

James R. Rapier

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This is a walk through life, work and adventures since the days of our youth, seen by the eyes of a grateful man.

We were so privileged at that time and we didn't know it. Tulsa was at that time a most unique place being the "Oil Capital of the World." One only needs to look at the buildings built then to see all the wealth. For a relatively small town we had all the trappings of cities many times its size. Our school Central was the second largest in the United States and offered so many subjects that it was estimated to take 33 years to take them all. Even better, we are told it was ranked the second in the nation for excellence in teaching.

It was a time of great changes in the country and in Oklahoma when we graduated from Central in 1956. Our world was much different than it is now. A house cost about \$22,000, average income was less than \$4,500 a year, a car cost \$2-3,000 the postage stamp was \$.03, and the minimum wage was \$1. In 1956 the words "In God We Trust" became the official motto of the United States and 200,000 Soviet troops crush Hungarian anti-Communist freedom uprisings while the US sits on its hands.

Los Alamos Laboratory discovers the neutrino and, at a reception in the Kremlin, after the United States gave them occupation of Hungary, Nikita Khrushchev tells ambassadors from the West, "We will bury you!" President Eisenhower is re-elected defeating Adlai E Stevenson.

Anti-protons are detected in the atmosphere, Oklahoma University are national champions in football, civil rights is a pressing matter, and the first transatlantic telephone cable goes into operation. Israel captures Egyptian military posts and the Straits of Tiran & reach the Suez Canal in Egypt, for which I would later play a role in its return of the Sinai.

More than 80 percent of U.S. households had refrigerators but only 8 percent of English households did. Growing up the ice man brought ice daily for our iceboxes. In that year, there were only 6 airplane accidents resulting in a mere 152 fatalities.

Though unemployment is only 4.2% there is a 48% business failure rate and 650,000 US union steel workers go on strike. Oklahoma State house Democrats in Oklahoma City, substantially raise taxes and the oil industry, en masse, moved out of Tulsa and went to Texas, never to return again. Today 77 of our classmates live there now.

So that is a thumbnail of what was going on at the time we were graduating. After Central I went to OSU hopefully to become a productive part of our class. The US was responding to the challenge of the launching of Sputnik in 1957 and did not like being second to that of the Russian communist nation (Edom for those who understand).

It was a time in which we had a great pressure to produce the best engineers and scientists, and that showed up in Universities. Only 10% of those that started in my class in Electrical Engineering did not fail and drop out. But it did not interfere with having a good time. During most of that time John Allen lived with me and we were then and still are today the best of friends. He is an absolutely wonderful man, and in spite of my bad influence, he has been remarkably successful.

John and I brewed our own beer, bottled and capped it. However regularly some of the bottles would explode in the middle of the night for which we broke out laughing and got up and cleaned up the kitchen where the bottles were stored. The sound of explosions was probably the cause of many of my quirks as he also used to place tear gas (in 22 gauge shells) in the heater in my room. After I had gone to sleep and the shells got hot enough, they would detonate and fill my room with tear gas. We both laughed uproariously at my plight which would be repeated over and over due to my forgetfulness or naivete which ever you choose.

I recall one night when John and I had imbibed some of our liquids and we went out riding on his BSA thumper (so named because it had one large piston and lots of torque) with me riding on the back. John's reactions were quick and that included when driving a bike. We were coming down hill on a four lane street approaching a traffic light and were on the curbside lane with a car was in the inner lane. As we were going fast John had to brake hard for the red light, but just as we approached it, the light turned green and John gapped it open instantly throwing me off the back on to the street. I landed on my butt and with my legs and feet up, I skidded through the whole intersection on my fanny. But the funny thing was the couple with their daughter in the back seat of the car on my left, who were looking down at me while I looked up at them. I probably didn't look too intelligent as I slid through the intersection at a pace faster than they were driving. It was too funny to imagine. I got up and jumped back on the bike. Mother just thought she drowned all her foolish kids.

At that time, John and I for some unknown reason worked on designing a helicopter which he designated as the Rapicopter. Neither of us had ever been in one but it held a fascination to us and later when I bought my own helicopter, he designated it as having been achieved. Later we both became pilots and flew this wonderful country.

My parents like so many of our generation liked to travel these great United States due to the proliferation of cars and highways in the 1940s. By the time I was out of undergraduate school I had been in or worked in every state in the US. My father was a pioneer in the engineering of air drilling in gas and oil wells and he was kind enough to take me to oil patches all over the US. I am so grateful for all the sites and circumstances he afforded me at a young age. That experience of new vistas stuck with me and only grew with time. Traveling will become even more intense later.

But by grace I graduated from OSU with a BSEE and began a career in telecommunications. It was the year that the 727 first flew which would come into my life later. I had thought I would be an engineer wearing a white shirt and tie but when I began, they put wrenches in my hand and said "go climb that tower son". It was inauspicious start of my career. Climbing towers became comfortable with time but since that was a time of the birth of cable TV, the towers didn't have climbing ladders, were narrow, rusty and shook a lot while climbing. On my first day I found that as soon as one climbed 100' above the ground there was always wind, sometimes strong wind. When one climbed to 300' the towers were really shaking.

In any case I got used to the shaky, rickety towers with rusted cross bracing and could spend hours way up there while aligning microwave antennas. Back then the only time one wore a safety belt was when leaning out away from the tower to tighten the large bolts on the bracing and the antennae (6' to 12' in diameter). Hanging out in mid-air, sometimes hundreds of feet up eventually became comfortable when you had to push with your feet so as to get enough leverage on whatever was being tightened. Then it came time to move to Thailand to put in a nationwide telephone system for the country. This was the month the first touch tone telephone was introduced in the US.

I was in Dallas the day President Kennedy was assassinated and in fact at the airport when the presidential entourage was preparing to head back to Washington DC. I was standing behind a waist height chain link fence a short distance from Air Force One and saw all the people waiting on the ramp to get on. I was so close that anybody with me could have easily shot the people waiting if there was a bad guy present. The interesting thing is that I never saw Vice President Johnson in the group and since he was tall he should have been easily visible.

Kennedy was assassinated only days after the assassination of President Diem of Vietnam, and only two days after his assassination, President Johnson signed a National Security Action Memorandum that cancelled withdrawal and changed the objective of assisting South Vietnam, to that of winning. It was an interesting time to be going to that part of the world and my trip was not accidental as I had thought.

On the way to Thailand we stopped at Phnom Penh Cambodia, the capital, and landed that gorgeous 707 on the one short runway, and the pilot had to brake very hard with full thrust reversers to get it stopped before the runway ran out. It was hot that November day in the terminal, there was no air conditioning or amenities to which I was accustomed, and the smells and sights were a change to this American's eyes.

I was not amused when I heard that Cambodia's Prince Norodom Sihanouk had found Kennedy's assassination grounds for national celebration. Years later when Hubert Humphrey in the midst of his political campaign pronounced Sihanouk to have been one of our best friends and I found his comments as offensive as that of the Prince.

In time we re-boarded the airplane and I noticed the lack of fencing around the airport and also saw a water buffalo wandering towards the runway unconcerned about what else was taking place in his world. Since the density altitude was high, the pilot took the Boeing 707 to the very end of the runway with the tail overhanging the grass. After going through his check list, he put on full brakes, full flaps, full power and started us down the runway. I could still see the water buffalo wandering toward the runway way ahead of us, and as we accelerated the animal was so close to the runway that I could no longer see him and I am certain the pilot was puckering as he and the water buffalo were of the belief that they both had the right away.

While living in southeast Asia I often wanted to go to see Angkor Wat in Cambodia, but their government had the border closed throughout my stay, and even if it was open the communists would have killed me. Though I didn't feel that way at the time, it was just as well because we were fighting the communists in the country which I was well aware of. However much of our press lied to us about the communist armies being there and so our government acted like border incursions were infrequent.

Landing in Thailand I became so aware of what a different world I had come to live in and nothing in my past experience prepared me for what I would be doing there. I lived in Nakorn Ratchasima (known as Korat) the third largest city in the country and at the three way hub of the very first nationwide telephone system for the country.

The system which was quite large and complex and my employer was there to install and turn it over to them. After the first month I was put in charge of the system testing team to my surprise considering how little I was prepared to do so. The people working on this huge system were quite talented and a pleasure to work with there. It would stand me in good stead when later I became the Director of Engineering for a new telephone system for the United States.

The following month on December 9, Zanzibar would obtain their independence from England. Years later when it became a communist stronghold and is then known as Tanzania I will bring about another interesting event in my life. Three days later independence is gained for the country to be known as Kenya. This unleashes what we find in much of Africa today and there is no better way to understand what is today than by reading Robert Rourke's great books, "Something of Value" and "Uhuru."

I lived in the bankers house, a sprawling facility that my company had procured for us and one room even had an air conditioner. I soon learned not to use it at night because the power requirements of the one window air conditioner was such that it would shut down the whole town's electricity. I lived there by myself much of the time but even so, I had a cook, a dish washer, a clothes washer, a landscaper, a business manager, a guard, and a driver. Outside of that I had to do all the rest of the work.

I loved the smells there and there were a lot of them all day and night. The smells of Thai cooking was a delight then and still is today. The smell of diesel fumes from the trucks in the moist air was for some reason a pleasant smell as well and I don't expect to be able to explain that to anyone.

At night on weekends I would go up and sit on the open porch on the second floor, which was screened on three sides. Sometimes the days work was quite physically and mentally stressful but to go up there and sit was so pleasant. The Thais spice up their food with a pepper (not much larger than the end of a pencil) that it is too hot to describe. The women would take the peppers and grind them in a mortar and pestle in the quiet nights. As I would sit there, off in the distance I would hear a woman making cherk, cherk, cherk sounds as she ground up the prik ke nu peppers. Then soon there would be another adding her sound of cherk, cherk, cherk, and all over town these cherk, cherk, cherk sounds would blend and it became the most relaxing sound and when I heard it I would know that the world was well.

Americans were heartily welcomed there where we were called farongs (referring to white skinned folks) and very frequently I was greeted by people with a thumbs up and the words te nung, which means number 1. I traveled widely throughout the country and in fact have never met a Thai who has seen as much of the country as I have. Though most of my comrades eschewed the foods prepared by locals and avoided risky places I did the exact opposite, and was very glad I did.

I was invited into many Thai homes and almost without exception there were three pictures hanging on their walls, the King, the Queen, and Elvis Presley. I ate whatever was offered but my favorite was gai yong (spicy char-broiled chicken). Though Thai music was heard most places, the bars and restaurants often played American music that was all about 10 to 15 years old. It seems that when our 45s were no longer selling in the US the remainders were shipped overseas.

