

Janis Kozlowski: OK. And how many people were there at Otter Point?

Charles Donovan: Oh well, at that time, when I got over to Otter Point, first of all there was three Navy radiomen here, and three over at Chernofski Bay. And we were the first naval personnel to go up there. There was Army personnel – plenty of Army personnel at Otter Point - at Umnak. But, we were the only Navy personnel. And then eventually we got much more, many more of the Navy personnel – pilots and their crews and so forth. And then the Seabees, they came up.

Janis Kozlowski: When did all theses others start coming to the base there, do you remember when, or about when that happened?

Charles Donovan: Well it was in ... Mid-May of 1942.



Schultz in his Quonset hut 42-44. 503rd Coast Artillery. Photo courtesy Charles Donovan.

Charles Donovan: Of course the Army had been there when I got there. And I met quite a few of the, of this 503rd Coast Artillery unit, and became good friends with one platoon of them. And I can give you names of people there and so forth.



Sgt. L.M. Smithey, Umnak 42-44. 503rd Coast Artillery. Photo courtesy Charles Donovan.

Janis Kozlowski: So, are these people that you kept in contact with over time?

Charles Donovan: Many of them, yeah. Well, not many of them – quite a number of them, because [Chuckle] many of them have passed away, of course, already.



Unknown Sergeant, Umnak 42-44, 503rd Coast
Artillery. Photo courtesy Charles Donovan.

Charles Donovan: Many of them, yeah. Well, not many of them – quite a number of them, because [Chuckle] many of them have passed away, of course, already.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah.

Charles Donovan: During the time that I had after I first got out of the Navy - was discharged - I didn't keep in too much contact with them then. But, then as I got older here and I picked up this computer unit – it's not really a computer - but I got on to that and I found many of them through that. And I would e-mail them, and so on and so forth ... back and forth.

Janis Kozlowski: I would be interested in hearing who some of them were – I don't know much about the 503rd Coast Guard Artillery. Some of the others are a little - there's more written about them.

Charles Donovan: Well, this, they have been disbanded for years, I understand – I found that out just this past year ... that they had been disbanded and renamed another unit. But, there was, the sergeant in charge of the platoon that I became familiar with ... and friendly with - his name was Richard "Dick" Conroy . And then let's see, there was Sergeant Smith [Smithey] – I forget his first name – I think it was William, but I'm not positive ... we use to call him "Smithey". And then there was Bill Mentka ... Menka-Miller ... Menk-Miller... Yes, Menke Miller ...

Charles Donovan: And then there was Mazmanian ... M-A-Z-A-M ... Maz-manian – M-A-N-I-A-N – Mazmanian. He was a ... oh, I'm trying to think of his nationality ... it's right on the tip of my tongue. Anyway, I met him, of course. And then there was another fellow we called "Shorty". And there was a great number of them, of course, in the whole unit. But I was just more familiar with this one platoon.



Sgt. William Menkmiller, Sgt. L.M. Smithey, S/Sgt. Cornelius (Dick) Conroy outside their Quonset hut office. Umnak, Alaska, 503rd Coast Artillery. Photo courtesy Charles Donovan.

Janis Kozlowski: [Um-hum] So it sounds like, being, just a few of you being Navy guys that didn't cause you any trouble in the base?

Charles Donovan: Oh, no, no, no. No. [Chuckle]