

ROAD TRIP!

Why did I think I needed a second chance at assimilating into the USA's society and workforce? What drove me to such madness? Oh yes, I remember. I've been living 26 years deep in the forest of the Great Inland Northwest and before that mostly homeless and wandering the world in search of a place to be one with society. In the autumn of 2017, I realized I had done my time thinking about such unresolved issues and it was time to get out there and see if resolutions were possible.

I had tried before, immediately after my return from the Viet Nam War, later during a stint in college; I even emigrated to Australia hoping I could leave the problem, whatever it was, behind. A part of me wanted to have the normal life of job, wife, kids, house, cars, and toys. Another part of me, the bigger part, clearly directed, "NO WAY! You'll only get in trouble."

Fifty years passed and I have a slew of commercially ready products in the form of books, e-Books, documentaries, sculptures, and jewelry, all on an expensive website. These masterful pieces of art are my life's work, albeit a life lived on the outside of society. I see people with a lot less talent and products of lesser quality making it big, so why not me?

I developed a plan to go on a long and enduring road trip throughout the upcoming winter for the sole purpose of working the collective American crowd to help resolve the issues of failure to commercially connect with the American and worldwide marketplaces, as well as on a personal level. I made the price of my e-Books a mere two bucks, as well as the downloadable version of my Viet Nam War and beyond documentary. My goal was to personally put the word of mouth out there so it could circulate. I also brought some paperback editions and the doco on DVD. IF only sales would pay for the fuel, I'd consider that a win.

My mode of travel was a 2016 Ford F150 Lariat, with a bed in the back should I need it. My preferred bedroom style was that of fully furnished condos that I have the power to obtain for a week at a time at the price of

\$239 (\$34 a night) and some timeshare points, as opposed to dirt cheap hotels, which are no less than \$40 a night.

I bought a timeshare in Florida back in 1997 just for the sake of having a nice place to stay as I travel about. The accommodations afforded through this purchase made me feel safe and comfortable as I traveled throughout the EU when I hired out as a private contractor to fight global financial terrorism. During the day, I would visit with top fraud squad police in various countries, as well as the criminal element. Having a gated place of residence added an extra measure of security to my sleeping arrangements. If in the morning the gate guards were dead, then I would know if the bad persons were trying to get me.

Working the timeshare network of condo-complexes not only provides a nice, inexpensive way to live in strange places, but also assists in choosing where to go: where the condos are.

As I plotted the route of this *Assimilation Tour*, I could see how the Greater Force than I was assisting in guiding the chosen path. It too knew I needed another chance to merge with society and maybe work out some of the unresolved issues before my life ended via natural causes. This trip had two parts: regression through the past and progression into my upcoming senior-life future.

Through the regression phase, I would experience a slow “flash of life in review” which is reported as something we see during our dying moments. Somewhere along the line, I predicted that I would recognize the change from regression to progression.

My travel budget was limited to about \$6000 to cover four months.

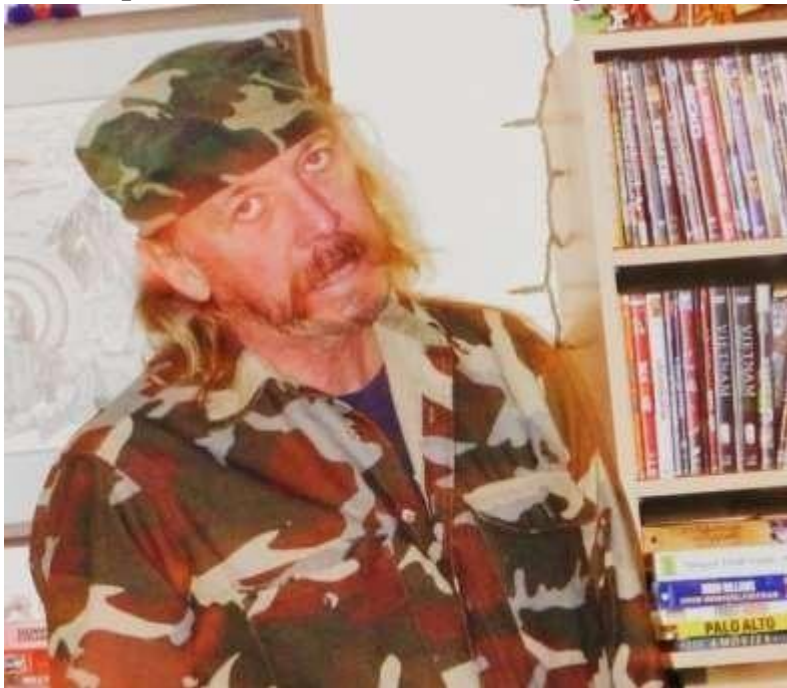
In the morning of October 26, 2017, I gave my last firearms safety class, and in the afternoon, I officiated my last wedding. This was my official retirement day from community service. I was ready for a change.

Did I mention my awareness of a force greater than myself that guides me? No, it is not a religious belief. I know I own the paths I choose and I am NOT going to follow someone else’s idea of said Greater Force, not when I have this mysterious force working for me, within me, and in my best

interest. A religion would be a distraction from my true God if said Greater Force is that of God. I don't know, nor is it my place to know. Heaven or Hell, if I can use the metaphors, soon follows each choice I make based on the mysterious force that guides. I always tell it, "We're in this together." I also believe that where I go, what I see, what I do, and many of the people I meet have something to offer me, be it advice, revelation, a point of wisdom, or a rebuke.

I live, work and play in the Theater of Life, as well as learn as a permanent student in the School of Life. On every stage I walk onto, every actor is always on time, knows his or her lines, and follows the script written by the force greater than ourselves: the great scriptwriter. Every environment is the classroom and will offer me a lesson, and I, as the student, need only to pay attention as the master mentor may well test me later.

The path for this road trip began with a night visiting with Mr. David, a master expressive artist in his own right.



He makes art on a scale from little to huge. Eight-foot-tall Sasquatches to wee weird jokers, with the final pieces cast in bronze.



We ate supper, told stories and lies, drank adult beverages, and by bedtime I had my truck down by his gate for a five a.m. departure.

I drove 553 miles to a Wyndham Microtel in Salt Lake City to spend the next night. During this trip, I relinquished my King of the Hill crown and donned the crown of King of the Road. Yes, I am a professional traveler and know how to live safely and comfortably on the road, with or without money in my pocket.

I enjoyed some social intercourse with the hotel's front desk clerk. I did not write down her name. What I learned from our lengthy conversations was that she was from Guam. I have been to Guam. I mentioned to her how I had noticed a steep cliff to one side of the island nation as I flew away after a refueling stop on the return flight from Viet Nam in 1969. In my mind, I saw the photo-memory of the steep cliff as clearly as if I were looking at a photograph in my hand. The proud native of Guam filled in the details regarding the local lore of the cliffs.

She told me that the name of the cliff is *Two Lovers' Point*. The folklore tells of a Romeo and Juliet type story of lovers forbidden to marry. In rebellion,

they decided to tie their hair together and jump off the cliff to their deaths on the rocks below. That information verified my old photomemory of the steep cliff that I have carried for so long, and I rejoiced that the cliff has a legend.

You can read the story from a third party here:

<http://guam.stripes.com/travel/legend-two-lovers-point-guam>

This spontaneous meeting with an old memory now resolved told me that everywhere I go, most everyone I see, all the things I do, and all of the experiences I have will aid in answering the following questions:

Who did I meet, and how did they fit into my life and how will they continue to fit in?

What made my visit to the places and events I experienced special, and what did I gain from it?

How did any experience help explain my past, and how will I use it to influence my future?

Are any of the places I visited worthy of a consideration to relocate?

Is there any reason to assimilate to anything, place, or person I encountered?

Lastly, as stated before, What did I lose by being a trained warrior in Viet Nam and how do I get it back?

My first condo-complex was in . . .

Steamboat Springs, Colorado

The next day I drove 333 miles to the Rocky Mountain city of Steamboat Springs, Colorado. I became a weeklong resident of this condo-complex called the Legacy Vacation Club. My living space was behind the window on the fourth floor:



The only purpose of this weeklong layover was to live in a neutral zone, one separate from my life at home, yet not yet a part of my attempt to assimilate into society. I was surprised at just how tired I was and I slept a lot. Autumn's physical labor to prepare for this winter had worn me out. The rest and ability to take it felt good. I also created a guitar solo music video, the *Assimilation Tour Theme Song*, which is on Vimeo on my website's front page or in the Video Link page. <https://vimeo.com/240737649>

Steamboat Springs got its name when miners heard what sounded like the chugging sound of a steam engine, which was actually the boiling water in the ground.

In Steamboat, I made up flyers to leave in my hands-on promotional travel wake. These were my assimilation tools for interested consumers to follow-through with purchases of my work.

Thank you, yours truly,

BW's autograph here

Certificate Number: XXXXX

Date:XXXXX

Although this stop was not officially a part of my merging with society road trip, I still asked the questions:

Who did I see and how did they fit into my life and how will they continue to fit in?

The only person I had any meaningful communications with was this gal, the condo-complex receptionist. She might have what it takes to make it into my future, if she could handle a lifestyle reminiscent of 1888 deep in the forest and would consider romance with an older man. Of course, she won my heart, as she is Ukrainian and reminded me of my sweet Nati from Spain.



In downtown Steamboat, I met many service workers in stores, but none was available to come out and play. There was one gal who followed me out of a pub, but she was too drunk for me to invite into my life.

What made my visit to the places and events I experienced special, and what did I gain from it?

In the photo of the Vacation Club you see huge electric lines running past the building. There are three sets of these massive electro-magnetic current generators running through the town. I'll never stay there again, as I believe the unverified truth that the current's magnetic fields will cause cancer.

What I gained was a solid rest, which brought on the desire to sally forth into the real adventure that was about to begin.

Only those two questions had answers. My next stop was in . . .

Denver, Colorado

I drove 203 miles west to Denver to visit Dave, a Nam vet who had worked in the same unit that I flew with, but he was in the avionics department. He was my first encounter with the wartime peers on this "flashback" adventure. I had visited Dave earlier in the year and created the music video, "*Organics*" using his father's old Hammond organ. You can view this video on my website or Vimeo at:

<https://vimeo.com/264649524>

Dave lives in a bedroom community in the very type of house and neighborhood I could never live in. For him, it is perfect. He is always busy as a volunteer for one community service or another, making him a truly well-merged social role model.