In January 1964 Muslims are battling in India and plans for a World Trade Center are shown in New York. A communications satellite is launched and soon I will participate in this all new technology. Big changes in the world will come from these events.

At first I worked on installing the system which was quite sophisticated and complex for the time, in fact state of the art. We were using TWTs (traveling wave tubes) instead of klystrons, and the microwave antennae were high performance dishes with sizes up to 10' in diameter.



Aligning them in high wind conditions with all their weight took a lot of strength and I was frequently several hundred feet in the air all day long with my headset connected to the service channel while alignment continued on distant sites. When I was quite young I had a fear of heights (which I broke in Tulsa by repeatedly jumping into quarry water from 30' up) and became so comfortable that I could actually sleep on top of a reflector hundreds of feet up, still with no safety belt.

Much of my travel was by train, though I often drove one of our cars and driving on the left side of the road became easy, however one can never call driving in southeast Asian traffic peaceful. As an illustration, I like to convey what driving there was like by quoting a newspaper article which told of a head on collision, on a four lane road, in which a policeman was in the center of the collision of the two cars. It occurred on a sidewalk.

I bought a motorcycle while there, having ridden since I bought a new bike when I was 13 living in Tulsa. Though I rode for 50 years, driving a bike in Thailand was definitely a different risk level, but the locals used them heavily. My other common mode of transportation was a som law, a three (three is Thai is som) wheel taxi-bike that I rode in often.

Included also in my modes of transportation was riding on an elephant, though I could hardly call it a means of travel. And not to be forgotten were the buses. These were a sight to see as they were painted and decorated to a degree that few could imagine. People hung from the sides, the back bumper and ensconced themselves on the roof where all the luggage was carried.

The bulk of the system ran north from Krungtep (Bangkok for you foreigners) up to Saraburi, not shown on the map, then to Korat where it divided and went east to Ubon, and also north to Nong Khai (where the bravest people in the world flying for us under the Air America name were based).

There were literally dozens of small towns and villages in which I worked some of which you can see on the map such as Buriram, Surin, Ubon, Aranyaprathet, Khon Kaen and Udon Thani. You should keep those names in mind because when Rolling Thunder began over Vietnam the majority of USAF air strikes were launched from four Royal Thai Air Force Bases, Korat, Takhli, Udon and Ubon, refueling over Laos.

By the way for those of you who read the Ugly American, the stretch of road mentioned in it was north of Saraburi and south of Korat, and it "just happened" to be built so that our bombers and fighters could land on it.

During that time one of the books I was reading was Atlas Shrugged by Ayn Rand. It had a substantial impact on my thoughts and except for her atheistic view, I thought the fundamental point was right. It would shape many aspects for me later. Other times at night I would exchange reel audio tapes with those in the US. The difference between their view of world and mine was so clear. What the press was telling them was so far from reality that I could see why the flower children were misled.

My days were long, arising around 4 AM, gathering up as much as 300 pounds or more of test equipment in steamer trunks and going to the train station in Korat. I usually did not get back home until 9 PM, dirty, hot and tired, still with all those trunks of test equipment to get back to the house. ✕ End part 1

When I arrived at the train station boarding area, it was a large open area like that awful scene of injured soldiers in *Gone With The Wind*. I was always surprised to see so many people up at that time of the morning. It was many acres, with hundreds of people milling around and indescribable smells and sounds in the dim overhead lighting. Dozens of women were squatting in the traditional Thai stance, feet flat on the ground and chest against the thighs as they prepared one of my favorite dishes, gai yong (char-braised chicken.)

They would bring with them to the site, small cookers that sat on the ground which had coals under a grate and would braise half sides of the chickens and add a delightful spicy rub on it. There were of course other dishes including fresh fruit, coconuts, rice and coffee, which was usually iced. One can only admire the resourcefulness and calm in which the people there addressed tasks of life there. If you think about it, these women were running one person restaurants in an open plaza with no amenities, yet they fed a large number of people daily. Not only that, I considered the food very good and never had any illness from eating off the street with the other people.

I would, with no small amount of effort, load the test equipment trunks on to the passenger cars at the rear of the train which were always the third class cars. I could afford the first or second class accommodations but in the back I got to see and meet so many interesting people and to talk with them. The windows were always wide open (it is in the tropics and warm to hot) and the smoke and cinders from the steam engine commonly blew in the windows in transit. I took lots of movies while rocking and rolling down the tracks there.

Inside the coach were hard seats not unlike the pews in a church, some backed up to the sides of the car, but most in facing pairs perpendicular to the sides. The cars were full of pigs, chickens, dogs and some goats and a constant scurrying around as their owners attempted to get them to remain calm and orderly in such an environment new to them. You had to laugh at the smells and noises in there. In the cacophony of it all would be the women who walked along the train sides selling their wares, calling out "gai yong, gai yong, gai yong."

Virtually every day in the pre-dawn morning light I would call out to them "pome owe gai yong" (meaning I wanted some of their chicken) and they would hand it to me through the open window wrapped in a banana leaf. Then I was ready as the train started up with those old steam engines on narrow gauge tracks, trundling through the countryside with the constant swaying of the cars and the smoke and cinders blowing in the windows, probably not too dissimilar to trips on the old Orient Express.

I really enjoyed those trips with the Thais and spoke to them in their language as they chewed Beetle nuts, which had left many of them with missing teeth and a dribble of the red juice on the sides of their mouths. Being a very friendly people who smile a lot, they were easy to meet, but since they didn't expect me to speak their language it often took time for them to hear me. And, the many dialects was another problem. These trips went to locations that few of the citified nationals ever went, and would stop at locations that were small villages spaced mostly for the convenience of adding water or fuel for the fireboxes.

Our sites were usually well away from where the train stopped and I would have to carry the trunks along the laterite roads we had constructed in order to build the sites. Because they weighed so much it would take multiple trips carrying them and the roads were typically a quarter to one third mile from the train stop.

Those days were long as we aligned antenna upon the towers, linearized TWTs, swept and tuned wave guides. We would work alone at a site, but would be working with people elsewhere. When swinging (aligning the paths) I would connect wires to the service channel which was then hooked up to my headset, grab my wrenches and climb the towers to the top. The views of the countryside and the people working was wonderful, and some days I would spend 8 to 10 hours up on top of the towers holding on to whatever was convenient.

Then when the day was over I would climb back down the tower, or put the test equipment back in their trunks and carry them back in the tropical heat to where the train would be heading back. Usually I would return to my home, eat dinner, shower and fall into bed since I would be arising in only a few hours during week days. Almost all of my first three years after graduating were 80 hour weeks, every week.

In time we had all the paths aligned, repeaters working and I would stay in Korat where after a while my job was to train 22 Thai military people in the operation and care of the system. They were bright people and they were tolerant of my language errors, which was made somewhat easier because so much of the technology and equipment had no other name than what we called them in American. One I recall so well was Nai Boonchuai (nai means mister) a captain in the army there. His seriousness was only exceeded by his good will and his ability to grasp technical concepts.

The system was really quite complex and troubleshooting the hundreds of modules was a common activity. I can remember troubleshooting a TWT power supply for days only to find out after replacing a very large amount of parts and modules that the whole problem was caused by a zener diode output being 0.1 volt out of specification.

I became very fond of many of the gentlemen I was training and had them over for a get acquainted party at my house one night. Only later did I find out that it was a custom and a courtesy to your host to get sick and barf, which occurred in the front yard to my great surprise. I would later find other interesting customs in my travels.

During that period I also traveled widely in one of our cars and saw that wonderful country like few others. I can remember on a trip to Aranyaprathet which is almost on the Cambodian border across from Poipet on the far east side of the country. I got a terrible case of food poisoning while there where in the house as my cook had prepared me a special dish of lobster thermidor. This was at a time when I did not eat according to Leviticus 11 as I do now.

I will never forget the drive back from there as it was a long drive, but when I began the trip back, I saw out the car window the manner of life was as it was centuries before. And then I could actually watch the passage of time all the way back to the then current day as I drove along. It was such an amazing experience.

Frequently I went north to Khon Kaen and Nong Khai, the latter being on the northern border along the huge Mekong River. For those who were conditioned by the unending falsehoods perpetuated by much of our press, in those days the Pathet Lao were the communist rebels who were at war with their own, but non-communist government and funded mostly by Russia.

Their basic concept was takeover control by murdering anyone in the country who in their lives had any education or responsibility. If you were or had been a teacher, a policeman, a village official, had any education at all, or had in any way had been a responsible person, you were simply a target to die. Upon returning to the US later and hearing the strong opinions and delusions of the young, I thought I had returned to a land full of the incompetent and deranged.

The Mekong is a huge river and at flood stage in the spring monsoons, it was a raging giant. It took a strong heart (or massive fear) for those people who left everything they had in Laos to attempt to swim or float across on a log, or anything else that would float. Whole families of men, women and children did so to get to safety in Thailand. If you go to a Thai restaurant in the US now, chances are they are really Laotians who learned to cook Thai food in the refugee camps in Thailand. They are the lucky ones, many of them didn't make the crossing of the Mekong.

It was a scarcely hidden secret that in a private compound outside of Nong Khai was the operation known as Air America which was made fun of in an American movie of that name. This was a CIA operation and they flew slowly over the Laotian countryside, at very low elevations to drop supplies and medical goods to the people of Laos fighting the communists. This was a humanitarian effort at its highest, and many in Laos survived because of these true heroes and their effort (in my lexicon, only someone who actually does something heroic deserves to be called a hero.)

These were the bravest of people who ever lived. They did this low, slow flying in Cessnas, Pipers and old C-47s and did this at very low altitudes. Their death rate was terrible and they all knew that they only had six months to live. But they did it anyway. What incredibly brave people they were, giving their lives for people they would never know.

I remember one offensive by the Pathet Lao in which they made a massive push across the country and in fact took over the majority of the country. President Johnson convened a meeting in sunny Hawaii to review this slaughter in Laos and brought much of his cabinet to the vacation spot. (Later I will tell you very inner secrets of the life of President Johnson.)

Well, the Pathet Lao had made such a rapid advance that they had far over stretched their supply lines, so they stopped and even backed up somewhat. Johnson and company heard of the temporary cessation of major battles and the small retreat, and so returned to Washington. Of course the Air America people continued to fly and die.

