

## Kermit Roseberry – Chapter One.

Where do I start? I guess the beginning would be a good place.

1942

A 17 year old who thought he knew about all there was to know. Boy was he ever wrong. I got on a train from **Columbus Ohio** and went to the Covington Kentucky Reception Center. I got tests, physicals the whole works. They shipped me off in a troop train bound for St.



Petersburg Florida. I stayed in a tent city, in a week about half the troops were sick with dysentery. In a week the tent city was abandoned, I boarded another train and I wound up at **Miami Beach** for basic training. I was lodged in one of the smaller hotels'. **One of our favorite things** was to drop condoms full of water on anyone who would dare to walk under our 4th floor window. **I made the mistake of**

**bombing a Major who just happened to be passing.** Of course no one knew who the culprits were so the entire squadron gi'ed the hotel floor with tooth brushes for a week. We had long hours of drilling, running and physical training. We had parades were we were standing at attention for what seemed like hours at a time. All the while GI's were falling out by the droves in the hot sun.



A north bound train took me to Buffalo New York to the **Curtis Wright Aircraft Factory**.



Where I learned all the nuts and bolts about the C-46. Well in my logical mind I pictured a trip to the China Burma India Theater of operations.

That's where they were flying the **C-46**. I went to Lawrenceville Illinois. There I joined a replacement training squadron flying the **C-47**. Later the outfit was moved to Scotts Bluff Nebraska. We were flying double glider tow.



We flew Low level cross countries. I'm talking **25 feet** above the ground. Nighttime formation flying with the only light being the glow from the engine exhaust. When we got pretty good at that they put dampers on the exhaust system. One day we were tooling across the ground at the prescribed altitude of 25 feet.



We flew out over a bluff about 50 feet high. I'll never forget that picture it's painted on my mind to this day. A farm house was in the lee of that bluff, a woman with an apron full of chicken feed was feeding a flock of chickens. When we came over that bluff at 25 feet. It must have scared hell out of her and the chickens. She threw that apron over her head feed and all and headed for the house. The air under us was full of flying chickens.

My pay at the time was 50.00 a month. But, I had been on the move so much that the payroll records had not caught up with me. So they magnanimously gave me a partial pay of ten dollars. Whoopee. I finished my training at Scotts Bluff and was expecting to get shipped overseas.

I lucked out and got a ten day furlough and went home as a corporal. I was told to report to Fort Wayne Indiana after my Furlough.

But let's save that be for another day.



Kermit Roseberry (Rosy)  
Master Sargent, USAFR Retired



Hello, this is Tom McVey

I called Rosy and asked him a few questions about his basic training and the story he wrote.

**Rosy, when were you born.**

I was born in Columbus Ohio in 1924. When the roaring 20's were at their height.

**Rosy, how many brothers and sisters did you have?**

I had seven brothers. Five of us were in WWII. One other brother who is younger than me joined the navy toward the end of the war. The youngest joined the US Army after the war. I also had two sisters.

**Rosy, when did you join the Army Air Corp?**

In 1942, I joined the Army Air Corps in Columbus, Ohio and was sent to a reception center in Covington Kentucky. I was there for about a week then I went to basic training. I am trying to recall this from memory, which at the age of 90 is not too great. Although I do manage to beat my son in-law in a game of chess now and then.

**Where did you complete your basic training?**

I wound up at Miami Beach. There was not a base we were billeted in the local hotels at Miami Beach. The government took over the hotels for the duration. Not all of the hotels but a good many of them. We did our training on the beach and marched up and down the streets of the beach. Believe me it was no picnic.

**Flying at 25 feet is so dangerous. Why did the Army want you to fly so low?**

25 feet may sound scary but when someone is shooting at you. You need to reduce your time as a target. By the time I had finished all the schools and training I was all of 18.

**Rosy, I searched the web to find some pictures from 1942 and the Army Air Corp. How do you like the article that has been together for you?**

Tom, I like the pictures. Although, they are not quite representative of the tents we had. Our tents were more pyramidal.

Tom, here is a situation that happened to me and Ruth. **Hark** back in my narrative to **Buffalo New York**, when possible I would go roller skating at one of the local skating rinks.



In the spring of 1995 **Ruth** and I went to **Tampa Florida**, to a Good Sam samboree. I had won a raffle, it was an all paid trip to the Calgary stampede in Calgary Canada. **Ruth** and I took our fifth wheel trailer and headed north. We arrived in Calgary and checked into the tour. We parked on the parking lot of the university of Calgary football stadium. We were to have a catered dinner in the stadium concourse that evening. I mentioned to **Ruth** we might go in early and get us a spot at one of the tables. When we entered the concourse. There was a couple setting at one of the tables. I suggested we go over and introduce ourselves. Which we proceeded to do. Every member to the tour had a name tag to wear around there necks. As we were setting and talking, I noticed the lady kept looking at my name tag. She finely asked me if I had ever been in Buffalo New York. I replied that I had went to Curtis factory school during **World War II**.



Well sir when I told her that she jumped straight up in the air hands held high over her head and screamed. ! "" **Kermit it's you**". I'll tell you the hair on the back of my neck stood straight up and chills ran up and down my spine. I thought oh hell what is all this about. Her husband looked across the table at me and remarked, so you're the guy she's been telling me about all these years. Poor **Ruth** she was strictly struck silent. It seems that 50 years earlier when I was in Buffalo New York. I had met this young lady at the skating rink. We would meet there every week end. When I was transferred she make me promise to write to her she was 17 at the time. When I had got control of myself I told her I had written 15 or 20 letters, but never having received any reply. I just gave up. Her reply was, "that son of a bitch". I knew he was intercepting my mail. Poor **Ruth** she just sit there wondering what the hell was going on. How likely that some 50 odd years later you run into a youthful romance like that. Just a sidebar in life's course.

**Rosy**

I found this information about how the Army Air Corps sent several thousand troops to Miami Florida for Basic Training. I never knew about this. I hope you find it interesting. **Tom McVey**



Sheldon Hotel barracks 1943

## **CAMP MIAMI BEACH WW2**

### **WWII MIAMI BEACH VETERANS**

Between 1942 and 1945 Miami Beach played a significant role WWII. Nearly half a million men, including matinee-idol Clark Gable, took over more than 300 hotels and apartment buildings for housing and training headquarters by the Army Air Forces Technical Training Command. By the time the war ended, one-fourth of all Army Air Force officers and one-fifth of the military's enlisted men had been trained in Miami Beach, "the most beautiful boot camp in America." Another group of hotels and buildings served as an Army Redistribution Station for infantrymen returning from battle. These men were reunited with their wives, debriefed about enemy positions, and given rest and relaxation before being released or reassigned. Young women of the Women's Army Corps Communications Detachment were also stationed in Miami Beach. They were attributed with shortening the war by deciphering enemy messages. The Miami Beach Training Center is a closed United States Air Force facility. It was last assigned to the United States Army Air Forces Eastern Technical Training Command. It was closed on 30 June 1944.

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