

**Robert Buchanan:** Matter of fact, I would ... in the morning before we'd take off, I mean, it was our job – the mech's job – to get in the plane and start the plane up and run the engines, check the engines out, check the plane visually all over and well, I used to call it bleeding the automatic pilot. When the pilot's would come out, why, they'd get in and you'd tell them everything was all right, that would be it.

**Janis Kozlowski:** So was that position similar to what they would call a flight engineer now?

**Robert Buchanan:** That is right. It's the same thing.

**Janis Kozlowski:** Ok. Do you remember your first flight?

**Robert Buchanan:** The first one, no. [laughing] I wouldn't, I don't remember the first flight. No, not really.

**Janis Kozlowski:** So, it must not have been real memorable to you, that particular flight. But were there others that you remember because of some event that happened or...?

**Robert Buchanan:** Oh, just oddball things maybe. I know ... well, like ... I remember I was on radar once and we ... it was real foggy and I picked up three picket boats and we just circled around and come in like we was making runs and I could even tell on the radar how they would separate when they would ... of course, they had us on radar too evidently. They knew we were coming in toward them. It was so foggy I remember we couldn't even make a run on them.

Then another time we were down around Paramushiro and come back ... was coming back what we called sectors – I think there was about six sectors. You'd fly ... you'd be assigned to one sector. I remember we come back, we decided to drop off and take a little ride over the top of Kamchatka Peninsula. All we could see was woods down there. Of course, being from Attu there was nothing grew there – absolutely nothing but tundra. There wasn't a tree on the island. So we decided to take a ride up to there and then all of a sudden I saw ack-ack coming up. So they started ... but I don't think they ... it was just a warning. Of course, we were supposed to be ... at that time we were to stay three miles from the shoreline of Russia and we were clearing land.

Then, they quit firing at us and we started out and then the fighters – Russian fighters – come up and followed us back out to sea. And I don't think they even shot at us. I think that all they did was just followed us.

**Janis Kozlowski:** They wanted you ... to make sure that you knew you were in the wrong air space.

**Robert Buchanan:** That's right. They had the right ... they were not at war with Japan – Russian wasn't. Russia didn't declare war on Japan until right at the very end of the war in the Pacific. We ... being as they had a Peace Treaty with Japan we were not supposed to be in Russia. If a plane got shot up and had to go to Russia because they wouldn't be able to make it back to Attu, because that was strictly nothing but solid water all the way back, they could go in

and they could crash land in Russia. But they would then taken as internees and kept same as a prisoner of war camp.

Now our squadron didn't have anybody ever taken as an internee over there but the PV squadron that was with us went up there, they had a couple of crews that ended up over in Russia as internees and were put in a, you know, same as a prisoner of war camp.

**Janis Kozlowski:** What squadron were you with that had PVs?

**Robert Buchanan:** Uh, that I don't have ... I don't remember if it was 135 or 139, I forget.

**Janis Kozlowski:** Do you remember any of the guys?

**Robert Buchanan:** No, they weren't ... the PV squadrons were all kept in Quonsets more or less to themselves and the PBY were up in another section. No, I ... some of them, you know, we'd get together but I don't remember any names of ... the only one I can think of right now is one that came to our ... I probably could look it up in my whatcha call it, in my roster of ... from our reunions. But it was Bob Larson, who is ... he's probably dead now, because he was quite a bit older than me. He was a pilot in a PV.

**Janis Kozlowski:** I was just kind of curious about whether you guys mixed it up very much when you were on the ground or not. It sounds like you kind of stayed separate.

**Robert Buchanan:** Well, there wasn't nothing much you could do, you know. There wasn't nothing much to do there. There was a ... they had a Quonset where they had a ... they showed movies. Of course, it was the same Quonset they held church in too [laughing]. No, I didn't associate with any of the PV people up there to amount to anything at all.

**Janis Kozlowski:** So it sounds like there wasn't very much to do when you weren't flying?

**Robert Buchanan:** There was *nothing* to do – shoot dice, play cards, nap, and that was about it.