It is of no doubt to me that our being there to put into place the country's first nationwide telephone system was as much a coincidence as the Freedom Highway. In time portable communication trailers showed up right behind the building in Korat. Their equipment was connected to our multiplex channels and it was at that time that our system provided the first ever fully integrated SEATO communication which was throughout the theater. The equipment did not remain there over time, but I have no doubt that particularly at Ubon, Udorn, Khon Kaen, and Nong Khai as well as Bangkok that our system most likely was used for other than civilian uses.

There were some remarkable things I experienced concerning some of the Thai people there. One concerned the very large self supporting tower (I think it was about 300') just behind our building in Korat. I had used this tower for a barefoot single side band antenna for talking to people around the world on the Collins KWM-2. That was another richness of experience in talking with and finding out what was happening around the world on this marvelous planet earth.

The cross beams on this tower were double four inch angle steel, and one day a Thai working on the tower near the top fell off. The tower was smaller at the top than the bottom, and as he fell he hit one of the outside pairs of angle iron with his stomach, flipped over fell to the next one below landing on his back, and continued this until he hit the ground. At the bottom cross beam, his body actually bowed these massive pieces of steel. He got up and wanted to go back to work, but was instead taken to the hospital where it was found he had massive internal injuries.

Another time, a waveguide trunk needed to get up to the top of a three story building via a narrow stairway in Surin. Waveguide trunks weighed more than 500 pounds and were longer than eight feet and about three feet wide. The Thai workers had a solution though, and to this day I can't comprehend it. They placed the waveguide trunk on the back of a man who probably didn't weigh 80 pounds, and with a man behind and one in back, they (mostly the guy under it) carried that trunk up three flights of stairs.

Thai people are very clean and fastidious. I remember waiting at Bon Pong Songkram in the early evening as the people waded out in to a small pond for evening bathing. The women wore a sarong (a completely loop of cloth about four feet wide that they tied in a knot at the top of their breasts. They could successfully loosen it and bathe completely without ever exposing anything with people all around. Folks up country didn't have running water or electricity, but always sent their children off to school in the morning looking like their clothes had just come back from a dry cleaners.

One most interesting bit of history has to do with Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat who took over the country the year after we graduated. At that time there were opium dens all over the country, and a large part of the populace wasted away their lives on the drug. Field Marshall Sarit had an interesting way of dealing with the problem. He had the police go into the opium dens, removed the people and hung them by their necks in the center of the towns and left them there for all to see. It seemed to have had a memorable effect on the people and the problem went away very quickly.

He did another thing during his reign, he built schools all over the country, and one primary subject was the study of English, presumably because it is the language of business throughout the world. These two things, done by a man who was no saint, had a very great impact on the whole country.

As a digression, the American peace corp children had come to the country to teach English to a population who already had a high percentage that already spoke it. They used to come by looking for something to eat, because I was an American. What an incredible waste of a bunch of well meaning but immature kids who weren't much younger than me and my friends who were making a serious difference in the country.

Where I lived, and really most any place in the country, there were bars and they were one of the few venues in which to go out. Bars were all essentially brothels and they were always well stocked with girls, and usually very pretty girls. When you went in for a drink, usually beer, (Singha was the most popular) men, particularly white men who probably had somewhat more money, were quickly set on by the girls.

They enjoyed talking with me and since the proprietors soon knew I didn't purchase their services, they did not give the girls a hard time if other customers weren't around. The Thai word for small is nit noi, and so most of the girls called themselves nit or noi and said they were from Chang Mai which was noted for having very beautiful girls, though few were actually from there.

The girls I would find in time were there against their will and really enjoyed conversing with someone about matters other than sex. Only once was a girl particularly persistent after I had said no, and she went on to tell me things about her such as she would be a good candidate for a merkin if she knew what one was.

In my travels in countries throughout the world, I discovered that many girls don't have much opportunity for regular work and economic necessity leads them to prostitution willingly or by force. I can get angry at the pollyannaish in our country who lead campaigns complaining about foreign working conditions, when without those jobs, many more girls would become prostitutes.

But in Thailand, most of the girls in the bars are forced into it against their wills. In fact at that time, rural parents commonly sold their daughters virginity in one night stands because they needed the money so much. That was a \$15 dollar event, a lot of money for a poor family. I could have bought a pretty girl to do with what I wanted for life for \$10 if I was of such a mind.

The currency there is the Baht formerly called the Tickel and it was easy to remember that a Tickel was worth a nickle (US\$). As an example of value, I could get a som law driver to pedal me clear across town for two or three Baht. Moreover one negotiates for most everything there, and we would dicker about the cost of such a trip.

The country was primarily Buddhist and there are ornate wats (we would call them temples) all over the country. There are hundreds of them, if not thousands. I have seen them in jungles and villages in more places than I could count. Most are not well kept, but even so, the people would go in and after buying gold leaf sheets, apply the gold in various place inside.

The Buddhist monks are ordinary people who must serve a compulsory two year stint, and afterwards most of the men go back to other activities. During that period in which they have no income or means of support, they simply go up to anybody with their bowls for food, the people willingly feed them and that is how they get their nourishment.

There is a completely different view of life to the people there. Two examples that I have seen include a case when someone would die on a sidewalk, a passerby would just cover them up and leave them there, while people stood around and talked as if nothing noteworthy had happened. Or, if a girl had a child and could not care for him or her, the girl would simply take the child to someone and give the child away to be raised by the other person. No shame or even much thought was given to the act, and the new parent just took on the permanent assignment just as if the child were born to them.

Later for reasons that escape me, I chose to do something that I am most ashamed of but have to own up to it as I decided to go tiger hunting. I was brought up a hunter and the rule was if you shoot something, you eat it. Animals were not for killing for the sake of taking away their lives. I followed that always previously. At this very time President Johnson first authorized combat forces for Vietnam, 50,000 of them.

But for whatever reason I featured myself as a big game hunter and made plans to go tiger hunting in the mountains of Khao Yai. Guns are not permitted there, but nonetheless I was able to obtain a 357 magnum, bullets and a shotgun with slugs at my arrival. When I tested the 357, it shot so low and to the right that it would be doubtful I could hit anything if that wasn't right in front of me.

The trip to the interior and into the mountains was in itself notable as I had bummed a ride part way there, and then through a fuzzy communication had gotten someone with a Toyota jeep to drive me into the jungles on the way to the mountain top where I was supposed to stay in the lodging of a local rancher. Passing along what could barely be called a road, we often were stuck in rivers of mud from which we extricated the jeep by a winch. In these mountains, the temperature was still hot and the humidity high, made even more so because of the shelter of the jungle. The jungle itself was so thick that one could not see further than a few feet.

Upon arrival, my host in torn shorts and no shirt greeted me and introduced me to his wife and children. His dialect was so different from most Thai language that our communications were of little value. It was afternoon, and hot and he showed me to my quarters, a small empty room with a table (bench) made of twisted, gnarly limbs lashed together which was about four feet high. That was to be my bed while there.

I rested on it as my choice was to lie down on the dirt floor, or the table, and as uncomfortable as it was, it was better than the floor since all kinds of insects and vermin came in and out of the non-existent door. Later he motioned for me to come in to another room and share a drink with him with his family.

In a corner of the room he had a clay crock in which he made SaTho, which is a rice wine. The top of it was covered with a dirty cloth. He motioned to his wife who brought out two short glasses which obviously had not been run through a dish washer. He removed the dirty cloth and dipped the glasses in the crock and with his arm held straight out from his shoulder handed me my glass.

I looked at it when he handed it to me and in doing so saw a great big fly floating in it and so did not drink it right away though he had begun drinking his. In time he wondered why I wasn't drinking and came over and looked into my glass spying the fly in it. He grunted some word, grabbed the glass from me, took his finger and crooked into the liquid thereby removing the trespassing fly and tossed it on the floor. He then handed it back to me with a big smile on his face after doing me the favor. Yes, I did drink it, and it was powerful stuff. ✕ End part 2

That night "sleeping" on the table of rough limbs was cool, hard and since there were no screens, the mosquitos feasted on me. Actually there weren't even any windows just rectangular holes in the walls.

So the next day he and one of his sons took me on a walk some distance away and he showed me the area in which I should be hunting, and the tree in which a stand should be built. Hunters know that you hunt at dusk or early morning as that is when creatures are on the move. So we reconnoitered the whole area and went by a watering hole nearby the open clearing over which I would be standing watch.

We walked around the watering area and sure enough we found tracks of several tigers. He was able to assess how much they weighed and how long they were. There was one big adult and two that were probably only a year or so old. The pad, not the foot with its toes was at least seven inches wide. I still can't believe that I was actually planning to kill one of these marvelous creature, but that is the truth of the matter.

It was obvious that the watering hole was not one of occasional use by the tigers and other animals as the tracks were everywhere. I could see why he had brought me to the clearing, a word that hardly describes an area in which the grasses are higher than my head.

At the water hole were also the tracks of guars, which others had called a kwai kating for reasons I don't understand. These are extremely large animals, fierce and very hard to kill. They stand up to 7 feet high and 11 feet long. These are huge animals that can weigh more than a ton and a half, as heavy as African black rhinos. They have skin more than two inches thick and if you shoot the target had best be right behind the shoulder or just behind the eye. The skull is so thick that bullets bounce off.

They have one other notable characteristic it is said, and that is that unlike other animals when irritated, they don't run away, they attack their foe. If wounded, they don't stop until the source of their irritation ceases to be. In fact a number of people has said if you ever shoot one, it better have been a fatal shot or else.

Next we constructed a stand way up in an old tree made of limbs lashed together with rope. It was actually quite large as necessitated by the width of the limbs up twenty five feet in the tree. We used a rope to get up the tree which worked quite well.

Then it was back to the farm house to rest and return an hour before dusk. Sleep on that bundle of limbs I was using as a bed was not to be but at least I rested. Then he sent his pre-teen son with me to guide me to the tree stand and so we set out.

In time we were walking along the same path which was lined with elephant grass which stood high above my head and so on this winding path I could only see one or two feet ahead of me. But the sun had gone down and we were walking in dim light and as I was walking around a long curve in the path it happened.

A smell hit me very strongly. I remember the moment so clearly that this strong pungent smell hit me, and though I don't think I had ever smelled a tiger I knew that was what was right around the bend. Then it let out a growl and the volume was intense. The simple fact was that it was almost dark, and with the elephant grass all around us, I couldn't have seen him if I right next to him.

At that moment, in a case of fright, I grabbed the kid and set out directly through the elephant grass instead of the path because the tiger had first rights to the path. We ran right through the grass toward the nearest tree which was probably more than three hundred feet away, and nowhere near the stand we had built. Then the next problem reared its head. The tree trunk was large and smooth, and the first limbs were way up above the ground.