The questions . . .

Who did I meet, and how did they fit into my life and how will they continue to fit in?

Dave is now a good friend and we'll keep that friendship alive until we die.

None of the other questions have answers.

I only spent one night as I had a major appointment in . . .

Branson, Missouri

The next day I drove southeast to Branson, Mo. I had to make a night stop partway. I got a free night at a Comfort Inn using Choice Hotel Reward Points.

Oh look! It's the happy receptionist in receipt of a book as a tip for being so nice to me. Yes, you know where my mind wandered. She's young, nice, beautiful, and curious.



In Branson, it was the week of Veterans Day and this city has adopted an annual Veterans Week celebration. Veterans receive a lot of free food and entertainment during this week. This travel event mimicked how I left my childhood home in 1967, soon finding myself as a combat participant in Viet Nam with a certain select type of warriors: aviators. I was curious: what would be the results of this foray into my past? What would come of it? I never feel comfortable at veteran reunions. I do stand out as a guy who has commercially told his war stories on multimedia platforms and formats.

My childhood friend Bullet chose to join me, as he too is a Nam Vet, a Marine. We shared one of my condo-connections, the Foxborough, outside of the city.



I do not like staying too close to where I work, as that means I never get away. Literally, I was working the “Branson Strip.”

The Thunderbird Combat Assault Helicopter Company Association hosted a hospitality room in one of the downtown hotels. This would put me in and amongst fellow combat aviators with whom I flew and whom I protected in Viet Nam when my ship, *Pollution IV*, led the way on combat assaults. I’m in the ship below, laying down the smoke.



Being with this crowd was a repeat of my child-to-adult progression, man-baptism by gunfire. I met a few of the good old boys. Mr. Carlson, below, was my very first peter-pilot on Blue 10.



An interesting war artifact to drive to was one of the old Thunderbird gunships, Bandit 2. I had been a gunner, not a pilot, although I did get in some stick-time from a seat like this one.





Bullet looked good playing the part of a pilot.



The week was interesting beyond the Veterans Day events. We went for a zip line adventure.



I became aware of a Veteran Film Festival, too late to enter, but I did go to it and met the organizer. I gave him a copy of my DVD and he gave me his card to contact him for next year's film fest.

At the end of the week, between appointments, I made a quick appearance at the AHC's after-supper party. Bullet and I chose to eat supper at an all-you-can-eat lobster and crab restaurant for \$40 instead, and then treat ourselves to a ZZ Top Tribute Show. In the few minutes I was at the reunion party I gave a bit of a speech, talked up my books and DVD, thanked everyone for coming, told them all how great it was to see them again, gave a handshake to the organizer, and walked away to the sound of applause. That felt like a perfect closing to my veteran reunion endeavors.

The organizer then started telling my story about how I tracked down a smoke generator and donated it to the Smithsonian. Sorry, I just couldn't let someone else tell the story, as he did not know the details. So I took to the podium again and told the story. The end result was, another round of applause. I then excused myself, as I had a ZZ Top Tribute to go to.

To never participate in a veteran event again could be a reward of this tour. Leave it behind as something I did and walked away with the memory of appreciative applause. Oddly enough, few veterans have ever supported my work on the topic of our collective time flying combat missions in Viet Nam. My opinion is, yes, I don't tell their story, I tell a

glimpse of *the* story regarding a day in the life of a Combat Assault Helicopter Company, from my point of view, the only point of view I have. What these guys miss out on is having an award-winning video that shows the life they lived in war through video, giving them something to pass down to their descendants. Oh well, not my worry; I feel it has always been a lost cause.

It was great to have Bullet along, as his adventurous spirit helped me have all sorts of commercial fun with foods, amusement rides, and music, which is what the Branson Strip is all about. We drove around the countryside aimlessly a few times, as well. I love getting lost, as that is when the other neat stuff is seen and experienced.

The questions . . .

Who did I see and how did they fit into my life and how will they continue to fit in?

Bullet was the best person for me to hang around with, as he knows me from childhood, we both went to Nam, so we have double backgrounds that make us . . . to use his word, “brothers.”

I saw many faces from the past, one of the most important times of my life. I did sell a few photo books and DVDs, \$25 worth. It was good to see faces from long ago. I’m not alone, yet, but the groups keep getting smaller. I am not sure future contact is necessary.

What made my visit to the places and events I experienced special, and what did I gain from it?

Seeing the old gunship was great, as was seeing the people. I did not feel compelled to hang out with the group of old aviators. This is where Bullet’s friendship, adventurism, and fun came into play.

How did any experience help explain my past, and how will I use it to influence my future?

Yes, I could feel the memories of being back in the day with these fellows. I could smell the spent JP-4 jet fuel, hear the crack of the radio transmission, and sense the tension of war that hung in the air. Maybe they were all feeling a bit uncomfortable, too.

Is there any reason to assimilate to anything, place, or person I encountered?

On the contrary, I walked away with the biggest show of appreciation that this group of people has ever shown me, two rounds of applause. I can never do better than that, leaving me with the understanding that I no longer need to participate in any veteran reunions again, and therefore there is no need to assimilate or waste my time and energy trying. Nice.

Lastly, as stated before, "What did I lose by being a trained warrior in Viet Nam and how do I get it back?"

I am still working on that.

I dropped Bullet off at the airport and I drove to a family reunion in . . .

Kentucky

With Bullet sent back home, I drove east to Kentucky, to meet family members I didn't know, as they are young. I met two grandnieces, Ava and Abby, 8 and 10 respectively. It was great to spend a few days with the kids and their mother, Jennifer, my niece-in-law, with whom it was also nice to spend some quality time.



Alas, my nephew Russell was away on business. I noted that Abby has a flair for acting, so I put her talent of being a young southern gal to work under the stage name of Lizzy Taylor. You can see her giving a sales pitch found on my website as . . .

Lizzy Taylor

Not every word is true and that is why I call such performances, “video plays.” I write fiction.

I had a very comfortable visit with my family. The questions:

Who did I see and how did they fit into my life and how will they continue to fit in?

It was great to see the next generation of my blood. It was good to see me in them. Abby, the expressive artist, and Ava, a delicately emotional child, like I was at her age.

What made my visit to the places and events I experienced special, and what did I gain from it?

The Lizzy Taylor video is special, living a couple days of their lives and routines was special, and the blood-love I felt was very special.

How did any experience help explain my past, and how will I use it to influence my future?

Watching the two grandnieces, I also saw some of my parents and more so, grandparents, as well as myself and their parents. I hope to see more of all in the narrowing future.

Are any of the places I visited worthy of a consideration to relocate?

Nope, I’m good.

Is there any reason to assimilate to anything, place, or person I encountered?

I found joy in the sharing of blood and genetic makeup a joy that will endure into the future. On that level, assimilated I am.

Lastly, as stated before, “What did I lose by being a trained warrior in Viet Nam and how do I get it back?”

The answer might be no more than one word that sums it all up. I wait to recognize that word.

Russell has a brother, George. He and his family live just up the road. I drove on to . . .

West Virginia.

Here I visited another nephew, George IV, and his family, Susan, Maggi, and George V. V was away at college so we only spoke via phone.



Maggie read *Shindara*, did a book report on it, and got an A. She said that when she gets out of her parents' house she will come visit me at mine. Possibly, but I won't hold my breath, as such a beautiful young woman with intellect and poise will have a million opportunities to chase.

We ate well at a restaurant as we chitchatted and hung out. Everyone works, or schools, and there was no time to play in the middle of the week. I stayed in a Motel 6, as their septic system had broken and one more water user was not going to be a good thing.

The questions:

There is only one discovery that answers all questions regarding what I lost, yet have, and who and what will always be in my future: Family. This too was a great visit, I felt assimilated on a family level. It was too short, yet I had to move on to . . .

Harrisburg, Pa.

Nothing to see here, folks, so just keep on moving on. I spent a night in a hotel. The worst hotel room ever, as it had no window other than one that opened up onto a hallway. With the blinds open, I was the fish in the bowl. No questions, no comments.

Agawam, Massachusetts.

In this small town, I met new people, one who holds a special place in my heart, as she, Lynda, is a fan who bought one of my wooden mushrooms last year. Here it sits in her living room on display, with a photo of Basil.



That makes me feel special and appreciated, plus, Lynda and her husband bought five books and two Jesus rings while I was there. Nice.

Gas money.

The questions:

Who did I see and how did they fit into my life and how will they continue to fit in?

Lynda and her husband Brian, patrons and friends. I need more of these folks to find me and enjoy my art.

What made my visit to the places and events I experienced special, and what did I gain from it?

Food, fun, chitchat, nice bed, sleep, and then up in the morning to . . .

Hometown

I grew up on the North Shore of Massachusetts, and the South Shore of New Hampshire. My gene pool first arrived in the area in the 1600s. My family has a lot of history in this region. I'm the eleventh generation from the first arrival, Simon Willard.

I went to Bullet's house and spent four nights and days, with one dedicated to a drive to my hometown. Bullet needed some physical labor assistance with autumn leaf pickup over the yards of three houses. That was exactly what I needed, as long-distance driving does nothing but weaken muscles and expand the belly.

The best part of the trip to my hometown was visiting with childhood peers and my ninth-grade biology instructor, Harvey. I also tracked down another member of the BW Fan Club, Peachy, and 86-year-old wonderful woman who is still perky and spry. We ate lobster at a restaurant. Yum. I did go to the mouth of the Merrimac River to catch the sunrise . . .



. . . and maybe a woman?



I tried but she was afraid to get too close. She had a camera exactly like mine and did not know how to use it. I suggested we go have breakfast and I'd give her a lesson. There was no assimilation there.

I did find a shell in the grass and it is now on my truck's dash.



I still needed breakfast so I dropped in on Kerry, a woman I didn't know in person, but we had been in contact via email for a year. She was surprised to see the man in the photo letters standing at her doorstep. A longtime friend, Maureen, introduced her to me. She lives in a retirement condo. We went to one of my childhood hot spots, the Agawam Diner, and had breakfast. We then dropped in on Maureen and Rick, our mutual friends just for the fun of it. I met Rick when I was 7 years old and we were neighbors until I went into the army.

