

Janis Kozlowski: Do you think it's an important or a good idea, that the government recognizes ... the World War II veterans in places like the Aleutian World War II Site and [the] Valor in the Pacific, and others?

Paul Polink: I certainly do. Because they served also in ... under conditions, that were not, you know, glamorous. But still, they had to be there.

Janis Kozlowski: And, and people played a ... a significant role in the war, even if they weren't in battles.

Paul Polink: Right.

Janis Kozlowski: Right.

Paul Polink: I feel that the ... the 54th Troop Carrier – we were basically, the only way in and out of the Aleutian Islands, you know, especially during the winter months. And of course, it was high priority; you just couldn't get in there ... for anything. But we felt that we did a job too. And I read a little bit about the history of the 54th, and ... [Chuckle] putting it together, [there] really wasn't anything. I have a thing here - when I took a ... I don't know who this, but I took a picture of this ... plaque. And it said - and they do have a very nice display on ... at the Air Force Academy. It says, "Anna Merriam McCoy Penny, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Arthur Penney, and Lieutenant Colonel Harry Jessie Cobb [sp.?], without whose vision and commitment, this monument would not have been erected." I wonder if you knew anything about them.

Janis Kozlowski: No. Penney, Penney, you say?

Paul Polink: Yeah, Anna Merriam McCoy Penney.

Paul Polink: I did know who they were. But, you know, Lt. Colonel Grossmith became a Brigadier General during the Berlin Airlift.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, he did?

Paul Polink: Oh, yes. And ironically, he lived in Virginia, and that's not too far from where I live. My brother was killed about the same time he passed away, and I didn't get to go see him – pay my last respects to him.

Janis Kozlowski: Um.

Paul Polink: But, he was quite a man.

Janis Kozlowski: So, did ... did you kind of keep up on his career over time?

Paul Polink: Well, like, I noticed when he was ... the 54th left Alaska to, to go in the Berlin Airlift. And that was about two years after I left the squadron. If I'd a [have] known they were

going to go to Germany, I might have stayed in - but you ... nobody knows that. But ... 'cause I always wanted to go to Germany.

Janis Kozlowski: So, you might have stayed in had you known that?

Paul Polink: Right.

Janis Kozlowski: [Hum]

Paul Polink: And that as very exciting - the Berlin Airlift. They had to bring everything in by air.