I lifted the kid onto my shoulders, then put his feet on my hands and boosted him up to the lowest limb so he would be safe. With the condition of the trunk being what it was, it was too smooth and too big around to climb. I really could not tell you how I got up that tree, but I did.

Safe in the tree we quieted down and because the moon was bright we could see fairly well but could not see any signs of the tiger. So being not the smartest person around, we got down from the tree and made our way some distance away to the tree where we had made the stand earlier. Sitting in the stand was much more comfortable and there was a nice breeze way up there.

During the night there we regularly heard sounds of many animals including some growls, many of which were in the direction of the watering hole. They were too far to see well and too far to shoot even if we could see. Several times I had seen shapes that were probably tigers.

But my standards of hunting from my youth were that you never took a shot unless you were sure. If it was a shot that would possibly just injure an animal, and if you did just injure it, you tracked it until it was killed, not to die a painful death later.

Throughout the night I regularly heard serious growls and then they faded away into the night, though a jungle at night is never silent. But later we heard some great noises in the forest, not the normal soft noises of most animals. You could hear limbs breaking and so I was very focused. In time I saw this huge animal come out of the woods into the clearing moving toward the water hole and I was sure it was a guars.

I decided that was what I would hunt (this is the sign of a disreputable hunter who changes what he has decided to hunt) and so I began to follow the guars with my gun. Being well aware of its reputation for coming after the person who has shot him, I wanted to get a clear shot. I knew that a shot angling down sinks faster so I aimed higher and just above the back of his front shoulder, and then pulled the trigger.

The sounds immediately thereafter were massive. It sounded like a bulldozer was rampaging through the woods and you could hear trees falling and limbs breaking. A most fearsome barrage as he raced through the woods, but even worse, we could not tell if he was heading towards us or in some other direction.

In time it became silent and I was thinking I had been successful and wanted to climb down and go inspect my kill wherever he was in the jungle. As I made plans to go down, the kids eyes became very large, and he was very excited, and talking very fast.

I really didn't understand his dialect at all, but he was able to get his message though my thick head. The message was:

"if he is dead, he will be dead tomorrow when there is daylight, but if he isn't dead, then lets not go."

A great amount of wisdom for a kid so young, and even I could grasp the basic truth of the matter and so agreed to stay in the stand until morning. I'm very glad I did.

So when daylight came we began walking on the path we had started out on the night before. At the place where fear took over and the whole idea of being the great white hunter evaporated we could see what had awaited us. Right at that bend we could see where a very large tiger had been lying down in the dust and we had almost stepped on him.

As to the spot where I had shot, it looked like a truck had driven through the jungle and it was hard to believe. We trailed the damage for some time but never found any sign of him. But I didn't like myself for what I was doing and decided to return to Korat soon.

Shortly after returning I became quite sick, with high fever, chilling, and began to lose weight. Several local doctors including at the US Army hospital could not find the cause and because one of the top centers for Tropical diseases was in Bangkok, I went there for a battery of tests which ended without a determination.

So, it was time for me to return to the states to find out what was happening. By now, this 175 pound man had lost almost 50 pounds and none of the symptoms were letting up. Since Thailand is almost on the opposite side of the world, the question was which way to return, with the sun or against it.

I decided to take a route that would take me through Russia, because we were led by many to think the Russians were bad guys and I wanted to decide that for myself. I never liked accepting matters just because it was a common belief.

So I chose that route and set out to get visas and other items necessary for the return trip home. I went to the Soviet Embassy in Bangkok and was told I would be free to wander throughout almost all of Russia, take pictures by myself and generally travel like any other country. I was also told that because of the short time for my departure that I would not have to have an Intourist Card, a normal requirement. I went back a second time to get my paperwork and the same plan was reiterated.

But because this was not what I had heard, I went to the US Consulate and described my trip to the Ambassador. He could not believe what I told him and while I was still sitting there he called the Soviet Embassy and was told the same thing I had said. Because he still could not believe it, he took down all the details of my trip and telegraphed them to Washington DC. ✕ End part 3

The trip progressed through and stopped at a number of countries including New Delhi India, Karachi Pakistan, Beirut Lebanon and then to Moscow. In India upon arriving at the gate we were immediately surrounded by armed soldiers. It seems the muslims were even busy at that time. Upon approach to Lebanon we were escorted by Israeli fighter planes but no sign of a military presence at the gate in Lebanon. In light of September 11, 2001, it is telling that the Israelis escorted airplanes way back then.

On the way to Moscow the trip turned out to be most interesting. In that "classless" society, the airplanes had three classes though in those days we had only two in aircraft. As I have mentioned, American (English if you prefer) is the language of the world and it is a rare country in which you cannot get along well speaking our native language. The same is true of the capability to speak it among Russians at that time, though the freedom to do so is another matter.

We are used to seeing overhead bins for storage of articles, but on the Russian aircraft there was only light netting above our heads which with the weight of some of the articles was not too comforting. The seats were close together and not of the quality to which we are accustomed.

It seems that many of the people on the airplane were communist functionaries and had been sent on a government vacation to the Black Sea. I was quiet and reading when the person sitting next to me greeted me in Russian and I responded in American. His English was not the best but in time he found out I was an American and on my way to Moscow.

Then he shouted out to someone else in the cabin that I was an American and in moments I was surrounded by dozens of people and the pilot must have had to make some quick flight corrections because of the sudden shift of weight. The people were asking me a barrage of questions and mostly they were quite cordial and had a genuine interest in me and my trip. Shortly a young lady whose command of English was quite good began to carry the conversation and was in fact the translator for all the people who had questions to ask of me.

I really had not expected such a turn of events but this impromptu gathering turned out to be a solid means of improving the relations between the people of two countries effectively at war. The questioning and the growing crowd around me continued all the way to the approach into Moscow. The questions mostly after finding out why I was going there had to do with America, the people and what it was like living there.

I usually sleep on flights and that begins not well into the flight and since I arrived earlier in time than when I departed I could have used the rest for the long day. But I went into the airport and the first thing that I saw was a real surprise, all products for sale had price signs marked in US Dollars.

The next change I discovered was that contrary to what occurred on the airplane, when I spoke in American, they would not reply and hurried away from me. Even the clerks spoke in my language only when I was inquiring about a product and did not enter into unrelated conversation. Notable was that what I saw there and most places away from the airport was an almost absence of people in police or military uniforms. I later found out that was an illusion and they were really there in large numbers.

So I gathered my bags and had intended to rent a car or take a taxi but a sudden turn of events changed all of that. Without notice an attractive woman approached me and informed me that she was my Intourist agent and would be with me from then on during my visit. Her English was quite good and her mannerisms were pleasant.

I declined her offer and told her thanks but no thanks and that the Consulate for them in Bangkok told me that I would not have to have such an ever present escort. She informed me in return that it didn't matter what I was told, that while there I would be with her and I didn't have a choice. This was said with a smile.

So shortly I had my luggage loaded into a car with a driver in front (not a smiling sort) and I sat in the back with my handler. We drove into Moscow and began to tour and true enough at certain spots I was able to take pictures. But as it turned out, I could not go where I wanted to go, could not stop when I wanted and many times I was informed that I could not take pictures, or only in the direction approved.

Seeing the heart of Russia was like going back twenty years in time. The clothing was drab, without form and the best way I could describe the women's dress was as if they had been made of old feed sacks. Overweight was the norm, and very overweight was common. But the thing that hit me the most was the almost complete absence of anybody smiling. My agent may have smiled but mostly the people seemed to be universally unhappy.

We went into Red Square, saw the GUM department store whose contents would have stopped the most ardent shoppers from the US. Saint Basil's church was the most colorful building in the whole town and so I know why our news agencies always show it rather than all the bleak buildings. But most Christian churches were turned into grain storehouses and in fear Christians broke ice in rivers at night for baptisms.

The city was awash with ugly, tall, dimly lit, unadorned gray buildings to house the populace. The ugliest public housing project in the US would have looked like a palace compared to most of the apartments there. But, there were tower cranes all over and the building of more of those ugly warrens were common.

The Kremlin was a massive display of government power. You could see who had the power and who didn't. There was a short line for the tomb of Lenin who dreamed up their sorry lifestyle and brought about the deaths of up to 100 million people. Moscow was a place without music, or color. A typical apartment for a family was only about 700 to 800 square feet. And in June of that year the US the Civil Rights Act is passed.

But then it happened. All of a sudden her smile ceased, I was put back in the car unceremoniously and we began to drive to a destination unknown and there was to be no stopping along the way. My requests for where and why were unanswered.

Many times I have attempted to figure out what happened and have only one guess. We had stopped at an intersection and I was informed I could get out and take pictures which I did. Though I didn't take pictures of it, I spotted something interesting and since I worked with microwave equipment all the time, said that what I was looking at appeared to be experimental microwave equipment.

For those without knowledge of the spook world, the Russians had built in listening devices into the US embassy and listened to conversations throughout by energizing the windows and listening devices with microwave radiation, forty of which were found on May 19 of that same year.

That is my only guess as to what happened to me. I was taken back to the Moscow airport and put inside the terminal where I remained for a long time. Nobody was guarding me, and in fact it seemed that nobody was paying the least attention to the American in their midst.

So, I sat down and began reading German language newspapers on the table next to my seat. I had no skills in the German language, but it was surprising how much I could glean in reading the gist but not the words. From reading the newspapers I determined that as fate would have it, the day before the US had begun bombing North Vietnam. I recall it as being Haiphong.

Anyway several hours expire, and I want to go to a hotel and rest and am tired of all this foolishness. My entreaties to anybody who would not leave when I spoke to them fell on deaf ears. Finally I began to get louder and persistent and not willing to put up with the circumstances. At about that time, some guy grabbed me by the arm and most unceremoniously pulled me into a room not far away in which thirty or more police were smoking in a small room.

My observation there being an absence of police in Russia dissolved as they were just hiding a short distance out of view. When jerked into the room I informed them politely but firmly that I was an American on a tour of their country and it had been approved by their consulate and I wanted to continue my tour.

They in turn informed me that it was not relevant what I wanted and I would be doing whatever they wanted and I had no say in the matter. Then two of them on both sides of me grabbed me, took my suitcase and put me in a car. There was no conversation at all. They drove me some distance to some building in a place in which I had no idea where it was located, pushed me into a room with bars on the window and locked the doors. Still with no conversation.