I also swung into the Dead Center of Town, the Byfield Parish Boneyard, to visit with generations of family.



Oh look, Aunt Dot is the most recent plant. She was the last of the elder generation.

On my drive around the neighborhood, I passed this old icon of a lifestyle gone by. My gram used to work at this farm and bring us freshly pulled milk, with cream on the top, right from the cow.



What event had taken place in the old hometown stomping grounds that sent me on a wild and crazy tangent that took me far beyond the norm of social life?

I guessed that the head-on collision I had one night with a drunk driver changed my life's course as much as anything. At 10:25 on August 25, 1967, my life changed. The collision fractured my left pelvic bone and put me in

bed for a month or so to recover. After that boring, sedentary month, I was burning to get on with life. It was from that frame of mind that I made my first adult decision: join the US Army as soon as the doc said I could. By the end of October, I was “in the army now.” I wore the Halloween costume of a soldier for three years.

There I was driving on the very road that had led me to the very curve on which the drunken stranger knocked me into this wild and crazy tangent. This night was also late, dark, and similar in detail to what they were on August 25, 1967. Was this the time and chance to change things up? Could I drive the same path and make it through without a life-changing accident, and in itself be a life-changing incident with no collision?

I thought my chances were good, so what could go wrong? Not a halfmile from the accident site I noted the headlights of an oncoming car, and then suddenly, on my side of the road, an unseen dog-walker turned on a flashlight to announce his presence. My reflex made me swerve away from the dog-walker, yikes . . . into the lights of the oncoming car. Quickly, I pulled back to my side of the road. Whew! I made it and no one got hurt, but that was not good enough. I wanted a smooth ride with no incidents.

I continued to drive, mulling over my options. I knew how to make a circle around town to give the pivot point another chance at clearing the air.

Once again, I approached the danger zone. This time, two cars led the way. I let them pull ahead to the point that I could no longer see them. I wanted the full-on, face-to-face, bumper-to-bumper meeting with another car coming my way on that corner, or not.

The corner came up and I smoothly rounded it with no approaching vehicle and no life-changing incident, or was there? All was good. I could only wait to see if this maneuver made any change whatsoever to my life.

With that question asked and answered, my next week’s stay, where I hoped to write more of my Dream Story, was on Cape Cod. Thanksgiving was on the doorstep and I had too far to go to reach my destination in the late afternoon, so I got a hotel in Kingston, Ma. From here, I did two things: celebrate T-day with a meal and two beers at a pub. Yep, I got a little blurry.



I paid a visit to the famous Plymouth Rock of Pilgrim fame.



You don't see this every day: True History.

Who did I meet, and how did they fit into my life and how will they continue to fit in?

The hotel receptionist made me a trade, a book for some of her handmade greeting cards. That was me performing a kindness. One hundred and eighty thousand words over 118 pages, with an original cover painted by yours truly, for three pieces of paper with thirty-six words total? Where's the justice in value?

Kerry, she might come visit someday; the gal on the beach remains lost within her own fears.

What made my visit to the places and events I experienced special, and what did I gain from it?

Plymouth Rock . . . that's special.

Surviving the "crash corner" was special.

Seeing many old friends from my childhood, and new cousins, was special.

Basically, driving through the garden of my youth, seeing and feeling a sense of roots, but knowing that garden has been plowed under and is best visited in memories makes it special, and one less thing to think about.

How did any experience help explain my past, and how will I use it to influence my future?

My people were already here when the Pilgrim crew showed up. "Watch and learn, new people."

Are any of the places I visited worthy of a consideration to relocate?

Nope. New England in general: been there, done that.

Is there any reason to assimilate to anything, place, or person I encountered?

No. The bottom line regarding childhood homes is, "No one should try to return to what has changed."

Lastly, as stated before, "What did I lose by being a trained warrior in Viet Nam and how do I get it back?"

Being a part of a hometown family and a sense of social belonging that includes the fire department, church, school, etc., is what I have living on my hilltop, just not as deep. I am still the weird outsider.

Alas, the future beckons and I have a job to do, work on my latest novel about dreaming. I drove on to . . .

Hyannis, Massachusetts

Most of the condo-complexes are okay, but some . . . they just don't qualify for the level of "resort" that I seek. Some are nothing short of

retirement complex-condos, or even welfare-assisted housing. Hyannis offered the lesser of the condo residence experience.



This one lacked views of any kind that were worth looking at. Out the dinning room window was the back of a grocery store and its parking lot, and I felt the walls closing in on my workspace.



From the bedroom, I could only see another set of condos. Am I watching them or are they watching me? For the money, I can put on a show.



The true reason for me even being in this burg was the fact that I had a sister and brother-in-law just down the road. We hooked up and had fun, and they allowed me to do some more physical labor. Yep, leaf raking.



I couldn't stay the entire week, the place was too depressing, so I went to visit the great and wonderful author, John Del Vecchio, who's most known for his novel, *13th Valley*, a Viet Nam War story. John was a military journalist.

The questions:

Who did I meet, and how did they fit into my life and how will they continue to fit in?

More family, I'm having fun with it, and I am sure it will continue.

John is part of my extended family and our friendship goes back to the late '80s.

What made my visit to the places and events I experienced special, and what did I gain from it?

I suppose editing through the dream story up to where I left off was well worth the time, and I suppose I could look at the lack of a pleasant view a good reason to sit in front of the computer, working.

How did any experience help explain my past, and how will I use it to influence my future?

My sister is more British than I am, and I more Irish than she is. Otherwise, yep, same stock and it's good to know.

John's Viet Nam past is similar to mine: we survived and wrote about it. He is a brother in both arms and pens, and therefore I am heading to visit him in . . .

Connecticut



Visiting John showed me a lifestyle I could have had IF things had gone differently for me. He is older than I am and he had an adult life before he went to Viet Nam. He has a wife, children, and a history of jobs, many writing accomplishments and a great reputation in the published authors' world. We had fun chitchatting, eating, and yes, he let me move around some leaves. He has the best leaf blower I've used. It's on wheels like a snow blower and sucks in air from the front, blowing it out the bottom with

great vim and vigor. He also has one of the best guest bathrooms I've seen, and from his guest bed the starry night sky is worth waking up for throughout the night just to see which star or constellation marches past the overhead skylight.

In the morning I had purpose, to get to . . .

Chantilly, Va.

I had great plans to visit my custom-painted flight helmet and smoke generator on display at the Smithsonian's Nat'l Air and Space Museum at the Udvar-Hazy Center. Alas, the timing was just wrong. For me to do that, I needed to meet with Roger, the curator; he gets me in early through a private entrance. As fate would have it, Roger could not meet me until the next day, and I could not stay as I had to check in to my next condo. I did spend the night in a hotel there, though.

One topic I wanted to discuss with Roger is if he'd give me a letter from the NASM stating that IF someone wanted to, they could donate my second original Viet Nam War Smoke Generator Wall Art that I made. It is a real Viet Nam War smoke generator's smoke ring, and the piece is 3x4 feet dimensions.



Second, do you see the face in the bushes on the right side of the river?



I'm never alone.

My destination was the best condo-complex, so far: The Outer Banks Beach Club off the coast of North Carolina, on the last US beach before Africa.

Outer Banks of North Carolina

I liked the looks of this place in the catalog, so I rented it for three weeks. This is a long time at a good place, but a very long time at a bad place. Good news is that it was great. It is just behind the barrier sand dune.



I rented the bottom floor and it did not provide a view of the ocean, but then again, the dune blocked the wind, and the ocean was but a short walk away.

It came with a Full Moon on the first night.



With nice sunrises.



I met interesting people on the beach. I carried a soccer ball to kick and run with to give me inspiration to run and allowing me to gain some extra ground. On my return from a run, a lovely young woman walked up, over the dunes, and onto the beach. I was the only man on the beach so I figured, IF she was looking for a man, it would have to be me. She wasn't, but we did chitchat and she said I could call her and ask her out to dinner. I called several times, but she never picked up. There was no assimilation there. I also chatted up several store clerks and waitresses who could have said,

"I'll meet you . . . sometime, somewhere." Alas, none did, so no assimilation there, either, and it was not from lack of trying.

Another character I met on the beach was the world-famous, recordholding richest man in the world, Mr. Hoover.



As rich as he was, he was homeless, moneyless, and looking for a free drink. We sat on the deck and sucked back my whiskey. Soon enough we breached my attention span, so I suggested we take a walk, and we did. First, we walked along the beach acting like teenagers, okay, drunken teenagers. Once onto the main road, Mr. Hoover darted across the road and hit a Circle K for a free beer. Time to ditch him before the cops showed up, and I did.

Just when I thought I was free from calamity, my left foot, wearing a new shoe with an extra adhesive sole, stopped in its track when the sole grabbed hold of the pavement, plummeting my upper body south, to the pavement of Martin St., right in front of a car waiting for the light to change.

I was down and up so fast I'm not sure the driver knew what had just happened. Neither did I. My right knee took a serious dent with broken skin. My right elbow struck the pavement with blunt force trauma. The small of my back tweaked to the right. I knew it was all going to hurt later and it did for weeks with constant scabbing and muscle tightness. The good news is, it was my Gawd healing me from the zip line incident that had pulled my right shoulder a smidgeon out of its socket. Ramming the elbow into the pavement as if I meant it was Gawd ramming it in like It meant it. The result was, the shoulder bone popped back into place. I was feeling

creative and had a brainstorm of how I could record myself playing two instruments in one video. A storm churned the ocean into a frenzy and I videoed that. I then recorded me playing guitar. Then I played that back on my laptop, and then recorded me playing the flute along with the guitar video. You can see this video, titled *Storm Surge*, on my website.

For more recording fun, I shot videos of an Atlantic sunrise, and the 5% crescent moonrise later. Unfortunately, a constant strong breeze made the live video recording worthless. I needed a recording studio.

I asked around and found one, The Ranch, just five miles down the road.



I laid down some flute for the sunrise video with the title, *Sun Dance*.



I then laid down some blade for the video, *Moon Dance*.



You can find both music videos on my website, or just click here:

[Sun Dance](#)

[Moon Dance](#)

The questions:

Who did I see and how did they fit into my life and how will they continue to fit in?

Mr. Hoover was fun but only for a while. He had jail in his future.

