

ROY'S STORY (PART 1 OF 2)

By Roy Bardowell, CDDC

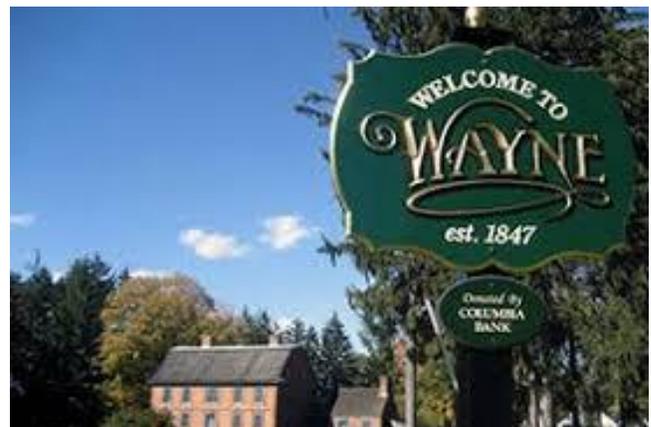
I will admit to being very clever when it comes to garage doors and how to automate them. Known as the operator GURU, this honorary title is not from my own modest conclusions, but from the hundreds of garage door servicemen I have trained over the last 3 decades. Occasionally some will ask how I got to be the utmost authority and expert on garage door motors. I wish I could say it was from years of study at Princeton University, but that is not the case. There are no college courses that can help you to learn more about garage door automation. Like many other trades and vocations, only time on the job will help you learn. The best advice from me is go on as many service calls as possible. The best short cut to gaining good experience is to travel with a seasoned expert and learn from the best. The alternative is to self-learn which is the longer road to competence.

I never lessened my competitive nature and always strive to be the best in everything I do. Being the very best person in Door Automation suit me just fine and I intend to ride this train until my last day on Earth.

Here is a little of my story: Roy was born on March 10, 1954 at Christ Hospital in Jersey City, NJ. Roy, his Mother, and Father lived in 8th floor two-bedroom apartment in North Bergen, NJ. Roy's parents; Roy Sr. and Grace were proud of their first-born boy and saw him as a miracle baby because Grace had suffered two miscarriages some years before Roy was born and they were afraid

they might not be able to have any children. Eighteen months afterwards on September 26, 1955, Grace gave birth to a girl giving Roy his first sister: Cheryl. When Roy turned two years old, Roy's parents bought a new house and moved to the suburbs: Wayne NJ.

Wayne is a small township about 8 miles south of the New York state border and was a wonderful place for kids to grow up. One of Roy's first memories was watching a back-hoe dig out the hole for the septic tank on their new property. While living in Wayne, Grace gave birth to two more children. Roy grew up in Wayne with his two sisters, Cheryl & Tammie and youngest brother, Wayne. They had an above ground pool which was used nearly every day during the summer months.



Roy's dad, Roy Sr. owned and operated a television repair business when they lived in North Bergen. Roy Jr loved going to work with

his dad. One time, Roy's dad hooked up a set of speakers to an oscilloscope. He showed Roy how to make weird alien sounds by adjusting the two output dials. This gave Roy an immediate interest in electronics. Roy spent a good part of his younger years exploring electronics and things that ran on electricity. When Roy's mother died suddenly from a heart attack, Roy's dad decided to move the business from North Bergan to Wayne to be closer to his children and home. Roy helped his father convert a part of their basement into a workshop so Roy Sr. could repair televisions. Roy also helped wire the basement so there were ample wall outlets. They also insulated the walls and added heaters to the basement. Roy loved the construction work and used the left-over wood to build a small tree house. Because Roy's Dad was a good customer of RCA, they gave him one of the first color television sets ever produced. In 1964, Roy turned 10, and had a birthday party with many of his friends. They were all amazed to see a color TV, since this was new technology.