It had a bunk bed with a small thin mattress and I cannot recall what it had for a toilet, but it was just a cell, and I was locked up. No charges were made, no appearance before a court, I was just locked up. But I was tired and went to sleep on the cot/bed.

The next day somebody handed in a tray of food without talking and I ate it. Then a day later a man came in to the room ostensibly having had similar treatment as I, and telling me he was from Chicago. Though he put on a good act, it was clear to me that he was a shill placed there to gain an affinity with me and to find out whatever he could about me and my purpose for being there. He didn't learn anything.

The next day he was gone and the manner in which I was being treated caused me to think I would not get out of there alive. I was questioned several times, nobody beat me, but it was made very clear that I had no rights and my life was in their hands.

After two days with no future apparent and in fact looking bleaker every day I decided that if this was where I would end my days, that I would do all I could to fix them if I were to be able to escape and get away, so that if they did terminate my life, at least there would be a reason. That night I made my plan.

One interesting observation is that they spent their time looking at me, and not my luggage. In my luggage was a very good 8mm movie camera that I had bought at the Korat Army PX and it had a great telephoto lens with slow motion capabilities also. Wherever this place was in which they locked me up, it had a direct view of one of their military airfields.

So the plan was, and which I followed through on, was to take good motion pictures of all their military aircraft, including take offs and landings, close up and in slow motion as well. If I was to die, it would be for a reason, and if I got out, I would have those most valuable movies. They never found out I had the movies and though I think they probably had listening devices in my cell, that was not the time when security cameras were readily available.

Three days now and I am not informed of anything, and my future is not getting any better and there mannerisms were not comforting at all. My spirits are relatively good given the circumstances, even considering how sick I was at the time. I can say that being locked up by myself in solitary confinement is not for me.

After three and a half days of being locked up, when it was well after dark (I don't think there was a light in my accommodations), several men came in my room grabbed me and took me out into the dark with control of both my arms. We walked for some distance in the dark without any conversation. I thought that this was not fortuitous but had no idea what was coming next.

Then we arrived at a car where they put me in between two men and put my suitcase in the back. We drove for sometime which I would guess was before midnight and the direction was not towards Moscow, but some place way away from it. The car drove into an airport, and in fact drove right up to the airstair for an airplane, and they pushed me up to it, gave me my suitcase and then stood there without saying a word.

So I climbed the airstair and got on board the airplane with no idea whose aircraft it was and no idea where it was going. However I didn't care as I was no longer locked away, but it was not reassuring as to what was coming next. There were others on the airplane but I don't recall any flight attendants. The airplane was not very full and I had a seat all to myself. Lots of questions were passing through my mind and not the least of which was what plans they had for me when I reached my destination.

We arrived at an extremely dimly lit airfield in the middle of nowhere. Since people were getting off the airplane, I thought I would see if I could slip off with the other people when nobody was watching and I did so. It would seem that I really wasn't escaping and my exit was part of the agenda, but I didn't know then and still don't.

I then wandered out in front of the terminal with my suitcase and got to the curb where there was one dim light overhead. The other people were leaving though I didn't know what conveyance they were using. I attempted to ask people where we were but like my previous experience, people did not want to speak to someone who spoke American. So, there I was standing at a curb in a dim light, now knowing where I was and not knowing how to get to some other location. To say the least it was a disconcerting condition.

In time somebody told me I had to take a bus and from there take a taxi to some other place. The enunciation was far from clear and I wasn't at all sure I had heard what I thought he said. But, it was better than anything I knew.

In time, and it was probably two in the morning a bus with no inside lights pulled up and I got on having no idea where it was going or even if it was the one that I was told about. There were a few others on the bus with me, and we did not converse, after all, I was not sure if I was escaping or what the circumstances were.

Later the bus stopped in a place with no buildings or lights, truly in the middle of nowhere and the driver motioned for me to exit. So, I got out and the bus drove away leaving me standing beside the road with no markings and not a light anywhere that I could see. I kept thinking "can this become any more strange."

There was no traffic at all where I was standing and it was cool and dark. I don't recall now how long I stood there but it was a long time. One asks himself what should be done, stay or walk, but there was nothing on which to make such a determination.

Then a taxi pulled up and I got in. I really don't recall how I paid him, but my only money was US travelers checks, Thai Baht, Indian rupees, and Russian rubles. He didn't speak to me either and we drove along through the countryside without seeing houses or lights. But I was alive and in motion so it was better than the opposite.

It is still in the middle of the night and dark as we drive to parts unknown and not having any idea where I was. Though very tired, my focus was on staying alive and escaping. Then the taxi pulled up to a place and stopped and he motioned for me to get out, and I did with my suitcase.

There were more lights at this spot though it was not heavily lit and there was a large open area where I had gotten out and I noticed that people were walking over to a spot, and they entered something and as they went down into it, they disappeared from sight. So since there were more people than I had seen so far in this night doing something, I wandered over to see where they were going.

When I got there I discovered that it was a long ramp leading down into the ground. It wasn't very well lit but it seemed better to follow the people than to stand up on top where there was not much to see or do. So down I went on this very long ramp and when I got to the bottom, the low spot, there was a walkway in a circular manner extending as far to the right and to the left as I could see. And because it was circular, I couldn't see very far in other direction even if the lights were not so dim down there.

I have to say that my memory of this portion of my travels is not the best, whether because I was sick, lack of sleep, or shortage of food I don't know, but I am doing my best to be accurate on it. The basic aspects are correct though the detail may be wanting.

Across from where the ramp I was on, there was also a long ramp going up across the circular hall at the bottom. A chain link fence and a gate separated the other side and there was a man behind a cubical just behind the fence. I was attempting to determine what to do now and so I walked across and spoke to the man behind the fence. When I asked him where I was he said Germany and upon hearing this news I was elated. It was then that he told me I was in East Germany and he was in West Germany. Which meant I had been on a thousand mile flight from Moscow to East Berlin. To say I was incredibly pleased to hear that I was that close to freedom and made me ecstatic would be an understatement for that tired, hungry and sick man.

So I told him I wanted to go to West Germany and he said that right up the ramp beside him was the terminal for the trains, to which I told him to let me in so I could take one. It was then that he told me what the fare was for the train in West German Deutschmarks. Of course I didn't have any of that currency and he would not accept the currency I had nor my travelers checks. After some lively discussion, it was clear that he was not going to unlock the gate to let me in until I had bought a train ticket with proper currency.

At this point I am a most frustrated man while I stood there in the dim, dank underground that separated east from west. Several times I went back to attempt to persuade him of the nature of my predicament to no avail. Recall it is very late at night now and I haven't slept for a long time and don't feel all that well.

An hour or so later, an old woman came around the hall walkway from the right looking very much like a bag lady. She stopped across the hall and down some from where I was standing but did not speak nor did she even look at me. In the dim light it was hard to see much of her at all anyway.

Well, being a friendly sort and my progress going nowhere, I walked over to her and greeted her. I really don't remember what language she spoke but shortly she conveyed that she would convert currency for me if I so wanted. I could have kissed her at that point. So, shortly later I had West German Deutschmark in my hands. I am sure that she didn't just happen up there by accident but for whomever sent her, I am grateful even today.

Of course very shortly I was purchasing my train fare, the gate was unlocked, and my suitcase and I began the long walk upward to freedom in the west. It is hard for me to convey how glad I was to be free and breathing after my ordeal in which I didn't think I would ever get out of Russia alive.

After climbing the long ramp I found my way to a passenger train car and got on. Tired would be an understatement for my condition and I sat down quickly. Since it was probably around four in the morning there weren't many people on the car I was on. But now I had a new problem, where was I and where was the train going?

I had a plan though as there were route maps up near the ceiling showing different colors for different trains, but they also had names of stops. So I decided that the next time we stopped I would look for a sign and then see if I could match it to the map. Good plan, but at the next stop, nothing written matched what was on the map.

But I did it again and this time I saw a sign and its name was on the map. So I presumed I knew where I was, but not which direction the train was headed. At the next stop though I saw another sign and it too was on the map so I then knew where I was and which direction I was going, and that direction was toward Berlin.

That brought up the next problem to be solved as I saw that there were multiple stops in Berlin and I had no idea as to where to get off, and the map did not help either. So in a flash of wisdom, I concluded that the center most stop was most likely to be in the center of Berlin and that was where I should disembark.

It was interesting on this final leg in that I had come from almost no lights and as we got closer to Berlin the lighting became more and more frequent which is to be expected, but to me it was a sign of returning to freedom. I continued to follow the map and the signs outside and when we arrived at my pre-determined point of exit, my suitcase and I walked out into the early morning center of Berlin. Pleased I was.

Of course all my airplane reservations were gone after my three and half day lock up in Moscow, and I had no place to stay now that I was in Berlin. So, I wandered around like the dirty, unshaven and probably smelly vagabond that I was and while waiting to cross a street, I inquired of the man standing next to me as to where I might find a place to stay for the night. It turned out that for whatever reason he did not have lodging either and said he would take me to a place that has homes for people to stay.

But in the meantime since it had been a long time since I had eaten anything, he guided me to a place to eat and we had a most early morning breakfast for which I have no idea how I paid for the meal. He was a really nice man from Switzerland in Berlin on business and we got along quite well. He then gave me his business card and wrote on it the name, and telephone number of his fiancé and told me to go to Switzerland on my way back and to call her and she would show me around Geneva.

Later we walked to a place that helped foreigners to find lodging and then sent me to somebody's home and he went to some other home for the night. Recall that it is now probably not even five AM and they had called these people who said to send me over and I took a taxi to their home whereupon I disembarked and knocked on their door.

I can't remember anything about meeting them except that they were pleasant to a stranger who interrupted their sleep. They showed me to my room and I got in bed and slept very long into the next day. I don't recall anything about that stay except my leaving late carrying my suitcase with me. I don't even recall how I got airplane reservations to Geneva or how I arrived at the airport. In fact even getting on the airplane is not something I can recall, and my memory is quite good.

But upon arrival in Geneva I was met by his fiancé and she was a most pretty young lass and her personality was delightful. I still have her name and his business card after all these years. Anyway, she had arranged for a hotel for my lodging, took me there and then after checking in and cleaning up, she took me on a tour of the city, with all its serpentine and byzantine roads, the places that foreigners normally would never see. She squired me around for two days and nights and I must say that after my most recent events, it was a most welcome interlude.

I recall awakening the following morning after going out the night before as the radio next to my bed was playing some very lovely classical music, with light streaming in the windows and I was ensconced in a large soft bed. The contrast to my time in Russia could not have been greater. Rioting for six days in the Watts is occurring.