Scott was fun and if I'm ever in his area again and need to record something in a studio, I will use his.

There were women but there was no assimilation. It got close with a bartender who got me drunk and was looking better by the moment. I suppose I'm guilty of today's media definition of sexual harassment, but I was but one more "No" to getting a "Yes." It's called courtship.

What made my visit to the places and events I experienced special, and what did I gain from it?

I found, recorded, and edited into finish product three new musical expressions on video.

I felt the blessing of not being Mr. Hoover.

I had a fine three weeks of fun and relaxation.

How did any experience help explain my past, and how will I use it to influence my future?

I was a budding artist in Viet Nam and henceforth; this too is genetic. Who painted the Spirit of '76? Who was a master clockmaker, and a British major, as well as an early liaison between Northern Europeans and the local tribes? I can't retire from being an artist except through death. I'm his blood eleven generations down.

Are any of the places I visited worthy of a consideration to relocate?

No.

Three weeks passed and I was truly ready to roll. I drove to . . .

Raleigh, North Carolina

In Viet Nam, I joined the all-volunteer suicide combat assault helicopter *Pollution IV*, the company smokeship, as you may well know. The number one gunner, Harvey, showed me the way as I learned the ropes. He must have shown me well, as I lived through eight months of beyond-the-callofduty, beyond-the-front-line war.

We stayed in touch after the war and I visited him quite a number of times over the decades. He has passed since. Left behind is his son John, and John has kept in touch with me. Since he was just down the road from the Outer Banks in Raleigh, N.C. and in the general direction of what I wanted to do next, I chose to take him up on his offer to visit. He has a new big house and a wonderful new wife. They showed their love in front of me, and I liked it.



The questions:

Who did I see and how did they fit into my life and how will they continue to fit in?

Seeing John and his family living the good life made me feel good that Harvey would approve. I hope to see them all some more.

What made my visit to the places and events I experienced special, and what did I gain from it?

Once again, I saw what I didn't have enough throughout life due to my combat personality. I lost family life.

How did any experience help explain my past, and how will I use it to influence my future?

I think it's all too late to revisit the possibility of family. My best bet would be to hire one to visit.

We had a good visit, but in the morning I was up and out with a destination to visit another old friend, *Thunderbird 6*, the flight's command and control helicopter on display in . . .

Salisbury, North Carolina

The drive was not too long and by the end of the day, there I was, standing beside another Huey from back in the day.



Here it sits in its full glory, although I will say, it needs a fresh coat of paint.



The questions:

Who did I see and how did they fit into my life and how will they continue to fit in?

I saw no people, only an inanimate object that was like seeing an old family member.

What made my visit to the places and events I experienced special, and what did I gain from it?

Flashbacks and memories poured forth as I stood next to the old bird. Like the time *Pollution IV* got into a firefight with a squad of NVA sneaking out of Viet Nam and back into Cambodia. They didn't expect to see us in Cambodia, but there we were. Once the squad was dead, Aircraft Commander Nider turned the ship toward Tay Ninh, and this was good. A lucky enemy bullet struck the hydraulic line and punctured it. Without hydraulics, steering a helicopter is nigh onto impossible. Airspeed becomes your best friend. We made what the A/C called a controlled crash. As soon as we stopped unharmed on the Tay Ninh active runway, *Thunderbird 6* came in close for a landing, with the CO's hand in a fist, waving it in extreme displeasure.

How did any experience help explain my past, and how will I use it to influence my future?

This ship was my past, and seeing combat Hueys alive and well, on display, like the smokeship I dressed up with a smoke generator at the NASM, and visiting *Bandit 2* in Branson and *Thunderbird 6* in Salisbury showed me symbols of my past that will remain on display into the future. Marking time and space by putting these artifacts on display has become a thing, but perhaps one I can let go of if that's what feels right. I was a participant in the dedication to the Huey in Salisbury, as was Harvey.

I spent the night in a hotel nearby. The next day's drive would take me to a hotel for four FREE nights in . . .

Pigeon Forge, Tennessee

In a telephone opportunity after booking a room with Choice Hotels I chose to listen to yet another sales pitch for a timeshare with the Blue Green Resort group. I asked for the youngest, most lovely salesperson they had, and the sales manager set me up with a young gal from the Ukraine. He told me she was from Russia, but as soon as she opened her mouth for an introduction, I commented, "You are from Ukraine." Right away she liked me for knowing the difference.

She gave her best sales pitch, and I listened, whilst I had images of her in my bed playing the part of young Nati; still, her sales pitch fell on deaf ears.

Pigeon Forge might have been a nice rural community once upon a time, but today, the same company that filled the Branson Strip with fake facades holding near-empty entertainment venues has defined the ambience. I could only take it for a few days. I was antsy to roll further south to ...

Fort Rucker, Alabama

I had some goals in the Ft. Rucker area. First off, I wanted to find *Thunderbird Red 10*, a Slick-on-Stick the crew of *Pollution IV* and I helped dedicate years earlier.



You can see a TV interview we gave during the dedication ceremony at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBPY78g9xY&list=FLljFZ9FfdiB2Djs3sqbIHuA>

I also wanted to swing into the Ft. Rucker Army Aviation Museum and its gift shop to see IF they owed me any money for products sold, or maybe needed more.



As it turned out, they were very happy to see me. No, not to patronized more of my great historical aviation artwork in book and video formats, but instead to pass me a bag of my books and DVDs, asking me to take them back as they, as an aviation museum, can't sell a book or DVD to save their lives.

Well, that just about wraps up my ability to assimilate with society on a historical educational level via award-winning books and videos. If an Army Aviation Museum can't sell army aviation books and DVDs due to lack of patron interest, what chance do I have? NONE!

I saved some money by staying in this low-end motel.



This gave me two days to work the area. Some fun came into play when I visited with Jim and Debbie. Jim is the President of the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion Association. He was kind enough to take over the 145th CABA website that I ran for three years before I lost interest. The questions:

Who did I see and how did they fit into my life and how will they continue to fit in?

It was a shock to hear that the museum quit offering books and video on aviation history due to lack of sales. I guess this means they are out of my life.

It was great to have supper with Jim and Deb and maybe they will come visit me someday.

What made my visit to the places and events I experienced special, and what did I gain from it?

Knowing what can't be done is in itself knowledge. If a museum can't sell my work, how can I? If my work has no interest for the younger pilots in training and older retired pilots such as those from the Branson reunion, this is why my efforts are all mere exercises in futility, and failure is not my fault.

How did any experience help explain my past, and how will I use it to influence my future?

I've always felt that selling books and DVDs was a mug's game, and now I know it isn't just me who fails in the sale of my work. The consumers fail to partake.

With my jobs done here, I headed south to . . .

Fort Walton, Florida

Along the way to my next condo-complex I decided to look up Mr. Richie in Dothan, Alabama, who used to run the local pizza place back in my area of the world. Rumor has it that he makes \$25,000 a month selling his pizza. I went in with camera ready and studied his action. For ten hours a day, he stands behind the counter writing orders from a constant flow of customers and taking their money. I would guess the rumors to be true.



Here he is, working it. He wears a “Jesus is my superstar” T-shirt but won’t wear one of my Jesus rings. His claim to fame was his stand-in role for Arney S. in *Conan the Barbarian*.



In Ft. Walton, I spent my first night in a Comfort Inn, on the top floor, as I was a day early to check into the condo-complex.



I had to laugh when I looked down at a familiar angle from partway up my tower and instead of seeing my house, I saw a Pizza Hut. I pretended

time had passed and now all the ground around my tower was commercially developed.

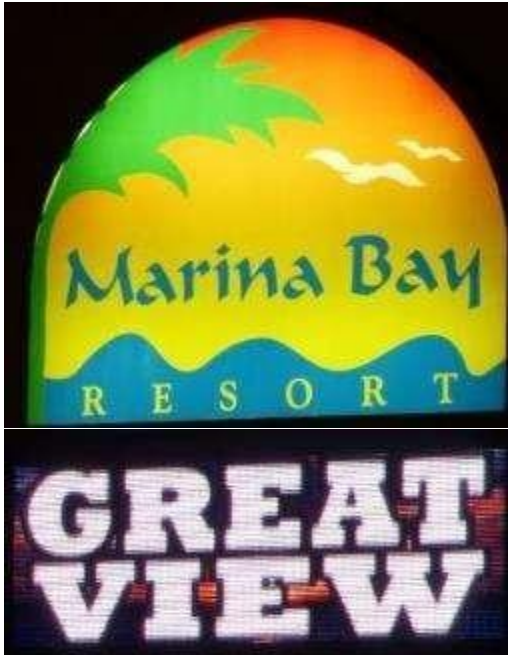


While waiting to check-in to the next condo, I took an early morning drive and found the sun sitting over the Atlantic Ocean.



The time came when I had to check into a place that looked ominous, as ominous as I was suddenly feeling. I had a cold coming on that I must have picked up in Alabama.

The sign for this place is a total lie.



From my room, my cubicle, my prison, my retirement condo, my glorified Motel 6, there was no “view.” I looked out onto another building.



Luckily, I had that cold brewing and I had nothing else to do but to absorb whatever germ had entered my body and wanted to adapt to me. It took four days, which isn’t bad for a foreign body’s assimilation.

New Year’s Eve passed during one of my recovery nights. The best I could do was listen to the fireworks. The cold had me in bed early, and the rain outside deterred my interest.

As soon as I could, and right on time, I busted loose from the convalescence and headed to my next condo-complex in Hot Springs, Arkansas, with an overnight in . . .

Jackson, Mississippi

I found another low-end hotel in Jackson, Ms., where I had fun with the night clerk. I asked her where I could find a beer, she told me, and I thanked her. She added, "Bring me back one, too." Oh yes, I did. It was fun to slip the beer to her without any of the other nosy co-workers seeing the gift given. I do like covert activity. The next day when I checked out, I gave Hannah, the receptionist, a copy of *Shindara* as she said she loves to read.

Standing at the counter I asked for a general time estimate for the drive to Hot Springs. A truck driver knew from experience, and asked me why I was going there. "To buy some quartz crystals and work on a story I'm writing." He suggested that I take the time to visit the old Daily Planet building from the original Superman TV series. "You look old enough to remember that," he commented. Oh yes, I am. The next day I arrived at my next stop in . . .

