

Interview with William Butler Hutchison

**Aleutian World War II National Historic Area
Oral History Program**

May 18, 2010, Des Moines, Iowa

Interviewed by Janis Kozlowski, National Park Service
Transcribed by Professional Transcripts

This interview is part of the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area Oral History Project. The interview with William Hutchison was recorded with his permission on a digital recorder. Copies of the audio file are preserved in mp3, wav and wma formats and are on file at the offices of the National Park Service in Anchorage, Alaska.

The transcript has been lightly edited.

(The dictation starts out with dialog after the phone was answered by Mr. Hutchison and before the interview starts.)

William Hutchison: and — uh — one of my prized possessions. Well, anyway, I am going to put you on speaker and see how that works and that will give me two free hands.

Janis Kozlowski: Okay.

William Hutchison: Okay you are on speaker now, can you hear me?

Janis Kozlowski: I sure can.

William Hutchison: Oh great, that is going to be great.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:00:20.1] Now, I wanted to ask you, Mr. William B. Hutchison, if it is okay if I tape your interview today?

William Hutchison: Yes, it is. You may tape it.

Janis Kozlowski: Okay, thank you. Okay. I worked up a list of questions, some things that I thought I would ask you if I need to, but it would be most important if you tell me stories that you remember best about your experience in the war during World War II. If that includes stories that are outside of the Aleutians, that is okay too, and I do have your memoirs that you put together in front of me and I might ask you questions about those as well.

William Hutchison: All right.

Janis Kozlowski: So, I just wanted to start out and ask you some questions about how you got involved in the military in the first place. **[0:01:11.0]** Can you tell me where you were living and whether you were drafted or enlisted or.....

William Hutchison: I was working in the FBI in Washington, DC. I went there when I was seventeen years old, just out of high school, and I always had interest in aviation. My father used to take me to see airplanes take off and land (laughs) and when I was in Washington D.C., I enrolled in George Washington University and they had a Civilian Pilot Training Program which I took and I learned how to fly a little Piper Cub. Then I went to the Navy thinking that would give me a real good chance of becoming a Naval Pilot, and it did, and I went into the Navy. **[0:02:12.4]** I worked for the FBI and J. Edgar Hoover who was a terrible person that refused to let me go. So I just packed up and left one day.

Janis Kozlowski: Wow, how come he wouldn't let you go?

William Hutchison: Because he thought that what I was doing at the FBI was more important. (Laughs).

Janis Kozlowski: Hmm.

William Hutchison: I don't know whether you know what a terrible person he was or not, but

Janis Kozlowski: I do remember some of the stories.

William Hutchison: Well, they are all sadly enough true.

Janis Kozlowski: **[0:02:49.9]** Hmm. So where were you when -- well do you remember when Hitler invaded Poland in 1939?

William Hutchison: Indeed I do.

Janis Kozlowski: So how old were you then, a teenager?

William Hutchison: A teenager. Yes, and I spoke at my graduation about that very thing. I spoke about the need to get organized to fight Hitler.

Janis Kozlowski: **[0:03:22.1]** And then do you remember where you were and what you thought when you heard that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor?

William Hutchison: Oh, I couldn't believe it. I was driving up in Northern Virginia with my girlfriend and I -- It was Sunday afternoon and I just thought the world -- I had a hard time going back to school thinking how foolish it was for me to be in school. But I did go back and finish my course.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:04:02.5] But then at some point you decided to join the Navy.

William Hutchison: Indeed I did. I will tell you, the Navy has always appealed to me. More people in Iowa join the Navy percentage wise than any other state. I don't know whether you know that or not. But that is so and there was a \$500 reward when I joined. I thought I could use that too.

Janis Kozlowski: That was quite a bit of money then, right?

William Hutchison: That was a lot of money.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:04:41.5] So what unit were you attached to when you joined the Navy?

William Hutchison: Say again.

Janis Kozlowski: What squadron or what unit were you attached to when you joined the Navy?

William Hutchison: Oh, I was a Cadet. I was an Aviation Cadet.

Janis Kozlowski: Where did you get your start then? Were you in Washington D.C.?

William Hutchison: Yes, I was.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:05:06.7] Then what kind of training did they give you after that?

William Hutchison: Well, I started -- I had already gone through Civilian Pilot Training through George Washington University and then when I enrolled -- then when I enlisted in the Navy, I became a Cadet and started the procedures, the long training procedure with the Navy, to go to pre-flight school and then to flight school and then to special -- then to Pensacola and eventually become an Ensign.

Janis Kozlowski: Do you remember how long that training took?

William Hutchison: I would say the better part of a year.

Janis Kozlowski: Okay. So you were trained as a Navy pilot.

William Hutchison: Yes, I was.

Janis Kozlowski: And what kind of airplanes did you fly?

William Hutchison: [0:06:03.0] Well I flew -- I chose to fly multi-engine bombers when I was still a Cadet. We got a choice of what we learned to fly so I chose multi-engine land-based bombers and then later on a development happened -- A VJ outfit of the Navy is a preferred squadron in which you must be able to fly any aircraft that the Navy has. You got some "active to go" through that training and (laughs) I was told by the

man who recruited me to fly with the VJ outfit, that he had sent, because of the nature of the assignment, had sent a Letter of Commendation to me from him. And I am right in the process now of finding out if he ever did that. I am writing to the Navy Records Department. I have one Letter of Commendation from the Air Force in flying Navy Reserve. I was in a Navy Reserve program in Lincoln, Nebraska and the Air Force base was right across the field from us and they had a terrible accident and I got there and was instrumental in saving a man's life.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh. That is probably not often that another branch of the service would give a letter of commendation to another fellow, so you must have been very important in that incident.

William Hutchison: Yeah, I have the thing in my hand, the letter of commendation, so I want to -- so I would like to see if there is another one there and I have just written to the Bureau of Records.....

Janis Kozlowski: Um-hmm

William Hutchison: to see if I can get a copy of my whole folder. So there you are.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah. Yeah, that is great that you got that. That is something I bet you have held very dearly through your life..... [0:09:07.6] So, what -- after you went through your training then where did you go?

William Hutchison: I went to multi-engine training at Lake City, Florida. I was an Ensign then. Then I was assigned to a squadron in the West Coast and I went there and then as I told you, there was an opportunity for me to fly with a VJ Squadron which was sort of the elitist thing you would do because you had to fly every kind of plane made. And I flew for them, I flew dive bombers for them; but I flew other aircraft too.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, I was thinking you must have been pretty valuable to them because most people just got trained in maybe one or two different airplanes, but -- so you must have been a pretty natural good pilot?

William Hutchison: Well I guess I was. It seems -- I saw a picture of a plane that I flew and I think I could crawl in that plane and fly it today.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:10:36.0] Do you think because of your skills, did they carefully choose where they were going to send you, or do you still think it might have been a random choice of where you ended up in the war?

William Hutchison: I think it was a random choice. I think that people had to go where they had to go -- and that was part of the whole thing. A lot of people didn't get to go where they wanted to go, but I certainly did. I cherish my experience with the Navy and It's a

Janis Kozlowski: Did they ask you where you wanted to go?

William Hutchison: No, I don't think they did, you just knew where you were going to go if you chose multi-engines you were going to go probably to the Pacific, which is what happened to me.

Janis Kozlowski: Okay, so where did you go after your training?

William Hutchison: [0:11:37.2] Well, I went to Attu and then came home from Attu because of a weakness in the plane we were flying and it was then that I flew with the VJ outfit. Then I went back to the Pacific for two years.

Janis Kozlowski: When did you arrive in Attu? Do you remember about the time-frame.

William Hutchison: I can't remember. I think I talked to "getting off a plane and crawling into a tent-like place to stay". I heard my name read on the radio by Tokyo Rose.

Janis Kozlowski: (Laughs).

William Hutchison: She had my name and my number and my hometown down, as she did everybody else's in the whole squadron. That was really a shocker.

Janis Kozlowski: That was right after you got to Attu?

William Hutchison: That was the day I arrived in Attu.

Janis Kozlowski: Wow!

William Hutchison: I didn't know what day it was.

Janis Kozlowski: Did you ever find out how she knew?

