

Janis Kozlowski: Let's see, so what was ... let me go back to the types of missions you flew – you said you flew rations and went to weather stations. What was the nature ... do you remember what of kind rations, or was it, that you brought down? Or was it just pretty basic cargo?

Paul Polink: It was ... mostly materials for their.... You know, we didn't actually fly the food in for the base, but ... like I say - magazines, movies ... routine provisions for their PX's, and all of that kind of material - that was one of the missions. The other thing was the ... like I say, we had a mail plane that would leave everyday after the plane came in from Seattle with the mail. And then, medical trips, and ... those people that were going home on emergency leaves, and ... new personnel, sometimes, that were gonna be assigned to the islands – we would take them in to where they were going to be.

Janis Kozlowski: [Um-Hum] And when you landed on places, like.... Well, you never landed at Dutch Harbor ... is that right?

Paul Polink: I don't remember Dutch Harbor. Yes.

Janis Kozlowski: OK. So when you landed at places like Attu, where there had been a battle, did you ever see any evidence of it?

Paul Polink: Yes. But I really wasn't a history buff. I heard a lot of stories, and it was pointed out to me where the battles were and all that – [but] I learned more [Chuckle] on the history channel about it than I really heard about then. But I was 19 years old and not interested in history at that time.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah [Chuckle] that's understandable for that age for sure. [Chuckle] Can you tell me a little bit about your mechanics duties and what ... did you just work on C-46s, or were there other aircraft as well.



Paul Polink: 47s, they were 47s.

Janis Kozlowski: I'm sorry.

Paul Polink: Well basically ... if I had a flight out in the morning, I would go down and preflight the airplane and start the engine up. And there were certain tests that I had to go through to see if the aircraft was fit to fly. And then, later the pilots would arrive, and they would check the log on the plane. And we had a system where, if the plane was on my initial, it was ready to fly. If we have a "Diagonal" in the box, there was something mechanical wrong with the airplane. But, it could still fly, but the pilot had to be aware of it. And then, when we

had it on they what call, “A Red Cross,” then the plane was grounded – period - until somebody ... one of the specialists looked at it and [fixed] what it was. I, I never had any problem with that - my ... planes seemed to be ready all the time.

Janis Kozlowski: So, you don’t remember having big problems with those airplanes?

Paul Polink: Well, I remember other people, discussing what ... what problems they had. But, I was ... very faithful to my inspections – I never penciled them in - I was faithful with my inspections and did everything I was supposed to do. And I really never had any major problems.



I would have a voltage regulator go out and burn up the battery, or landing lights wouldn’t work. But, I was able to handle those things. But I was rather fortunate, because I never had any real major problems.

Janis Kozlowski: And after all your training and all, did you feel pretty comfortable working on the airplane?

Paul Polink: Yes I did. And ... [Chuckle] I felt that, you know, there was a lot of trust put in me, because there were ... things that if you didn’t recognize, [that] could ... cause you a problem.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, that’s kind of a specialty profession it seems.

Paul Polink: I remember when ... at one point ... Alaska Airlines would have us do simple things, like changing spark plugs and everything. And even, we’re talking about many, many years ago - they use to pay us, like, \$7.50 an hour.

Janis Kozlowski: Was that good money at the time?

Paul Polink: Oh, yes it was great! [It] bought a lot of good dinners.

Janis Kozlowski: So, did you work for Alaska Airlines?

Paul Polink: No, only as, like I say, “Part time.”

Janis Kozlowski: Oh.



Paul Polink: We could sometimes, be available - they would advertise that they could use some mechanics during certain hours - certain days. And of course, they checked you out ... but ... not very often, but, often enough to make some money.

Janis Kozlowski: [Um-Hum] So, that was at ... the international, the Anchorage International Airport?

Paul Polink: I don't remember. But I doubt it. Because ... you know, were talking about 1945.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, right – it probably would have been, maybe Merrill Field - which is close to Elmendorf, but ...

Paul Polink: Probably.

Janis Kozlowski: ... a different runway?

Paul Polink: Yes.