Hot Springs, Arkansas

I needed some quartz crystals to use in finishing a run of wall plaques that I started in the late '80s. I had found a box of these partly finished cheery wood wall plaques during my autumn cleanup, about a dozen. Back in those days, I knew a guy who had eight routers connected to a stylus. The router bits would carve away the wooden blocks as the stylus followed the

plaster masters I had made. Therefore, I need some nice crystal specimens to finish this project and Hot Springs, Arkansas is the place to get them.

This is the last wall plaque I have left from the eighties. It is for sale on my website under the Sculpture link.



First, I had to check into a Best Western Hotel, as I was a day early. It was okay, recently renovated and a bigger room than either Wyndham or Choice Hotel chains provide, and around the same price.

The next day I checked in to the Emerald Isle condo-complex. I met this crew behind the check-in counter.



I came in hot, bored, and needing to talk to human beings, so I gave them the Great and Wonderful BW standup comedy skit. As reward for listening to me, not tossing me out or calling the police, I gave them a copy of *Quirbots* to read. I asked Melinda, on the left, IF she'd like to go out for a nice dinner, but she couldn't due to marriage. I asked Kathy on the right if she had time. Kathy said she might. I suggested she call me when she has the time and desire.

I asked if I had a nice condo, "as it's time I got a good one."

They looked at the paperwork and sure enough, "You have the best one." What made it "the best one" was the fact that the developer made it for himself. I guess he died and didn't take it with him, so now they rent it out. Oh yes, I paid my \$34 a day for the week.

Another thing that made it the best condo was the view from the top floor, overlooking Lake Hamilton.



Two other amenities that made it the 'best' condo were the special tiles on the floor and the walk-in shower, similar to John's in Conneticut.

The first real day out on the town sent me to a known crystal shop, Coleman's. I dug in their land in 1979 with my newly-wed wife and pulled up virgin crystals. My, oh my, how the entire area has been developed.

I bought a few pieces from Coleman's Retail store for wholesale and then took a drive toward Mt. Ida and found another shop and bought some more specimens, \$750 worth altogether.

In the top photo the pieces look small, but they aren't that small. Palm sized, as the second photo shows.



The next day, Kathy called and said she would be available for the next two days. Nice. I asked her to take me to the old Daily Planet Building, which she did not know was in Hot Springs. It's something Superman would leap over in a single bound, as seen in the 1950s TV series.



It's for sale. 1.4 million bucks, plus about 5 mill. more to renovate it. If I did it, I'd establish an E-news paper in it called *The Daily Planet*.



Merry Christmas, see the lights strung across the sign?

Then there was the Observation Tower on the highest hill just outside the city. It's 260 feet tall, with 360 steps. I needed a good tower climb.



Okay, this photo brings me to an amazing realization: WHAT IF . . . Kathy and I had hooked up in college and were married in 1978, or so? This could be our 40th Anniversary vacation. Interesting.



Yes, that's the Daily Planet building down below. To tell the truth, IF I were to move to a small city, Hot Springs is the best one I had found on this trip, so far. Mind you, I would not do well in summer, as it is wicked hot and humid, but I would live in the Daily Planet's penthouse as I remodeled it.

Kathy and I had fun for two days and three evenings. We sampled a few of the restaurants, did some shopping, and a lot of one-on-one chitchatting. It was the best condo-complex so far, and a standard of which other such places need to take note. The questions:

Who did I meet, and how did they fit into my life and how will they continue to fit in?

I met a handful of women, something I lack in my life unless they are clerks or service people. All were clerks and service people. Then there was the exception to the rule, Kathy, who chose to take the meeting personal. Nice. A real woman who doesn't have contemporary hangups. Refreshing.

The only man I met was the second rock shop owner. We got along great too. He cut me a great deal by lowering his price from \$45 a pound to \$1015. Me being a Viet Nam Vet helped. He too served at that time, in that area, but on a boat offshore. I gave him a DVD to show him what he missed on land.

What made my visit to the places and events I experienced special, and what did I gain from it?

I noticed the rural development since my 1979 visit, and then saw the city and its surroundings in new light. I shopped the market for crystals and obtained plenty for future projects. Most of all, I had a nice, productive stay.

How did any experience help explain my past, and how will I use it to influence my future?

My artistic past showed up in full glory as I sought out quartz crystal specimens to use in my upcoming art runs that I know I want to do, and some new ones yet to be explored.

I took some names and numbers of galleries and rock shops that might find my upcoming crystal inclusive artworks interesting. Maybe there will be future sales in wholesale bulk.

I found a historic place that could need my TLC. Bring on a big lottery win, I want that Daily Planet building.

Are any of the places I visited worthy of a consideration to relocate?

Yes, I can see me renovating that Daily Planet building and leaping it in a single bound. I'm only about 6.5 million dollars shy of the estimated budget.

On one floor, I'd have an excellent workshop, and in the area are many crystals to use in artworks. I'd have a video/audio recording studio, and a workout room, with Jacuzzi and sauna. I might even go for one of those resistant swimming pools.

The Daily Planet E-newspaper would be fun to watch someone else run. A "Good News" newspaper.

I could frequent the hot mineral water bathhouses and detoxify easily, making life healthier, maybe longer, without any pain. I once asked an elder female friend what her secret of longevity was, and she stated straight up, "Orgasms." I'm going to live to be a hundred!

Is there any reason to assimilate to anything I experienced?

No, yes, and maybe. What this town needs is Brian Wizard to win the lottery, renovate the Daily Planet building, and throw some excellent parties. Would that be me merging with society? I would change the building's name to Brian Wizard's Daily Planet, another legacy. It would be the humane thing to do, and be exciting and fun.

To have had Kathy as my wife for the past forty years was only a dream and one photo, but the photo was a nice touch to the dream.

Big city, with lots of women of all ages, and me with a penthouse, oh yes, I'm ready to play. I don't mind watching.

What did I lose by being a front line and beyond warrior in Viet Nam and how can I replenish it?

Family and long-term relationships of the hearts are what didn't happen. Having said that, I can't take all the responsibility for the failed relationships, as it was the women who always walked away. Now, at this age, I know better. I'm free and loving it.

I snore, fart, sneeze, cough, wiggle, itch, toss and turn, as well as jump when I'm asleep. Sleeping with a garbage disposal unit would be easier.

The week went quickly and the next thing I knew, I was off to spend a couple days waiting for the calendar dates to move so I could check-in to the next condo. I took up residence in . . .

Mineral Wells, North Texas

The drive across Texas was interesting, seeing all of the industry going on above and below the ground. On top, there are crops: peanuts, pecans, and cotton, and below ground, there are gas and oil wells pumping out the energy.



Let's not forget the wind, as you can see behind the cotton bales.



Otherwise, the road is long and rather bland on both sides.

Here I stayed in a Best Western for two nights only because it was on the way to my next condo-complex, and inexpensive. Yes, they all look the same.



I had no idea what I might find here. For one supper I chose an Italian restaurant. It was a mistake. The waitress had a runny nose that she would wipe with the back of her hand or shirtsleeve, and the order of mushroom garlic sauce over angel hair pasta came to me as three small sliced mushrooms, with no garlic, over regular spaghetti. Oh look, I found another Huey from the Nam.



It's not one of the Thunderbirds, but one of the Black Cats from up in I Corps. There was a museum to go with it. I donated a few DVDs to the volunteers as a reward for their dedication to the cause. Maybe something will come of it.

In a pawnshop, I bought a full body harness. It just felt like the thing I need at home. We'll see if I can construct a fun workout tool for Spring Training. What if I tied a tire or cement block to it via a rope and pulled it behind me as I walked a mile? It could be a full-body workout.



No questions applied here. The next stop was . . .

Roswell, New Mexico

This is the area where in 1947 a supposed alien flying disc crashed and was taken by the US Army and hidden out of sight . . .blah, blah, blah. The town of Roswell is the big town in the area and it has a lot of “alien” commercial junk for sale. I did not partake in the museum of hoax. I had another hotel stay and the most excitement I found was a pretend black panther taking a dump.



I also caught the wee crescent of my 849th moon cycle near its beginning.



These photos prove how easily I am entertained.

I believe this is the pivot point between the regression and the progression. What now lies ahead is my future. I no longer have to be a part of the past. I'll put it on the back shelf. My next week's stay was in
...

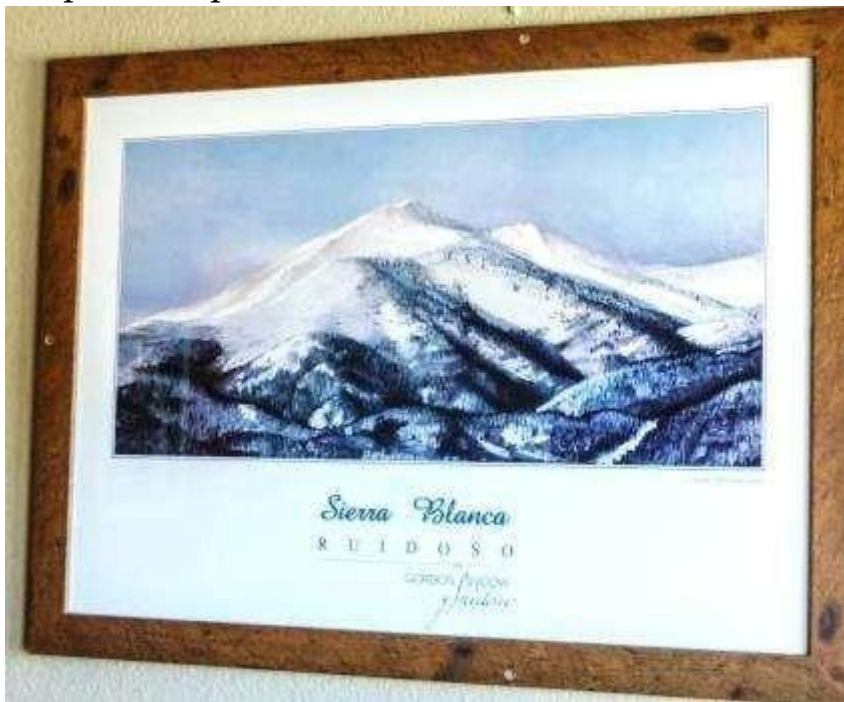
Alto, New Mexico

Rancho Ruidoso rests in a low field within the New Mexico Rocky Mountains. It is a simple place with a dozen condos.