Only 500 yards from Roy's home was an area known as the Glen. The Glen was a place where a river ran which had eroded the landscape over thousands of years to form a gorge. This gorge was simply called the Glen and was a hangout for kids of all ages who were seeking a wilderness experience. Many people were drawn to the Glen because of its unique beauty. The walls of the gorge were red shale and very pretty. Because of the

vertical angle and loose shale, it was very difficult to climb, so the only place to access the Glen was down stream where it merged with another creek. The Red shale gorge had 50-foot walls on each side of the creek and there was a walking path on each side of the creek where you could see fish, turtles, frogs, and salamanders nearly any day during the spring, summers, and fall. The source of the waterway through the Glen was Pines Lake and Knitenburg's pond. Knitenburg's pond was a very still pond that usually froze before Pines Lake and allowed Roy and family to skate on it most of the winter. Pines Lake was great for swimming, sailing, and other water sports. During colder months Pines Lake could freeze just enough to skate on, but it never froze thick enough to completely trust it for skating.

Roy loved the outdoors and hanging out in the Glen with his friends. During the summer break Roy would sometimes build a lean-to shelter from sticks, brush, and pine branches and camp out under the night sky. Roy would have done more of that, but the mosquitos would make it intolerable. The only way to camp in the Glen was with a tent that had screened windows. Thanks to the Glen, Roy learned to appreciate nature, wildlife, and the outdoors.

One of Roy's first life lessons came when he turned 9 years old and was offered a newspaper route. Every day after School the Wayne Today newspaper publisher would drop off a package of newspapers. When it was raining the papers were wrapped in plastic. Roy's route had 25 customers and the 25 newspapers were supplied with 25 plastic bags that were for each newspaper. Rolling up every newspaper and putting it in the bag, then tying it up was time consuming and most times the bag would tear leaving the paper soaking wet, so Roy decided to place each newspaper between the storm and front doors of his customer's home. During collection time many of Roy's customers thanked Roy

for putting the newspaper between the doors, which meant they didn't need to go out and get wet or cold when raining or snowing outside. Some said Roy did a better job than the previous kid, because there were times when the paper would not get delivered at all, which really aggravated the customer. Roy told his customers that will never happen with him. He was a responsible person they could depend on! Roy always felt proud to be called responsible and dependable.

The lesson Roy learned from delivering newspapers was everything can be improved on and should be improved whenever possible. Roy also learned the value of the importance of GOOD CUSTOMER SERVICE. Roy delivered the Wayne today newspaper and saved \$100.00 in the first year.

One of Roy's close neighbors and newspaper customer was Mr. Leon Hunt. Roy quickly became friends with one of Leon's sons, Donny. Roy and Donny were only a year apart and attended the same schools. Roy & Donny went on many skiing trips together, so soon Roy became good friends with all the Hunts. Leon Hunt was the founder and owner of a garage door operator manufacturer plant in Paterson, NJ, named Hunt & Martin Manufacturing. When racial riots broke out in Paterson and rioters were burning down buildings, Leon and partner Jake decided to sell the company to the Mocker's who already owned a successful wooden garage door manufacturer plant in Palisades Park, NJ. The Mocker's changed the name of the company to Automatic Doorman Manufacturing (ADM).



Leon and Jake stayed on as consultants. Due to labor shortages Leon arranged to have components brought to his home where his family would assemble important assemblies, they were short on at the factory. Jake did the same thing. Mr. Hunt asked Roy if he wanted to help out and was told he would be paid per piece for each assembly completed and Roy agreed. Roy had no idea what the things were that the Hunts assembled every evening. All Roy knew was you had to work as fast as possible to make the desired amount. Unbeknownst to Roy, this was his start into garage door automation. Between Roy and Donny, they could assemble 125 components every night that would be included in each of the 120 residential door operators that Automatic Doorman sold every day. The two boys could produce more than the actual employees at ADM, so the work was sent to Roy and Donny throughout the entire summer break. Between Roy's and Donny's work, they each received a check for \$65.00 every week. To a 10-year old boy that was like a million dollars. Roy liked the money and swore he would do it forever.

