

Jim Schroeder: Then when we finally ended up in Shemya, I was put together with a crew, which it was Watkins' crew - my first crew. That's where I met Pat Skea - he was a bombardier on my, on Watkins' crew.

Then I stayed in Watkins' crew: Barry Shaw, engineer; Ralph Fukes, assistant engineer; Sid Stone, radio and Hubert Altman, and Jim Sample, gunners. I know I sent you the thing [photograph] on building the model airplane in Sherman, Texas. And then Hank Kowalsky, [sp.?] which [sic] I still see - he lives only about thirty miles away from me. He was a photographer on the ship.

During that time, I flew about 10 missions with the Watkins' crew. And then I was turned over to Holland's crew later - [in] which I flew about four, or five missions. I had about 14 missions total when the war was over.

And like I said, there was a lot of time and playing cards and listening to the radio, and fishing or walking the islands - just to keep something to do. Because, flying was very sporadic because of the foul weather that we had up there.

One of my remembrances was when I was on Howlands crew and we were heading for Paramushiru, which was probably next to [the] last flight that we had. As we were getting close to the target, we were up to about 20,000', and we emptied the gasoline from the wing tanks into the bomb bay tanks. And being in the radar, I was sitting right next to the Bomb bay when I smelled gasoline. And I looked in the bomb bay, and one of the fuel lines broke. And all the gasoline was going into the bomb bay. So I got a hold of Mitch, our engineer, and he went into the bomb bay and shut off one of the valves for the line. By that time, there was about three inches of gasoline in the bomb bay.

So when they opened up the bomb bay, most of it went out. But, a lot of it flew back into the [Chuckle] back end of the ship. The crew back there was all covered with gasoline.

So after that, one of the engines quit working, so Mitch went back there and finally got the thing started. If we wouldn't have got it started, we had a choice of either flying to Paramush... to Russia and being interned for six months, or [to] try and make it back on three engines - back to Shemya.

Mitch finally got the engine started, so we flew back to Shemya. And when we got back to Shemya, the Island was covered over with fog. So we made three passes over the island and couldn't hardly see it. So we, the pilot decided to fly to Attu - which was only about 30 - 40 miles away. So when we got over to Attu - that started getting closed in. So we spent the day there, and then we flew back to Shemya.