The area around this condo has one thing going for it this time of year, winter skiing. Oh, for snow skiing, snow needs to be on the ground, and there wasn't any.

The photo depicts how the snow condition should be in late January.



Alas, this is how it was, barren of skiable snow.



Therefore, the businesses were seriously suffering, as was the water table. There was wildlife, so that was nice.



Oh no! It's the enemy of my tower, a flicker.



I shot this lovely dove photo from behind a window so I had to fix it up a bit, hence the blurriness.



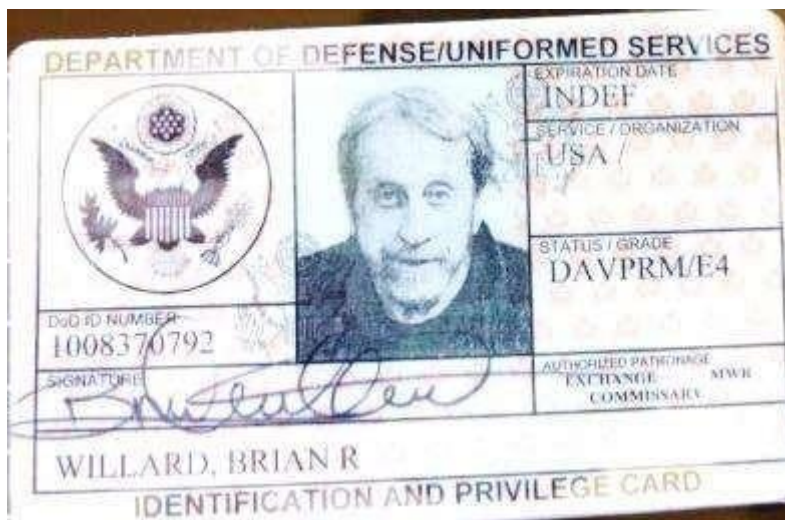
Sunrises, sunsets, the waxing moon, and stars drifted overhead.







For a day trip, I rode over to the Holloman Air Force Base for a new military ID. ID photos are never flattering. This ID opens doors like military bases and US Embassies around the world, and gains a guy like me discounts.



The base has a nice array of aircraft on display.



Just down the road is the White Sands Missile Range, where I was bad and retrieved some of the good stuff.



To enhance my attempts to assimilate with the Rocky Mtn. society I took myself out to a meal. Oh, the ambience was the same as I have at home. I ate alone, again. Another sign of the financial struggle everyone is suffering.



For work and play, I sat at the computer and wrote this boring drivel telling the story behind the *Assimilation Tour* up to here.

Who did I meet, and how did they fit into my life and how will they continue to fit in?

Nobody.

What made my visit to the places and events I experienced special, and what did I gain from it?

Nothing but writing towards an end.

How did any experience help explain my past, and how will I use it to influence my future?

Zero.

Are any of the places I visited worthy of a consideration to relocate?

Nope.

Is there any reason to assimilate to anything I experienced? No.

Lastly, as stated before, "What did I lose by being a trained and experienced warrior in Viet Nam?" How do I get it back?

Nothing comes to mind, which is perfect; this is post-pivot point into progression.

The maintenance of this condo was lacking. What they needed to do was to hire me to fix everything broken, from the front door that wouldn't stay shut without the deadbolt in place to the plumbing of the kitchen sink, which burst open on my last dishwashing session.

I couldn't stay to fix any of it, as I had to drive to the next stop . . .

Holbrook, Arizona

From Alto, New Mexico to Holbrook, Arizona I covered ground I had never covered before.

A lot of it looked like this.



With lava flows.



With lava tubes, which I wanted to climb into, but see the makeup of the brush, prickly things abound and I do not like being pricked by sharp thorns.



For a respite, I rolled into . . .

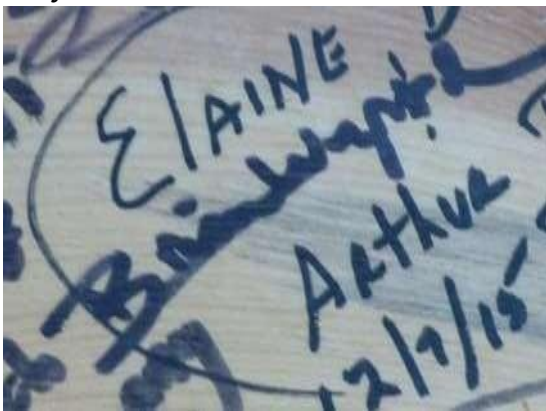


Oh yes, the people put the pie into Pie Town at the Gathering Place, where they specialize in meals, with pie as desert.

Long ago, they decided to allow guests to inscribe their name on any piece of doorjamb or frame.



Oh yes I did.



Oh look! It's a happy waitress with a copy of *Space Hunts* for a tip.

It could be true that her expression is saying, "I worked hard to please the man and all I got was this stinking book. Where's the money?" I joke.



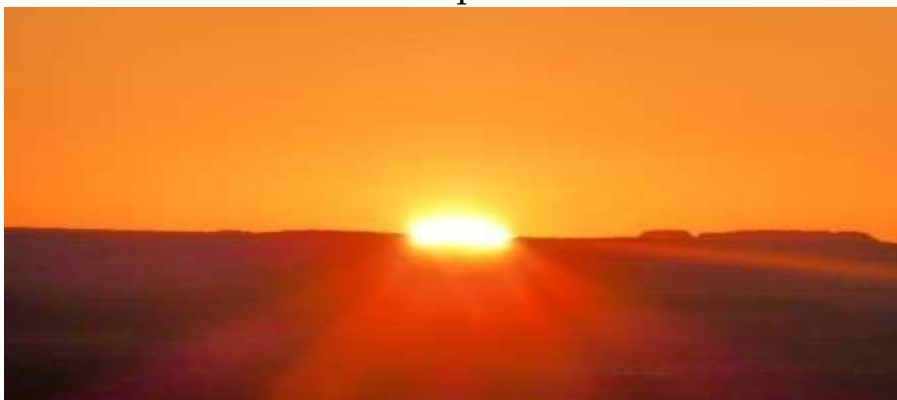
With breakfast and pie in me belly, I got into more of this.



Holbrook is the halfway point to Sedona from Alto, so I spent two nights in another hotel just lining up my next check-in rendezvous. There is a Petrified Forest in the area. I bought this specimen of ironwood to bring home so I can, "put another log on the fire."



There were things to see in town, but unfortunately, the price of photographing the morning sunrise was slipping a bone in my left knee out of its socket. Was it worth the photo? Of course.



I was down for the day, hobbled. The cure is to simply relax and let the parts find their way back home. I watched HBO.

I was to check into a hotel in Sedona on Sunday, making my second day in Holbrook a Saturday. I was mobile enough to drive downtown, where I found a Ford dealership with an oil change shed open for business. It was time for the second oil change of this trip.

That evening I walked a block to an Italian restaurant for supper. I needed a second Italian meal to better the one I had eaten in Mineral Wells, Texas. Good news! This pasta dish met my expectations.

The question, only one:

What made my visit to the places and events I experienced special, and what did I gain from it?

I gained a swell piece of petrified ironwood to use at home.

The next morning my knee was ready for walking, so I drove it to . . .

Meteor Crater

On my trip west to Sedona, I came across the largest petrified tree in the world, so they say. It's in the area of Jerome.



For two hours, I drove the long and sometimes winding road toward the San Francisco Peaks and Flagstaff, where I'd turn south to Sedona.



Along the way, I came across the largest meteor crater on Earth. I would like to find one of these bits, which is just a fragment of what struck the ground to make the big dent. The meteor was traveling at 26,000 mph, and all was great and wonderful until the landing. The size of this nickel-iron meteorite piece is that of a 3500-watt generator.



The Hohenberg Meteorite is the largest discovered fragment of the 1,500-foot (45-meter) meteor that created Meteor Crater.

THUMP!



Here are the details.



The national network of *Corvus brachyrhynchos* (American Crow) is keeping an eye on me this entire trip. I feel so loved and looked after.



On the way to the crater, I noticed this natural landscape and I liked it.



On the way back I stopped, broke out the flute, and played the tune the tree, rock and I all heard.

You can see the video, [Wee Desert Ditty](#) on my website, or just click that link; it might work.

Then there was this fine piece of stone. I want it in my yard. I could paint it up to be a screaming gargoyle face. Do you see the two rocks in the hole?



Oh yes, you'll find these pieces in my rock garden at home. The rock itself is too big to carry.



I finally rolled into Sedona.



I scored three nights of FREE accommodations in a swank hotel IF I agreed to listen to a 90-minute sales pitch. Oh yes, you know I'm good at it.

I am finding it fun to make the people that help me along the way feel special. Everyone loves my New Year's resolution of making someone feel special every day. Giving them all a little something to remember how appreciative I am for their help is fun for us all. The common statement is, "This has never happened to me before."



No, I'm not losing money being so magnanimous. I'm working this town's travel industry and my work has earned me \$800 in cash and free lodging here and elsewhere down the road.

The sales pitch was great theater. The salesperson, a woman, immediately thought my personality was funny. She suggested I do comedy standup professionally. I explained to her that I do comedy sit-down because I'm old. Plus, I don't like crowds, so if there were an audience of 400, I would dismiss 399, leaving just the one person in front of me, like you are now. I could have given her \$25,000, too, and bought more timeshare redundancy. Something inside me held me back.

Here's a possible surprise ending to this story. Now the plot of a slow flash of life was making sense.

Restaurant Emergencia

Sister,

This email may be the end of my *Assimilation Tour* if things go one way instead of the other. If it's the end for me, it is up to you to come here and clean up the end of the story. This is where I am staying.



Yes, I am enjoying my stay.

Several days ago, I had tightness in my left breast. I had to stop what I was doing and let it relax.

Tonight, whilst watching the movie, *Time Travelers*, my left arm went numb. These two incidents gave me the idea I have a heart condition that might need addressing. Both are signs of a heart attack. Such a thing would be a killer ending to my *Assimilation Tour* story. As it reads in the beginning, the last 90 days have been a slow flash of life prior to said life's end.

If I go to a hospital, it will be the VA in Reno, as that is the best one for the big stuff.

