

After you read this story you will realize the events that led to the construction of YellowAirplane.com And Why God Sent me to the North Pole.

The story below is about how, Jeff Dyrek, the webmaster of YellowAirplane.com, in 1977, fell 180 ft., landed on rocks, and returned to work with a light duty working status, after spending only two days in the Navy Hospital. But the story goes on to talk about the great suffering, Mr. Dyrek, experienced, all of the unsuccessful medical operations that he has endured. However, after twenty five years suffering, he went to the North Pole which cured the original problems that all of the previous operations could not cure.

This story is actually a rough draft, with no corrections made, so please excuse the grammar errors.

June of 1977 is one day that changed my life for ever. Being the Navy and stationed at Lemoore Naval Air Station in the central part of California's San Joaquin Valley, I had many visits to the Sequoia National Forrest. I was on leave and just returned from a three week motorcycle drive around the country. I still had one week left before my leave was over and being a very energetic guy, my friends and I decided to go hiking in the Sequoias. We usually did pretty dangerous climbing on steep rocky cliffs up to and above the twelve thousand foot level with sheer drops of over five thousand feet.



of

in

We were getting ready to leave for our day hike and my friends Doug Glen and Gary Wilson were ready to get on the bikes when I said, "Let's not do anything dangerous today. Let's just walk through the woods, I feel like something real bad is going to happen." Gary and Doug were both quite surprised to hear what I have said, but shrugged their shoulders, looked at me like I was crazy, and said OK.

We jumped on our motorcycles and headed out for South Fork Drive in the Sequoia National Forrest. We have never been there before so we were heading into new territory which didn't make much difference because we were pretty seasoned hikers.

After about a two hour drive, we finally arrived at the end of the South Fork Drive road looking up at an incredible mountain vista. After unloading our bikes and getting our gear together we headed into the tall pine forest. It wasn't long before we came up to a stream which was crossing the trail. The water wasn't very deep, but there were pools up to about eight feet wide and several feet deep that were filled with trout. "Oh boy, look at the fish," I was thinking. We didn't have any fishing gear but we were determined to invent a way to catch one of these fish. We dammed the stream in upper part of the pool and dug out a channel in the lower part of the pool making pretty good efforts to drain the pool so we could grab the fish. Unfortunately this didn't work.



It was late spring but the mountains were still covered with a large cap of snow. As the snow melted

the streams flowed creating extremely cold water which would make your hands become numb in just a few seconds. It still turned out that catching the fish with our hands didn't work so we walked down the stream looking for another pool and more fish. More fish indeed! We found lots of fish in pool after pool and with every attempt to catch them we were unsuccessful and the fish swam even farther down the stream escaping our efforts.

We kept up our efforts until we came to about a seventy foot waterfall. After a few minutes of looking for a path around the cliff, we found a safe way, then continued down a gradual slope looking for more pools with more fish. Again we came to a cliff, but this time it was about two hundred feet to the bottom. The stream flowed over the cliff which was a vertical drop to a small pile of rocks then flowed into a large pool of water partially covered with ice. After looking at the situation, we decided that this was the last part of our journey and that we should go home. We came to the conclusion that if anyone fell off of this cliff they would be dead for sure and discussed this outcome between ourselves. Standing on the very edge of the cliff, I spit over the side, and it took it forever to hit the bottom. Then I picked up a hand full of rocks and started throwing them over of the side one by one, much to our astonishment when they hit the bottom, they would make a big boom that repeatedly echoed down the box canyon. It was great! The echo was very loud and persisted longer than any echo I have ever heard. Next, Doug and Gary started throwing rocks too. After three of us continued throwing rocks for just a few minutes, there weren't any more rocks to be found in the area where we were standing. I looked around and we were standing on a huge bare boulder with the stream in the middle with beautiful green moss and grass growing around the edges, but there were no rocks to be seen anywhere. I walked about fifty feet up the stream and grabbed an arm load of rocks then started heading back so we can continue to throw them off the edge and listen to the entertaining boom. As I was walking along the edge of the stream I stepped on the wet moss. There was nothing that I could do. I fell into the water and started sliding down toward the two hundred foot cliff.

The water was about two inches deep and the smooth rock under the water was covered with a thin layer of extremely slippery moss. The slope of the stream was only a few degrees and since I was about fifty feet from the edge of the cliff before I slipped, I never knew that I was in any danger what so ever. At this time, in the blink of an eye, I went from feeling perfectly safe to a situation where, that more than likely, I was going to die in the next several seconds. Making this thought even more likely was the fact that we just got through saying that anyone who fell off this cliff would be dead for sure.

As I slid down the stream, I looked for something to grab on to but there was nothing, not even a little crack. I looked at my right forearm and I could see that its muscles were as hard as a rock. I looked up and I saw Doug Glen standing on the edge of the cliff, watching me slide toward the edge. His mouth was wide open and he was starring at me in the horror of disbelief. I watched him until the instant that I was shot over the edge high into the air. I then looked in front of me and after I flew several feet from the edge, all of my fear disappeared, then I suddenly noticed the tops of the trees, apparently, moving my direction. The colors were fabulous and I said, "It's beautiful up here."

I don't remember any part of the fall after that. Doug, later said that I hit the rocks on the bottom landing on my feet. He then said that I bounced fifteen feet into the air, then landed a second time in the water. Doug told me that the only part of my body that was sticking out of the water was my head. He then went on to say that it took him about two hours to climb down the cliff to me to pull me out onto the dry rock. While Doug was coming to my rescue, Gary went back to where we parked the motorcycles so he could drive back and get some help.

I've thought about this for many years afterward and realized that most of the research that I've ever read about or have seen on TV, showed that any person who fell into water that is near freezing, had only a few minutes before his life passes away. In this case, since there was ice on the water, the water was evidently near freezing, yet I was almost completely immersed for a period of about two hours. After a couple of years, hindsight made me realize that being submerged in this extremely cold water was what kept me from bleeding to death and it actually was one of the factors that saved my life.

Doug pulled me out of the water and took off my wet jacket. I remember starting to wake up momentarily then I would fall back into unconsciousness in repeated cycles. After I did this for a while, I remember telling Doug that I was cold. I looked around and noticed a lot of blood on the rocks. The back of my head was bleeding very badly and I had a cut that was shaped like a cross on the back of my skull that later took thirty two stitches to pull it back together. I felt a pain in my left shoulder and noticed that there was a small sliver of rock sticking out of my skin. I grabbed this little piece of rock with my right hand and pulled as hard as I could. The skin and muscle pulled way out away from my shoulder before I was able to pull it out of the tissue. The small sliver of rock turned out to be just like an arrowhead stuck deep into my shoulder.

I was still complaining of being very cold but never knew that I was ever wet. After looking around for a while, Doug took off his jacket and placed it over me. As I laid there, I heard a voice. It wasn't like anyone talking, the voice seemed to speak directly to my brain. It said, "There's a reason that you're alive." I again fell into unconsciousness for an unknown amount of time. Maybe I was just delirious and having hallucinations or something but there was no doubt that I heard those words and they seemed very real and were very clear.