William Hutchison: Never had a clue, never did anyone ever gave me a clue. It was well known that she would do that. One person told me it was a thing that the Navy kept in touch with newspapers, that all of us came from areas where a newspaper was involved, and that she had lists of those names which were terribly essential to the war effort, but were certainly frightening to shake up -- to hear your name being read by a voice a thousand miles away really upsets you.

Janis Kozlowski: I bet it did. Yeah -- Well, so you must have gotten to Attu after the Japanese had been expelled.

William Hutchison: Yes, that is true.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:13:49.5] And so what -- Well first of all how did you get to Attu, did you ferry an airplane up?

William Hutchison: Yes I did. I flew an airplane up to Whidbey Island to Attu, up to Dutch Harbor and then from Dutch Harbor to Attu.

Janis Kozlowski: What kind of airplane was it?

William Hutchison: It was called a Harpoon which is a PV-2 I believe, a PV-2 yes.

Janis Kozlowski: All right. So you said you had problems with that airplane. Do you remember what the nature of those problems were?

William Hutchison: Yes, the wing tip was manufactured by a furnace company and they would come off pulling out of a steep dive, the tip would come off, but it didn't affect the flying of the plane; the plane still flew; but it was a little lop-sided and that was enough to frighten everybody and we were called back to the states to have our planes worked on, all redone.

Janis Kozlowski: So you had to take that whole fleet of PV-2s back to the states?

William Hutchison: That is right.

Janis Kozlowski: Did you continue to fly them after they were fixed then?

William Hutchison: Yes, we did

Janis Kozlowski: Okay. What kinds of missions did you fly?

William Hutchison: [0:15:11.8] They were as I -- As I told you, we had a business of keeping a lighthouse broke down. That was at Cape Lopatka. It was what the Japanese fishing fleet depended on to avoid hitting Russia and so we would knock that lighthouse down, it would take two 11" rockets placed strategically at the base of the lighthouse that would bring the whole lighthouse down. Two days later it would be back up again.

Janis Kozlowski: Really! So they were pretty quick at getting it functional again.

William Hutchison: They were terribly quick.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:16:08.0] How many missions were you able to fly over there?

William Hutchison: I think I flew twenty-one.

Janis Kozlowski: That is a lot of missions. Do you -- Over what time period, do you know?

William Hutchison: Two and a half years.

Janis Kozlowski: Given the weather there that is a pretty good number of missions isn't it?

William Hutchison: It is indeed, but they were not all hazardous. Many of them were surveillance or we would attack the fishing fleet which fed the main Japanese mainland. They were pretty easy prey. Most of the fishing boats were unarmed and they were easy to put down.

Janis Kozlowski: But you probably never knew what you were going to get when you flew missions over there. You must have gotten jumped sometimes by their fighters?

William Hutchison: I think I sent you a picture of Oscar attacking me from behind.

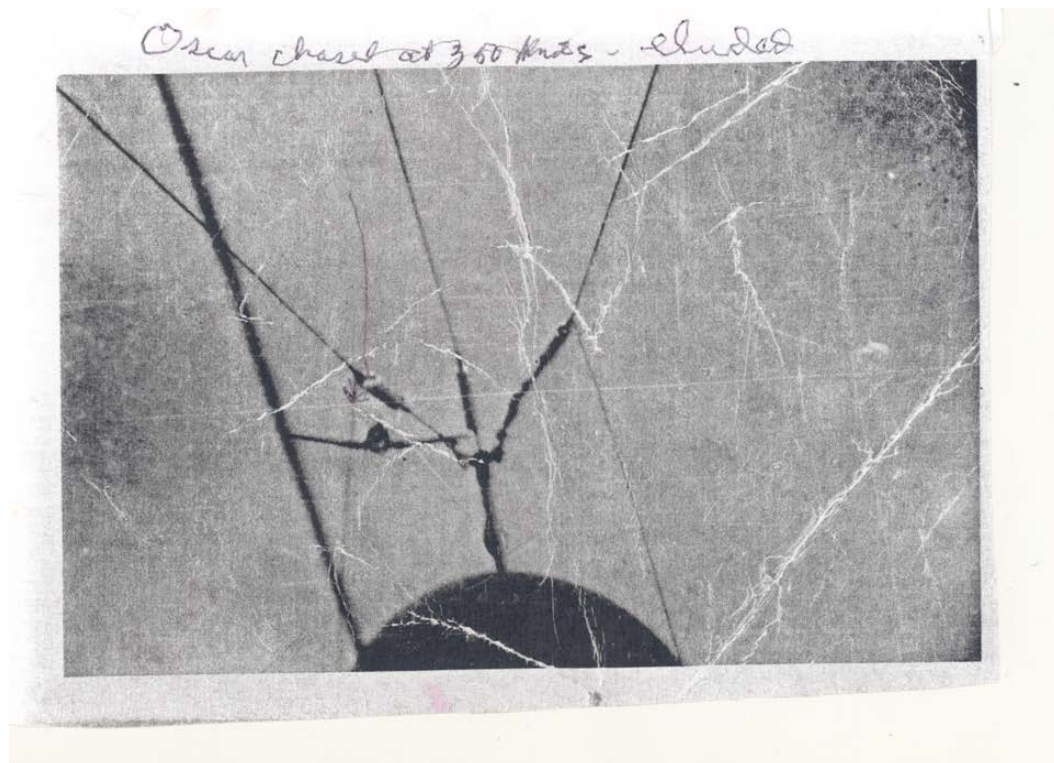


Photo courtesy of William B. Hutchison

Janis Kozlowski: You know you said you were going to send a picture, but I didn't see one in the envelope.

William Hutchison: There was one in the envelope, but I have another one if you want it. The main fighter at the time of course was Zero.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, um-hmm.

William Hutchison: But Oscar was their second best fighter aircraft and that was what was assigned to the Northern Kuril Islands, to protect them. We would occasionally

make a raid over the bases, the Naval bases, which were where we lost -- each time we did it, we lost a crew, a plane or two.

Janis Kozlowski: Really, every time you attacked the Naval base, one of them went down?

William Hutchison: Yep!

Janis Kozlowski: Wow. So I guess you were pretty lucky because you made it back?

William Hutchison: [0:18:22.5] That's right. And you know, it was -- I found a poem about a year ago that tells exactly how I felt at the time. That was -- that you know flying up in the beautiful sky in a powerful piece of airplane was pretty easy and pretty wonderful. When things went bad, they went bad at sea and you went down and no one had to look at you being shot. I had a cousin who was a doctor in the Navy and my mother would write and tell me how terrible he had it. And I thought "my God, I don't know why my mother says that." Doctors stay in steel operating rooms on big ships, but this cousin was assigned to a Marine landing squadron and it hit all of the bad places in the Pacific and he wrote a letter to his father, which was never sent because of censorship, but it told about how he slept over night with two of his buddies both dead beside him. So I never had anything like that. I would see a plane go down in the freezing ocean and that would be the worst I ever had was and it was all over in a matter of seconds.

Janis Kozlowski: But that must have been a pretty bad memory for you.

William Hutchison: Yes it was in a way, yes.....

Janis Kozlowski: Because you knew those guys in the airplane, right?

William Hutchison: Yep. The thing of it was, getting there was probably worse than what happened when you got there. You were flying over water at 36 degrees in which you would last about 15 seconds and even kids that were micro-younger than I -- one of them said he would never, ever get in a plane again.....(Laughs)

Janis Kozlowski: [0:20:22.6] Oh. How old were you at the time when you were flying those missions?

William Hutchison: Well, I would be 19, 20, and 21.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, so you were the old man on the crew, huh?

William Hutchison: I was the old man.

Janis Kozlowski: Well that's a pretty -- I mean you must have been really good at that young age to be flying a multi-engine airplane already, being in charge of it.

William Hutchison: [0:20:46.0] It was a wonderful thing to learn to fly and to have such a wonderful aircraft. The aircraft I had was a Harpoon. We flew with the Air Force who did not even have heated compartments in their plane. We had heated pressurized compartments in our plane. We had a stove that had hot meals for eight people in it. We had a plane that would fly 800 miles on a single engine and I always felt that we were superior to the Air Force because of the equipment we had.

