

Janis Kozlowski: Um ... and let me ask you one more question ... did you have a ... were you ... did you have parts readily available for the planes you were working on, or was that, was that problem?

Paul Polink: No it wasn't. The navy had a ... navy was, there were a lot of navy planes in the Aleutian Islands. And sometimes ... many of the parts were interchangeable, and we relied on them a lot of times when we were in the islands. And of course, if you really got stuck down there, we, the 54th, would have some planes going through the area all the time, so if you really got stuck, you would get the parts. But, I never had any problems. But.... Although we were quite friendly with the supply personnel on the islands, because we could get anything we wanted, or needed.

Janis Kozlowski: [Um-Hum]

Paul Polink: And we would promise them a trip to Anchorage sometimes – the pilots would say, “If you ever need to go to Anchorage, well, we could take some people without them being on our manifest.”

Janis Kozlowski: And did you, did you ever have any ... breakdowns in flight, or when you got out to the islands, that, that you had a difficult time dealing with?

Paul Polink: No I didn't. I had some minor things, like ... there was a, in the tail wheel, there was a drift pin that would break before it would do any damage, and things. But, it was a simple thing to jack up the airplane, knock that one out, and put another one in. And we carried some of those things with us. But we ... we were like junk men, we took care of ourselves, we had some of the most common things that you would need. So, we would have some supplies on board.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, that's pretty amazing at 19, that you ... you thought to, to do that kind of thing and being prepared. Because you probably didn't have a lot of experience and age, and, you know, taking care of things. So, that's pretty admirable.

Paul Polink: Well, some of the old-timers would put a bug in your hood, you know, [they] said, “If you go down there and can't get this part, the ones that are not too bulky, take 'em with you.”

Janis Kozlowski: [Um-Hum]

Paul Polink: I listened.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah. And was your crew older than you were?

Paul Polink: Oh, yes. They were; they were quite older. Like, my pilot and copilot were like, 27 years old - I was 19 of course.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, they were old men in comparison.

Paul Polink: They [Chuckle] sure are now.

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh] But, so they were helpful to you? They probably mentored you a little bit?

Paul Polink: Yes, they were very helpful. And I always would listen, because, I didn't know everything. So I listened ... I was a good listener.