Even though it took four hours for the rescue crew to arrive in a helicopter, it seemed like only a few minutes. I watched the helicopter land nearby. The helicopter was owned by the Shasta Helicopter Rescue Company. I then observed several crew members disembark and walk over toward me. The rescue team members were wearing dark green flight gear



and white pilots helmets with microphone plugs dangling down their sides. When the crew members got closer to me, I recognized them as members from our Skydiving Team back at Naval Air Station Lemoore. It turned out that there was some kind of argument on who was going to do the rescue. The Shasta Rescue Company, because they had the Forest Service contract, or the US Navy SAR (Search and Rescue) team since I was in the Navy. Their compromise was that the SAR team did the rescue, but flying in with the Shasta helicopter. Later, after the rescue, they transferred me to the Navy helicopter in the town of Visalia which was directly in the flight path to the Naval Air Station Lemoore where I was stationed. So, that's exactly what they finally did in this rescue operation.

Back at the bottom of the cliff, when the rescue team came up to me, they started injecting me with whatever it was that they used in this situation, then put a drip bottle line into my arm. They placed me on a stretcher and carried me to the helicopter, which was a Bell Jet Ranger, that wasn't nearly as wide as the Navy's H-1 which the Navy rescue crew usually uses in these cases. The team members placed me into the helicopter then they shut the door. When they did this, because of the narrow fuselage, they slammed the door on my feet causing me to yell out in great pain. The reason for this pain was when I landed on the bottom of the cliff, I hit the rocks with the bottoms of my feet first. This hard landing crushed my heels, caused a compression fracture of my L1 vertebrae, twisted up my back, gave me a severe concussion, severely cut my head, damaged my right elbow and, what took me four more years to find out, severely tore my diaphragm causing an internal bleeding for twenty five years thereafter.

I was flown to and admitted to the Naval Air Station Lemoore base hospital where I laid in bed for two days. Here the doctor gave me some pills, then he said if I was given any more than eleven pills, I would become totally addicted to them. As I laid there, I remember that when I would close my eyes and relax, I would instantly find myself riding in a bright red and white, nineteen fifty four Buick convertible. I remember that the car was packed with people and everyone was hanging out over the sides with their arms swinging in the air, screaming loudly as, Dan Wolf, was driving like a wild man around the mountain curves. As soon as I opened my eyes, the car was gone and I was back in the hospital laying in the bed. When I closed my eyes again, there I was, back in the convertible with everyone screaming in terror riding with a mad man at the wheel. After being in the hospital for only two days, the doctor returned me back to work on a full duty status.

After being released from the hospital, I went home that evening with a bottle of pain pills and a bottle of muscle relaxers, supposedly ready to go back to work the next morning. I was, with no doubt, full of pain. Even with all of the pills that the doctor gave me, I just wasn't having a good day. I had to go to work the next morning so I got all of my clothes ready and set them near the door of my room. The next morning I was off to work. Somehow, I had the feeling like I was behind in time, and I had to catch up with something, but I didn't know what it was. I drove to work at one hundred and thirty seven miles an hour, that was as fast as my motorcycle would go. That was the only speed that gave me the feeling that I was catching up to what ever it was, and the distance to this vague time thing, was getting closer, but as soon as I slowed down I felt like I was behind in time again. The exact distance from my front door to the front door of work was twenty point five miles and it only took me twelve minutes to get there. At that speed which included following the speed limits in town and the five miles on the Navy base I was averaging about one hundred and twenty miles per hour. A month earlier, before I went on leave, I was the swing shift supervisor at work. After I fell off this cliff, I was back to being a bench tech, and my good friend, Jeff March, was

from this time on, the new swing shift supervisor. I don't remember this ever happening, but Jeff later told me that, one day I walked into the supervisors meeting, right up the center space of the conference tables â 'U' configuration, and started yelling at the Division Officer, the Division Chief, and other Supervisors calling everyone an "A.. Hole." It's funny that I would say that because I thought very highly of all of those people, and it's nothing that I would have ever done in a conscious state of mind.

After several days from my hospital release, I was continuously complaining about a pain in my back. My friend, Dale, looked at it and said that there was a big lump right in the middle of my spine. After getting tired of everyone telling me that I should go back to the doctor, that's what I finally did. The doctor looked at the lump and said, "No wonder it hurts, you broke your back." He then sent me back to work, still in a full duty status, with still, more bottles of pills.

Again with a little bit of hindsight, I now realize, that anyone with a broken bone in any part of their body would have severe swelling by the end of the very first day after the break occurred. The reason that the doctor never detected the swelling and the break, was because he never gave me a complete examination. This is also why he never detected a damaged elbow and my crushed heels or even the cut in my left shoulder where I removed the arrowhead shaped rock. What adds up to is that the doctor just stitched up my head and went off to leave me fend for myself.

As time went on, during the next couple of weeks after I was released from the hospital, every day that I was back at work, I was becoming more and more irritable. All any person would have to do was to say hi to me and I would blow up and start screaming uncontrollably at them. Then, after they left, I would say to myself, "Why did I do that! They didn't do anything wrong!" This went on for several more days when I realized that there was something wrong and decided to go back to see the doctor. When I went to the sick bay clinic in the base operations area, one of the SAR team guys that rescued me, saw me, and said that he wanted to be with me when I saw the doctor for this exam. I told the doctor about these temper problems that I was having and he said, very loudly, that I was â 'totally nuts,' in those exact words, and that I was going to have to see the base shrink. I was so mad that I drove home like a wild man. I then grabbed all the pills, that my regular doctor gave me, and threw them out the back door of my house as far as I could throw them. Three days later, when I saw the psychiatrist, I felt incredibly better. It was all of the drugs that the medical doctor gave me that were driving me crazy and making me act like a madman.



Even though I felt a lot better, in the mental department, I didn't feel a whole lot better in the

physical department. I was always tired and no matter how much I tried, I was always needing to take frequent naps. There was something wrong. I'm always the motivated type of person and motivation just wasn't the way I felt anymore. I still had the feeling that I needed to "Catch Up" with something, whatever that was, so I continued to drive like a wild man chasing his soul but never able to catch it.

My social life was deteriorating because when it came time for me to do something with my friends, I would just have to sit at home because of the pain and lack of energy. One more time, hindsight would tell me that this whole situation would cause me even more distress and that this was the onset of a whole new set of problems of "Traumatic Stress Disorders" that will mature later in my life.

In the following August, our squadron was ready to deploy aboard the [USS Kitty Hawk](#) in preparation to go on a West Pac Cruise so we had to perform what are called carrier quals, short for carrier qualifications. On these carrier quals, the ship would train its crew and prepare all of the equipment for sea duty and combat readiness. At the end of the Carrier Qualls, after a month back at NAS Lemoore, we were sent out to sea for a period of six months. The cruise was great! And I now wish that I would have gone to sea duty immediately after attending electronics school, toward the beginning of my enlistment instead of spending five years on shore duty, but that's another whole story.