Janis Kozlowski: While yours might have been a little bit better of an airplane and more comfortable, it was still the very limits of its range, those missions that you were flying, right?

William Hutchison: Well yes, but when we got the Harpoon we added 400 miles and it made it that if you missed getting back to Attu you could go someplace else. You had enough gas to go someplace else.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh. That must have been kind of a comfortable security you had there with a little extra fuel.

William Hutchison: It was indeed. It was indeed. The speed of the aircraft had not been slowed down at all. It was a remarkable aircraft. My grandson, traveling in England about year or maybe two years ago, found a book about the airplane, the Harpoon. It has reminded me of -- you might be interested to know that one of the people quoted in that book was a member of our squadron. I think I've mentioned his name to you and I can't think of it at the moment.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:22:48.3] Is it Elmer Lurker?

William Hutchison: No it is not. (laughs) Elmer Lurker!! (laughs) How did you know Elmer Lurker?

Janis Kozlowski: Well you mentioned his name the other day so I wrote it down.

William Hutchison: Oh you did, well you shouldn't have. (Laughs)

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, okay.

William Hutchison: Because Elmer Lurker dropped a wing tank right smack on the deck of a huge Japanese fishing troller.

Janis Kozlowski: What happened there, can you tell me about that?

William Hutchison: Yeah, well you selected what you wanted to do on a yolk (the steering wheel of an aircraft). You have a button that releases five different things, charges, guns, puts down flaps, puts down wheels, drops wing tanks, drops bombs. You select what you want to do. Then you press the button after you selected what you want to do. Elmer somehow selected "drop wing tanks" instead of "drop bombs". So anyway Elmer died about two months ago. So I guess it wouldn't be so bad.

Janis Kozlowski: Was he embarrassed about his mistake?

William Hutchison: Yes, because I had a picture, a beautiful picture of him and of the gas tank right straight in front of me and I had to swerve up, pull up and dump my bombs in the ocean. So he had made a bad mistake and many years later I offered to give him a copy of the picture and he said "I don't want it."

Janis Kozlowski: (laughs) So did you give him the business when you got back?

William Hutchison: Yes I did. (laughs) But then it could have happened to anybody. [0:24:55.9] Another time in my life I was flying SBDs, a dive bomber. A young man from New Guinea, who had been in a Navy squadron with an 80, mind you an 80% attrition, came back in who was looking for a temporary place to fly and he chose my VJ outfit. I knew he was drinking too much and here I was an Ensign in charge of a Naval Air Station. The air station was Clatsop County Airport at the Clatsop County Naval Air Station. There were only six of us there. He was one of the six and he selected in taking off, instead of raising his wheels, he raised his dive flaps and he went straight in and was killed of course.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh. Where was that station you were talking about?

William Hutchison: That was a little Naval Air Station at the mouth of the Columbia River [Clatsop County Naval Air Station].

Janis Kozlowski: Okay, I know where you mean then. Okay -- Where were you flying these SBDs?

William Hutchison: [0:26:09.5] Out of that little Naval Air Station. I was servicing carriers that came, I was a Bogey-man and every other flight I was being vectored out to intercept another person flying a Bogey-flight -- in other words a false attack on a carrier.

Janis Kozlowski: I see, so would you consider that a training?

William Hutchison: Yes, it was training for radar and ship-board personnel.

Janis Kozlowski: So was this after you left Alaska, then you went down to Clatsop?

William Hutchison: Yeah, this was in the interval that I had when we found out that the wing-tips of the Harpoon were coming off and we had to take the planes back to be altered. There was an interim of time that it took to re-put the wing tips -- change them on the Harpoon.

Janis Kozlowski: Okay, so then you flew the SBD while that was happening?

William Hutchison: That's right, you got it.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:27:32.4] And then did you go back to Attu?

William Hutchison: Yes, I did.

Janis Kozlowski: Okay. So you spent two and one-half years total on Attu.

William Hutchison: Yeah.

Janis Kozlowski: Wow, that's a long time.

William Hutchison: Well yeah. But then I subtract from that two and a half years, six months.

Janis Kozlowski: That is still a long time in many people's books.

William Hutchison: Yeah, it is.

Janis Kozlowski: So were you on Attu when the war ended?

William Hutchison: Yes, I was. I was indeed. Because of Russia's position as being a nonbelligerent as far as Japan was considered, we had to stop flying our sectors immediately after the atom bomb was dropped. That was the end of our bombing activity.

Janis Kozlowski: So did they ship you off Attu pretty quick after that?

William Hutchison: [0:28:38.6] Well, not -- I stayed on for a while flying SB2Cs out of Amchitka because we were still doing submarine searches in the Pacific even after the bomb was dropped.

Janis Kozlowski: Did you say you flew SB2Cs out of Amchitka?

William Hutchison: Yeah, I did.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, okay. So they thought there still might be submarine activity?

William Hutchison: Yes, that's right.

Janis Kozlowski: Okay. Did.....

William Hutchison: I never saw a thing. I would fly 500 miles south of Amchitka. That was half way to Wake Island, turn around and fly back. I never ever saw anything outside of some little ships.

Janis Kozlowski: And how long did you end up doing that?

William Hutchison: [0:29:43.0] I was just trying to figure out how long I did it while you were posing another question. I would say -- I know I had a good time doing it. I fell in with an Army rescue outfit that had 12-cylinder powerful surface antisubmarine and they

would take me out and put me in a basket and rescue me on tape. (Laughs) They had marvelous food on board that little antisubmarine thing. So I was enjoying myself as I always did.

Janis Kozlowski: (Laughs) So you were a Navy guy but you were working pretty closely with the Air Corps, Air Force guys.

William Hutchison: [0:30:35.2] Yes, I was feeling that the Air Force there had done a good job defending the island, but a poor job of carrying the war to the Japanese. Their planes were not equipped in any way to fly 800 or 1680 miles to do a little bit of damage. In the time when we had joint operations it was not unusual for no Air Force planes to make it to the target. I hate to say that, but that is the truth.

Janis Kozlowski: Hmm..... Did the two branches of the service work pretty well together?

William Hutchison: Yes, there was some evidence that they had accomplished something working together, yes and there was none of that strife about, "Nothing could stop the Army Air Corps except the Navy." There was none of that -- we understood that their planes were not our planes.

Janis Kozlowski: I hear the Navy food was better than the Air Corps food. Is that true?

William Hutchison: [0:32:04.9] (Laughs) I think I wrote and told you that for a change my friend and I would go over and eat in the Army mess. We ended up getting our Navy clothing stolen because we would hang it on a rack outside the mess tent; but as I recall the food was not very good at the Army base. So my friend and I in retaliation stole a command car and parked it up on Gehres Point, which is part of Attu, and parked it, and it sank in the tundra, almost. Then we went back a number of months later to the Army mess again and there were our coats hanging on the rack. Of course we took them, but we never took the Dodge command car back. To this day it is sunk in the tundra.

Janis Kozlowski: (Laughs) So, I guess you got the better end of that deal.

William Hutchison: Yes, well learned.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:33:18.6] So how about sleeping quarters? Were those very good on Attu?

William Hutchison: Well by then we had Quonset huts and they were adequate. They didn't have urinals, but we were high enough in the (laughs) -- we could just go to the back door.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:33:47:1] How was it being your age, you know late teens, early 20s, to be living for a couple of years on an island like that?

William Hutchison: Well, every day was an excitement of some kind. On our day off we were going to walk down -- we heard that the Army had brought a load of ice cream in and we were going to go down there to see -- and then we got caught in a winter snow squall and got lost and had to wait huddled up until the wind stopped and we could see where in the hell we were.

Janis Kozlowski: Geez.....

William Hutchison: And then we got down there and found out that the Army had taken all of the ice cream and we were half a day late.

Janis Kozlowski: It sounds like the weather was pretty bad there.

William Hutchison: It was totally bad. [0:34:34.7] It was..... One day we heard a plane grinding away in the fog and pretty soon, I was outside, and I heard the motor stop and I knew that they had hit the mountain. They must have had a wonderful pilot because they hit the mountain about 3000 feet above where we were. Everybody on the plane survived, they all stepped out of the plane, and fell down the mountainside in one huge snow drift. They were having a great time. I thought that was one of the happiest moments on Attu.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, that is an incredible story, to have the whole crew survive a plane crash.

