

## **Types of Flying Missions, P37s and P38s, the Japanese Fishing Boat “Mission”**

We flew a mission every other day. We lived in tents. And as I said, as the war proceeded, we moved. And we flew - the squadron was assigned a mission almost every day. And those missions were primarily escorting bombers: B24s and B25 bombers is what we did, mostly. That was the primary mission. The secondary mission was to cover landings: when the marines would come and land and we would cover them. And attack the enemy aircraft that was attacking them. The third mission we did was called “Seek and Destroy” missions. Which we would go out - our squadron would go out - and we would go and seek out Japanese fighters, and bombers, wherever we could find them and shoot them down. So those were the three primary missions that we had.

And I flew mostly P38 - I flew 103 combat missions, and 64 of those were P38s, and the others of those were in P37s. The P37 was a single-engine fighter, the P38 was a double-engine fighter. We preferred the P38 in the Pacific because it was faster and it had better range. So that was the main part that we used. Sometimes we would go on a bombing mission, so we would - the P38 could carry 2,000lb bombs. So we would go out and and bomb facilities and bomb shipping, and whatever we found. Sometimes it was a pretty simple thing, and sometimes it was pretty complicated.

But, my most famous mission was a fishing boat - a Japanese fishing boat. Actually, we were going out to bomb something, I forget what it was, and it was cloudy, and it was - it was clouded in, so we couldn't bomb, we had to turn around and go home. And we were carrying the bombs, of course, we had bombs underneath the plane. So we had to take them back home, because the target was socked in with bad weather. And on the way back we saw this little Japanese fishing boat. And we said, “well, it's a Japanese target, so we'll bomb it.” And so we lined up and started bombing it. And it was a small boat, and he saw us coming, and every time we would dive one he would quickly turn, and turn, and turn. And boom!, the water would fly up and just, he'd disappear under all the water build-up. And then out the other side he'd come, chug chug chug chug chug. And so anyway, long story short, we had 16 airplanes with each bomber plane had two bombs, and so we dropped 32 bombs on him and never hit him. [Laughs].

So it was. But somebody used to call us on the radio and said, “well, we go down and [strike] him, that's easy. We could blow him right out of the water with our guns.” And the CO said, “leave him alone! He got through - he made it through all 36 bombs!” And so we said, “okay.” So we let him go.