[Thank Our Veterans](#)

But there was something wrong. While out to sea, I was getting sick very often and I was always exhausted. I would end up laying on the floor in our workshop and would go to sleep on the very cold steel deck, on a regular basis. The Chief Petty Officer would always yell at me, but there wasn't anything that I could do, the need for sleep was so strong and I always felt so bad. I finally found a place under the workbench where I could lay down and wouldn't be laying in the aisle. The Chief still yelled at me, but, at least I was out of view so my sleeping problem wasn't so obvious.

Six months later our ship returned to the United States home port and our squadron, VA-192, returned to NAS Lemoore. I found a house to live in, in the country, at 16071 W. Grangeville Avenue. I couldn't keep the grass cut, I couldn't unpack my boxes, I couldn't even make my bed. I would go to work and then come back home and go to bed. I never felt good at all. One night, I remember that a cat got stuck in the bug zapper behind the house, and I felt so bad and was so weak that I couldn't get up to help him. When he started to move, I would hear a bunch of sparks and then I would hear the cat screaming in agony. This screaming cycle continued all night and there was nothing that I could do because I couldn't obtain enough strength to get out of bed. I was so weak, that I may have not even had enough strength to get up if the house was on fire.

I knew that I couldn't stay in the Navy even though they gave me some excellent opportunities for going back to school and working on the new, [F-18 Hornets](#), so I got out of the Navy and moved to Sacramento. I applied for a job at Patterson Aircraft Company and started working there within a week of application as an Avionics Technician. It was a fantastic job! Here I got to work on some real nice Cessna, twin engine, corporate aircraft

and we had a fantastic work crew also. Then it started, I was always weak and always feeling cold. I started missing work at a very regular rate. Knowing that there was something wrong, more than just being sick, I decided to go to the company doctor. He looked at me for about fifteen seconds then said, "You have the flu, take these pills and come back in two weeks." I took the pills that he gave me but, they didn't do anything good. I went back to the doctor, time and time again, and he gave me the same, fifteen second exam and then he would hand me more drugs. It turned out that the drugs were also causing me to become very ill and caused me to miss a lot of work. I was sick of this doctors fifteen second exam procedure so I found another doctor. This new doctor did the same thing too! So I went from doctor to doctor, all with the same story, a fifteen second exam and they would give me drugs that many times caused me to have some very terrible side effect reactions.

My job at [Patterson Aircraft](#) was as an Avionics Technician where I would repair and re-calibrate aircraft instruments, radios, and other navigation equipment as well as autopilot systems used aboard the aircraft. As I said before, it was a fantastic job that allowed me to work very independently in the shop, hangar or on the flight line at my discretion. One day I was working on a Cessna 310, twin engine, executive aircraft. I was feeling



quite well and am always energetic and eager to do a good job. When I crawled under the instrument panel I started feeling dizzy and I could tell something was wrong. I climbed out of the airplane and started walking toward the Avionics Shop. I soon noticed that my energy level was going downhill real fast. All I could think of doing was to lay down somewhere. I also thought that I can't get sick at work or it can interfere with the operations of the business, so I had to find somewhere to lay down real soon.

I walked into the Avionics Shop and noticed that everyone, including my boss was gone. I then wrote a note and left it on my boss' desk saying, "Lew, I'm not feeling well and had to go home." I next walked to my truck in the parking lot and started the engine. I drove out of the airport then, because I was feeling so bad and I knew that it was very dangerous for me to drive home in the traffic of South Sacramento, I turned to the west and continued on to a nearby park. I got out of the truck and immediately had to lay down on the ground. I was very sick and I was also in very much pain over every inch of my body, yet I didn't feel the pain in any specific spot. I was extremely weak and could no longer get up or even roll over. I laid flat on my back in the grass of the park near my truck and couldn't do anything about what was about to happen.

Two black guys wearing earrings walked up, then started looking at me and then at the open door of my truck. They then looked at each other, nodding their heads in some kind of mutual understanding. After looking back and forth, at each other, several

times, they walked up to me and, in a squeaky voice, asked me if I had the time. They next walked over to the open door of my truck, and looked into the cab and noticed the keys were still in the ignition.

I thought I was going to get my truck stolen, and I couldn't do anything about it except remember what they looked like and, hopefully, file a report with the police. I was so weak that I didn't know if I was going to live much longer, I couldn't even hold my head up. The two guys looked at me again, then at each other, then left me and the truck alone.

I laid there in the grass for a couple more hours. It was getting kind of cool and I started getting real bad chills. I started feeling like I had a little energy and the extreme weakness subsided somewhat. I realized that the next thing that I had to do was to get out of the cold and go home where I could go to sleep. I got back into my truck, drove home, and slept for the rest of the day. I later contacted my boss and then the doctor. It was about a month before the doctor could see me so I stayed home from work for the entire period. I was feeling much better after laying down for a whole month. I visited the doctor, then he asked me what was wrong. He then took a blood and urine sample. His verbal investigation into my health problems took about fifteen seconds. At a later visit we found that his test showed that, maybe, I had Hypothyroidism or something, then again I was given more drugs.

This exact same injury sequence happened three more times while I was working at Patterson Aircraft all with the same, extreme, results. Many years later, I am finding out that the big problem was torn diaphragm that I received because my fall while I was in the Navy that was being aggravated by my work at Patterson Aircraft. And over this four year period, because of the haste in the doctors diagnosis, the doctors were calling it everything else. One other thing that I would like to add is that every time I paid our company doctor with cash, he would never enter my visit in the medical records so he wouldn't have to pay tax on this income

The next paragraph tells about how my real health problems were found.

Doctor Ferrigno was the only doctor that really went after the problem. He asked me questions like Sherlock Holmes would ask when he was doing a real investigation. Why is it that most other doctors take only 15 seconds to complete their exam and are not interested in hearing what you have to say. I am telling you the truth, you are better off going to a psychic, they will spend more time looking for the problem and won't prescribe drugs for problems that you don't have.

After having these continuous problems for a period of about four years, one day, my friend, Cathy Harper, called me from Memphis. Cathy was a nurse and also one of the nicer people that I have ever met in my life. When I told her what my problem was, and how the doctors were just pushing pills at me without even trying to find out what my health problems were, she told me to see a specialist, the general practitioners are all quacks, she exclaimed. I next looked in the phone book and found a doctor named Dr. Ferrigno located in Citrus Heights, California.

After making an appointment and making my first visit, Doctor Ferrigno sat me down and asked me questions for about one half of an hour straight. He didn't give me that fifteen second routine, like the other doctors did, and he also didn't cram drugs into my system like the other doctors did also. He asked questions like, "Where does it hurt, what happens when

you do this, what happens when you do that, or what happens when you eat this." He did a exhaustive investigation into what my problems may be just like Sherlock Holmes would do when he was looking for a murderer. After he was through with the question and answer period, he said that he wasn't going to exam me. He next said not to eat anything after ten o'clock tonight, and for me to come back the next morning at eight o'clock for some test.