William Hutchison: It was the USO for entertainment that was in the plane.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh really.

William Hutchison: Yes, it was the USO.

Janis Kozlowski: Do you remember who was on the plane?

William Hutchison: I don't remember. I don't remember. In fact nobody that I knew at the time.....

Janis Kozlowski: [0:35:52.6] Uh huh. So did you see a lot of aircraft -- You said when you went on the bombing runs over Paramushiro and the Kuril Islands that you saw aircraft go down. Did you also see a lot of crashes on Attu or in the Aleutians?

William Hutchison: I am afraid so.

Janis Kozlowski: Were those usually weather related?

William Hutchison: Yes they were. It was a -- and I always think my success in avoiding a crash had little to do with my skill as a pilot, but more to do with how much wind and how much fog there was and that I just had it good and easy.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:36:39.4] Did you get to choose whether the weather was good enough for you to fly on a given day or was that decision made at a higher level?

William Hutchison: That was made at a very high level and you went when they said and you didn't always agree -- in fact a lot of times you -- and sometimes you thought "I don't see what is wrong with today, better than yesterday, and we flew yesterday." So it was arbitrary I am sure and I am sure the men who made it, didn't want to make it.

Janis Kozlowski: So you didn't always feel very comfortable with the flights that you were sent on.

William Hutchison: That is exactly right and sometimes you felt that they were not necessary. We had a flight one time with a bunch of retired cruisers from WWI that took them forever to get to the target and when they finally did get there, one man was washed overboard and -- it was -- the whole thing was a bad, bad idea. There was a B24 Army and the Navy cruisers and us -- Navy planes. So anyway that was a bad judgement.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:38:07.9] Did you have feelings at times that you thought you might not make it through the end of the war because of the kind of flying that you were doing?

William Hutchison: That thought crossed my mind; but I was never afraid of the engine failing. I just knew that that was a great aircraft and I never thought about -- I was a good -- I could fly very well in fog. Radar -- and we had Loran which was a brand new device that told us where we were exactly. Loran later became the forefather of the automatic systems for knowing where you are now.

Janis Kozlowski: So you thought the Loran system worked pretty well for you during the war?

William Hutchison: It was time consuming. It took a little bit -- it took about 20 minutes to get a good fix, but you could always get a good fix.

Janis Kozlowski: Um-hmm.

William Hutchison: Of course when the Loran became automatic, that was the beginning of the end of navigation. So I went through Naval training where I had to learn celestial navigation because of more people working out of the Navy program than anything else.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:39:39.6] How well would that work in the Aleutians?

William Hutchison: Loran was everything and Loran was not there for us when I first went there, but it got established and it was a -- I don't know if you know anything about Loran or not, but it was requiring three transmitters and the time lapse between transmitters was how you fixed yourself. But that was a great device. And one time I

had left a trailing antenna out and for Loran you needed a huge antenna, in those days you did, you don't anymore; but I had left it out and hit a squall and electricity generated and the skin of the plane jumped to the trailing antenna and we lost part of our trailing antenna and consequently the Loran didn't work. But we were navigating okay.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:40:58.6] Hmm. So with that navigation equipment, the PV2 was probably really a two-pilot operation.

William Hutchison: Indeed it was. Actually three.

Janis Kozlowski: Three, okay.

William Hutchison: Pilot, co-pilot, and then somebody to do the navigation. We divided it pretty much three ways.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:41:26.6] So did you have a consistent crew on your airplane or did you fly with different guys?

William Hutchison: Same crew. Marvelous. Three young men that were just absolutely -- the radio man was one of the smartest kids I ever met in my life. He knew more about the mechanics than the mechanic did. He knew more about the guns than the gunnery guy did and he knew -- he was an excellent radio person.

Janis Kozlowski: Do you remember his name?

William Hutchison: I do indeed.

Janis Kozlowski: What was his name?

William Hutchison: George Sproul.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, okay. He was always your radio man?

William Hutchison: Yes, always.

Janis Kozlowski: Do you remember the other guys you flew with?

William Hutchison: Yes, Jack Holmes and Marvin Davis.

Janis Kozlowski: Okay. And were those, the other two -- which guys were your co-pilots or helped you navigate -- were pilots and navigators.

William Hutchison: There was a Roger Patterson and Marvin Davis was the young man that said "I would never get in airplane again" after the bomb was dropped. He said "now I don't ever have to get in an airplane again." (Laughing)

Janis Kozlowski: Do you know if he ever did?

William Hutchison: He was a person who wanted to forget as much as possible. So I had a wonderful letter from him telling me exactly why he -- he didn't keep up with correspondence. The other two did. Jack Holmes was the mechanic and when we didn't go back to war he joined the Air Force and became an Air Force pilot. Marvin Davis -- I don't know what he did, he just avoided thinking about his experience. We hit a down draft and he was asleep in the tail of the plane and he went up into the ceiling of the plane and was knocked unconscious, and really I thought he was dead. (Laughing) But that was one of his experiences that didn't sit well with him.

Janis Kozlowski: No wonder he didn't want to fly anymore. (Laughing)

William Hutchison: That's right.

Janis Kozlowski: [(0:44:23.7)] Did you keep in touch with any of your other crew members over the years?

William Hutchison: Yes I did. George Sproul.

Janis Kozlowski: Is he still alive?

William Hutchison: No he has been gone for 10 years.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh.

William Hutchison: So young. A marvelous man.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:44:50.0] Did you keep flying after the war?

William Hutchison: Yes I did, for 14 years. I stayed in the Navy Reserve.

Janis Kozlowski: But you never bought yourself an airplane, a private airplane.

William Hutchison: No, I never did. I had -- I joined a group one time and we, the group bought a plane and I flew it so seldom that I quit that, and I was flying routinely, flying marvelous Navy planes.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:45:30.2] Were there any that weren't so good or had bad features?

William Hutchison: (Laughs) Oh, yes. I was a pretty bright Cadet at Pensacola and if you got a certain grade on navigation you got, not Saturday afternoon off, but Saturday morning and Saturday afternoon and I wanted to go down and learn to fly a Seagull, which was a beautiful plane. It had an in-line engine in it, an air-cooled in-line engine which is a mistake to begin with. It didn't have enough power to get off the ground unless the winds were at least 40 miles an hour. So I was allowed to go down and crank up this Seagull and try to get it off and I never succeeded. I would make a wake by flying with the wind and wiggling it back and forth and stirring up the water, spinning

around and trying to go up the wake I had made and thinking I could get it off the ground, but I never could. And that was a plane that was built by the Curtiss Company, which was operated mostly by retired admirals, and I always thought that was a terrible waste of money to have a plane that couldn't take off.

Janis Kozlowski: Yes, so it was only a kind of trainer, or did they let you do it for fun. They didn't really use it in service?

William Hutchison: They couldn't use it in service. It was just there. (Laughing) And they kept making them and kept shipping them around. The OS2U was the float plane that was used most often. It was an old design and it was very good at what it did. It had enough power to get off a choppy sea and enough stability to top right in the open ocean. The OS2C were never a good plane, but the Seagull looked so beautiful. Just absolutely beautiful and couldn't fly worth a damn.

Janis Kozlowski: (Laughs) You know, I don't think I have ever seen a Seagull.

William Hutchison: Well, it's a beautiful plane. It was narrow and it had an in-line air-cooled engine. If you know anything about engines, you would know that it was a hard thing to do. (laughs) If they are in-line, the rear cylinders aren't going to be cooled as much as the front one.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, so the ones in the back might run pretty hot.

William Hutchison: That's right. You have got it. What's your background?

Janis Kozlowski: [0:48:21.2] Well, I am a pilot. I got my license when I was in my 20s and we still own a couple of airplanes now. We have a Cessna 180 on floats and a little Citabria two-seater, on wheels.

William Hutchison: Oh, that is a marvelous. The 180 is a wonderful plane.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, we like that airplane quite well.

William Hutchison: [0:48:54.2] Yeah, well I have a cousin whose son flew from Los Angeles to New York and from New York back to Los Angeles when he was 12 years old.

Janis Kozlowski: Wow!

William Hutchison: He's now in charge of the Chinese Air Force.

