

Harry Bailey: Then they have, between Shemya and Niski, the island, is a pass. I don't think anybody had ever been through there, [it was] very narrow and how during the storm the big swells that flow through there. But, they finally said that's the way to go because you could go the other side of – the south side of Shemya – and get some relief from the wind. If the storm didn't become greater we'd just hang there at anchor. And when it subsided we'd go back to the other side, the north side, of Shemya and start unloading ships again.

Janis Kozlowski: So it was safer in a storm to be out, kind of out – not out in the big sea – but away from the shore so your barge didn't get beat up and swamped?

Harry Bailey: That was about the size of it. Get out in deep enough water and hope that all would go well. I mean, at least you wouldn't run aground. It did happen from time to time. When I first got to Attu the first storm, which happened shortly after we arrived, a tug boat with a six man civilian crew hit a rock out there and all six of them drowned. It could happen in the harbor even.

When I was in Attu in 1990, when I got back there, I pointed out to the warrant officer, he said they were going to start trying to sal ... not salvage, but do something with locating old ships. And I said, "you go out on that rock there and there's one dangling out there."

There were others that did not even get into Attu. What kind of a ship – telephone service or wire service, they were, you know, trying to run a phone service to Attu. And that big thing, I think it was called the Dellwood, [US Army Cable ship, photo in University of Alaska Fairbanks archive. Supposedly one of four ships lost at sea during World War II] they had machinery for, like a switchboard. It was supposed to go and be dropped off at Shemya. Well, they forgot to do that and they were going on to Attu and the ship hit a rock and sank outside the harbor. So the ... I don't know whatever happened with the switchboard, but that was lost and everything else.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, there weren't a lot of ... I mean, there was a lot of water between those islands between Dutch Harbor and Attu and there weren't a lot of people out there to help you out if you got in trouble, right?

Harry Bailey: No. I can't remember losing many too many people, just occasionally, but everybody seemed to get by. I mean, no, the Navy, I guess would come. And going ... at the time late, before the war ended I was back at Seward at a radio station and before getting to the radio station I was assigned to the biggest ship that we had, [they] called it "FS". I guess that meant freight and passenger or freight service. I was put on as a signal man—radio man--on that ship. We ... the engines quit somewhere off of Dutch Harbor and I never heard of Chernofsky until that day when we got the call for assistance. It was a nice summer day so you just hung out there and, I don't know, about ten hours later a tug came out and towed us back to Chernofsky.

But, I don't know ... well, in Seward I ran into, when I was at the radio station there, where I could hear a faint voice on the radio and it was one power barge towing a disabled one. But the one, the tower, lost his power and the one he was towing in turn had, as best they could, to hang on and be ... and take care of that one. And they were trying to call into Dutch Harbor but I guess due to the mountains there and Shelikof Strait they couldn't hear them so I was able to

pick that up and relay it. And the tug went out from Kodiak and pulled them in, I guess, because I never did hear anymore about it so I'm sure they were safe.

Janis Kozlowski: Boy, that sounds like an ... that could have been a real tragedy there.

Harry Bailey: Yes. Yes. When you're on the radio you always ... when you can't hear anybody, you ask for words twice. That is, repeat each phrase. I had to do that that night because they were, you know, so far away or whatever. I mean, the reception was very poor. But they made it I guess, you know.

Janis Kozlowski: That's good.