

Janis Kozlowski: So what, so what did you do on your time off?

Paul Polink: Well, they had built a new gym right across the street from our barracks, and I spent a lot of time in the gym ... doing, you know, playing scrub basketball against some of the guys. And I spent a lot of time in the room, I really was fascinated by music, and we had all the latest records of the day. And ... then, in the summer, I was really engulfed in baseball – I loved baseball, and the 54th Troop Carrier had a lot of support. In fact, our whole squadron would go to the games. And Colonel Grossmith was a ... a real, real rabid fan of baseball. And we played three days on the Post league and three days in the city league of Anchorage – they called it a “USO League.” So we played, rather ... six days a week. And of course, when I made the baseball team, I was taken off flying status for the summer – ‘cause, they couldn’t have us out, you know, somewhere, and only have a half a team. But I remember some of the guys that ... that I played with. And, of course, I was the, like I say, the younger guy - I think most of them are deceased - I am 84 years old!

Janis Kozlowski: You sound like you’re doing pretty well for 84.

Paul Polink: Ah, well, I, I only ... quit.... The last school district - they called me, I was 79, and I said, “No, I don’t think I’ll try it again.” Because, they all said, “Just fill in for a couple months,” and then it ends up one or two years. And my last school I went to ... and I didn’t need all the money, so, I gave them a break on that – I, I was there for five years, and [was] only supposed to be there a couple months.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, wow!

Well, let me ask you about baseball again – I have a book here that ... a guy wrote, about ... it’s called, “Walky-talky Fanning Bees.” It’s about ... it’s, “Baseball Ambassadors Visit Combat Areas in World War II.” And this man says that, “Stan Musial, Frankie Frisch, Danny Litwhiler, Hank Barowy, and Dixie Walker all visited Alaska.” Do remember bumping into them?

Paul Polink: Yes, I remember when they were there. And I would read it in the papers. Sometimes I was able to see them. But, if, if ever I was able to visit them, I, I certainly would. I was a, I still am – a rabid baseball fan.

Janis Kozlowski: Who, who ... which is your team?

Paul Polink: What’s that?

Janis Kozlowski: What’s your team?

Paul Polink: Well ... it’s terrible now, but it’s [the] Pittsburg Pirates – they’re not doing well, for the past 15 years, but it’s still my team.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, you still have to remain hopeful.

Paul Polink: That's....

Janis Kozlowski: [Chuckle] So, you didn't really get to meet any of the baseball ... the big guys that came through – they didn't come through ... well, they might have come through Elmendorf, but you didn't have an opportunity to meet them?

Paul Polink: Right, I did not have.