Janis Kozlowski: Really?

William Hutchison: Yep.

Janis Kozlowski: How did he get to be in charge of the Chinese Air Force?

William Hutchison: Because that is what his Dad did -- in this country he was never -- I don't know how strong his connection was with the Bureau of Aeronautics, but he always had that kind of a job where he was testing and trying and setting up things in the aviation world. His name is Tym Czyciczum. (Laughs)

Janis Kozlowski: Wow.

William Hutchison: Of Polish decent. [He speaks fluent Chinese --added comment]

Janis Kozlowski: No kidding! (Laughs)

William Hutchison: Yes. (Laughs) So he can't come home as long as he has that job. So his family hasn't seen him for several years. They have gone to China to see him -- His father was a big wheel in aviation in the U.S.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:50:26.7] Sounds like your whole family is quite talented that way.

William Hutchison: Well it sort of turned out like that. I was born on an Iowa farm. Learned how to repair a two-cylinder John Deere tractor and make it run.

Janis Kozlowski: Well that was probably a very good skill to have.

William Hutchison: It was then, yes.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:50:55.3] Can you think of any other flights or experiences that you had during the war that were particularly memorable or people that you remember.

William Hutchison: Yeah, I think I have told you about some of them. My friend and I -- The Navy had marvelous clothing and we had green hooded coats with a fleece lining that could be taken in or out and that was exceptionally right for Alaska. The Air Force guys were going around in skimpy little leather jackets, colder than hell. So as I told you, we would -- my friend, Hank Green, who flew with our skipper -- He and I went to eat at the Army mess and while we were there, we took our coats off and hung them on the rack and went back and of course they had been stolen. So we stole a jeep from them. (laughs) A Dodge command car! (laughs) And took it out to Gehres Point, if you know the island of Attu was where Commodore Gehres ruled the roost and so -- anyway we went back a couple of months later to the Army mess and there were our coats hanging on a rack. Apparently the people who had stolen them were wearing them into the restaurant.



Photo courtesy of Bill Hutchison

Janis Kozlowski: (Laughs).

William Hutchison: So my friend and I stole our coats back, but we didn't tell them where the jeep was.

Janis Kozlowski: (Laughs) Did you ever find out who stole them?

William Hutchison: No, no. I could have done a little detective work because it was a real blow to us to lose our beautiful coats.

Janis Kozlowski: I bet. Yeah and I heard you guys had better equipment than the Air guys, the Air Corps.....

William Hutchison: I always felt over-dressed. (laughs) Too comfortable when I was around the Army flyers, they had skimpy little leather jackets that they stood around shivering in and I thought "Oh dear what a terrible thing to have happen."

Janis Kozlowski: (Laughs).

William Hutchison: [0:53:35.3] But there was another incident -- The Japanese on Attu had a fair electrical generating capacity and lines to different places and my friend and I discovered the generator and thought, "Well it's a generator, we ought to go into the generating business to see that we had electricity." So we cranked up the Japanese generator and we could hear people screaming and hollering. There were Americans working on the line while we were cranking up the generator and it was electrocuting them.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh no!

William Hutchison: No one was killed, but we should have known better.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:54:24.0] Did the Army and Navy get along very well on Attu?

William Hutchison: There wasn't a lot of contact. There was not a lot of contact -- only if you made an effort to have a contact did you. My friend, Hank Green, had a cousin who was in the Air Force up there and we made an effort to see him whenever we could.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:54:53.3] When you were on Attu, were both the Army and Navy airfields -- were they paved?

William Hutchison: They had iron -- there was a picture in one of your calendars of them laying down. There was an iron, perforated iron and they all fit together.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh the Marston Mat?

William Hutchison: Yes. That was what all the runways were.

Janis Kozlowski: The one on Amchitka as well.

William Hutchison: Yes indeed. And it was a mile long.

Janis Kozlowski: On Attu?

William Hutchison: On Attu it was probably 7500 feet -- I don't know, it was less than a mile I know.

Janis Kozlowski: Are you saying the Amchitka runway was a mile long?

William Hutchison: Indeed it was. There was a possibility of landing the B29s there.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, I didn't realize it was that long.

William Hutchison: Yep. And I think the island has since become radioactive, hasn't it?

Janis Kozlowski: I think so, yeah. They did so much testing on it and all the evidence of World War II has probably pretty well been obliterated.

William Hutchison: They tried different things. They dug a trench along the mile-long airstrip and they would pour gasoline into that mile-long strip and set fire to it. Then it worked to the point that they could land in a black haze instead of just plain fog, but at least you had an idea where the runway was.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, okay -- so that was the way of finding the runway.

William Hutchison: That was the way of finding the runway.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh.....

William Hutchison: I never saw it operating and when I flew out of there on the SB2C, it was non-operating. In fact, when I landed, I had to have help getting back to the station as Amchitka is a totally flat island and I would -- I don't know how I did, but if I called, a jeep would come out and get me and lead me in. But that was another time that I will tell you a story about that.... [0:57:28.7] On an SB2C there were two wooden runways for your feet and then there was a canvas spread between those two runways and beneath that was a bomb bay and the canvas was soon gone and on my second time out in Amchitka flying the SB2C, I had taken a pencil to make sure that I had a pencil for the -- are you familiar with an E6B?

Janis Kozlowski: You mean in the cockpit?

William Hutchison: Yeah.

Janis Kozlowski: No, not really.

William Hutchison: Oh, it is just a big E6B that you pull out and do your navigation.

Janis Kozlowski: Okay.

William Hutchison: on it. So anyway, I took off and I leaned over too far and damned if my pencil didn't come out of my pocket and fall clear down in the bomb bay. There was no other pencil to do navigation with. So I decided that I would lean over real quickly and bend down and crawl down there and get that pencil. I could see it. But every time I would get ready to reach down to get the pencil I would throw the plane off its setup nose position and (rrrrRRR, makes engine sound) so I would quick get back in

my seat (laughs) and pull the nose up a little bit with a control and try it again and this time we would go just the opposite. (laugh) It would start slowing down and -- oh shoot, I can't have that -- I took my shoe and my stocking off and by slipping forward in my seat I could reach the pencil with my toe and get hold of it and brought it up and was in navigation business.

Janis Kozlowski: So did that canvas, the canvas between your legs, was that how you were able to get your foot down there?

William Hutchison: No, the canvas had been long worn out and gone. It was no longer -- you know, a lot of the things on a plane that are not used sort of deteriorate. They get left behind or something happens to them -- and that's what happened.

Janis Kozlowski: That was lucky that you were able to get that pencil back.

William Hutchison: Yeah, because I had 500 miles, straight south 500 miles 180, 500 miles 360 and there wasn't a big chance of missing my Amchitka Island, but it was a wonderful experience and I am made a real good contact with the Army rescue unit. [1:00:22.0] They fed me steaks as long as they could take pictures of them hauling me out of this.....

Janis Kozlowski: (Laughing)

William Hutchison: And you know I was cooperating nicely and I was just -- they had a wire basket they were bringing up and a kid threw a bucket of water on me. I screamed. (laughing)

Janis Kozlowski: (laughs) So how often did that go on?

William Hutchison: Well that was just once and this is how lax they were. They had whiskey in gallon jugs aboard that sub-chaser that the Army had. The Army had an air-sea rescue, wasn't that strange, and they were more interested in going to sea and chasing white sea otters of which I got to see a lot.

Janis Kozlowski: Really!

William Hutchison: [1:01:41.1] They were very rare animals. At that time for killing one there was a \$10,000 fine if you got caught with one.

Janis Kozlowski: I had never heard of a white sea otter.

William Hutchison: Well they look like white snakes as they swam in the ocean. Beautiful, beautiful.....

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, I imagine.

William Hutchison: I wonder if they are all gone?

Janis Kozlowski: Well, you guys were out there a lot more so you probably saw more than what we are able to now, because they do surveys and things like that, but you know maybe they just don't spend the time out there that you all did.

William Hutchison: I suppose that that is it. Anyway, that was my connection with the Army and they were wonderful guys. (laugh) And the kid that threw the -- I said you SOB I am going to have you court marshalled. I was so mad and of course I cooled down because he was a brash young kid who was probably doing what somebody told him to do. (laughing)

Janis Kozlowski: (laughing)

William Hutchison: There were laughs....

