will work as parachute material...

VOICE #2: If it does, we won't have to worry about the shortage of Japanese silk...

VOICE #1: Who's going to test this one...?

VOICE #2: Gray...

VOICE #1: Boy, that's one job I wouldn't want...

VOICE #2: There goes Gray now...

VOICE #1: Where...?

VOICE #2: Getting into the plane over there...

SOUND: BRING UP PLANE MOTOR...IT TAKES OFF

VOICE #1: All I can say is...Good luck Gray...

SOUND: BRING UP PLANE MOTOR BIG...THEN FADE OFF...BRING BACK IN
AGAIN FAINTLY

VOICE #2: How high do you think they are...?

VOICE #1: About two thousand feet...They've been over the field
for five minutes now...I wonder why Gray doesn't jump...?

VOICE#2: Do You think it's cold feet...?

VOICE #1: Naw...Not Gray...I've seen that one jump from higher than
that...

VOICE #2: Hey, look the plane door's opening...

VOICE #1: There's Gray in the doorway...

VOICE #2: It should be any second now...

VOICE #1: There goes Gray...The chute's opened!

MUSIC: STINGER...FADE UNDER...

NESBITT: And that's the way the first Nylon parachute for the Army
Air Forces was tested...Standing beside me now is the
person who tested that chute...As you've probably gathered
by now...The name is Gray...So go ahead, Gray...

GRAY: First of all, let's get one thing straight...My first name is Adeline...And I'm ^{the first and only} ~~one of the few~~ women parachute testers in the country. ~~Even~~ when I was a little girl I was interested in flying. So I went out and got myself a job to pay for flying lessons. After weeks of training I finally came to the moment of my first solo. I was sort of scared but I didn't dare let my instructor know it. That must have been my lucky day because when I brought the ship in for my first solo landing I made a perfect three pointer. I don't think I've made as good a one since then.

NESBITT: And so you've been flying ever since...?

GRAY: That's right. However, as soon as I knew how to fly well enough to satisfy myself, I didn't stop there...

NESBITT: Well, what did you do...?

GRAY: That's when I took up Parachute jumping. I went to an instructor and told him I wanted to learn how to jump... He thought I was crazy. He felt that a woman wouldn't make a good jumper. But I finally convinced him that women can do almost anything a man can do. So he decided to teach me. And so, I became a parachute jumper.

NESBITT: How many jumps have you made, Miss Gray...?

GRAY: Thirty three in all...That includes a delayed jump from ^{nine} ~~twelve~~ thousand feet. In that one I didn't open ^{you} ~~the~~ chute until I got down to ^{one} ~~five~~ thousand feet. ^{above the ground.}

NESBITT: That must have been a terrific strain on you when the parachute finally opened!

GRAY: I thought my head was coming off...But I came through without a scratch...

NESBITT: Well, Miss Gray, when did you start testing parachutes?

GRAY: Right after the United States entered the war. I realized there weren't many experienced parachute packers around so, to do my bit, I went to work at the Pioneer Parachute Company.

NESBITT: And that's where you tested the new Nylon chute for the Army Air Corps...?

GRAY: That's right. You see the Japs control the silkworms... Who in turn, control the silk supply of the world..So the United States had to find a substitute for parachute silk. They experimented with Nylon and finally believed they had the right formula. The first parachute made of this Nylon was put together in our plant. Of course, after the Nylon chute was built...There was the question of who was to test it. Since I had been jumping for quite a while by that time, I volunteered to do the job. The day I went up for the test, I really was scared because I knew how much depended on the success of that parachute. If it worked, then it proved that Nylon chutes were practical and we didn't have to depend on the Japanese worms for help...I mean both kinds...(MORE)

At any rate we went up to two thousand feet and after I had said a short prayer, I jumped out.

GRAY: At any rate we went up two thousand feet and after
(CONT'D) I had said a short prayer, I jumped out...

NESBITT: And what were your thoughts as you floated down to earth?

GRAY: After the chute opened, I just said over and over to myself - "It works! It works!" Then, just before I landed I thought of something else.

NESBITT: What was that Miss Gray?

GRAY: Well, one parachute is equal to four hundred and forty one stockings. I realized that, with Nylon parachutes in production, American women were in for an absence of leg flattering hose for the duration.

NESBITT: Yes?

GRAY: So my one thought on landing was - "Land gently Adeline! If you rip the Nylons you're wearing - you'll be in cotton from here on in!"

NESBITT: And did you land gently?

GRAY: Nope. I'm in cotton from here on in.

NESBITT: Thank you Miss Adeline Gray.

MUSIC: PLAY-OFF

(APPLAUSE)

MUSIC: "ENGINEERS FIGHT SONG"...FADE DOWN AND OUT BEHIND