

## **B-24 RAID ON PARAMUSHIRU**

**By RICHARD KORPANTY**

**(DICK WAS A CADET IN THE 44C CLASS IN TEXAS AND OKLAHOMA. AFTER BECOMING A SECOND LIEUTENANT HE ATTENDED B-24 TRANSITION SCHOOL IN FT. WORTH TEXAS. HE PICKED UP HIS CREW AT BOISE, IDAHO AND HELPED THEM "MASTER" THE B-24 AFTER HE HAD ONLY 1 1/2 MONTHS EXPERIENCE IN IT HIMSELF. HE SAID "I MUST HAVE FOOLED THEM BECAUSE THEY CALLED THIS 18 YEAR OLD 'SKIPPER,' BUT IT TOOK A FEW MISSIONS BEFORE I FELT I LIVED UP TO THAT NAME.")**

**I HAD MY 19th BIRTHDAY IN ANCHORAGE AND FLEW MY FIRST MISSION FROM SHEMYA TO PARAMUSHIRU IN 1945. IT WAS A ROUGH ONE! I FLEW NUMBER 2 POSITION. MY WINDOWS WOULD NOT DEFROST AND THE CO-PILOT KEPT A 6" SPOT CLEAR WITH HIS HAND WHILE I FLEW FORMATION.**

**IN THE NUMBER 3 POSITION WAS A KID NAMED TALBOT. JUST AS I LOOKED OVER AT HIM A SHELL HIT HIS BOMB BAY GASOLINE TANKS AND HE CAUGHT ON FIRE. I BELIEVE THAT HE WAS GOING TO TRY AND LAND IN RUSSIA (SIBERIA) BUT BEFORE HE COULD DO ANYTHING HIS PLANE BLEW UP. I DIDN'T SEE ANY PARACHUTES OPEN SO I ASSUME THAT EVERYONE GOT KILLED.**

**THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN THE FIGHTERS STARTED ATTACKING. IT SEEMED LIKE THERE WERE HUNDREDS OF THEM HITTING US FROM EVERY SIDE LIKE WILD ANIMALS ATTACKING A WOUNDED PREY. THEN I FOUND OUT THE NOSE TURRET WAS FROZEN BUT THE MACHINE GUNS STILL WORKED SO I INSTRUCTED THE GUNNER TO FIRE HOPING THE TRACERS WOULD KEEP THE FIGHTERS AWAY. AS USUAL WE HAD NO BALL TURRET AND THE TAIL GUNS WERE FROZEN.**

**WE FINALLY DROPPED OUR BOMBS AND STARTED HOME AND AS WE STARTED TO RUN LOW ON FUEL I TRIED TO SWITCH TO THE BOMB BAY TANKS BUT THE PUMP WOULDN'T WORK! OUR FLIGHT ENGINEER AND HIS ASSISTANT TRADED HOSES WITH OUR TOKYO TANK PUMP. BY THEN WE WERE DOWN TO 10 MINUTES OF FUEL REMAINING AND STILL HAD A LONG WAY TO GO TO GET TO SHEMYA.**

**A DUMBO (PBY) WAS SENT OUT TO FOLLOW US HOME BUT IT FOLLOWED THE WRONG PLANE AND BESIDES IT WAS LEAKING AND COULDN'T LAND ON THE WATER ANYWAY. I GUESS IT WAS SENT OUT FOR MORALE PURPOSES ANYWAY.**

**ON THE NEXT MISSION I FLEW, I HAD THE MACHINE GUNS STRIPPED OF ALL THE OIL AND GREASE AND FROM THEN ON THEY NEVER DID FREEZE UP AGAIN. I ALSO HAD THE MECHANICS EMPTY THE BOMB BAY TANKS, CLOSE ITS VENTS, AND FILL IT WITH CARBON DIOXIDE TO PREVENT WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO LT. TALBOT. "DARN IF THIS COWARD WAS GOING TO BLOW UP!"**

**(ED. NOTE: THIS WAS QUITE A FIRST FLIGHT EXPERIENCE ESPECIALLY FOR A TWENTY-YEAR-OLD!)**

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