If all things pass and I live that long, I'll see what they think. I don't want to do anything here. If I can, I want that eclipse on video, so I don't want to be delayed.

SO, relax IF this is IT for me. I say, "Excellent!"

If you have not heard from me tomorrow morning, give these people a call. Ask if they saw me for breakfast. If by nine I haven't called you, have them check the room. If I'm out of here, tell them to do what needs to be done to take me to cold storage. My desire is cremation and being dumped into the wind from my tower top.

You need to secure my computer. Write everyone on my contact list, then in the documents folder you'll find a file called: Email addresses. Write them too sending them this note below:

Hey, it's me, Brian, now over on the other side. This is my last photo letter. You can read my final piece of writing on my website soon. Its title is: A Slow Flash of Life.

If you would like a memento of art, book, or DVDs go to www.bwizard.art click on All Products and tell my sister Sandra, the sender of this email, what you want. You will have to pay postage for whatever you pick. Enjoy, and it has been as real . . . as any dream I have ever had. Cheers,

Brian Wignall



So my mind doesn't toss and turn all night long with the wonderment of dying, I'm taking a shot of vodka and a Valium. The Great and Wonderful,

Brian Wignall

What a surprise, right? The next morning I awoke alive, but still with the dull pain in my arm. I called the VA in Reno, to tell them I might be in for a ticker-checkup in a few days. They said, "Go to the ER NOW!"

I called the VA Choice Card to see if they would pick up the tab. They said, "Maybe, but go to the ER NOW!"

Both made me feel as I were the boy who cried wolf. I called the ER in Sedona, and they said, "The VA might pay for it, but we have a duty to treat you. Get over here now."

I spent my lunchtime at the novelty 'green' restaurant, Verde Emergencia. It was lay-down seating and gave out free bracelets as lunch treats.



It had a unique road sign.



The "Welcome" sign was to the point.



There was a crowd so I had to sit and wait my turn. It had the best view from any restaurant waiting room I've ever been in.



The server came out to call my name, and I went in for some bedside service.



For lunch, I ordered some vital statistics with a side of EKG.

Did I really have a heart attack? I didn't know? In the end, the doc said all readouts were fine. B/P 140/70, heartrate 68, EKG was just fine. That is when he started touching me to squeeze muscles. As soon as he latched onto my upper shoulder muscle, he smiled and reported, "Found it. This rock you have under your skin has no doubt pinched a nerve or two."

The long distance driving and hours sitting at the computer reporting my travel-capades are most likely the cause of the tight muscle and the nerve

pinch. He suggested massage and heating ointment like Tiger Balm. I have some Blu Emu, herb, vodka and Valium.

Yeah, but . . . I can't relax under all that. I have to get up at 2:30 am so I can drive into the desert north of Flagstaff to shoot the Lunar Eclipse in case you miss it, with a desert ambience.

The only question:

What made my visit to the places and events I experienced special, and what did I gain from it?

Working the travel industry, all fair and square, was good for my travel fund.

Finding out that the repetitive action of driving and computer work torqued my shoulder muscles so tight that a nerve was pinched, mimicking a symptom of a heart attack. This information was something I needed to know as such a thing could happen again, with another 1500 miles to drive and much and much more writing to do.

The trip to the ER could seriously dent my upcoming finances IF the VA fails to come through as planned.

The fact that I'm still kicking is great.

Sedona: a mystical place to do things not usually done. In the morning, I rolled out of there to shoot . . .

The Luna Eclipse

I asked the front desk for a 2:30 a.m. wakeup call. The clerk filed the request into the computer. At 2:25 I woke naturally; I know my circadian rhythm and time schedule. I proceeded to pack up. I took a minute to reflect on how lucky I was to be able to pack up and depart, not having any serious delay in a hospital or morgue.

By three a.m., I was out of town; the wakeup call never did come. In Flagstaff, I stopped at a Denny's for breakfast. There was a homeless man

there drinking only coffee. I met my New Year's resolution and bought him eggs and English muffin, my main staple at Denny's. Fed, coffeed-up and ready to shoot, I drove north through some foothills into the flatter desert. With regular glances over my shoulder, I watched the full moon. Bingo, the shadow made its mark. I pulled over and shot the darkness as it began to pull its red veil over the face of the Blue Moon.



This Full Blue Moon Lunar Eclipse was special. As Earth and Sky reported:

The January 31 full moon is the third in a series of three straight full moon [supermoons](#) – that is, superclose full moons. It's the [first of two Blue Moons in 2018](#). So wasn't just a total lunar eclipse, or a Blue Moon, or a supermoon. It was all three ... a super Blue Moon total eclipse!

First Blue Moon total eclipse in 150 years? Well... It depends on where you live. Yes, we've seen the social media memes going around suggesting this is the first Blue Moon total eclipse in 150 years. But the meme is true only for time zones in and around the Americas, not for the rest of the world. The last time that we had a Blue Moon total lunar eclipse – reckoning in world time ([UTC, or GMT](#)) – was [December 30, 1982](#).

My great-grandfather may have seen this show after his stint in the Civil War.

I had a method to my travel and eclipse photography process. Over the course of the event I would stop, shoot, and then drive repeatedly. At its finale, I pulled over and stopped to finish the photo shoot.



The sun came out and its brightness ended the show.



The only question:

How did any experience help explain my past, and how will I use it to influence my future?

The fact that a Lunar Eclipse on this day hasn't happened for 150 years is a cool piece of celestial history and I documented the event.

When the time is right, I'll construct a music video to go with it. Maybe I should use last August's drum solo as a soundtrack. I was now on the . .

.

Long Trek Home

I spent the night in Richfield, Utah hotel. Along the way, I saw a critter I've never seen, a Kaibab squirrel. Wikipedia tells us . . .

The Kaibab squirrel (*Sciurus aberti kaibabensis*) is a tassel-eared [squirrel](#) that lives in the [Kaibab Plateau](#) in the [Southwest United States](#), in an area of 20 by 40 miles (30 by 60 km). The squirrel's habitat is confined entirely to the [ponderosa pine](#) forests of the North Rim of [Grand Canyon National Park](#) and the northern section of [Kaibab National Forest](#)^[1] around the town of [Jacob Lake, Arizona](#).

This squirrel is [not found](#) anywhere else in the world.^[2] In 1965, 200,000 acres (800 km²) of Kaibab squirrel habitat within Grand Canyon National Park and Kaibab National Forest were declared the Kaibab Squirrel [National Natural Landmark](#).^[3]



The breakfast matron at the Richfield hotel and I have something in common. I like mineral specimens, as does she, and she owns a crystal mine. I asked if I could help her mine some crystals this summer, and she agreed to let me. We'll see.

My day's drive was long. I drove like a maniac with the purpose of reaching Ontario, Oregon for a night at the Sleep Inn. Along the way, I found a place that held a pedestal rock and a rock house. If I were to buy into this, I could fix the place up and sell books to the passing avid readers, all three of them a month.

It has a singing pedestal rock, hear it? "Ooo la la. Ooo la la."



The building has its warm side.



I made it to Ontario, Oregon, and along the way I covered new ground. A lot of it looked like this.



The questions:

Who did I see and how did they fit into my life and how will they continue to fit in?

The hotel's breakfast matron may well be in my future, as she has a slight correlation to my past love of minerals and the mining thereof: she has a mine.

What made my visit to the places and events I experienced special, and what did I gain from it?

I gained opportunity to mine some dirt for gems and treasures. I saw a new form of squirrel, the Kaibab squirrel.

Are any of the places I visited worthy of a consideration to relocate?

I found a neat place to fix up and live, the rock house. Oh, yes, you can forget that idea, the Utah summer is too much heat for me, as may be the case for mining crystals.

After some restaurant food, a good night's sleep, and a hotel breakfast, I drove to Wallowa County.

Home for a Look-see

On the drive up Whiskey Creek Rd at Mile Marker 5, this is what the condition of the road condition was, which wasn't bad, except the fresh rain on icy paths was slippery.



Two miles later the road condition was a bit more treacherous.



I only had 20 hours to be in Wallowa Co before I drove on to my next condo-complex in Washington. I had no desire to spend any of it getting my truck unstuck from the snow should things go wrong, and wrong they could go with just a wee bit of bad luck. Therefore, I turned around and called it a good look-see. I'd try again in two weeks.

I looked up Bill and invited myself for a stay in his guesthouse. In exchange, I took him out to supper.

No questions, no answers, other than it was good to see Bill.



His spiritual aura beams out from the top of his head whenever he is in his comfort zone.

The next morning, I had to roll out of town to . . .

Ocean Shores, Washington

In the morning, I was up and out with a destination of the Central Washington Coast. On the way out of town, I stopped to look at my tower from the Y in Lostine. WHAT! Where was it?

I thought it would be right there, on top of the ridge. It was gone. Really? That would be just wrong. Maybe I shot the wrong spot. I'd know in two weeks when I re-returned.



Ocean Shores is midway up the Washington Coast, where I intended to rip into the dream story. I want that thing DONE! I also need to continue with the *Assimilation Tour* report, and make that Lunar Eclipse video.

Unfortunately, or through Divine Intervention, it turned out that the condo-complex called *Windjammer* was a total failure at providing me a fun experience. The ocean views were of parking lots, north and south.



To the east sat the main thoroughfare. Day and night I could hear every passing vehicle.



To make matters worse, I wanted to make the Lunar Eclipse music video and this would take high-speed internet. All this place offered was dialup speed. So twentieth century.

I checked in at dusk, and checked out in the morning. It simply was not up to my standard and I had no reason to accept that. I could go home.

On my way home I swung west a mile to the beach, giving this trip a three-sided water frame: Pacific, Atlantic, and Gulf.



My goal was to spend the night under the roof of Mike and Annie's home in Lyle, Washington.

Along the way, I stopped to visit with Dave and Debie. Dave was my first crew chief in Viet Nam on Blue 10.



I made my goal and had a great time with Mike and Annie. Mike was one of my first pilots in Nam, also on Blue 10. The three of us get along swimmingly so all had fun.

The next morning, I shot Mt. Hood just because it is there, and Mike's recently completed rare and obscure classic 1937 Graham.



Home!

Today felt like *the* day for arrival at my house, but it wasn't. It was too far to drive in one day, five hours with stops. The first stop was back at the Y in Lostine to reshoot the appropriate location to see the tower.



