

**Joseph D. Hutchison:** And they gave us our first assignment. It said there was a Japanese taskforce that the Navy had been playing hide-and-seek with out there, and as soon as they could pinpoint where they were, they were going to send us and two other crews out, and we were going to attack them at deck level. Well, they said, "Well, we don't expect any of you to come back, but we're not; we don't want you to think that we're mad at you, or anything, because you're a new crew. But ... we hate to lose you, but we also hate to lose our friends that are on the other two crews."

So, anyway, the taskforce eventually turned around and went home. So we didn't have to go out and do that. And we then we started our regular bombing missions, and then pretty soon, well, we became a lead crew. And the rest of the deal is pretty well outlined on the papers that I sent to you.

**Janis Kozlowski:** You had a pretty eventful first part of your career there.

**Joseph D. Hutchison:** Yeah, kept moving pretty good.

Oh, incidentally, our navigator was the one that made the decision that the B-24 could fly all the way to Paramushiru and return - which provoked the missions to the Paramushiru. That's what started them. They asked him; he had been, I understand, a college professor of astronomy and navigation before the war.

**Janis Kozlowski:** Really. So, then that was a natural fit for him then?

Yes, he was very well qualified and a natural leader. And Reineke, the intelligence officer, that second lieutenant (he was thirty-five years old, which was very old for a second lieutenant at the time) had gotten together and figured out that it was within the range of the B-24; we could make it there and back. So then, when the Kiska and Attu business was finished up, well, we started running bombing missions. I was on the August 11<sup>th</sup> mission - the first one, which was, I guess, about the third try. Some captain, or Lieutenant Halperson [sp.?] or something like that, made a trip. He flew over and dropped some bombs somewhere, he don't know; it was all fogged in, he don't know whether he dropped them in the Atlantic Ocean, or the Pacific Ocean. [Chuckle] But he went out and tried. And then they had another mission; all the brass wanted to be the first ones to bomb Japan. We were the first people who, you know, [that] got close enough to where you could bomb territory that was Japanese - pre-war.

**Janis Kozlowski:** So your crew did take a B-24 over to the Kurile Islands then?

**Joseph D. Hutchison:** Yes.