

**John Pletcher:** [*begin mid sentence*].....mind sitting in the pilot seat of the airplane because it was watertight [*laughing*] - of course, it was raining. We had a fairly long runway probably 4 or 5000 feet long but it was wet sand, but it was good, it was nice and level and smooth – a good landing place. But I spent the first night sleeping in the airplane and so did my crew because that was the warmest place just to roll out our sleeping bags there and parachutes, and whatever you could use for padding and do the best you could to try to sleep.

And then the second night, I had a pup tent that I put up along side the runway. Next morning I woke up and I was in a puddle of water but this pup tent was water tight on the bottom up for about six inches, it was water tight. So here I was in this pup tent getting my boots and stuff on, getting dressed, inside this pup tent trying to keep from getting drown [*laughing*] in a puddle of water.

And, walking over to the mess hall, the mess hut was just a prefabricated building that had been put together. And it was probably about, oh, 24 by 24 feet, and it was prefabricated, the walls and everything were built in sections that could just be stood up and fastened together and everything. And they had the kitchen in there. So, you took your mess kit, it was the familiar aluminum mess kit, with aluminum tools and you went in one door of that little building and got your tray filled up with whatever was being served. That morning breakfast was hotcakes and eggs were powdered eggs so the only kind of eggs you got was scrambled eggs. They couldn't give you two over easy eggs [*laughing*]. The eggs had already been overeasy a lot!

But anyway, you get your mess kit filled and walk out and stand in the rain or whatever's happening and eat your breakfast [*laughing*]. It was food, you were hungry and you'd eat it! You know these young people were always hungry. And, later on, of course, they got better facilities but...

At the end for washing your dishes they had two barrels, they were both filled with hot water and they had people stoking the fire under them and you, they had a pit that you scraped off whatever you didn't eat. Then you rinsed your dishes, washed them in this first barrel that I suppose had some detergent or soap of some kind in there and then the last barrel was a sterilizing barrel that you dipped them in to rinse them all off and they air dried. Then you took your mess kit back to wherever you had your bed roll and when it come meal time again why you grabbed your mess kit and went across the tundra and ....

You know, down there in the islands the tundra is strange, its in clumps...we called them niggerheads, and they were clumps and you could walk from one clump to the other if you had pretty long legs. This one friend of mine who was one of the senior officers in the squadron, Frank Gallagher, that darn guy, he had long legs. He and Buddy King(?) both of them were tall, long legged guys and they could walk normally from one hump to the other and I had to kind of hop a little bit to go from one hump to the other. But if you missed a hump and went down in between 'em you were liable to go clear to your, over your knees in muck [*laughing*]. Oh boy! What an experience! What a way to fight a war. [*laughing*]