Anyway, she continued showing me around and we went to small private clubs, bistros, restaurants and I there I had my first taste of Swiss Cheese Fondue accompanied by some really good wine. My hostess went out of her way to make my time in Geneva pleasant.

Then it was time for me to fly back to Dallas and I cannot recall the countries in which we stopped, nor my arrival back in Dallas. However it is worth noting that upon return my weight had dropped to only 90 pounds and I was just as sick as when I left Thailand.

But our top security agencies in Washington got to feast their eyes on the movies I had taken in Russia immediately after my return.

It was such unlikely event that it defies credibility, but I went to our company doctor for whom it had been decades since he was in medical school but he is the one who found out the nature of my illness. He opened an old school book and found a passage in which it described a rare kind of malaria in which the pathogen would hide in the spleen and therefor could not be seen. He then inserted a chemical into my spleen chasing some of the vermin out of it and immediately took blood samples.

In the samples he was able to find evidence of the rare malaria that was taking such a toll on me. In short order the medicine he gave me began to substantially reduce the symptoms and in six months all vestiges were gone never to return again. I still marvel on the fact one of the great centers of tropical diseases in Southeast Asia as well as our own governments disease specialists could not find it but a company doctor using an old text book found it.

At this same time a British official was murdered in Yemen by muslims, followed by their tossing of a grenade into a crowd of British children in the Aden airport terminal. The PLO is set up at the behest of Egyptian President Nasser which soon had assets of \$2 billion due in part to US and European funds, who then called for a jihad against Israel. The Monkees start on NBC in the US.

In any case it was time for me to earn my keep and I began doing some system engineering as well as field engineering and during that time I had no home at all, and lived in motels and ate restaurant food, and traveled. I worked on mostly telephone systems for GTE, Central Telephone and various Bell entities. I had become the choice of AT&T and for a long time, at their request I was sent to their systems and facilities continuously. I don't think there was a Bell central office nor an AT&T repeater in the entire southeastern US that I wasn't in.

I would soon learn, and firmly believe that no company ever did as much damage to the US than AT&T. In the future that assertion would be reinforced even more. They had conned our congress in paying them based on how much they spent, not on how they performed. At that time we could put in a microwave repeater with performance far superior to any equipment born in Bell labs and our cost would be ~\$100,000 and one of theirs with lesser performance would cost ~\$1,000,000. So they had no motivation to save money and charge less for service, they were motivated to spend like drunken sailors and did.

Many times AT&T would send out PHDs to where I was testing to show me where I was wrong in that system performance simply could not be anywhere nearly as good as I was reporting, after all the very best of Bell equipment could not do that. They always went back with their faith in the invincibility of AT&T in question. I would find out much more when dealing with them at their headquarter at 190 Broadway in New York City and later when my group was part of the birthing of cellular telephones which we installed overseas years before doing so in the US because of the AT&T strangle hold on congress and our future.

Then there was the problems with AT&T unions. They were offended by the idea that a non-union man would be sent out to "their" locations to find out what was wrong with the equipment upon which they worked. They did some of things which I could not comprehend at the time, being naive about the nature of most unions. They would take cockroaches and paint them with silver paint and insert them inside the waveguides and of course when ever they moved, it made it impossible to linearize either the waveguide or the klystrons. To find the problem all horizontal runs of waveguide had to be removed meaning the whole system would be down and all caused because I was an upstart engineer from the non-Bell company.

Another game by those of the CWA union folks was taking straight pens and plunging them into bundles of telephone wires and cutting off the head so that it could not be seen. This of course caused cross talk on the telephone circuits and was almost impossible to find. For those who have forgotten, it was the same AT&T and their unions who launched a massive campaign to prevent customers from plugging in their own telephones at home. Today people plug in their computers, telephones, fax machines, security systems all the time, not knowing how hard AT&T and the unions worked on congress to prevent that from ever happening.

There are three men, who though largely unrecognized stand alone as giants in freeing this country from the control of AT&T to the freedom we now have. They are Nicholas Katzenbach, Thomas Carter and Judge Green. It was these three who broke AT&T's power and freed the nation from their clutches. Without their courage it is very unlikely that we would have computers, cellular telephones, fax machines or many common conveniences because they simply could not be connected to the Bell system.

When the AT&T oligopoly was broken, they discovered more than a million employees they really did not need and laid them off in a massive disgorgement of people that lasted for years. One of their games they played back then was charging a customer more just because they added another telephone in their home. Of course having another telephone in a more convenient location didn't mean you would be calling anybody more often, but congress had let them get away with charging us more each month. AT&T made seriously large political campaign contributions.

However that was my life at the time and I even became competent in fixing their ancient C1 alarm system which was not so lovingly known as the chicken pecker. It was a very ancient technology with hundreds of relays which were forever needing to have their contacts burnished. It was larger than the biggest of luggage and must have weighed a hundred pounds. Our little system alarm system would do even more but was all solid state and so small you could hold it in with one hand.

During that time I roamed central Florida from north to south and was there so often that I had regular dates with local lasses just as I did when living in Savanna Georgia, a town in which I had the most enjoyable times in the evenings. I was always in rented cars and one time when in Savanna the rental firm gave me a convertible because that was all they had left thinking it would be short term event. I didn't turn it back in until more than six months later. In the mean time I enjoyed the convertible touring the southeast US. That was the time when massive arrests of communists was occurring in Indonesia and the 630 foot Gateway Arch was completed in Saint Louis.

Then there was the time that a new democrat governor was elected in Florida and he had planned for no less that 7 simultaneous balls to celebrate his election. He wanted television coverage of all of them, so AT&T was tasked with doing that and so they had me in Tallahassee to stay in the centrally located central office from which all the studio transmitter links (STL) was located. This was such an important time in the world, and during that time, Rhodesia became independent, Ferdinand Marcos was elected president of Philippines and the US sent 90,000 more soldiers to Vietnam.

While working at the central office, it so happened that it was also a place where a lot of our multiplex equipment was located and rather than wasting my time just waiting, I was going through all the circuits listening to each of them to see if there was any problems just as I and others had done many times. The quality of a telephone circuit was a function the microwave path, the transmitters and receivers, the multiplex, the termination unit, the local loop to the customers, a factor called VNL, and lastly their telephones. All were analog then and maintaining quality was a never ending task.

As I was inserting my headset into each consecutive circuit, I came across two girls discussing the upcoming prom or dance for which one had a date and the other did not. The discussion had to do with what they were wearing and the one lamenting not having a date. Since I had a substantial ornery streak in me, I flipped on the transmit switch and announced that I would be happy to take her to the prom and immediately switched the transmitter back off. Before I moved on, I could not tell you how loudly I laughed as the girls then talked about the interloper and what had just happened.

It was during that time of solving lots of problems for AT&T that I was called on to move to British Columbia and be the resident manager on a massive and incredibly technically complex program. Like so very much in my life, I was quite unprepared for the demands that would be placed on me there. We are not usually prepared for what we face that is new, but I always liked a challenge, in this case a considerable one.

This was a command and control network used for managing the distribution of power from the WAC Bennet dam which forming Williston Lake and the Peace River. The 600 foot high dam generated more than 13 billion kilowatt hours of electricity annually. We had a Canadian subsidiary who were skilled but not for such a massive effort.

We built buildings and roads all across the Canadian Rockies, on islands and in some very hard to get to places. Twenty six miles of roads were built, several bridges and most were built right through and on mountainous terrain. Because most sites were very remote, the buildings mostly had large dual generators so large that some of the radiators were six feet high. The batteries were composed of cells that each weighed well more than a hundred pounds and each completed battery with rack would weigh as much as a ton.

We recovered more than 60 percent of the generator's energy for heating of the buildings which had automatic fire suppression systems utilizing long rows of CO₂ bottles, and dampers that automatically opened and closed depending on temperature or fire conditions. Grounding systems and lightning protection were very carefully designed because of lightning being common in mountains.

There were more than two hundred people who participated in some way in completing the program including all the people with whom we contracted. And that brought up another matter. The Canadian government had to be sensitive to "taking away local jobs" and so we made use of many Canadian nationals as we could. I myself became a Landed Immigrant in Canada during my stay.

This was a time well before cellular or IMTS telephones but those of us in management positions had single side band telephones in our cars and I could be deep in the rockies in my car and talk easily to people in Dallas. It was a convenience that left a strong memory in me about how useful it was to not be tied to a telephone line. It would be almost ten years later when I and others were working on programs consisting of large systems at the birth of cellular telephones.

I lived in West Vancouver, a garden spot of the world. I could not see a car or a house from inside my abode. There were tree trunks more than twenty feet in diameter next to where I parked my car and the lush vegetation of the property partway up the mountain was beautiful all the time. Grass was green year around there and roses bloom at Christmas time in West Vancouver.

Twenty feet behind my kitchen was a trout stream with a waterfall and the sound of a waterfall that close to you all the time is a delight. The mantel over my fireplace was a mining timber from a mine that had washed down from mines further up the mountain. It was entirely a wonderful way to live for someone that is so enamored with the majesty and beauty of this wonderful world in which God gave us to live.

We had two helicopters leased year around and they were used as primary transportation. One only needs to fly a few times in the wonder of the mountains to love flying in helicopters. We had piston engined and some turbo charged Bells, and Hillers and occasionally used jet 204Bs for our flights. I am sure that the time of John and I working on Rapicopters and my flying there in British Columbia was a prime determinate of my later acquiring a helicopter

Vancouver was a sophisticated city in which to live and going out at night for supper meant dressing well, usually in a coat and tie. My appreciation for good wines and good dining came to be at that time though it was a change for someone for whom dress was and still is not what matters.

There is so much to tell about this huge program, starting with the dollar value, which adjusted by use of the Implicit Price Deflator, to compensate for inflation between then and 2006 would make the program more than a quarter billion dollars in today's dollars. I was twenty five when I took on the role of Resident Manager of it.

We had a very competent Construction Manager on it which was good because that work in the mountains was not for the faint of heart. Our Business Manager was a delightful Welsh gentlemen who had a most humorous way of going through life. And our Office Manager was one of those people who just got things done, when they needed to be done.

Our field engineers were hardy and very competent people and without them the work would have foundered. Can't say enough about them and their competence. One gentleman who was the son of a Canadian Air Force General, just would not take no for an answer. No matter how difficult an assignment was and no matter who he was attempting to get something done with, his very presence or demeanor got it done.