The next morning I went to the San Juan Medical Center in Citrus Heights and went through several test which included a barium swallow that allowed the doctors to see the action of my esophagus in a real time photographic manner. After the exam, Doctor Ferrigno then told me that I had a hiatal hernia, and it was bleeding, which was the cause of my chills and extreme weakness.

This is proof that the first time that a doctor, really, tried to find out what the problem was, he would find it. For four very long years, I was being treated for everything but a hernia, yet the doctors would, continuously, only give me a fifteen second exam. The difference was that Dr. Ferrigno asked me that in depth series of questions as any investigator would do while trying to find the truth. In other words, almost every doctor that I have ever gone to in the past twenty five years, didn't give a hoot about my health and well-being, they were just interest in getting my money and repeat business to pad their pockets. I'm very sorry if I sound bitter about this, but the truth is the truth.

Doctor Ferrigno gave me Gaviscon and Tagamet to help fight the problem. I had to quit my job at Patterson Aircraft and spend the next several months just laying down until I started feeling good enough to go and look for a job. During this time I was going broke. I didn't have any money, and I also didn't have any insurance. Still being in considerable pain, as a last chance effort, I contacted the VA Outpatient Clinic in Sacramento. I needed medical help, and just basically, some food to eat because my cupboards were empty and so were my pockets. The VA councilor gave me two bags of food and set up an appointment for a doctors visit thirty five days later.

After thirty five more days of laying down, I was feeling a lot better. But now, I was having one of the new symptoms which was a great difficulty getting food to go past the entry point of where my esophagus ends, and my stomach begins. Very often food would stick in the bottom of my esophagus and getting it unstuck put me through a lengthy and painful ordeal of sticking my finger down my throat and inducing vomiting, then drinking water, then again inducing vomiting repeatedly until the stuck particle of food would dislodge and free the opening. Of course, after thirty five days of rest, anyone would feel much better, but during the bad parts of that time I couldn't do anything but lay down and survive hoping that I could make it to the next day. I was always very weak and had to keep the heat in my house up extra high to prevent the continuous aggravating chills. I had solid black stools indicating there was blood in my upper digestive system and I had to urinate very frequently, usually having to get up five times per night.

By the time the doctor at the VA Outpatient examined me, again, I was feeling much better and my stools had already returned to normal. I told him about the stools and he asked me

if I was taking any vitamins. I told him I was and recently have added iron to my daily supplements. Instantly, in his eyes, I was a liar, and the black stools of a month prior, were due to the fact I was taking iron and my telling him that I just recently started taking the iron tablets made no difference. The feeling that I had from this doctor was that I was just someone trying to take advantage of a free income that a VA medical retirement could provide. But the truth is that I had the black stools long before I took any iron tablets, I took the iron to reduce the anemic condition caused by my continuous internal bleeding. As for the results of the his following test, the doctor said that he didn't find any problem with the restriction and there was no need for further medical treatment. Here's another point that prevents a doctor from finding the truth, whenever I try to go see a doctor, it takes three weeks to a month before I can get into his office for an exam. When you're sick, you're sick and you need to see a doctor, now, if he's ever going to find the problem, not a month later.

I still had severe eating problems and they became much worse with every time that I had a blockage that took more than a couple of minutes to clear. I would often eat out at a Denny's or a similar restaurant several times a week. Because of my severe eating disorders, it took me about an hour to eat a hamburger. So, when I went out to eat, it was very common for the manager of the restaurant to come out and ask if there was something wrong with the food. Of course, it wasn't the food, it was my severe eating disorders, but I sure got to meet a lot of managers this way.

After several months of being unable to work, I finally got a job at the Sacramento Army Depot. Here I started working as a Journeyman Electronics Technician working on IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) systems. The job required that I sit up on a bench stool and perform electronics repair, alignment and calibration of these systems. The problem is that the sitting in the forward position is the one position that causes me to hurt very badly. After several months of work I again started having frequent and long periods of time off of work.

As time went on I transferred to another position at the Army Depot now working as an Automated Test Programmer. With this job I was required to design, both, the software and hardware required to automatically test, highly complex, electronic weapons systems. This job also required that I sit at a desk in a forward position. I initially had problems putting the sitting forward position and my illness together due to the fact that it took several days to a couple of weeks of sitting forward to cause the illness to appear, plus the pain from the abdominal problems manifested more as extreme weakness and a nervous type of pain in my legs, while the pain in my abdomen was minor in comparison. My legs would ache and ache in a painful manner very similar to when you would have the flu and irritable leg syndrome. Subsequent visits to the doctors again resulted in them just giving me drugs for influenza.

Again, I was going into long periods of illness. Just like when I started working at Patco, I would use all of my sick leave, all of my annual leave and then, in addition, thirty days a year of leave without pay, just because I was sick. Things were getting real bad. I couldn't

get any solid food to go down into my stomach without getting stuck so I started living on Tin Roof Sundays, which turned out to be my favorite ice cream. I couldn't stand it any longer. Repeated visits to the doctor resulted in a diagnosis of the flu, which I knew wasn't the problem. Because of this I found another doctor and told him that I needed some work done on my hernia. I knew that the severe restriction had a lot to do with my ultimate condition. Dr. Black immediately set a date for some test and very soon, after that, I was laying flat on my back on an operating table. Dr. Black assisted in the surgery along with Dr. Opsal. Dr. Black was around ninety years old and it was very amusing to see him, at his age, standing there, looking at me while wearing his surgical mask.

After the surgery Dr. Opsal stated that he could easily admit four fingers through the tear in my diaphragm and that people are usually suffering so badly that they need the surgery when he could barely get his little finger through the anomaly. I asked him why he didn't sew the tear up and he quickly replied, "Sew what up, there's nothing to sew up, the muscles have atrophied so much that there was nothing left." So there was nothing more to do. It was obvious by the way that the muscles were atrophied, that the injury actually happened a long time before the surgery.

Within a month after the surgery, I felt really good. In fact, I felt great! This lasted for about another month before the problems started coming back. I would again start to get food stuck very often, almost with every meal. My lunch period at the Army Depot became longer and longer as these food sticking problems got worse. Many times I would go out back behind the building where I worked, into an equipment storage area, and stick my finger down my throat for an hour, continuously, trying to get the food dislodged. As I mentioned before this procedure was very painful when I got the food stuck and even more painful to get it out. I would have to vomit, drink water, vomit, drink water and vomit again. I know it sounds gross but that's the way it was. When the food finally got dislodged, I would have to lay down on the ground for a half hour or more, before I had enough strength to walk back to work.

The problems got worse and worse until, Jim Larson, my boss, would have another employee drive me to the emergency room at the hospital. Each trip became more painful and dislodging the food was nearly impossible. Finally, one day, Jim Larson walked up to my desk, handed me a piece of paper and said, "Sign this, you're retired." I signed the paper and went home. The sickness never went away but there was a considerable relief to my system by not having to sit forward all the time and not having to deal with the stress of the possibility of being fired after missing so much work on a regular basis.

