

Janis Kozlowski: How long did that take you to put the Quonset up?

John Pletcher: Oh, I don't know. We worked at it for three or four days, I guess. I don't remember.

Janis Kozlowski: But it was more comfortable living?

John Pletcher: Oh, yeah. Yeah, at least when the wind blew you didn't have bad wind and it shed the water, because they were water tight. They'd shed the water and the tents would shed the water too but it was always damp inside the tent regardless. And I have slept in a tent, in a big sleeping bag, and we had some original sleeping bags that were big ones, they were quite wide, and actually two people could use them. And, I have slept in one of those sleeping bags in full winter uniform, in my flying suit, inside that sleeping bag and was just barely comfortable. And the wind would be blowing and, of course, the tent would be flapping and pumping the hot air out as fast as we could heat it up. And, water in the bucket that we had there would freeze [laughing]. We had a little old stove for heat, that's all we had. And, of course, the mess hall was several of those Quonset huts put together in a T shape and the leg of the T was the kitchen and the cross part was the mess part of it. And they had, I think they were stools or benches built in. They had sort of like a counter top – you go into one of these sandwich shops and you have a counter top and stools – well that was about the kind that sort of arrangement. And you had this countertop and you go in there and, of course, they... you could dip out whatever food you wanted down the several trays that they had there. But the officers and men all ate at the same mess hall. The enlisted men had one of these wings and the officers used the other wing. Back in those days there was segregation. In the.. as far as the ranks were concerned, and I guess there still is in the modern army, military to a certain extent.

And, of course, it was definitely segregation as far as colored people were concerned. At McCord Field we had a colored squadron there and they had white officers but all the troops were colored troops – and definitely segregation. They didn't get integration until well along in the war that they would get some integration. We had one man in our outfit who was... I can't tell you what tribe of Indian he was from but he was quite dark, and some of the people mistook him as being partly colored, but he wasn't. He was actually dark skinned because he was from an Indian tribe that was dark skinned. Down there in the lower 48 where there is lots of sun some of those Indian tribes are pretty brown. So, this guy was mistaken sometimes for an Indian...but he was a darn good soldier. But anyway, that's the way we, that's the way we lived.