One of our pilots was a most delightful man of the name of Jack Godsey. Not being a helicopter pilot then, I didn't realize just how good he was as is so apparent to me now. He had an unending sense of humor and was really good at sizing a new person up and seemed to be able to smell fear in anyone.

One day we were up on Carson Mountain, the building and the tower were up and a large area set aside for a helipad. It was many thousands of feet up from the floor and the sides fell away sharply. A really beautiful place to be and I just loved working up there.

On that day, we had a bookish sort come up having driven up from Vancouver for whatever reason and was introduced to all of us including Jack. Then it was determined that he needed to go somewhere in the helicopter, a Bell 47 as I recall. So he got in and strapped on his seatbelt while Jack went through preliminary checkouts.

Of course it is the nature of helicopters to shake, vibrate and make unusual sounds, but soon after Jack started the engines and the main rotor blades began to rotate, he put on a very worried face and began to stare at the main rotor mast head above them. Jack then reached over and tapped the guy with his elbow and said "do you hear that? It shouldn't be doing that". Of course there wasn't anything wrong with the helicopter but now the guy is looking up with great intent and seriousness attempting to find out what is bad with the rigging.

Jack continued with his check out, all the time continuing to look up at the swash plate and the mast head and making observations about the apparent trouble there. I might add that one only needs to move the cyclic a little away from the null position to make the whole helicopter shake as the main blades complain about their relationship to the winds. You can be sure that the helicopter was shaking for that reason.

By now with all the priming from Jack, the guy is now seriously scared and it is time to bring the blades up to 100% and when that happens, the noise of the engine is high, the noise of the blades are high and a lot of vibration is occurring. Jack keeps looking up at the main rotors as if they are about to do something terrible.

Then he raises the Bell up into a hover a few feet off the ground and all seems well with our hapless lad. He looks out and sees he is at an altitude that he could jump out, when Jack says to him "oh my, did you hear that?" and looks up at the rotors.

In response the other guy looks up studying something he has no knowledge about and while he is doing that, Jack slips the helicopter sideways over the mountain edge and what was only a couple of feet below the helicopter has suddenly become 6,000 feet straight down. As the fellow drops his gaze from above he suddenly sees more than a mile of air below him, and right at that time Jack reaches back behind his seat and drops a large metal wrench on the metal floor. I think the guy probably had to buy new trousers.

One day we were flying right up the center of the rockies and the day was indescribably beautiful. One especially risky technique is landing on a pinnacle but I was too naive to appreciate that fact. In any case, there was a pinnacle that rose up about a mile from the valley below and was about an acre in size and flat at the top.

We landed there, got out our sandwiches and some good wine and just became immersed in the incredible beauty around us. It was so magnificent that I don't think any of us spoke as we drank in the wonder of this world God made for us. For those who have not spent time in a helicopter, especially in the mountains, the wonder of this world has something still to offer you.

This is not to say that working there was a bed of roses, and in fact you could say that often building the roads buildings and towers was a test of perseverance and that those who were building it were made of the right stuff. I may be able to get the point across as to the contrast between the incredible beauty and the inhospitable conditions we worked in on this great program. But in reading the following, remember just how big it all was and what follows had counterparts elsewhere.



Just as an example, one site was on Mission Mountain, which was just up from the Bridge River dam, and as the steam coming up from the dam rose up to the site we were building, the hoar frost on the tower as seen here was three feet thick or more.

Though this was not a very tall tower it was not for the faint of heart. The pictures here are not as bad as it got, as you can still see the tower. I can remember when it was cased in hoar frost so thick that I had to break a

hole through the ice just to get inside. This was so as to be able to climb it from the inside since there was no way at all to climb on the outside and then work on it.



Sometimes just getting to and moving around on the site was a test in itself as you can see in the picture to the left. The site really did look like this and if you look closely, you can see that every tree is covered with hoar frost, and it stayed that way all winter.

Note that the trees are all stunted from the burden they endured all winter. You can imagine what it was like to build a road, the building, erect the tower and install inside very sophisticated equipment.

Then there was Black Tusk. This site was near the ski site now known as Whistler mountain, which was just beginning to start construction then. But back then there was no civilization anywhere near the site.

We pushed a road through the mountainous forest of trees of twenty feet in diameter. Then we came to a river and built a bridge over it. Then we moved the bulldozers, graders and gravel trucks so as

to continue building the road further into the mountain and came to another river. So we built another bridge and continued building the road toward Black Tusk mountain. Then on a July day, a flash flood hit the area and took out both of our bridges.

A microwave system is like a chain, if you remove a link, you have nothing that connects the two ends together. I had a tight schedule on completing the central branch of the system, and now we had an important link that we could not even get up the mountain to build the site until we rebuilt the two bridges.

But, by the time we would have rebuilt the bridges, then continued pushing the road all the way to the base, and then up the mountain, winter would be on us and we still had to build the site. Building the site was in itself a large task.

I was in Vancouver when the news came in, and despondency was prevalent among many there. I had to find a solution but the most practical of solutions all led to not getting the site built before winter. And then I had an idea that seemed to me to be far too unrealistic, and that was to use helicopters to build the site and hopefully fast.

I have to admit that I thought it was nonsense but after talking with the Okanagan Helicopter management it seemed that it might have possibilities. So I began to lay out a course of action and when our construction manager came in, the plan was laid out and as wild as it seemed, he thought it might just work and so we proceeded.



Black Tusk mountain was formed by a volcano and later when the caldera dropped away all that was left was the lava core inside. Our site was on a shoulder of that mountain seen here. That is the tusk you see rising above the other terrain.

It was about sixty miles due north of Vancouver along what was then mostly a gravel road, which incidentally when one drove along the area near Squamish, the car would be covered with gold dust.

To understand the monumental challenge on this, here are a few statistics of what had to be done to make the operation work. This listing is what we had to take up on the mountain, which was six miles away, and 6,000 feet up from our staging area, and each load could not be more than 3,000 pounds.

- 300,000 pounds of material
- Two fuel tanks that were 8' in diameter and 26' long
- 45 cubic yards of concrete for building and tower foundations had to be poured
- Two large generators each larger than a VW car
- Concrete blocks, for the building
- Microwave antennas up to 12' in diameter
- Earth moving machinery, broken down into pieces.
- Cable reels
- Microwave racks 8' high
- Diesel fuel for the fuel tanks
- A 40 foot trailer for a bunk house
- A 40 foot trailer for the cook shack
- Battery and rack weighing more than a ton
- Many other items to build, install and keep people alive

We ran convoys of jet tanker fuel for the Bell 204B, which I have to say was an incredible work horse. And now that I am a helicopter pilot, I can only be amazed at how good he had to be to fly the operation with up to 3,000 pounds of weight hanging below and that load moving as the winds swung the pendulum underneath it.

A convoy of concrete ready mix trucks brought the light weight aggregate mix (to keep the weight under 3,000 pounds) all the way from Vancouver. Pouring and transporting concrete by helicopter was a sight to see.

In preparation we put all material on pallets that weighed 3,000 pounds or less, strapped them very securely, and specified areas for the concrete trucks, jet fuel trucks, and the concrete garborough type hoppers. All was organized and rehearsed with great precision and we had portable radios at the staging area and on top of the mountain.

Then at the first sniff of daylight we began the operation and the first thing was pouring the 45 cubic yards of concrete into the forms that had already been prepared by the concrete crew on top. Below is how it worked, and since I worked under the helicopter hooking and unhooking the hoppers, I had a first hand view.

As soon as the helicopter had emptied the hopper on top, a radio call was made down to the staging area notifying us. Then we would motion for the concrete truck to come over and fill the empty hopper and then the truck would go to another part of the staging area. Shortly afterwards, the helicopter would come down and the empty would be unhooked and in seconds the full one was hooked onto it and he was on his way up the mountain. In this military precision, it took 6 minutes from top to bottom to back on his way up.

This action took place all day until there was no light after dusk at all, remembering that in mountainous areas, it gets dark sooner. For three days this operation consumed every scrap of daylight and at the end, 300,000 pounds of material was placed and more than a little of the site was in fact built by helicopter.

This of course wasn't the end, this was barely the beginning and we had a crew of notably hearty men who worked up on top of the mountain all winter long building the site. That year twenty feet of snow fell on top of the mountain. In the morning the men would come up out of the bunk shack, and cut in new steps to daylight. Then they would make steps in the new snow going down to the cook shack so they could eat.

If the men wanted something, we did everything we could to satisfy them. But, there were three simple rules for them. No women, no booze, no guns. If you look at the picture above, you can imagine what it was like to live up on top of a wind and snow swept mountain, miles from anyone and any modern conveniences. These were tough men.

However while they were up there, another problem presented itself that being what would we do if someone were to get hurt while there. Much too often the weather was too bad to depend on a helicopter rescue so we began to look for an alternative.

Most who read this will not even remember when there were not such things as snowmobiles, but at that time they were an unknown, untested oddity and very little was known about them. But we wondered if they could be used on Black Tusk and so we acquired two of them and on a bright winter day we flew them up on top of the mountain by helicopter. Two men were to check out if they could get down the mountain and determine if it was a viable solution for an emergency.

Because it was a bright sunny day the task was viewed as a not too difficult task and the men took no food or water with them and only light jackets. It was thought that they would be down in a couple of hours before the sun went down. When three hours had passed we became a little concerned so we launched two helicopter to find them and I was in one of them.

The mountain was deep in snow and drifts with very rugged terrain especially at the top. We flew for hours and not only could we not see either of them, we could not even detect their tracks as it was on the shady side of the mountain. We flew until there was simply no light left and then flew over to the closest motel we could find and waited. Morning came and the search continued but we found no sign of them.

But later on that day they made it out walking and were recovered. It seems that only shortly after they had started down, they were driving across a snow bridge unbeknownst to them. They broke through, machines and all they fell into a deep hole with no way to get out. It should be mentioned that neither of them had ever been on one of these machines and if they had a history of reading the terrain, they might have been able to read it, but such was not the case.

It being later in the afternoon when they started down, they could not see well in their hole. And though they knew they would not be getting the snowmobiles out, they couldn't even figure out how to extract themselves from their cave. That night the temperature went down to 20 below zero. Their light weight clothing was not what they needed, made still worse by the absence of food and water. However, being trapped down in a hole together out of the winds probably saved their lives. When they were found their fingers and toes were black but did not have to be amputated.

