

Robert Buchanan Transcript Summary

[0:00:00] Growing up in Barberton, Ohio; location of family members

[0:01:00] Acquiring an interest in aviation; mistakenly signing up to be an aviation mechanic in the Navy; boot camp and Navy training at a radar operator's school; for Aviation Machinist's Mate and assignment to Whidbey Island Naval Air Station with a PBY squadron.

[0:04:11] Enlisting in the Navy; deferment; working at the Goodrich plant; age at enlistment, Aviation Machinist's Mate training in a public school in Chicago; radar operator's school in Tennessee; aerial gunnery and air operations school in Florida; assignment to VP-61; dates of service at Attu and Amchitka; service in the South Pacific after Alaska

[0:09:08] Getting to Attu via Kodiak; Dutch Harbor and Adak

[0:11:08] Crew assignments; flying with the same crew; names of crew members; morale of crew; pilot J.W. Trout; status of other crew members; who kept in touch over the years

[0:15:56] Commanding officers in Alaska; disappearance of Frank Woody; crew loss rate in VP-61; speculation on what happened to two lost crews; nature and number of missions flown to Kurile Islands

[0:20:40] Nearly hitting a Japanese plane in the fog over the Kurile Islands; station in the tower of the PBY; taking a turn flying the airplane

[0:23:57] Getting the plane ready for departure; story about finding picket boats near Kurile Islands on radar; flying over the Kamchatka Peninsula and being fired on and chased off by Russians, living with PV squadrons on Attu; recreation on Attu

[0:30:29] Flying in bad weather; durability of PBY; deciding if the weather was suitable to fly; Commodore Gehres; early morning departures to the Kurile Islands; lack of fear of flying

[0:33:26] Interview with psychiatrist at NAS in Seattle; age of pilots relative to flight crew; Whidbey Island land and seaplane bases; rehabilitation leave

[0:37:56] Assignment to the South Pacific after the war; flying for Admiral McCann with high ranking personnel to assess how much equipment and materials were left behind for sale to the Dutch; considering re-enlistment in the Navy, offer for an increase in rank to re-enlist; returning home; meeting future wife; profession following the war with Goodrich

[0:44:55] Description of the tower area of the PBY; working multiple jobs in the PBY; Palm Springs Air Museum acquires a PBY with Buchanan's name written in the tower;

book written by a crew man's brother about the PBY air crew; inaccuracy of some of the books about the Aleutians

[0:49:13] Description of the tower in the PBY; duties while stationed in the tower; contact with the cockpit from the tower

[0:54:05] Night mission of unmarried men to Paramushiro; Chaplains issuance of last rites

[0:57:32] Commodore Gehres and the ship; Ben Franklin; Gehres' control over squadron decision making; Gehres cow that supplies him milk

[0:59:20] Length of flights to Paramushiro; heating coffee on a Coleman burner in the PBY; gear worn to ward off cold in the PBY; giving away warm flight gear to an Army soldier before leaving Alaska

[1:02:25] Living conditions on Attu and Amchitka discussed; recreation on Amchitka; atom bomb releases on Amchitka after WWII

[1:04:19] Flying back to the states in a Naval Air Transport plane; number of crews and planes in the Aleutians at the end of the war; how crews were assigned to aircraft during the war; praise for the PBY, weather in the Aleutians; getting used to poor flying weather and turbulence; boredom; lack of trees in the Aleutians; wildlife in the Aleutians; Aleuts

[1:09:53] Fishing for halibut and salmon; cooking salmon on an oil burner in the Quonset hut; stream thick with salmon near the camp

[1:13:10] Article in Flypast about the PBYs of WWII; figuring out the military number for the PBY at Palm Springs Air Museum; Buchanan finds six PBYs he's flown in are in museums; number of times each plane was flown

[1:17:35] Logging flights by bureau number; pilot Skidmore helps figure out which bureau number was attached to the Palm Springs Air Museum PBY; ground crew role in aircraft maintenance; helping ground crew attain increased pay for flight hours (flight skins); frequency of required aircraft maintenance; working on aircraft in hangars on Attu revetments on Attu and Amchitka

[1:22:24] Trying to remember 145 men in the squadron; Joe Heldorfer, Chester Brukus, Bob Custer, Jewett

[1:26:02] Enlistment centers named as towns of origin; getting parents to sign his paperwork to enlist; receiving a draft notice from the Navy after enlistment; repealing deferments, commendations and awards; taylor made uniforms

Table of flights conducted in PBY's housed in museums across the globe.