



Sgt. Percy Moen  
1<sup>st</sup> Squadron  
Supervising Heavy Equipment/Aircraft Refueling Crew

Percy was born in Stoughton, WI on February 17, 1921.

At the outbreak of the war he had a job he didn't like, so he enlisted when he was 20, joining the Army Air Force.

Percy was inducted at Fort Sheridan and then went on to Jefferson Barracks for basic training. Unfortunately, there was a spinal meningitis epidemic and it took months for Percy to recover.

After his recovery, Percy went on to Westover Field in Massachusetts for more drill and then on to Richmond, VA, then

Seymour Johnson Field, NC and eventually to the 413<sup>th</sup> at Bluethenthal Field, NC.

Along the way Percy learned to drive a double tanker truck for refueling aircraft, as well as other heavy equipment.

Remembering the Kota Inten, Percy recalls that it was crowded in the bunks and that he stayed up on deck as much as possible. In addition to cleaning decks, they also played cards. As the journey continued, the men were allowed to sunbathe 15 minutes at a time each day.

Percy remembered a boxing match between a black soldier and white soldier. The "white guy was a dirty fighter". The referee was a Captain who had "cracked up a plane and couldn't fly".

"It wasn't too good when we got there." Each man started sharing a pup tent with another soldier. Initially, to protect themselves from Japanese bombing they dug a hole for the tent. Then the monsoons came and washed everything away. "Then we dug a trench around the tent and stayed a little drier." After the pup tents they moved into two man tents with three men to a tent.

In the pup tent and then in the larger tent with three men, Percy lived with "a guy from Texas who never shut up".

Percy was a "buck sergeant" with a crew of four men that operated heavy duty equipment. He recalled that two men were good workers and their rank increased over time. The other two were "mavericks" and remained PFCs.

"The roads were bad." Percy worked with equipment maintaining the roads; hauling coral, filling potholes. "I tried to keep dry mostly."

"It was just like a job. No reveille or formations." Eventually, the bulk of Percy's service on the island involved refueling airplanes.

When I asked Percy of his strongest memory he told me it was seeing the Japanese surrender planes land on Ie Shima. "There was a saying; see the Golden Gate in '48." The soldiers had expected the war to last much longer than it did and when the planes landed, the event authenticated the war's end.

Percy ended the war as a Staff Sergeant, 7 days short of four years in the service. "Going home we flew in a C-46 from Okinawa to Guam. Spent a great 10 days there. Took a troop ship from Guam to San Pedro, CA. Discharged at Fort McCoy, WI."

After the war, "for three months I didn't do anything". At that point Percy started working at a die casting company.

Eventually, at the end of his career Percy retired from the Madison, WI fire department.