Talking about the stress. All of these years following my fall were filled with tremendous stress. Returning to work, with full duty, meaning that there were no restrictions on my duties at work, after just two days from falling two hundred feet was a total dereliction of duty on the doctors part. At that time immediately after the accident in 1977, I returned to work while I was pumped up on strong drugs. I was in total pain, unable to walk properly. My head was bandaged with stitches and a concussion and loss of memory. I had a broken

back. My heels were crushed. I had severe internal injuries, I couldn't even remember who my previous supervisor was and I had this tremendous feeling that I had to catch up with time. All of this turned into a huge, severe, stress problem. It didn't quit there. Because of this I couldn't reenlist in the Navy, even though I had a set of tremendous orders where I could go back to school for two more years and then be an instructor on the new F-18 Hornet electronics systems.

My life was changed forever, however, the stress continued. The same problem existed at Patterson Aircraft, I missed too much work and I was continuously ill and continuously felt like I was freezing and, because of my poor sick leave record, I knew that I could be fired at any minute. The doctors all said that I had the flu and I knew anyone with the flu for several years must really have something else drastically wrong. After leaving Patterson Aircraft and working for the Army Depot, again I was placed in a super stressful situation because of the fact that I was missing too much work due to illness.

The division chief would take me into the office and tell me how I was making him look so bad even though I was ahead of schedule on my projects and under budget. But that didn't make any difference because he was rated on his workers sick leave usage and not their performance. Also, if you think about it, I just worked about eleven years without a real vacation. I used all of my sick leave, annual leave and thirty days a year on leave without pay, just because I was sick. That's not a vacation, believe me.

However, This is where it really gets good. After I signed the retirement papers, I thought that things were going to be better. Now, I could concentrate on getting healthy and start putting my life and health back together.

One month after I received my retirement papers and ID card went by, and I didn't receive a pay check. I called the CSRS (Civil Service Retirement System) office and asked them what happened to my check. They told me that they had a lot of paperwork and I would receive my payment the next month. The next month came to an end and there was still, no pay check. I again called them and they repeated that they had a paperwork backlog and further told me that I would be paid the next month. A third month went by and I still had no pay check. I was already strapped for money with a mortgage, extreme doctor bills, depression spending, and so on, so three months without a pay check, left me looking for other sources of money.

I had a good credit rating so I borrowed the money that I needed to live on and to pay for the continuous streams of doctor bills that had already accumulated. As time went on, month after month the story was the same for a total of nine months. Finally I told the guy at the CSRS that I have no other resources for money and I would be unable to make the payments for my mortgage if I didn't receive the back pay checks. The CSRS finally sent me a check for only six hundred some odd dollars, calling it special pay. Special pay! My mortgage was more than seven hundred dollars a month and, tell me, what happened to the back pay from the time that I was put out and onto retirement?

One thing that must be remembered is that I had to, by Army regulation, make payments to this retirement system which added up to a sum total of over ten thousand dollars. Where

was that money? How come the retirement system ensures that you have to go bankrupt, loose your house, loose your car and everything else that comes with this non payment of retirement? Do you call this stress? You bet!

It later turned out that the Army Depot didn't have the authorization to grant me retirement. They could submit the paperwork and when the papers were approved, then lay me off and allow the CSRS to make the remaining payments. They didn't have authorization to stop my pay and, actually, they still owe me my full wage from the time that they put me out of work to the time that the CSRS retirement was approved. I have calculated this out and it is in the neighborhood of twenty-seven-thousand dollars and now, with about seventeen years of interest, it's a lot more than that.

Never the less, as you can see, I racked up a tremendous amount of bills. I had to put up with months of bill collectors calling me all day and all night too, I had to live under tremendous stress and was still very, very ill on top of all this. I didn't know where my next dollar was going to come from or how I was going to pay for anything. I called my real estate man and told him my situation. My house was worth a hundred and ten thousand dollars and I was forced to sell it for less than seventy thousand. I had to move immediately so I had to sell all of my expensive furniture for pennies on the dollar. I sold my totally restored sports car for nothing, my truck went for way under market value, I sold my guns, motorcycles, tools and everything I could get my hands on, at highly reduced prices, just to be able to live without becoming a homeless citizen.

All I had left was my van and what was in it. I hurt so bad that I thought I was going to die, and that the time appeared to be coming soon. I loaded the van with what I had left, and my dog and I went to the forest near Mt. Shasta where I figured that I would live until I finally died in the woods. After a couple of weeks on the road and away from all the previous bill collecting and financial stress, I started feeling better. The area of Mt. Shasta didn't have the heavy allergies. This allergy problem was another complication that developed in the Sacramento area caused by living in such a stressful environment of my predicament and my ever worsening health

I next started to drive around the country not knowing where I would live. I drove across Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming and all the way to Illinois to visit my parents, then drove to Kentucky still looking for a place I could call home. I stopped at a restroom in Kentucky and the writing on the walls, instead of being filthy like what I found it to be like in California, said, "God Loves and Jesus Saves." This is where I called home.

Using the lessons that I learned from several of the No Down Payment courses that I took, I bought a house on Kentucky Lake with no money down, no credit, no job and with just a contract on deed. These no down payment courses really work if you do exactly what the instructor tells you to do! I moved into the house letting the sellers and my real estate agent know the entire situation making sure that there was nothing for me to hide.

After moving into this house, this is the point where I had to file bankruptcy for the money

that I borrowed over the previous years. I lived in this house for two years and because of my bad health, I had to sell this house too. But, if I had the back pay from the nine months when I was initially put on retirement to the time of my first check I could have purchased this house and still lived in it today. But to this day, I never received a single cent of back pay from the government retirement insurance in which I paid so much money.

Unfortunately this house in Kentucky sold too quickly. My real estate agent told me that I was asking so much for it that no buyers would be interested, so I figured that I would have maybe up to six months before I had to move. The house was sold in just two weeks after placing an ad in a Chicago paper and I was given thirty days to move. I really wasn't ready and didn't have any place where I planned to move. That's how I ended up back in Bushnell living with my parents. I moved to my parents house and stayed in a temporary quarters attached to the back of the garage and I've ended up living there for the last fifteen years.

I have always enjoyed some good hard work but after my falling off the cliff experience, because of some deep nervous stress, I just couldn't stop working. Another pressure on me was that the Civil Service Retirement System would send notices stating that if I didn't fill out their yearly earnings statement that I would be taken off of retirement and that I would have a very difficult time getting back onto retirement. This doesn't seem like too much of a threat but when I was in a daily struggle with pain combined with severe eating disorders, any threat to my meager income caused me great stress.

My life was filled with continuous ups and downs. One minute I'm feeling great and all that I would have to do is to slip on the ice, and not fall down, walk too fast or even walk while wearing dress shoes which would cause jarring, without the soft soles found in tennis shoes, and I'm in pain again. Slipping without falling puts a lot of stress on the abdominal muscles and tears the tissues causing bleeding and weakness. Walking too fast, and by fast I mean in a normal gait, does much the same thing but adds the jarring action which causes the bleeding. Walking with dress shoes caused a higher "G" force to be applied in the jarring action which would cause the bleeding problems too. This list can go on and on because just about anything would cause injury to my esophagus and I would find new ways to hurt myself very often without even trying.

