

Janis Kozlowski: So, how soon did you set your radar up after the Japanese left Kiska? Was it within a matter of months after they had abandoned the island?

Robert Dougal: Well they had abandoned the island and I was at Seattle when the, when they abandoned the island. Originally, we were in Florida training the radar operators. And then, when we went up to Seattle, the main group that I had of the company - I wasn't the commander, I was a Second Lieutenant - they went out to Kiska. I stayed behind in Seattle to pick up supplies, because, we never had adequate radar supplies when we left Florida. So, I went with nine men to all the hardware stores in Seattle, Washington - up and down, around the area, picking up supplies that would be needed by four radar stations and nine men, like I said. And that was why I was left behind, to do that work. We were there about 10 days after the main body went over to Kiska - when they invaded it.

Janis Kozlowski: So, after all your shopping trips and trying to get prepared, when you ended up on Kiska, did you have everything you needed; in other words, did you really understand what you needed before you got there?

Robert Dougal: No, we, well, on the radar side, we knew what we needed when we left Florida. And we never had everything we needed until we got to Seattle and picked it up. And we picked up ... a lot of supplies. As far as clothing went, we started from Florida, and I had "Sun-tans" - cotton, sun-tan uniforms on. And I wore those all the way 'till I got to Kiska. I had no warm clothes until I got to Kiska. And we then picked up some warm clothes before we put the radar up.

Janis Kozlowski: So, other than being prepared to do your radar responsibilities, the other part... you know, your living conditions in Alaska; you probably didn't really understand what you were walking into very well?

Robert Dougal: We didn't know at all. We lived ... if in your years you heard your dad and other folks talk about living in tents, pyramidal tents, and so forth, down in the states - that's what we lived in, on Kiska. That's all we had when we got up there. And we all wore sun-tan uniforms that we wore when we left Florida and no winter clothing.

And when we got there, we were given warmer clothes and so forth. And as the months went on, we got warmer clothes - parkas and so forth, that you know about.

Janis Kozlowski: So, then, so after they re-equipped you, were you in pretty good shape for the weather conditions that you experienced on Kiska?

Robert Dougal: Well, I wouldn't say [Laugh] ... we didn't expect it. One day it would be sunny, the next day would be snowy, the next day it would be rainy, and then it would be foggy. And it was the worst weather you would ever want to encounter. And coming from Florida, we didn't, we didn't know how to combat that stuff. We had to learn how to do it.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, I bet that was probably your hardest task on the island.

Robert Dougal: It was. When we got there, and you lived in a canvas tent; and you know Alaska - you'd have no way to stay warm. You put a parka on, or ... with sleep.... Or, what we used to, when we slept at night, we'd put a mummy bag on and then a sleeping bag - it was so cold - to keep warm. Everything that.... We were all guys from Florida, now, and were [now] in Kiska. Nobody instructed us, we had no warm clothes, and it was real, real rough living in canvas tents. And it would snow at night, and the tent would get heavy, and it'd fall down on top of the men. I'm talking too loud I'm sorry.

Janis Kozlowski: So, did you have to stay in those pyramidal tents the entire two years?

Robert Dougal: Oh, no. No, no. No, we started out in pyramidal tents. I called [them] pyramidal tents, and you probably don't know what I'm talking about. But....

Janis Kozlowski: I've seen pictures of them.

Robert Dougal: OK. And they only held about six men.