

**Robert Buchanan:** We flew to Adak and in our crew, I don't know how we got to come back on a Naval Air Transport. We didn't have to fly our own plane back, we just come back on Naval Air Transport. They flew us to Anchorage and from Anchorage to Seattle.

**Janis Kozlowski:** So you left your airplane in the Aleutians?

**Robert Buchanan:** No. There were more flight crews than there were planes. There was ... not every crew had a plane. So that's the reason that ... you know, I've heard guys say that you was assigned to a plane but you know, really I don't think that that's so. I don't think we were ever particularly assigned to any specific plane. You might have flown in one more than the other one, like, our crew did in that one that's down there at Palm Springs, but I don't.... It could have been an assignment to certain planes, but according to my logbook we flew an awful lot of different planes.

**Janis Kozlowski:** How many different airplanes did you have in your squadron?

**Robert Buchanan:** Gee, I think it was 18 crews. I think we went up there with 15 planes. I don't think, I don't think we had a full 18 crews when we came back. And I don't think that we had the 15 planes either. I think there was ... I don't know what the deal was there. I think there was some planes taken back for.... I know there was one crew sent back. I don't know just what all the particulars were on that one ... I don't know what the deal was on that.

**Janis Kozlowski:** Was that PBY a good flying airplane?

**Robert Buchanan:** Oh, yeah. Yeah, you'll never get anybody who flew in PBYs to say it wasn't a good plane. [laughing]

**Janis Kozlowski:** So you felt confident in it?

**Robert Buchanan:** Oh, yeah, I did, you know. I never, you know, felt like I was at risk or anything to be honest with you. Of course, I wasn't too bright either. [laughing]

Weather up there was the worst thing. Weather was terrible flying. They had what they call williwaws. You take off in those dog gone things and they were twisters, they'd catch you and just kind of twist the plane around.

**Janis Kozlowski:** So did you have some frightening flights that way or did that not bother you?

**Robert Buchanan:** Offhand I don't remember that really bothering me that much either.

**Janis Kozlowski:** Did you ever get sick?

**Robert Buchanan:** I think you get used to stuff like that. You know it's there and you more or less expect it so I don't think it really.... It's probably a good thing that you do get that way. You probably would go kind of nutty.

**Janis Kozlowski:** Yeah.

**Robert Buchanan:** The thing up there is there was nothing to do. That was 10 months of absolutely just, you know, absolutely nothing to do.

**Janis Kozlowski:** So you were thankful for the missions so that you had something to occupy your time?

**Robert Buchanan:** Well, [laughing] yeah. I don't remember just actually being *thankful* for them but I didn't, when we did have them I didn't feel like I didn't want to go. So it's probably ... I don't know whether you ... I think you probably did get to a place where you were just happy to have something to do.

But, have you ever been far out in the islands there?

**Janis Kozlowski:** Only to Dutch Harbor, never farther.

**Robert Buchanan:** Well, on Attu there was not a bush. Same way with Amchitka: no bushes, no trees, absolutely nothing. There was ... there was fox on Attu, there *was*. As I understand it, they were brought over there by the Russians one time. There was, they called them Aleuts that lived there when Japan took that island and I think that ... I've read that those were brought in there. The only thing I know of that was ever there was those fox. And I'll be honest with you, the only thing I've ever seen was pictures of them on that island. I don't remember ever seeing one. And ground squirrels – they say that was there.

I used to see a lot of the sea lions, used to be a lot of sea lions there. But, other than that, that's all there was there.