

Charles Donovan: But ... you brought something to mind there: when we left the ship at Kodiak - they put us ashore at Kodiak Island and they put us ashore with only our Dress Blue's - with our Blues and a pea coat and our watch caps, and so forth. We didn't have any boots, or anything of that nature – any foul-weather gear. And then, we got over to Umnak and they gave us all this foul-weather gear – the Jungle Cloth – blue, Jungle Cloth, foul-weather gear and boots and so forth. But, when we landed at Kodiak, there, we went up to the mess hall. And as I remember, it was up at the top of a little hill, and there was this civilian cook up there - a stocky, jolly guy. And he said, "What would you like for breakfast?" And jokingly, one of the guys said, "Steak and eggs." He says, "How do you like it?" [Chuckle] So, we [Chuckle] had steak and eggs for breakfast.

Janis Kozlowski: [Chuckle] I bet you never would have believed you were gonna eat that!

Charles Donovan: No way!

Janis Kozlowski: [Chuckle]

Charles Donovan: Especially not up there! [Chuckle]

Janis Kozlowski: How often did you get it after that?

Charles Donovan: Oh, never! [Laugh]

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh] Did you even have real eggs after that?

Charles Donovan: No. No. We just had the powdered eggs.

Janis Kozlowski: I bet that's not, not something you miss.

Charles Donovan: No way.

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh]

Charles Donovan: And I also remember, one time, when we were still on this Spica and we were heading up to.... No, this Spica – this ship, was coming up and delivering goods to us, and they had lost - it was a refrigerated ship, and they had lost their refrigeration. So, they had to throw the ... all the good ... their meat and everything overboard. They lost it all in this bad storm. Actually, they were almost heading back to Hawaii during this storm. But, they lost it all. And we had ... mutton - every way you could think of it. We had mutton stew, and mutton sandwiches, and mutton, mutton, mutton. So, to this day, I won't eat any mutton.

Janis Kozlowski: [Ah-uh] Where'd the mutton come from?

Charles Donovan: They had sheep ranches up there then. And they still have, I understand.



Edward Winters, 503rd Coast Artillery, Umnak and Chernofski Bay, Alaska. Photo courtesy Charles Donovan.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, I think, I think that's true.

Charles Donovan: AK... yeah, AKMAK Sheep Ranch, I think it is.

Janis Kozlowski: So, they killed local sheep?

Charles Donovan: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Janis Kozlowski: But, you didn't find it that tasty, or did you just get sick of it over time?

Charles Donovan: Well, at first it was tasty enough. But, then I had so much of it, that I just didn't like it anymore. I couldn't even think about it, let alone eat it.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, how often did you get supplies coming in there to supplement what you were, what they were ...?

Charles Donovan: Oh, well we always got supplies. Of course, they couldn't land at Umnak – they had to put them aboard, ashore on barges – the supplies. But, we got plenty of supplies, always ... there was always supplies coming up from Seattle.

Janis Kozlowski: So you didn't feel too deprived that way?

Charles Donovan: Oh, not a bit. Not a bit. No, we were well taken care of in that way and many others.

Janis Kozlowski: How about your sleeping quarters in those Quonset huts, or in the Pacific huts – how were those?

Charles Donovan: We had just cots. But they were comfortable enough, we got used to them.

Janis Kozlowski: Were they warm and dry?

Charles Donovan: Well, they were a regular cot.

Janis Kozlowski: No, I mean your huts, were they warm and dry?

Charles Donovan: Oh yeah, yeah, they were warm and dry. We had the old heaters in them, and they were very warm, of course. The Quonsets were great, and like the Yakutat hut was nice and comfy.

Janis Kozlowski: [Um-hum]



Charles Donovan, Radioman 1/c, USNAAS Otter Point, Umnak Island, Alaska, May 1942 through December 1944. Photo courtesy Charles Donovan.

Charles Donovan: That was wooden, of course.