

Janis Kozlowski: Did you end up being an aircraft mechanic for your profession?

Paul Polink: No, I ... always wanted to be a coach and a teacher. I taught for like, seventeen years, and then I became a principal – I was a principal for about fifteen years. And then, the last four years of my career I was a superintendent of schools in my district. So, I chose the profession of education.

Janis Kozlowski: And which school district were you in?

Paul Polink: Well, I was ... I taught at a school called, “Brownsville,” for a while - its south of Pittsburg. And then, I became principal of a school district called, “West Greene,” in Greene County - it’s the last county in Pennsylvania as you go toward West Virginia. And then I was a superintendent at the same district. And then I retired. And then after I retired, I filled in as a principal for a number of Catholic schools, and a couple of private schools whenever they needed somebody - when they ... their person retired rather abruptly, or left. So ... I filled in then.

Janis Kozlowski: So, was your mechanic ... the experience, or the training that you got in a military, was that helpful to you at all in life?

No. My wife doesn’t believe that I did this - she says, “I can’t even hang a picture.” So ...

Janis Kozlowski: So, so tell me, what was it like living at Elmendorf?

Paul Polink: Well, it was really nice because of the closeness of Anchorage - we got all the benefits of a pretty good size city and the number of restaurants available, and ... I was.... But, like ... some of the things that depressed me about Alaska was the daylight in the summertime. The.... Being close to Anchorage, and.... The amazing thing about the Matanuska Valley - the size of the vegetables, and all that bit. But ... I was not fond of the winter – darkness. Is it dark at, there now?

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, yeah. Yeah, you have to go out on your lunch hour to ... to see the daylight, or you miss it. [Chuckle]

Paul Polink: That’s ... I remember that.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, that, that’s probably hard to deal with. So, do you remember that, that winter that you stayed there? Was that a tough one for you?

Paul Polink: What was that?

Janis Kozlowski: Was the winter the winter, the winter up in Alaska, tough for you then?

Paul Polink: Well it really wasn't, because ... I was in and out. And like I say, I would, be gonna fly. But ... it was tough as far as flying - you, you never got to see anything. Like in the

summertime, we would ... observe a lot of things - see some animals in herds, and all that bit, but... But, in the wintertime, it was tough - it was dark, dark, dark.

Janis Kozlowski: And were you able to get off the base very much and see what Alaska really looked like?

Paul Polink: Well, I was not really interested much, except what I would see during my normal flights. Because, the pilot, or somebody would point out certain things about where things were, and ... But, I still wasn't very interested. I regret that now - that I didn't show more interest in some of Alaska's beauty. I did notice a lot of things, but there are many things that went unnoticed ... by a 19 year old.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, yeah – I, I can imagine. I don't remember what happened when I was 19.
[Chuckle]