I started going to Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago to have some professionals look at my stomach to see if there is anything that they could do. They gave me an Upper GI, an Endoscopy, and an esophageal dilation which helped a little for a while. The doctor kept me coming, it seemed like, every two weeks. Then after about eight or ten times of these dilations, I was eating better but I still had very much difficulty getting the food to pass into my stomach.

After having this eating problem reduced I started going to the psychiatrist, at Northwestern Memorial Hospital to help reduce the stress and severe depression. He gave me Prozac which worked great for the depression but didn't really reduce any stress. Even though the stress was coming from many areas, the pain that persisted in my stomach was causing the lions share of the problems and I knew that, the stomach was the area I had to concentrate

on if I ever was going to become healthy again..

I still had a severe problem with lethargy and also chronic fatigue in general. I have always considered myself a chair seeking missile because when I see a chair, that's where I was going to sit, so I would jump from chair to chair. The glands in my neck were severely swollen, I had a continuous sore throat, my tongue was heavily coated and I would always have the chills but no fever. After seeing my local doctor with the proverbial fifteen second exams again and no results, I again went to the Northwestern Memorial Hospital and this time I visited a tropical disease specialist. He took a stool and urine sample, a blood sample and my temperature, then told me to come back the next week. So, I returned to Chicago for my second visit and the doctor told me that he couldn't find anything wrong. But why didn't he ever look down my throat or feel the glands in my neck, it's because he gave me one of those fifteen second exams too! He never sat me down and asked me about any other symptoms that I may be having in any attempt to diagnose the problem. If he couldn't find the problem in the samples he took, should he just throw his hands in the air and say that he couldn't find



anything and just let it hang there?

No way! The proper next step would be to ask me more questions, look at my throat, or just investigate for other things that may be causing the chronic problems. He's the person that was supposedly trained to do this kind of work.

After this period of unsuccessful exams, I spent a lot of time laying down or doing exactly what I'm doing now, my feet on the desk and the keyboard in my lap with the chair in its full back position. This position

was the least physical stress on my stomach and this is the way that I had to sit, mostly, over the last twenty five years.

After a long period of rest with my feet up, about one year, I started feeling much better and I decided to take a course at WIU, Western Illinois University. I took a single class of AutoCAD for one semester. The regular schedule, the teachers and the other students were all a refreshing part of my life. It was great, so the next semester I started going to school full time in the Industrial Technology Department. This turned out to be too much for me. By the end of the semester I was too sick to come to class. My AutoCAD instructor allowed me to do my work at home, on an older version of the program, and send it to him in the mail. The other instructors let me take an incomplete and allowed me to complete the work and turn it in to them during the next semesters classes.

[Read this story about Jeff Dyrek from the Western Courier, Western Illinois University Newspaper.](#)

I was having a lot of problem carrying my class books. I started hurting so bad that anything more than just a spiral notebook was too much for me to carry. I rented an apartment several blocks from the school and had to walk very slowly to my classes. To reduce the pain, I had to walk slumped over while moving my upper body very little. Day by day the walks and the classes became more and more difficult. I was in a tremendous amount of daily pain. My body hurt so long that many times I would just sit in my apartment and cry with no ability to stop. On an average, I would have to get up five times a night to use the restroom, and because of the stomach pain, I would have to get up about three times a night to take antacids. The head of my bed had to be raised up six inches, I couldn't eat any spicy foods, I had to take antacids all day and then again all night and just life in general, consisted of spotty sleep, improperly spaced meals, and long periods of intense pain. The doctor gave me drugs like Tagamet, and Prilosec, but neither made any effect. He also had me on pain pills and muscle relaxers which did help but left me feeling drunk and dizzy, yet had no real effect on the stomach problem.

My pain was, finally, just too much and I had to quit going to school. The painful effects of going to school still persisted for more than six months and there were a couple of times where I was sure that when I went to sleep that I would never wake up again, this was a welcome idea. It just didn't matter if died in the night because the pain was so intense for so long and I didn't see any better future.

As it did many times before, eventually I started feeling better. I was still having a lot of pain and my sleep patterns, with all the getting up for previously mentioned reasons, never changed. I'm a very motivated type of person and my mind never slows down, so I had to do something. Since I've worked with Aviation, Electronics and Computers all of my life I decided that I still had to keep myself in those fields of work in some way, while still working around the fact that I had to keep my feet up and my body as horizontal as possible. After much thought I decided to learn how to make a web site. I had all kinds of photos from my Navy days, so I started scanning photos and building a web site on my home computer. I bought a number of computer magazines. After a long period of intense study I purchased a web site and called it YellowAirplane.com. My friends complained that since I still had access to the computers at WIU that I should have used their computer space and saved myself some money. Inasmuch as I wanted to save the money, I have always had this, sort of, external drive that always pulled me in the right direction and kept me on course regardless what others wanted me to do. So this is how YellowAirplane.com got started.

I laid down in my basement apartment and worked for days and months on end. I didn't do anything else but work on the web site and sleep. I had to listen to comments like, "You're the kind of person that works super hard and never gets anything done," or "You're just dreaming lofty thoughts that will never go anywhere." But, this are the negative comments that every entrepreneur must endure before they become a success and I knew it. So, without an end, I endured the criticism and bit my lip every time I wanted to lash back and say something in return.

Time has gone on and my personal health had gotten better but I still had severe limitations.

When I rode the lawnmower to cut my mom's grass, I would have to lay down for about a week afterwards, due to the jarring, before I was feeling better and it was time to cut the grass again. When I sat up to pay my bills, or build a database, or even write Christmas cards, I would be again placed in the wrong physical position and end up in a lot of pain that persisted for long periods after the work was done.

Life was a wreck. I lived in a shack, I couldn't do very much, if I went out with my friends, I would appear normal for several hours then I would become the party pooper and had to leave because of the pain. I was always severely depressed.

[Read this story Rally at the North Pole from BalloonLife.com](#)

One day in 1999 a man wrote me a letter wanting to advertise his North Pole expeditions on my web site. I thought to myself, I would love to go to the North Pole myself. I asked him if I could have the rights for resale of his expeditions for my web site and he agreed to my deal. I would receive a commission for every person that I would send. I worked real hard building web pages and learning about North Pole expeditions. It was fantastic to be able to be part of a real expedition. In 2001 I sent my first man, Mr. Ken Bronstein, to the North Pole.

After the expedition returned, I learned about everything that happened through the stories that I heard. I also found out that a man in a wheel chair went to the North Pole with this expedition too. I looked at expedition videos over and over and noticed, where ever they went, the expedition members were either laying on a floor of a cargo plane or stretched out in a reclining commercial airline seat.

