

**John Pletcher:** So, the older pilots that had been with the Group longer were assigned as first pilots in the 73<sup>rd</sup> and most of these new pilots out of my squadron, my flying school class, were also assigned to the squadron as co-pilots. So I and several classmates were assigned to the 73<sup>rd</sup> and the 73<sup>rd</sup> was assigned to go to Elmendorf Field. We flew nine B-18s from Elmendorf Field at Tacoma Washington, flew those airplanes up through Canada; we flew to Whitehorse, British Columbia, then to Prince George first, then Whitehorse, and then to Fairbanks and then from Fairbanks down to Elmendorf Field at Anchorage. And that's how I got to Alaska was as co-pilot in the 73<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Squadron which had been transferred in its entirety to Alaska as one of the first bombardment squadrons.

The 36<sup>th</sup> Bomb squadron, also a medium squadron, was also sent here and I believe it came - maybe it had been at one time at Denver, at Lowry. I don't know where it was immediately before it came to Alaska but it was designated as a heavy bombardment squadron and supposed to have B-17s but they didn't have B-17s for it so it had B-18s instead of B-17s. So it came up with B-18s. So then there was the 73<sup>rd</sup> and the 36<sup>th</sup>.

Later I got down to Wright Patterson, which is an air depot and, lo and behold, down there I found, and so did my classmates who happened to get on the same flights, we found equipment down there that was marked for the 37<sup>th</sup> bomb squadron. We had the sneaking idea that somewhere along the line somebody substituted the 73<sup>rd</sup> in place of the 37<sup>th</sup> because there was stuff arriving [*laughing*] at Tacoma marked for the 37<sup>th</sup> squadron. So we picked up stuff at the depot that was marked for the 37<sup>th</sup> squadron and told them, "no that must [*laughing*] be the 73<sup>rd</sup>". So it's possible that the 73<sup>rd</sup> may have gotten up here by mistake, I'm not sure [*laughing*].

**Janis Kozlowski:** We'll never know that. [*laughing*]

**John Pletcher:** Never know that, but it, it's a good tale anyway.

**Janis Kozlowski:** Sure. Is this, this is a picture of your bomb squadron [*picture 8 of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Bomber Squadron*]?

**John Pletcher:** That's a picture of our, of our squadron, including a couple of guys that were attached to our squadron and this includes, this is the flight echelon: all of the flight crews and enlisted men that were on the flight crews and one of the B-18s. This was taken down at McCord Field in Tacoma. And, it...[*long pause*] quite an experience.