Janis Kozlowski: [1:02:57.0] Do you remember it as being kind of a good time in your life or not?

William Hutchison: Now that I am sitting at almost 90 years of age I see it as maybe the best part of my life.

Janis Kozlowski: Did you make a lot of friends there?

William Hutchison: Yes indeed. They are all dead now.

Janis Kozlowski: Ah -- That must be kind of sad.

William Hutchison: It is indeed, to be a survivor -- Then I made friends with the children of some of my squadron mates. And now they are dying off, so -- that happened to me just last week.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh....

William Hutchison: Hank Green's son, who was a dear friend of mine, lived in Salt Lake City and he was 63 years of age and he died.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh... that's a shame. That is too young.

William Hutchison: Much too young, yeah. And he was a 30-year veteran of the Utah Air National Guard. They did refueling all over the world and often took me with him on long refueling flights.

Janis Kozlowski: [1:04:13.2] Were there other guys that you served with that maybe weren't in you crew but that were important to you or that you made friends with?

William Hutchison: (Laughs) Yeah there were some. They are all dead!

Janis Kozlowski: Oh.....

William Hutchison: Did I tell you about the men that I made acquaintances with in the Reserve? And I -- we'd celebrated Navy Day in South Dakota. The governor had been an ex-Marine fighter pilot. And so he asked for us to come up from Lincoln, Nebraska and do a fly-over as they had a crowd of people there and they would have a loud public address system established and people had come to see the event and could hear both sides of the conversation. And so as I was pulling out, a man, a four-striper (that is a Captain), halted my aircraft and said he was going to go with us. And he went with us and we were flying at -- no one was to go below 100 feet -- And we flew down the runway because there were people sitting in bleachers on both sides of the runway. And so anyway, we were going down there and this Marine pilot, who had been an Ace, I can't remember his name, if I could remember his name you would recognize him. He became governor of South Dakota. He says "that isn't very close, can't you do another run and come down about 50 feet." (laughs) This old guy at the in the back, who didn't know anything about operating a radio, said something terrible. He said to the whole crowd of women and children, "We are not going to fly down there at 50 feet, if we do we will drop a shit-bag on you". And that went out all over the whole place and somebody in the tower said "will the Navy plane that made that last transmission identify themselves?" and I said "like hell!" (Laughs)

Janis Kozlowski: (Laughs)

William Hutchison: This old guy was -- I later had another contact with him later on and he goofed up again. That time it was not serious.

Janis Kozlowski: Well you might have been a young guy, but you weren't stupid.

William Hutchison: [1:07:20.1] (Laughing) Yeah, well. I often times felt I was having too good a time for this to be true, but there is a wonderful poem I leaned since -- but -- So the people that flew aircraft didn't have the dirty part of war to face. Their losses were at sea or at land or picked up by the proper people and their bodies were disposed of and we didn't have to suffer any loss of any kind, which in a way was true. So, that's that. I can think of a lot of other things and as soon as you hang up I will think of a lot of things.

Janis Kozlowski: [1:08:27.5] (Laughs) Yeah, well I have had you talking for more than an hour, so you are probably getting -- your voice is probably getting worn out.

William Hutchison: Well, are we through do you think or should we go on or what.

Janis Kozlowski: No I think that between your memoirs that you wrote and your interview today, I think we have captured quite a bit of it. I really appreciate you allowing me to talk to you and spending the time with you today.

William Hutchison: Well thank you, just don't mention Elmer Lurker. (Laughing)

Janis Kozlowski: Okay, I will make sure he is not identified. We don't want to embarrass anybody.

William Hutchison: That's right, although he passed away two months ago. So I suppose we don't even have to be careful about him.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, if you don't want his name in there I will make sure it doesn't show up.

William Hutchison: I think that would be nice. His wife is still alive and I am sure. Are you in touch with Will Swinney?

Janis Kozlowski: [1:09:10.9] Oh yeah, Will Swinney. Um-hmm.

William Hutchison: I have a marvelous picture of him as a teenager.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh you do?

William Hutchison: Yeah....

Janis Kozlowski: Oh -- I have never seen that. You know he is pretty -- doesn't like to give up too much. He will share everything he knows about all of the other crews, but he doesn't really say much about himself.

William Hutchison: Yeah, I can't remember who he flew with either. I am looking at the pictures.

Janis Kozlowski: I think I have the list. Do you want me to dig it out?

William Hutchison: Pardon.....

Janis Kozlowski: I think I have the list of crews.

William Hutchison: Oh yeah.....

Janis Kozlowski: Will has been really good about giving me information about the Navy crews that he knows about.

William Hutchison: [1:10:02.1] Well you know -- Did I tell you that my grandson bought a book in London in a book shop about the Harpoon and in that book there are four pages of Will Swinney?

Janis Kozlowski: Oh really

William Hutchison: Yeah

Janis Kozlowski: Do you remember the name of the book?

William Hutchison: Well I have it right beside me. The Harpoon. Just a minute (calls to Polly – umm -- right beside my chair is a blue book about the Harpoon, could you bring that in to me. It's down on the floor I think). There is a lot of good information in there.

Janis Kozlowski: Okay, maybe I can get a copy.

William Hutchison: You know -- do you ever use the book finder thing on the

Janis Kozlowski: Oh yeah. You know I see Will's crew was Edwin Ogren, Donald Causer, James Hoyle, Edward Bowman, and Joe Berrier.

William Hutchison: Yep. (It's a blue book with a picture of my aircraft on it right beside my chair to the right

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, Will has been very nice to write out lists of all the crew rosters that he knows about and that has been very helpful because I can refer to it and place people that way.

William Hutchison: Well he alone was responsible for our retirement get-togethers and the-- I am going to be gone for just a second and I will be back.

Janis Kozlowski: Okay..... Apparently he went to find the book, background talking.
[1:12:21.4 to 1:15:06.5]

William Hutchison: Sorry to be so slow.

Janis Kozlowski: That's okay. I was trying to look for it myself while you were.

William Hutchison: [1:15:16.3] I have it here. Osprey Combat Aircraft 3-4 -- The name of the book is PV Ventura Harpoon Units of World War II....

Janis Kozlowski: That sounds like a good book.

William Hutchison: It has marvelous pictures in it and it has Will Swinney's name about a dozen times which I am sure he didn't mind.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, I found it.

William Hutchison: Oh you did?

Janis Kozlowski: Yep. I am going to get a copy of it.

William Hutchison: (Laughs) There are a lot of wonderful pictures here. Ah --The Empire Express about participating crews. Ah -- let's see. Snow was falling on Attu on 25 March 1944 when five of the units, PV4s prepared to take off for a strike on Japanese

installations in the Northern Kuril Islands. Will R. Swinney, radioman, flying with Boris Georgia. Yeah, I knew -- he flew with Georgia.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh he did -- okay.

William Hutchison: That is on page #26. Will R. Swinney, radar radioman, when flying with Georgia recalls the mission. It was a five airplane operation against Kurabuzaki on Paramushiro. Paramushiro was the hardest place of all. They always managed to get one plane, either shoot it up so it **[1:17:11.1]** The incident that I wrote to you about which stands out in my mind is flying back with the plane that was flying on a single engine -- 814 miles on a single engine, a heavy plane.

Janis Kozlowski: Was that another PV2?

William Hutchison: Yes, it was and they made it and I stayed right beside them and I don't know what in the hell for, because if they had gone down there was nothing I could do except possibly drop another.....

Janis Kozlowski: A raft or something?

William Hutchison: Yeah. And that would have been unlikely.

Janis Kozlowski: And then

William Hutchison: They made it back --They made it back but had to make a go-around, if you can imagine this. He made his approach and made it too high -- I suppose because he was on a single engine, but he was going to overshoot the runway. So he had to pour the coal on a one engine plane that had just flown 800 miles, pour the coal on and stress the engine to the point that it could have been fatal, and make a go-around and land successfully. Then we cheered. That was a happy time for everybody.

Janis Kozlowski: Do you remember what crew was on that airplane?

William Hutchison: Oh sure. I told you in the letter that my memory is such that I know I know it, but I can't **[1:18:59:5]** He was a particularly nice man. He was a Chevrolet dealer from Southern Missouri.