The test of the human capabilities were so present in my mind while there in British Columbia and what men can endure is so much greater than I had appreciated in my youth. An example is a wonderful man, Bill Antoniuk who has since passed away. Bill grew up with his father who was a hunter and trapper in the Northwest Territories. During his youth he was called upon to stake out mining claims and in the process learned how to survey in difficult conditions. Bill was an integral part of laying out our microwave paths and the determination of our sites.

I could not begin to tell you all the things this man did but will relate a few stories just to show you what some men are made of. In the early periods when we were locating sites we would drive into the interior of the mountains as far as we could go and stop. Bill would get out of the car with only his transit, his clothing, a jacket, a plastic sheet, a little food and a bottle of whiskey.

Even if it was 30 below zero and a white out blizzard he was in those conditions alone, spending the night(s) and surveying during the daylight. At night he would crawl under a large pine with its boughs all the way to the ground and covered with snow and that was his home. He would take drink some of the whiskey, wrap himself in the plastic sheet and go to sleep out of the wind. How many men do you know who could do that?

Bill had an absolutely wonderful wife, Vi. She had grown up a city girl in Vancouver and was a teacher with no experience of hard outside living. But right after they were married, she and Bill took a canoe and on their honeymoon paddled a canoe up the mouth of the Mackenzie River, the tenth largest river in the world where it empties into the Arctic Ocean, just as winter was on them. They spent their first year of marriage in a cabin in the Northwest Territories. He used to say that if you can't pee off your own front porch you are living too close. While there Bill ran trap lines and hunted all winter. I may have a great dislike for trapping, but I have a very great admiration for this Canadian Indian man.

A note about Vi is worth mentioning as well even though you can already tell of my respect for her. One night three of us were out on the town in Vancouver and around 2:30 in the morning we had become hungry after imbibing various substances. So Bill got on my single side band car telephone and called home saying only to Vi that we were coming over and to fix us some breakfast. To this day I will never forget that upon arrival she was dressed, had put on her makeup and was looking as pretty as could be even though she had just gotten out of bed. She was genuinely happy to have us show up and breakfast was almost made when we arrived. What a woman.

Another incident concerning man's ability to deal with extreme circumstances occurred in the dead of winter one year. It seems that even though we had battery backup, and two large generators, one of our sites had gone down, and without power the alarm and command and control to it were inoperative and we knew nothing of its condition. As I had said, if one site goes down, the whole system is down on a serial system.

I had attempted to find anybody who would go out to the site and find out what was wrong. The best way to describe the responses was that only the deepest of fools would even think of going to that site deep in and up in the mountains at that time of year. The worst of winter storms was going on at that time also which did not make the problem any easier.

I always remembered my uncle whose company built the San Jacinto monument and none of his people would paint the stars on the top because it was too dangerous. But uncle Deek had a rule, that he would not ask somebody else to do something that he would not do so he got up on top of the monument and painted the stars himself.

That always stuck with me so if we were going to find out what was the condition of the site, I would have to do it. But there was a man who had a very responsible position with our customer, Herb Norden and he was willing to go with me on the quest. This was not something he had to do, and was not even his problem, but he volunteered to go on what he knew was a most difficult and risky adventure.

So we set out in my car in which we had appropriate and sufficient (we thought) clothing and boots, water and food. We both brought snow shoes, but he being smarter than I brought bear paw shoes. I brought trail shoes a terrible mistake of judgement. From the time we got into the mountains outside of Vancouver it was a terrible snow storm and just staying on the road was not simple. The car was full of gas and we took extra cans inside with us as well.

We drove on paved public roads which were not plowed well because we were well away from the traffic demands of civilization until we began to go cross country on gravel roads which had not seen any snow plowing and we had to guess where the road was by the road edges which were somewhat different from the snow on the rest of the surrounding terrain.

A point was reached well before our destination where the car simply would not proceed further in the deep snow. It was stopped. So Herb and I began hiking on our snowshoes on top of the snow, each of us carrying five gallons of diesel fuel. Though we could not see well because of the blizzard we were in, there was some daylight and the trek on snowshoes went well and my trail shoes performed well.

We probably walked a few miles and got to the area of the waiting track equipped snow machines. One of the reasons Herb went with me was because his company had a Tucker and my company had bought a Robin Nodwell. Basically our Robin Nodwell was not a worthy machine for the task ahead and so Herb joined in because we needed his company's machine.

You have to picture that we are in the midst of a blinding snowstorm in an open area at the base of the mountain where the two machines were parked. We climbed in the Tucker, closed the door and it was such a momentary relief to be inside the cabin on that big machine which to us felt warm. And, we really wanted it to start but had reservations since it had been sitting out in that environment for some time. We were quite relieved when it the engine did start. Whew!

The Tucker had headlights though the snow was blowing so hard that we could only see a few feet ahead of us as we started up the one lane gravel road that my company had constructed for going up the mountain. Herb was driving and we were in constant conversation as we attempted to determine where the road was and where it was not. Of course when we built the road it had no guard rails because it was meant to be driven in different weather and a driver could therefor see what was beside him.

Most ever mountain road has a lot of switchbacks and these roads we had constructed were no exception. We had built these with no more than a 5 percent grade and the Tucker did very well for the first few miles going up the mountain. A very important consideration was fuel in our machine. Of course mileage driven had no meaning as one drives up in heavy snow conditions. We had determined that just before we drove to a point in which our fuel tank had only half of the fuel remaining, we would stop so we could get it back down the mountain later. You might attempt to imagine driving it back down in those conditions.

So, when we got almost to the half fuel point we got out with our snowshoes and five gallon cans of diesel fuel. What an unwelcome change that was in our environment. The first part after our trekking started was difficult but manageable. That would soon change as sharp snow drifts started to cross the road as the winds determined, but in general they rose sharply ten to 15 feet high and were about fifty feet between the crests of each snow drift.

That is when I discovered what a terrible mistake I had made in going there with trail shoes as they stuck out in front of my feet about three feet and were useless with those steep drifts. But Herb in his bear paws continued up and was well ahead of me. We lost track of each other shortly after we encountered the steep drifts. We had no portable radios with us.

I began to crawl up the drifts on my hands and knees and at a certain point I would dig through the drifts with my hands, and upon getting to the other side would fall down into the valley between the drifts with my five gallon can with me. Then it was a repeat on the next and the next drifts. I estimate that it was more than a quarter mile of crawling on my hands and knees to the plateau at the top. All the while the white out was such that I could not see much beyond my hands. I was just hoping that Herb was all right.

At the top we had cleared a very large area because these were big buildings and the staging around each took a lot of space in which we had cleared the trees. It may seem that things improved at that point, but crawling in whiteout also included the possibility of crawling right past the fenced-in area and back out into the forest on the other side and not ever being able to find the way back.

In fact I missed the fence in several attempts and retraced my route each time by feeling the divots I had made in the snow previously. It took three different directions but eventually got to the chain link fence but not at the gate. Luckily the direction I chose to crawl around the fence was in the right direction to the fence and on the way I ran into Herb. It was an emotional moment when we came back together.

Upon finding the gate I had to unlock the large padlock we had put on it, and so I stood up for the first time in quite a while. Taking off my gloves in which my hands and knees had become very wet in the crawling was difficult and I could not feel the key in my pocket but could feel the hardness in squeezing it between two fingers. The lock did not like turning in that low temperature condition but it eventually gave up and let us in and the key was put back in my pocket.

In the whiteout we walked past the building but found it on the second attempt whereupon I unlocked the door and we walked inside. Though I am sure it was below freezing in it, it felt like we had hit a heat wave and Herb and I both lay down on the floor for a long time and did not say a thing to each other. We were just relieved.

I have no idea how long we lay on the floor but I am think it was well longer than an hour. Then we got up and with flashlights began to examine the building that was not operational to see if we could get it going using the fuel cans we had brought through the door. But such was not to be.

It appeared that the engines had stopped though we could not determine if it was fuel exhaustion or some other reason. The starter batteries had frozen and broken probably as a result of draining the reserve out of the battery in repeated start attempts. The ton of station batteries seemed to not have been damaged because of the automatic cut out on the chargers had disconnected them from draining all the way down.

So, we at least knew what had to be done at the site as soon as we could get a crew up there and it was time to leave. Leaving the relative warmth of the inside of the building was not something desirous and it was not easy to venture out the door which I carefully locked behind us.

Remember now that Herb still has his snowshoes and I am walking in knee deep or higher snow without snowshoes which I had left behind when the drifts got too steep. We still cannot see at all but we did find our way to the gate with difficulty but not because we were lost. However going out the gate became a very serious matter because we had to get back to the road which we had no way of seeing or we risked being forever lost on that mountain in very severe weather. This was definitely the most frightening portion of the trip.

We stayed together and began "walking" in what we hoped was the correct direction as we had reasoned that from the fence we would eventually get to the treed area though we could have walked between the trees and not have known we were there. We walked slowly touching each other from time to time to make sure the other was near as we couldn't see or hear at all. When we had walked further than I thought we should have I got down on my knees again so I could feel the terrain better and hopefully detect changes in the terrain caused by our site clearing.

In time I could feel a steeper grade than the area I had just passed and guessed it was the edge of the road which fortunately it was. Herb was still beside me and somehow we communicated that we believed we were on the road and going in the right direction. Neither of us could see but it was easier than going up as sometimes I could stand up and walk in the voids I had made crawling up. Sometimes I would fall and roll down hill and then get back up and walk again. Even going through the drifts were easier to get through because there was a hole I had clawed and crawled through and it was going down hill as well. On the way up I had to frequently feel the side of the road to know that I was on the safe side and not about to fall off the mountain on the steep side of the road. Going down I only had to attempt to stay in my former tracks.

Eventually Herb and I got down, I picked up my useless trail shoes (they will come into play in my life again years later) and we returned to the Tucker. Let us say that as Herb backed the Tucker downhill with steep drop offs beside us, it was a time of considerable adrenalin flow, but he did it, and we didn't run out of gas. His skill in doing that was incredible and I'll always remember it.

Then we walked back and my trail shoes were useable again all the way back to my car. Still it is whiteout conditions and it is getting close to morning though there was no hint of sun.

I can't visualize how I drove the car backwards though it was miles. The length of time in so doing was long. And since the car had been driven to the point that it would not push snow any further, I had to rock the car a number of times just to get it so it would begin to backup. Though we were warm inside, the trip driving backwards and not being able to see much less back up was time consuming. There were many times in which I drove off the road only to start again. The back up lights helped but the rear window was not clear at all.

Herb will forever remain in my mind as a result of the venture. For whatever reason we didn't talk about it later but we both knew what we had been through together. I know what he is made of and I have the highest respect for him wherever he is now.

To be continued.....

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