It was like a force beyond my control. I looked at North Pole pictures so long and after being depressed for so long, there was like no choice, I had to go. I didn't have any money and the trip was very expensive, but the force was with me and it was driving me. I worked harder than ever trying to find the money. I looked for sponsors and did get a few. I begged the vice president of GE Adventures to give a discount, so he let me go at his cost. I put my motorcycle up for sale, in the middle of winter, and it instantly sold for a thousand dollars. I still had to borrow a considerable amount of money and after all that, I was still three hundred dollars short. I told the companies vice president and since I knew so much about the trip, he hired me as a guide for three hundred dollars. Now I had enough to go on the trip. But I had no spending money. Suddenly, because of the news release letters that I sent, I had three people sign up for the trip and now it was one hundred percent sure that I was going.



I left from Chicago's O'Hare Airport. I was hurting real bad in my stomach and was in terrible shape in general from not being able to do any exercise for so many years. On top of that I caught the flu just days before our departure. But, none of that mattered. As I said, the force was with me and I had no control over going on this trip.

I met the expedition group in Moscow and we were taken to the Hotel Russiya directly across from Red Square. I've never seen such beautiful architecture. When we ate breakfast, we could see St. Basils Cathedral and the Kremlin Wall right outside the window.

We left Moscow and flew to Norilsk then Khatanga where we were stranded in some pretty nasty winter storms and tremendously cold temperatures. It was great. On the second night in Khatanga we had a fantastic party on the third floor of the Khatanga hotel. One thing that the Russian's are good for is pouring a lot of Vodka down our throats. The doctors told me not to drink, but from the first moment we stepped in Moscow someone was giving us drinks with our dinners.

There was one thing that really scared me about going to the banquets and dinners on this trip and that was that I would get food stuck and I wouldn't be able to find a private place to dislodge the particles in the painful manner that it required. But, to my astonishment, I was having less and less problems getting the food to go down. I thought that it may be due to the stress relieving environment of traveling and having a guide take care of all our needs.

Getting back to the big party in the third floor of the Khatanga Hotel. We laughed for about seven hours straight before everyone finally went to bed. The next morning I was moving real slow. It took me four hours to get my first boot on and another hour to get the second boot on. I then went outside and decided to walk around the town and look around. I started walking in a normal speed, too fast for me, and it happened again, I started bleeding real badly inside. I

could barely make it back to the hotel. I then laid down and went to sleep for two days. The expedition guide called the doctor in Florida and talked for a long time. They went to the local pharmacy and gave me some drugs to reduce acid production. I really needed everyone to leave me alone so I could sleep. I've been through this many times before. Because of this problem I told the expedition leader that I wasn't able to go to the pole and I would just lay there in the hotel. If it wasn't for the bad storms moving through the area, delaying our departure, I would never have made it to the pole.

[Click Here to read about the 2002 North Pole Expedition.](#)

In two days I could feel the bad bleeding stop, but I still had jet black stools for another four



days. Finally even those stopped and I was feeling better. The weather cleared and we were off to an island called Srednij deep in the Arctic Ocean. We unloaded our equipment onto a truck and took to the cabin on the island. I helped in the assembly line that moved boxes from the truck into the cabin. After loading for about ten boxes, I again started having a lot of pain and began to bleed internally.

The next morning we left Srednij and headed for Camp Borneo, the base that our group makes just sixty miles from the pole. As it was with a couple of other people, I didn't feel well at all. We next boarded the Russian Mi-8 helicopter and headed for the exact Geographic North Pole. We drank Champaign and took our pictures, dropped our skydivers then headed back home.

Two days later we were back in Khatanga and stuck in another storm. I stayed there for another week and met a lot of the local people including a beautiful Russian girl who was my best friend and still is to this very day. The storm let up and we boarded a Russian, four engine, turboprop, passenger aircraft and headed for Moscow. It turns out that I sat in the only row of seats in the whole airplane that wouldn't lean back and on top of that, the seats were in the exact worst position that caused me the most pain.

There were about two hundred people on the plane and the plane was severely overloaded.

When you factored all of the equipment and dogs, we were packed in there like sardines. When I looked around I realized that no one was in a good mood and everyone was uncomfortable. Many of the men there were on the polar ice cap for more than two months. Their faces were covered with frost bite and their feet were worked so hard that they were covered with deep blue bruises. In lieu of this, I just couldn't go up to someone and ask them to move so I could be more comfortable.



I ended up just having to sit in the position that hurt me the worst. I tried stuffing coats behind me to change the angle but it didn't work very well. There was nothing I could do. Then, suddenly, after about ten hours in the air the severe pain just started going away. It turns out that I had an adhesion that broke loose and now I was able to join the human race and be normal enough to sit up. As for the swallowing problem, it turns out that I had an infection in my esophagus and all the whiskey that the Russians drowned me with, killed, or at least tremendously reduced the infection to a point that I can, almost, eat normally.

This is why I believe that God sent me to the North Pole. He was the driving force that was giving me the uncontrollable urges to join the expedition. This is the truth. After twenty five

years, seventeen or eighteen operations and a hundred thousand dollars spent on doctors, not counting what my insurance paid, the doctors could do nothing but take my money. But, God sent me to the North Pole and now, I'm mostly, healed.

I still have a minor pain in my abdomen that feels like it might be the staples rubbing against my diaphragm, the tear in my diaphragm will never be healed, and my knee and broken back will never be healed again. But, other than that, I never felt better in twenty five years. At the time of this writing, February, 6th 2003, I have been ill with a flu type symptom for four weeks and it has never gone away. I get this every year and it's like a low level virus or something. But at least, I can eat, and I can walk, and I can sit up and pay my bills without tremendous amounts of pain.

But the previous text was only, really, discussing the problems with my stomach, there were many more things going on than this. My back was also damaged very badly. As previously stated, I had lump in my back, as the result of a broken L1 vertebra. It's impossible to conceive that I had a compression fracture of the L1 and didn't have any problems with any other part of my back. My height before the accident was five foot ten inches, after the fall, I was only five foot eight inches, a loss of two inches. The compression of the vertebra was not significant enough to cause this height difference. I had bad back pains for many years resulting from this accident. When I was on the USS Kitty Hawk, just months after the accident, I visited the ships doctor and he prescribed a chair with a high back instead of the stools that were common in the work shops. This helped a bit but didn't fix the problem. After I got out of the Navy I talked to several doctors about my back pain. They all recommended surgery and fusion of the affected areas. There were three places that my back hurt. In the middle of the upper spine, in the L1, which had the compression fracture, and lower down somewhere between the L1 and my tail bone. I absolutely didn't want to have my back fused, so I just lived with the pain and took pain pills and muscle relaxers to reduce the continuous agony.

While I was working at Patterson Aircraft, I started night school on a half time basis in an attempt to complete my college education. One of my lab partners was Dirk Mullikin who now lives in the Salt Lake City area. I was always complaining about a pain in my back and neck, and my friend Dirk kept telling me to go and see a Chiropractor. I didn't believe in Chiropractic medicine, mainly due to the fact that most MD's consider this type of treatment quackery.

