

John Pletcher: It reminded me of a class mate of mine that – we were flying a B-18 to Nome Alaska - and Brady Golden was my classmate – he was my copilot on this flight to Nome. I don't remember what we were going over there for but we were either taking somebody over there or picking up something and they used the B-18 to haul people and things back and forth. So anyway, we flew west out of Anchorage and ran into clouds and couldn't maintain visual contact with the ground so I decided, well, we're gonna have to go on instruments. So we went on instruments and I decided, well, I'm gonna climb up and get some more altitude and I'm gonna fly back toward Anchorage and climb 500 feet a minute for five minutes and turn around and fly back on my original course five minutes climbing 500 feet a minute. That should clear me of any of the mountains between Anchorage and McGrath and Nome and, lo and behold, that worked out OK.

We were flying on instruments, of course, we had a radio range at Nome that we could home on and that helped us. But we kept plugging along and we knew that it was clear at Nome and finally I could see that the clouds were getting brighter above us and I knew that we were gradually flying out of the clouds. We finally flew out in the cold air and Goldie was a smoker and he was smoking one cigarette right after another puffing away. And he looked over at me and we had both, of course had instrument training - he looked over at me and he says, Pletcher - after we got out in the clear he says "Pletcher, I'm sure glad you went on instruments like that, you know, I have never been on instruments before" and I looked at him and I said, "Goldie, you know I've never been on actual instruments before either"! *[laughing]* I think if I'd a told him that he would have jumped out.

And he had vertigo so bad, he says "I know we are flying level by a look at the instruments I know we're flying level but..." he says, "I've got this terrible feeling that we're climbing and about to stall." And he says, "I just can't stand it," he says, "I've got vertigo, I just feel like we're about to stall, and we're climbing, but I look at the instruments and I know we're not." But when we broke out into the clear he was happy. It was clear when we got to Nome *[laughing]*.

At Nome they had a gravel strip and it was kind of uphill, it was 3800 feet long and gravel and gradually uphill and you came in over the town, the town was....