

Janis Kozlowski: I know you were only up in Alaska for a little more than a year - maybe for a year and a few months. Did, was that enough time for you to actually make a lot of the friends with the guys in your squadron that you flew and worked with?

Paul Polink: Yes, I ... I really had a lot of good friends in the squadron. In fact, like I said, the morale was high, and everybody treated everybody with respect, and especially flying personnel. I'm not saying we were elite, but were the purpose for the squadron. And we were treated very, very well by other enlisted personnel.

Janis Kozlowski: Were ... you were ... you were doing a great service to those guys down in the Aleutians – I bet they loved the 54th.

Paul Polink: Oh, yes, they ... they would meet our plane ... talk about how things were on the main land, and... It, it was small talk, but you could tell that they were lonely. And , in fact, some of our planes used to take personnel up to see the sun - you know, they were clouded. The sun was still up there, but, it wouldn't burn through some days. And I thought it was rather funny at the time, but I could see that it wasn't quite so funny.

Janis Kozlowski: Really. So, they ... they just took them on a short hop in the airplane to get them out a little bit and [to] see the sun?

Paul Polink: Yes. And we ... we had, like the cooks and the bakers and the people in the mess hall, sometime, they would ask the colonel if they could take a trip down in the Aleutians with one of our airplanes. And of course, he would give them permission. And they, they did kind of like it when the ice was flying off the props and all that stuff. And ... they weren't thrilled - they didn't want to go back.

Janis Kozlowski: [Chuckle] Yeah, I imagine that would be a little frightening.

Paul Polink: Yes, to them it was.