Dirk's persistence caused me to seek out his Chiropractor, Dr. Wendal Johnson, mostly to just shut Dirk up and to keep him from bugging me about it. Dr. Johnson took a full torso X-Ray of my



a

back, then allowed me to view a number of training films about Chiropractic Medicine. After a few days I made my second visit to Dr. Johnson. He showed me the large X-Rays and I noticed that he had every part of my back charted out with lines that showed the exact angle that its different parts were out of alignment. This was very impressive because the three points of vertebral misalignment were the exact three points where I was experiencing the pain. My back was twisted like a pretzel just like a person would imagine it would be after an accident of the type that I had.

It took a couple of years of regular treatment, with Dr. Johnson, before my back was straight again and the pain was gone. However, the L1 compression fracture can never be fixed. There are still two reasons that cause pain in this point. These are, One: when I don't get enough exercise, and Two: when I lift too much, such as when I loaded a stack of concrete blocks, about fifteen, forty pound, blocks in total. When my back hurts, now, from lack of exercise, it is an intense burning sensation right in my spinal column. Lifting the blocks, and other heavier work of this order, causes a little more dramatic pain that is of the intensity level that prevents me from doing anything but laying on my stomach or directly back for a couple of weeks at a time as I reported to Dr. Kerr in Macomb, Illinois.

All of this time, while I was having all of my abdominal problems, I was also having severe back pain that increased my overall problems even more.

About my Crushed heels. During the fall I landed on my feet, initially. This is what jammed my spine in the first place. The Navy doctor said the problem with my heels was that the connective tissue between the bone and the soft tissue was damaged. The result of this was that I had to walk tip toe from June of 1977, almost to the end of the cruise in April of 1978.

Another problem was damage to my right elbow: I also had a lot of pain in my right elbow, right where the funny bone is located. This pain went away rather quickly but there was also another problem. When I would sleep with my right hand next to my head, my elbow would stiffen up very much. It would stiffen to a point that I was unable to straighten my arm up properly until I worked it for a few minutes. I remember sleeping on the Kitty Hawk when, suddenly, the General Quarters alarm went off. I was in the third bunk and I was sound asleep with my hand next to my cheek. I tried to get out of bed but I couldn't straighten my arm enough to grab a hold on the rail to lower myself down from the upper bunk. The alarm kept announcing General Quarters and that condition YOKE would be set in six minutes. My time was running out, I worked and worked on my arm trying to get to function enough for me to get out of bed. Finally it became limber enough for me to get down and make it to my shop just in time. If it wasn't for the fact that the berthing area was just around the corner from my shop, I wouldn't have made it before all the doors were locked and the six minute time limit was up.

But, this problem persisted for quite a few years afterwards and even to this day, when I rub the funny bone trigger point on my right elbow, it hurts. However when I rub on my left elbow, I can feel the pressure on the nerve but it doesn't cause pain.

Now I have secondary injuries.

One of the problems that I now have is a perforated esophagus, as one doctor told me. This

was caused by having the doctors at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, in Chicago, perform multiple and repeated dilations of my esophagus. This procedure literally tears the esophagus to increase the size. When this procedure is repeated, many times, the scar tissue builds up and creates a point where the flexibility and strength of this portion of the esophagus becomes greatly reduced. Now I have a permanent injury that is torn by a large amount of sneezing during the allergy season in the spring or fall, or coughing when I catch a cold, or even excessive laughing. Other things that cause this problem are jarring, falling down, walking too fast, or anything that causes a lot of torque to be put on the abdominal area like when I lift something that isn't directly in front of me.

As I mentioned before, in 1986, Dr. Opsal and Dr. Black performed abdominal surgery on me to fix my hernia, in the process, they used staples to hold parts of it together. But I believe this is a problem too. Now, when I sit up as a desk, lean back against a chair, and again sit up repeating this action many times, I have stabbing pains in two parts of my abdomen that are not in the esophagus or stomach.

There were serious secondary injuries because of my fall. I would now have times when I am feeling a lot better and I would attempt to get my body back in shape, after long periods of laying down. One day, I went to the park and there was a running course where you would run for a couple of hundred feet and then perform an exercise that was predetermined by the course. One of the exercises was a horizontal ladder that you would hang from and walk, hand over hand, until you would get to the other side. In my mind, I was in good condition and I never knew that this was going to be a problem for me. It tore my shoulder muscles which caused great pain that lasted for several years thereafter. This also happened because of different types exercises several times, since then, I have damaged each of my shoulders. Now my shoulders will never be the same.

Stress was another problem. Missing so much time from work and having the possibility of being fired continuously held over my head for so many years was no joke. This causes a lot of stress, especially when the doctors never spent enough time to try to find out what the problem really is. I even had a doctor call me a hypochondriac, yet he never spent over fifteen seconds on the actual exam. Was I going crazy and just imagining all of these problems? This was a question that continuously ran through my mind. This is stress! Having the boss yell at me because I am making him look bad due to my sick leave usage, is stress. Not having a vacation in countless years, is stress. Not being able to go on a date because I was too sick to get out of bed, is stress. Not having a normal social life due to all that time that I had to stay in bed, is stress. Having tremendous doctors bills, while not receiving my pay checks because I had to take leave without pay when my sick leave and annual leave have been used up, is stress. Losing my GI Bill because it ran out of time, because I was too sick to go to school and complete my classes, was stress. Having the doctor give me super short exams then, administering drugs for problems that didn't exist, making me extremely ill, is stress. Losing my house, my car and everything I ever worked for, because of the Government disability program that I cost me so much money and the fact that this program wouldn't give me a pay check for nine months, was stress. Having bill collectors call me day and night, playing grinding noises on the phone and making threats, was stress. I can go on, but when a person

is disabled, they have a lot of problems that add up to a tremendous stress conditions.

To sum up, after my fall, the VA told me since I was on leave and not on a duty status at the time of my accident, that my disability wasn't the VA's responsibility. I have to agree with them on this point, but when the Navy doctor put me back to work after just two days following my fall off of this 200 foot cliff, without performing a thorough exam, at this time, it did become the VA's responsibility. I am ten percent disabled through the VA and ninety percent disabled through the Civil Service when, actually, it was the VA's responsibility completely. Also, I have received tremendous financial and post traumatic stress damage from all this and due to the fact that the Civil Service Retirement System refused to pay me a cent for nine months after the Sacramento Army Depot put me on retirement, I have had an enormous increase in stress as well as a greatly increased debt. In addition, it turned out that the Sacramento Army Depot did not have the authority to grant my disability in the first place. In my mind, to make everything straight, my retirement should be completely converted to the VA, and secondly, the Sacramento Army Depot should pay me nine months of back pay at my full pay rate of GS-11 plus interest, because they didn't have the right to authorize my retirement, and thirdly, I should have my full GI Bill restored with pay for the time I spent attending Western Illinois University. These things would be the least that my government could do for me to get back into a more normal kind of lifestyle.

Jeffrey C. Dyrek. Webmaster, Disabled Vet.