Janis Kozlowski: Was that Lieutenant Garnett?

William Hutchison: Garnett! Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Janis Kozlowski: Okay. Now if their airplane had gone down and even if you got them a raft, what were the chances that they could have rescued them? They probably didn't really have good capabilities that far out, did they?

William Hutchison: Zero, zero, zero!

Janis Kozlowski: So all you could do was to say that you saw what happened to them.

William Hutchison: You could tell their survivors.

Janis Kozlowski: Did you talk to Garnett after he landed, after he had to do the go-around?

William Hutchison: Oh heavens yes.

Janis Kozlowski: What was he thinking? I bet he was just darn glad to be on the ground.

William Hutchison: That is exactly right.

Janis Kozlowski: Laughs.....

William Hutchison: Particularly, of course he felt upset by his screwing up his landing, his single engine landing, and having to make a go-around which requires a lot of power.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, I bet, and a lot of skill probably too, right?

William Hutchison: Yep.

Janis Kozlowski: [1:20:04.1] Now do you remember anything about the story about Bomber 31, the one that they found recently in Russia?

William Hutchison: Well I have seen the movie.

Janis Kozlowski: Mm-hmm, but do you remember any of that happening when you were on Attu?

William Hutchison: I don't. I don't remember. It was just another plane lost to Petropavlovsk. There was always the possibility that we would end up in Petropavlovsk and that was not a good thing to have happen, so

Janis Kozlowski: [1:20:41.3] Did they have any way of notifying you guys about missions, about who was lost or who was missing or anything like that?

William Hutchison: I think eventually the Russians -- do you mean between the Russians and the Navy?

Janis Kozlowski: Or even on your base. Did you have any idea what happened on a day-to-day basis to other crews?

William Hutchison: Yes, because if a crew was going to be interned, they usually talked to -- We rarely flew a single plane mission. They would talk to the guys and they would say, "well, we are going to be interned." Garnett had an oil cooler for the

starboard engines, shot clear off the plane and so he would -- In fact he would even talk to our base about it.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh.....

William Hutchison: Talked to the skipper about it. Then they had taken a vote. (laughs) and they voted to not be in turn, but to try to fly back and that is really a remarkable feat to stress an engine like that -- and usually -- I stressed an engine one time -- if you could squeeze the two throttles together, you could go by the stops, and that put more pressure on the engine and it was known that if you did it more than 15 seconds you very well could have an explosion.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh boy.

William Hutchison: So I did that one time and they tell me I only ran 10 seconds, but I didn't want to get near 15 seconds and at 10 seconds we pulled away from Oscar, who wanted to shoot us down. Anyway, do you have everything you want on the book?

Janis Kozlowski: [1:22:34.2] Yeah, I do. I found it already so I am going to get myself a copy. Thanks for giving me that information.

William Hutchison: Beautiful picture of the Harpoon. The only trouble is that it is not a Harpoon that they picture. I can tell because the tail empennage is different for a Harpoon than for a PV2, so.....

Janis Kozlowski: Is that the cover photo you mean?

William Hutchison: Yeah, the cover photo is not a Harpoon. The Harpoon has the two vertical stabilizers on the back, are clear at the end and they do not extend through the stabilizer. How can you tell a page?

Janis Kozlowski: Pardon me, how can I tell what?

William Hutchison: How can you tell what page? Okay, the Harpoon, pictures of the Harpoon are on page #46. The tail empennage is very different.

Janis Kozlowski: It won't show me that much. It only gives me a few pictures to look at. They want me to buy the book.

William Hutchison: Oh course, of course. I think my grandson told me it was \$34.

Janis Kozlowski: It looks like this one I can get for -- I can get a copy for \$18 now.

William Hutchison: Really? (laughs) Well I think that is about what my grandson paid in pounds.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh yeah, um hmm. You know it all depends on when you get it and how rare it is, all those things.

William Hutchison: Yeah. Well anyway, I think it is a marvelous book. It tells pretty much the truth about the plane.

Janis Kozlowski: Good, I will get myself a copy. [1:24:36.0] Well, thank you very much for talking with me today. I bet you want to go get a drink and rest your voice a little bit?

William Hutchison: I have a cup of coffee my wife just brought in. (Laughs)

Janis Kozlowski: (Laughs) It is hard to talk for a long time like that.

William Hutchison: Well, it has been a lot of fun for me talking to you.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, thank you very much. I am going to transcribe your interview. I will send it back for you to take a look at and then if you want me to make copies of the audio and transcription for your family and friends, I will be happy to do that.

William Hutchison: Oh, how nice. That would be marvelous.

Janis Kozlowski: Because I imagine others would be interested in hearing your stories too.

William Hutchison: Well I have fifteen grandchildren. I have 13 granddaughters and 2 grandsons. (laughs)

Janis Kozlowski: Wow!

William Hutchison: Sounds like an unfair adjustment isn't it.

Janis Kozlowski: (Laughs)

William Hutchison: One of my granddaughters thinks that I won the war

Janis Kozlowski: Well that is okay. If she believes that, that is fine.

William Hutchison: [1:26:46.3] I have got to tell you a little story. She is in high school, accepted a chance to visit Japan and stay with a family that she became acquainted with very nicely. And then to turn things around, the Japanese girls came here and my granddaughter, who lived just three blocks away, came over and said "Gramps, there is no reason to talk about the war" and I said that would be the last thing in the world that I would talk about, because my wife was going to have Thanksgiving dinner so they could experience that. And so the day came that the two girls came from Japan to stay with my granddaughter Rachel's home. They came in the house and one of the girls said "How are you, have you ever been to Japan?" I said "oh yes, many times." (laughs) So I looked up at my granddaughter and she looked absolutely stricken. It turned out that that was the only English this girl knew. "Have you ever been to

Japan?" No other knowledge or any English at all. So my granddaughter kept saying "Grandpa, what were you going to say next?" (laughs) I said I would have thought of something that wouldn't have embarrassed you. That was a little joke we've had. It has been nice talking to you.

Janis Kozlowski: You too. I am sorry it took so long to get back to you, but I am sure glad we had a chance to talk today.

William Hutchison: I am going to write to Joseph Hutchison and tell him I am the reason he did not get the Book of the Month Club. He must have gotten some, because I remember there were some that I didn't get.

Janis Kozlowski: Well I think he would be thrilled to hear from you.

William Hutchison: Well, I will write a little note to him right today. [1:28:34:8] Thank you so much for everything.

Janis Kozlowski: Thank you too. You take care of yourself.

William Hutchison: All right, I shall.

Janis Kozlowski: Bye-bye.

William Hutchison: Goodbye!

Story added in June 2011:

William Hutchison: But before I go I should like to tell you how I saved a busload of Naval Cadets from sure and certain death. Trader Vic, who ran the Pensacola Beer Garden, for 70 years was required by law to close up at midnight on Saturday night. We loaded up on Navy Buses and headed out to seven outlying fields all of them located on gator filled swamps. Crude plank bridges shattered as made along towards our destination. I was probably the last person allowed on this bus. There was a pole directly in back of the driver I could cling to with one hand. A tall Irish kid with one hand clung to the pole directly in back of the driver. All of a sudden the Irish kid lost his belly full of beer and showered it on the bald head of the driver who immediately let go of the steering wheel and the left front head light and fender of the bus were left on the wooden guide rail. I made one pass and caught the steering wheel with my thumb and steered the bus away from danger, but another cadet attempting to stop the bus put his foot on the accelerator instead of the brake and away we went. I received an ovation from drunken cadets for my efforts as if that amounts to a hill of beans. I wonder if there is an old Navy Flyer alive today who made this whoop dee doo trip through the Everglades and remembers it! I hope so!

Interview with William Butler Hutchison

**Aleutian World War II National Historic Area
Oral History Program**

March 2011, Des Moines, Iowa

Interviewed by Janis Kozlowski, National Park Service
Transcribed by Professional Transcripts

This interview is part of the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area Oral History Project. The interview with William Hutchison was recorded with his permission on a digital recorder. Copies of the audio file are preserved in mp3, wav and wma formats and are on file at the offices of the National Park Service in Anchorage, Alaska.

