

John Pletcher: I came in on a foggy day onetime and I followed the beach right on up into the town and flew over the town – I knew where the town was – then if I did I knew the powerhouse was right off the end of the runway. I told my co-pilot, I said, “don’t let me lose any altitude, don’t let me fly into the water, I’m gonna fly a left turn out over the ocean and I’m gonna do a 270 degree turn, just don’t let me fly into the water, watch me and don’t let me lose any altitude. And I made a left hand turn, circle turn, which brought me back headed toward town. I could pick up the town and I could see the, the powerhouse in the distance. And off beyond the powerhouse I could see this runway. I made it in and landed on that runway and it was a foggy time. And the fog was so low that the ACS, airways system, had a tower with a radio station right next to the runway, close to the runway – that tower was 151 feet tall and the top of it was out of sight in the fog and clouds when I landed. So we were just literally scud running, you might say, lucky. Lucky that we were able to see enough to get lined up and get on the runway and put it down on the wheels, didn’t belly land it, I never belly landed an airplane.

Then later after I got back to the States, after I spent some time training B-26 pilots I got into a B-17 program and went to Roswell and went through the B-17 pilot training and later got into the B-29 program. I went through the B-29 instructors school went to Tucson, Arizona and took over command of the training section at Tucson, training B-29 crews to go to the Pacific to join the bombing crews, replacement crews, that were flying from the Pacific Island over Japan. So, some of the people that we were turning out ended up flying over Japan. And I was earmarked for a cadre, for a 22nd bomber command which was sort of planned but never got quite to the point of getting on paper, and getting any cadre set up. They decided they didn’t need a 22nd bomber command or I would have ended up in that. But I did end up training B-29 crews at Tucson, Arizona when the war ended.

I was at Tucson when the practice bomb was detonated at, the original test bomb, at White Sands. When they shot that bomb off, I was at Davis-Monthan at Tucson, Arizona at that time. The news story they concocted was that an ammunition dump blew up because it was a heck of an explosion [*laughing*].

Janis Kozlowski: That was the cover up story?

John Pletcher: Cover up story [*laughing*], yeah. Ammunition dump blew up.