

Janis Kozlowski: What other kinds of missions did you fly, other than over to the Kurile Islands. What did you do before that?

Joseph D. Hutchison: Kiska mostly. Well, one to Attu, but ... mostly all Kiska; and this one mission to Paramushiru. But the 21st Bomb Squadron that I was assigned to was never assigned to be up there. They were sent up as a, for a two week coast patrol duty. Actually I think they were sent up there because I think the Navy had broken the Japanese code and they knew there was an attack going to be made in the Aleutians. I think the 21st was sent up there to be there when that happened. But I got nothing to back that up.

But anyway, the 21st showed up just in time to run the first bombing mission from Umnak down to Kiska. They just arrived, and the 36th Bomb Squadron was already there. But they had B-17s, and they were getting loaded up to leave, and they said, "You guys just unload your equipment, load up with bombs and come with us." Then they had trouble with the B-17s, and the B-24s went off, I guess, without them. On that first mission, I think the commander of the 21st, his plane was shot down; took a direct hit in the bomb bay. So, the 21st had the first casualties in the Kiska campaign.

The 21st was part of the 30th Bomb Group. And right after the 11th of August Paramushiru mission that we were on, they were ordered back to California to be shipped into the mid-Pacific. They were headed first for Hawaii and then I think, Funafuti. They were in the 7th Air Force. We were supposed to be with them, but we got back too late to go. So they gave us furlough of twenty-nine days, and told us to report back to Salina, Kansas. We got back there and they told us that we were going to be a training squadron for B-29s; one of the first training squadrons. But they had no more use for guys that were just gunners, 'cause nobody was going to be shooting at each other in training. So, we could take our choice - we could either, go to school and get a higher classification, or we could go back to reassignment somewhere else.