The transcript has been lightly edited.

(The dictation starts out with dialogue after the phone was answered by Mr. Hutchison and before the interview starts.)

William Hutchison: Hello.

Janis Kozlowski: Hey, Mr. Hutchison, it's Janis Kozlowski.

William Hutchison: Yes, Janis.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:00:08.7] Okay, so I got the tape player here. Is it okay if I tape your story today?

William Hutchison: Yes, indeed, it is.

Janis Kozlowski: Okay, great. Okay, you can start any time. What's the story that you remembered?

William Hutchison: Well, the story I remembered is a story that does not reflect well on Navy maintenance – plane maintenance. [0:00:33.3] When I was flying SBDs for VJ13, It was my duty to fly the planes from our little Clatsop County Naval Air Station up to Shelton, Washington for maintenance. I'd taken one up on Saturday morning and they worked on the plane immediately. There was a Coke machine in the hangar, so I put my nickel in and out came a Coke, clang, clang, clang, and then I took the lid of and it went

psst (made sound of bottle opening), and out of nowhere came a little black bear about 100 pounds, maybe 60 pounds, and he had eight claws that he stuck out at me and reached for the bottle of Coke. I did not deny him the Coke. I handed it over. He swallowed probably half the bottle in front of me and carried the rest over to the SBD that I had brought in and was being maintained. So, a half an hour or 40 minutes later, I took off to fly back to Clatsop County Naval Air Station. I thought I would celebrate by doing a slow roll over before I land. [0:02:01.6] So, I rolled it over on its back, and lo and behold, when I went to straighten it, out the controls were completely locked and I thought uh-oh. So, anyway, I started wiggling in my seat thinking about – I put the canopy back and prepared to bail out. In pushing it back, I stepped on the right rudder, which caused the plane to roll a little bit, so I pushed clear down on the rudder and it rolled upright. Lo and behold, the stick was loose again, so I landed, scared to death. But, the little black bear had carried the Coke bottle into the fuselage and dropped it down into the bomb – the bomb compartment of the SBD and it had fallen into the cone. You know what the cone is? It's the aileron and flap – aileron and elevator stick that moves. Pull it back and the nose comes up, down. The nose was down, left and right aileron. So, anyway, that's my story.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh my gosh, you must've been scared to death (laughs).

William Hutchison: That was right over – that was practically over the Columbia River. I thought, well, maybe I shouldn't do this over water (laughs). But anyway, that's – that's the reason..... I told that story to somebody recently and they said, oh, that's a wonderful story. But I've always thought it didn't reflect well. All of these young kids that were doing the maintenance on SBDs, but that's the way life is. [0:03:58] Thank you for calling back.

Janis Kozlowski: You betcha. I can add this to your interview if you'd like me to.

William Hutchison: I would like it to be in there.

Janis Kozlowski: Okay, all right.

William Hutchison: You're a master worker.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh (laughs).

William Hutchison: The piece is really put together nicely.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh good. I'm glad you like it. We.....

William Hutchison: [0:04:21.2] The plane – the picture – the crinkly picture was taken by George Sproul. I wrote that on there – my radio man – and it was taken through the celestial dome of a Harpoon and it vertically doubles two blocks the engine and ran away from it. Will Sweeny said the plane had to be going 350 miles an hour and evidently that was it because we pulled away from Oscar, which was a radio engine Japanese fighter.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, yeah, I see this. Where did these pictures come from?

William Hutchison: My radio man took a lot of Oscar and I've had it forever and it got crinkly bad and I should've done something about it years ago because it was a marvelous event. It scared the hell out of all of us, but we got away.

Janis Kozlowski: You had quite the experiences, didn't you?

William Hutchison: I did indeed, and I wouldn't trade any of them.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, I haven't gone through your interview yet and I'll spend a little bit of time transcribing this story today and then I can get it all back to you.

William Hutchison: [0:05:51.8] All right. Thank you.

Interview with William Butler Hutchison

Aleutian World War II National Historic Area Oral History Program

May 18, 2010, Des Moines, Iowa

Interviewed by Janis Kozlowski, National Park Service
Transcribed by Professional Transcripts

This interview is part of the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area Oral History Project. The interview with William Hutchison was recorded with his permission on a digital recorder. Copies of the audio file are preserved in mp3, wav and wma formats and are on file at the offices of the National Park Service in Anchorage, Alaska.

The transcript has been lightly edited.

(The dictation starts out with dialogue after the phone was answered by Mr. Hutchison and before the interview starts.)

William Hutchison: Hello.

Janis Kozlowski: Hey, Mr. Hutchison, it's Janis Kozlowski.

William Hutchison: Yes, Janis.

Janis Kozlowski: [0:00:08.7] Okay, so I got the tape player here. Is it okay if I tape your story today?

William Hutchison: Yes, indeed, it is.

Janis Kozlowski: Okay, great. Okay, you can start any time. What's the story that you remembered?

William Hutchison: Well, the story I remembered is a story that does not reflect well on Navy maintenance – plane maintenance. [0:00:33.3] When I was flying SBDs for VJ13, It was my duty to fly the planes from our little Clatsop County Naval Air Station up to Shelton, Washington for maintenance. I'd taken one up on Saturday morning and they worked on the plane immediately. There was a Coke machine in the hangar, so I put my nickel in and out came a Coke, clang, clang, clang, and then I took the lid off and it went pssst (made sound of bottle opening), and out of nowhere came a little black bear about 100 pounds, maybe 60 pounds, and he had eight claws that he stuck out at me and reached for the bottle of Coke. I did not deny him the Coke. I handed it over. He swallowed probably half the bottle in front of me and carried the rest over to the SBD that I had brought in and was being maintained. So, a half an hour or 40 minutes later, I

took off to fly back to Clatsop County Naval Air Station. I thought I would celebrate by doing a slow roll over before I land. [0:02:01.6] So, I rolled it over on its back, and lo and behold, when I went to straighten it, out the controls were completely locked and I thought uh-oh. So, anyway, I started wiggling in my seat thinking about – I put the canopy back and prepared to bail out. In pushing it back, I stepped on the right rudder, which caused the plane to roll a little bit, so I pushed clear down on the rudder and it rolled upright. Lo and behold, the stick was loose again, so I landed, scared to death. But, the little black bear had carried the Coke bottle into the fuselage and dropped it down into the bomb – the bomb compartment of the SBD and it had fallen into the cone. You know what the cone is? It's the aileron and flap – aileron and elevator stick that moves. Pull it back and the nose comes up, down. The nose was down, left and right aileron. So, anyway, that's my story.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh my gosh, you must've been scared to death (laughs).

William Hutchison: That was right over – that was practically over the Columbia River. I thought, well, maybe I shouldn't do this over water (laughs). But anyway, that's – that's the reason..... I told that story to somebody recently and they said, oh, that's a wonderful story. But I've always thought it didn't reflect well. All of these young kids that were doing the maintenance on SBDs, but that's the way life is. [0:03:58] Thank you for calling back.

Janis Kozlowski: You betcha. I can add this to your interview if you'd like me to.

William Hutchison: I would like it to be in there.

Janis Kozlowski: Okay, all right.

William Hutchison: You're a master worker.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh (laughs).

William Hutchison: The piece is really put together nicely.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh good. I'm glad you like it. We.....

William Hutchison: [0:04:21.2] The plane – the picture – the crinkly picture was taken by George Sproul. I wrote that on there – my radio man – and it was taken through the celestial dome of a Harpoon and it vertically doubles two blocks the engine and ran away from it. Will Sweeny said the plane had to be going 350 miles an hour and evidently that was it because we pulled away from Oscar, which was a radio engine Japanese fighter.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, yeah, I see this. Where did these pictures come from?

William Hutchison: My radio man took a lot of Oscar and I've had it forever and it got crinkly bad and I should've done something about it years ago because it was a marvelous event. It scared the hell out of all of us, but we got away.

Janis Kozlowski: You had quite the experiences, didn't you?

William Hutchison: I did indeed, and I wouldn't trade any of them.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, I haven't gone through your interview yet and I'll spend a little bit of time transcribing this story today and then I can get it all back to you.

William Hutchison: [0:05:51.8] All right. Thank you.