

Hale Burge: He didn't congratulate me or Jim Crider either, it was just in a days work and that's all it was. We did our job every day and nobody give us a pat on the back and we kept on working because we had a job to do.

We'd sit up there at nights a lot of time waiting for the B-24s to come in from a raid from Japan. At 10 o'clock at night we had the runway lights all shut off. And when we'd get a call that they were 15 minutes out before landing to warn us to turn the lights on we'd never hear of the airplane again. It'd crash in the old Bering Sea and that was all you knew about. The last information we had was 15 minutes away. So it was very, very sorry thing to see guys fly out in the morning and never return back that afternoon.

One time an airplane, a photo recon aircraft, with long range bomb bay tanks in it and all the camera work, flew out and was gone a total of 24 hours. Anyway, it got shot up pretty bad. I believe this is the right one: the pilot and co-pilot both got hit and the number 3 engine had a oil cooler leaking. They didn't want to shut it off because if they did the Zeros would gang up on them all the more so they let it windmill. Eventually it stripped the gears out, the induction gears on the engine, but the prop stayed on wind milling. The engine wasn't turning over but wind milling and on the B-24 it had an air scoop on the one side for this or that carburetor and the other for oil coolers or what have you. And that prop was whipping around so bad that it hit the leading edge of the cowling.

So the gunner who was a flight engineer, of course, he had to fly the airplane back home. He got the pilot out of the seat and he sat in there and brought that airplane in. And they were gone 24 hours and we thought they was already gone down but it hadn't. So that was an exciting thing that day when that airplane come out.