

Joseph D. Hutchison: Anyway ... where was I?

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, you were talking about the plane being loaded up ... heavily loaded, and the antennas you had never seen before.

Joseph D. Hutchison: Oh, yeah. Well, we climbed in and took off, and immediately I smelled gasoline. So, I looked out the right waist window.... No, that was not true, that happened later on. We flew and landed at Great Falls, Montana. We landed at Great Falls, Montana, and got arctic equipment; and loaded that in the plane, too. By that time, we were sitting practically [Chuckle] on top of; you couldn't walk around on the plane, because it was so badly loaded.

When we landed at Great Falls, the brakes failed. And he put it in the sub-depot there for repairs, and they didn't do anything for a few days. And the guys were having a great time in town because it was a great town for enlisted men. But for some reason or another, they hated officers; which didn't make him happy at all. The only thing he could find for amusement was to go to the movies.

Anyway, I had another run in with him there: I wanted to buy of, an extra pair of long johns - I figured it was going to be cold enough up there that it would be a [Chuckle] good idea to have a spare pair. So I went over [and] tried to buy some, and they wouldn't sell them to me - you had to have an officer sign for it. So then I bumped into him and stupidly asked him to sign for it. So, I got a chewing out again and an answer of "no" naturally.

So anyway, he decided that we were going to take off on a test flight. And they hadn't done anything at the hanger. We got in, and we told him, "Well, we didn't need to get in for a test flight; he could go ahead and test it himself." He said, "No, everybody's got to be in." So we got in and took off. And then is when I smelled the gasoline. I looked out the window and it was running down the side of the airplane. So, I got on the intercom and called him and told him. He said, "I know about it." He said, "We'll see about it when we get to Edmonton in Canada."

Anyway, we went on past Edmonton and landed at St. John's, British Columbia; which was just a little bay, a little field - practically a dirt strip. It was a steel mat, as I recall. Or, no, it was Macadam [a type of road construction].

Anyway, the plane was so heavy it practically went practically right through the landing strip. And the brakes didn't work again. So, they pulled it off to one side of the runway, crossways of the runway. And the engineer and the assistant engineer went to work trying to fix it themselves. Well they did their thing and the pilot decided, "We're going to take off." Well, it had been sitting there for a couple of days and sinking into the muskeg, or whatever the heck it is - the soft ground up there. And when he tried to move it, it wouldn't move. So then he started revving the engines up to full blast and then slowing down; rocking it like you would rock a car trying to get it out of the snow, or something. And eventually, it broke loose. But, he was under full power at the time, so it jumped - ran clear across the runway. And before he could turn it, or anything, there was a C-47 Canadian Airlines plane parked there; it had a little stairway for passengers to get in. And he stopped it, but not until the number one propeller tangled with that stairway -

chewed up the stairway and bent the propeller at right angle - the tips of it, were at right angles to the rest of the propeller.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh my goodness.

Joseph D. Hutchison: And you don't get new propellers for B-24s, at that time, out in the middle of Canada.... So, what do we do now? They stood around talking about it for a half an hour. And pretty soon, a Canadian guy with two hammers and a file walks up. And he stands there, and straightens that propeller out by banging, having one hammer in one hand and the other in the other, and tapping each blade - it was a three bladed propeller. Then he took his file and smoothed it out a little bit, and we took off. And as far as I know, [Chuckle] flew with that propeller the rest of the war.

Janis Kozlowski: They wouldn't do that today.

Joseph D. Hutchison: No.