

Joseph D. Hutchison: So they flew gas in for us the next day. And we flew out and got to Anchorage. But, we couldn't go down the chain; the weather was so bad down there. They kept us around Anchorage, I think for over a week, waiting for the weather to clear up so that it was safe to fly down there.

Anyway, when we finally got to; orders to go on down to Adak, we went down to the plane and here was a bunch of second lieutenants and one major lined up with foot lockers, bags and so forth, all wanting to ride down. And as I said, we had over loaded the plane to begin with - ll of our equipment, and then the arctic equipment. So, we had no real means of carrying them. But, anyway, they put on four, or five second lieutenants. And the major road up on the flight deck with the rest of the, the pilot and radio operator and so forth. And these other second lieutenants were in the back with us gunners. And we were down, flying low over the water. In fact, I got on the intercom and told the pilot, I said, "You better get a little bit more altitude." I said, "You're leaving a wake in the water." He gave me a hard time again; he said, "I've I got lots of room up here." (The plane was real tail heavy). And in the picture that I told you about, somebody has painted the name "Mush" on the side of it, and it probably pertains to the attitude of the plane when it was flying.

Anyway, while we're flying that low, the pilot and this major, I think, decided that it was time to pull a trick on these brand new second lieutenants. And so he called back, and said that ... "When the bell rang, for us..." We had these chest type parachutes, where you wore the harness; and to put the chute on, all you had to do was snap a couple, into a couple of hooks on the chest. So he said, "When the bell rings, you guys snap your parachutes on and make like you're going to bail out." Well [Chuckle] you don't bail out from ten feet [both laugh]. Anyway, this is the big joke on these second lieutenants; one of which was Larry Reineke, who you've, I'm sure, run into already, as - he became our intelligence officer assistant. And, he [the pilot] rang, and naturally, we did what he told us. And these lieutenants they had checked out parachutes, too. But they were the seat type parachutes and they didn't know how to put them on, or anything; they went nuts trying to get into a parachute. You know, there was cramped spaces there, because, we had bags all over the floor. So it was - you couldn't stand up in the area. So, that was a real big joke to him.

Anyway, we landed at Umnak that night with it getting pretty late and it was dark. And they just found tents for us to sleep in. And we took off the next day and continued on to Adak.

Janis Kozlowski: So, how many days in total did it take you to get the airplane down to the Aleutians with all this going on?

Joseph D. Hutchison: I really can't remember for sure.

Janis Kozlowski: But it was quite a long, long way; a long time?

Joseph D. Hutchison: Yes it was. It was a couple; it at least a week, or two.

Anyway, the whole crew was upset at the pilot's antics. And the navigator was the leader. We all decided to stick together and get rid of this guy, if we could. So we determined that we would ...

when we landed, the first thing we would do would be, “Change into our dress uniforms and go up, according to rank, and salute the commanding officer,” who wasn’t there, his assistant was there. And tell him that we refuse to fly with this pilot, and state the reasons. Well, that’s not looked at lightly if you look at the Army regulations. But, we had decided to stick with it. And so the next day, they tried to decide what they’re going to do with this guy. So they came up with, “Well, we’ll give him a test to see...” The operations officer couldn’t believe, you know, our story about how bad he was. He flew as copilot and observed his flying. When he came back, was, “The plane kept kind of skidding to the side.” I couldn’t figure out what it was about; I was standing on the flight deck kind of looking over his shoulder. Finally, I decided [Chuckle] he was trying to land the plane on a spot of mud on the windshield.

Anyway, he got it down safe. And they went back up to the headquarters and decided what they were gonna do. And they called us in and told us that, “well, they had grounded him.” But that didn’t mean a thing, because they had pilots, but to what were they were going to do, ah, they had a pilot that had volunteered to take the crew over. But they told us, “That he was in the hospital.” I don’t know whether he was in the hospital, or where he was - I think he was coming back from a furlough, or something. Anyway, he had accepted the crew, but he couldn’t take over for a week, or two, for some reason or another. And that in the meantime, there was a war going on, and we would be flying with, where; whether we liked it or not.