

An interesting overnight was the one at Winslow, Arizona. The trip would get in about 2100 local time and originate 0700 the following morning - making all the stops to SVC and back to PHX. Crews that were interested in eating would have to do so at a local bar. Sandwiches and pop were served there. Lots of Navajo Indians would frequent the place and arguments would flare up once in a while with the, "...we are the real Americans.. ."

It was really interesting when I had Roy Williams as copilot on these series. Roy was one of few white men that could speak Navajo. As a young lad, Roy's uncle ran the trading post in Tuba City just north of Winslow, where Roy would help out at the Post. He would be there every summer and dealing with the native Americans, picked up quite a vocabulary of the locals.

When I first went into this particular bar one night to grab a bite, Roy was with me. There was quite a commotion in the back room and I felt a little uneasy. Roy seemed like just a little quiet sort but when he got up and shouted some words - everyone and I mean everyone - stopped and paid attention! Roy scolded several of the men and they all settled down. The owner of the Bar, by the way, was a distant relative of Roy and would just chuckle. (All I learned was, "Yatta Hey!" - a Navajo greeting as in 'hello'.)

One night I came in with Mel D'Loss. We were downing our sandwiches and by now I was acquainted with the owner. He would always ask about Roy. I think he thought we were truck drivers. Soon a clip board was being passed around and we were asked to print our name. I thought for a minute and put down, "Wilbur Wright" and handed it to Mel. He looked at it with a smile and wrote, "Orville Wright". The next in line took the board, looked at it and asked, "Oh - are you two brothers?" (I almost choked on that!)

-Excerpted from Ace Avakian's article in the FARPA newsletter, Feb 2007