Ahhhhhh, that was better. Yep, operator error and the wrong ridge top last time. All was good.

I went to Doug and Tammi's for the night, good food, and the good fun.

The next morning I awoke with one thing on my mind: recapturing my Hilltop Kingdom.

The first thing new was that the county had graded Whiskey Creek Road since my last drive up it just a few days earlier. The last time it had been potholes and washboards.

The second improvement came at Mile Marker 5, and you can see the difference a few days make.



The ice-covered ruts were clear.

I made it to the where I had stopped last time and donned the snow chains. Why muck about? Alas, the rubber chain tighteners were old and one broke as I tried to install it. You know the rule: Adapt or Die. I broke out a bungee cord and all was good.

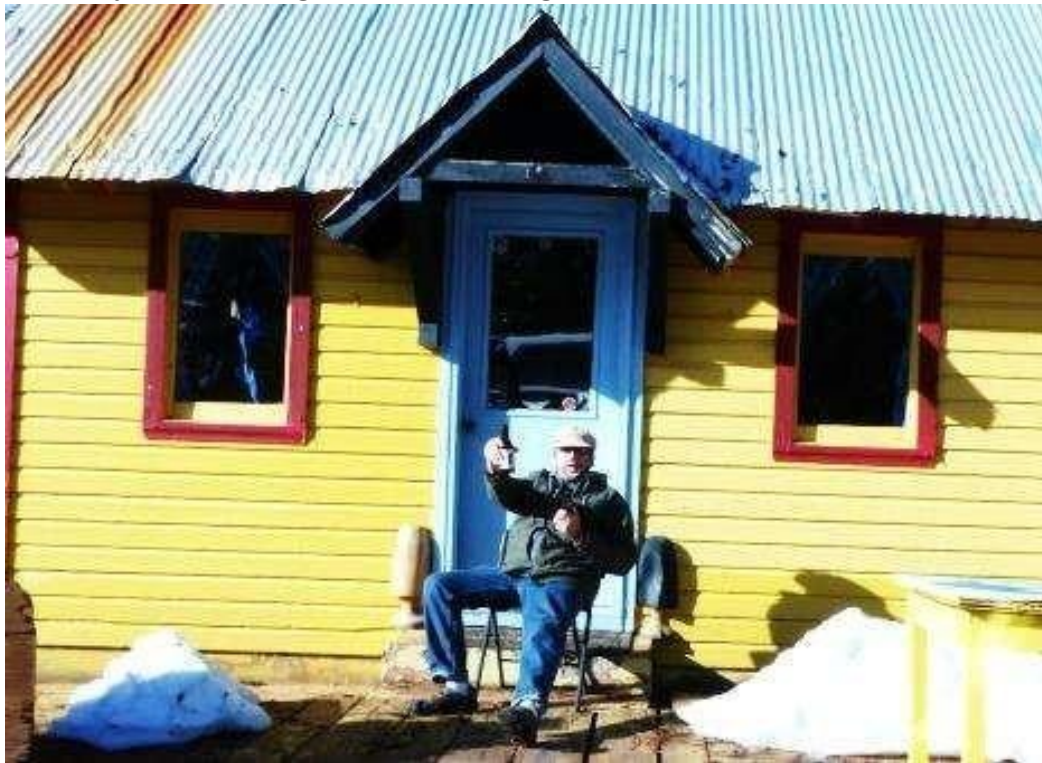


The truck crawled all the way to home. What a grand sight to see.



I had left my estate with the thought that I might not make it back for whatever reason. Now I was back, a better man for the effort, and I saw nothing but a spring, summer and autumn full of art projects and yard work. Nice. This is my place, the best place in the world for me. This is a perfect place to live well and die. This is like winning a big lottery, with nothing to do but progress positively into the future.

Once the house was open, the electricity and heat running, I broke out a celebratory beer. It's good to be King of the Hill.



Life is good and the trip was great. I learned a lot, saw a lot, and did a lot, all to the point of knowing that all that is out there is nothing that needs my assimilation. Mission accomplished. I never need to do that again.

Cheers,

Brian Wignall

I'm not moving on to . . .

Klamath Falls, Oregon

Yes, I had a check-in date on February 10 that cost me \$250. Forget it. KF is the hardest-hit Oregon town with the flu and I'm not going into that Petri dish. I'm home. Let the fun begin and continue on forever.

Epilogue

The bottom line:

Miles: 11,000+. Days: 111. Average hourly speed 24/7/111: 4.2 mph, even when sitting still and sleeping.

I sold enough merchandise to buy three tanks of gas. I gave away enough merchandise to make many people feel special, with the memory of the day the Great and Wonderful Brian Wizard crossed their paths and wrote a personalize inscription, "You are special."

I made and shared seven short videos that collectively contained seagulls, pelicans, dolphins, the moon, and the Earth's shadow completely moving over the surface of the January Blue Moon, turning it red, a video of me playing flute and guitar at the same time, sunrises, one darling young gal, and musical noise.

I did my due diligence and followed through in making the Lunar Eclipse video. I borrowed the last 90 seconds from my drum solo video. Check it out and dance to my heartbeat with the [RED BLUE MOON](#) on my website. I rode through 13 states, some twice.

I gave out books, not flyers. Of the 100 flyers printed, I have 99 remaining. I touched the waters of the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific.

I watched Orion do a southerly walk, then north again.

The fuel expense: \$1900, plus two oil changes.

Accommodation expense: 111 nights, minus eleven nights at friends' places, equaling 100 nights of bed-rent at an average of \$42 counting hotels and condos combined: \$4200.

Food/drink, in restaurants and condos, guessing at \$28 a day, times 111, equals \$3108. I have the belly to prove it.

I'm not going to count the costs of the fun things I did. They are on me.

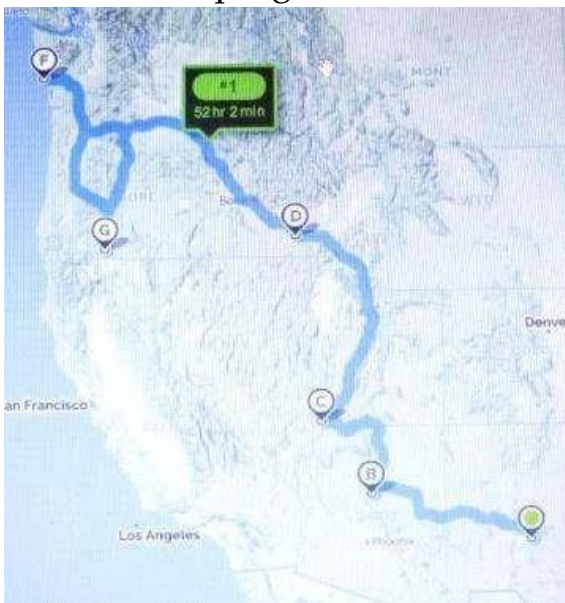
Total expense:

\$9208. Let's round up to an even \$10,000. \$90 a day, better said as, "A priceless healing adventure for ninety bucks a day." I left with issues from the past and resolved them. I win.

The route taken through the regression process was . . .



The trail into progression, minus the Klamath Falls extension:



The questions:

Who did I see and how did they fit into my life and how will they continue to fit in?

I saw new and old faces, new and old personalities, new and old places, a changing in the “times” from old to new. I saw my life up to now pass in a slow flash before my eye, and feel a fire in my belly brewing up a fun and exciting future.

What made my visit to the places and events I experienced special, and what did I gain from it?

Making it to those places safely, conveniently, and on time, meeting the people, seeing how special the generational march of DNA is, and gaining a new sense of who and what I am. Watching my life move through regression into progression on this personal journey is a gift of awareness and self-acknowledgement. To sum up the positive results, I am extremely happy, content, and free. This is an excellent way to march into my senior years, which may be the best years of my life.

How did any experience help explain my past, and how will I use it to influence my future?

The past has passed and found its place. I am presently planning the future.

Having said that, the thought of death at my doorstep was stress free; I didn't care as long I could get just a few more things accomplished: this story written, the RED BLUE MOON video shared.

Are any of the places I visited worthy of a consideration to relocate?

No. I live at the perfect place to die.

Is there any reason to assimilate to anything I experienced?

Nothing but the end destination; the best of my life to come will be lived on my hilltop, where I can die King of the Hill, with a variance of titles, such as King of the Road, the Snow King, and to a few, King of hearts.

Lastly, as stated before, “What did I lose by being a trained warrior in Viet Nam and how do I get it back?”

My word, “humanity.” I was young when it was brainwashed out of me, thinned, if not removed. Humanity and the killing of people do not exist as

one, yet that was the most influential event in my life. They coexist to provide the necessary contrast for each to exist, allowing both perspectives and experiences to be ours.

My New Year's resolution for 2018 has been, "To make at least one person a day feel special." I like it and I'm doing well with it.

I think I'll now expand on that concept and seek ways to spread, develop, encourage and use humanity, and still be the Great and Wonderful Brian Wizard, Master of Expressive Arts and Humanity.

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Wizard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brian" and last name "Wizard" clearly legible.

If you enjoyed this FREE story, feel free to make a donation. Better yet, go to www.bwizard.art and buy something: e-Book, paperback, audio book on CD or downloadable MP3, DVD, disc or downloadable, or to the sculpture gallery, where the big money is.

PS:

This just in:

Look! The people I had supper with in Enterprise, Alabama wrote me up in the 145th CABA newsletter, an association of aviator crewmembers from the Nam War.

LAST MINUTE NOTES (From the President of the 145th Combat Assault Battalion Association)

Brian Wizard Visit. Brian Wizard, 118th AHC smokeship doorgunner 1968-69. Brian is mostly known for his many books he has written, a few about his time in Viet Nam, and many about his other adventures. It's always good to hear about his adventures, usually through email, but it's really great in person. Brian gave Deb one of his books "Space Hunts," where he is taken by Aliens to a planet that transports earth animals for sport hunting; she enjoyed it. You can

check out all of Brian's stuff and contact Brian at www.bwizard.art. A lot of the books are eBooks that you can download online. Brian's interests go from books, to music, to art, and about everything else. You can get a whole different view from atop a 140-foot fire tower on top of a mountain in Oregon. Many of the items on his website are free. Take a few minutes and check out his website.