When Roy turned 11, he left the cub scouts and joined Boy Scout Troop 107. Hiking and camping became Roy's new favorite thing to do and Troop 107 did plenty of that. Every summer, Troop 107 attended the two-week jamboree at Camp Altara in Sparta, NJ. The

fee for the two weeks was \$165.00 per week and Roy always paid his own way. Roy loved the two-week camp out because he could earn up to 7 merit badges per week at Camp Altara. In two years, Roy earned 15 merit badges and was propelled to the rank of Star, then Life. After Life the next rank is Eagle Scout which Roy wanted more than anything. After 30 months in the Boy Scouts, Roy earned the required 21 merit badges to be eligible for Eagle. There were other items to complete for Eagle like create and complete a project that would benefit the local community and write an essay on God & Country. In Troop 107, 30 months to Eagle was a record. Roy liked being the best at something and loved the fame that came with being the best. The life lesson for Roy was **YOU GOT TO GO ALL IN TO BE NUMBER 1. AND IT TAKES A BIG EFFORT TO REACH YOUR GOALS.**

Roy actually earned 11 more merit badges giving him a bronze and gold palm to add to his Eagle rank. When Roy was asked to be a junior assistant scout master, he agreed and placed emphasis on the younger scouts earning merit badges. **ROY LOVED BEING A LEADER.** Even today; Roy still seeks out opportunity where he can LEAD. Roy became a mentor to the younger scouts teaching and helping them earn higher ranks. All the younger boys appreciated having a motivator to push them. This action taught Roy **ANYBODY CAN IMPROVE THEMSELVES WITH A FOCUSED EFFORT.** Even today at age 65, Roy sees every task as something to improve on. Roy however wanted more from the Boy Scouts, so Roy joined the Elite Order of the Arrow; which is an order society of American Indians that teach survival skills.

Roy learned very much about how to build a temporary shelter, and how to make snares to catch small animals. To stay engaged there were certain tasks you had to complete. One of them was to set up a personal camp from local items found in the woods without communicating or talking with anyone. Roy

could do that with his eyes closed. The hardest thing was to stalk a deer. Sometimes you had to hike for miles before even seeing a deer, but when you saw him you had to get as close as possible to him without him seeing you. It was quite a challenge which Roy loved doing. To get the award you had to touch the deer. The Indians taught Roy to walk by placing your toe down first. Walking by placing your heel down first made much more noise. During the stalking you have to stay down wind or the deer would smell you right away. It took many attempts, but one-time Roy got within 5 feet of a deer before it took off. A deer will play with you which can be very frustrating. Every time you thought you got close; the deer would bolt away then stop again. Roy's best came when he crawled on his belly, then hide behind a tree. After a while the deer would forget about you and you could crawl closer. It was definitely **A LESSON IN PATIENCE.** Even today when Roy expects a long wait, he thinks of the many times he stalked a deer. During the same time Roy completed his Red Cross emergency training which would soon come very handy.

Tragedy strikes. When Roy was 13 years old, he took some new friends to the Glen to show them his favorite fishing spot. While walking along the trail, they encountered some other boys who thought it would be fun to roll rocks down on them from above to scare Roy and his friends. Roy saw his friend Dave almost hit by a large stone and Roy told everyone to cling to the side of the gorge wall so not to get hit. Unfortunately, Roy moved too slowly and was hit directly on the head by a very large chunk of shale. The shale actually broke in pieces when it hit Roy. Roy didn't get knocked out, but immediately felt a hot liquid pouring down his face. His friend; Dave yelled out; **ROY—YOU'RE BLEEDING!** Roy began bleeding profusely from a 6-inch gash on the top and side of his head.

Roy yelled let's get out of here, so they all ran like the wind. Roy didn't want to go home

because he was afraid to get in trouble for turning his new white shirt red, so they stopped at Dave's house first. Roy was exhausted and lay down on the floor in Dave's basement, but soon a pool of blood started to form on the concrete floor and Dave went to get his mother to ask for a Band-Aid. When Dave's mother saw Roy, she began to scream. She told Roy he had to go home and then go to the hospital. When Roy got home his mother screamed, gave Roy a towel to hold on his wound, and told Roy to get in the car. Roy had previous head injuries and Grace knew exactly what to do and where to take Roy, so they headed for Chilton Memorial Hospital which was a 20-minute drive. Roy never saw his mother drive so fast before and very soon they arrived at the Emergency Room. By the time they arrived Roy was covered with blood from head to toe. Roy got out of the car and walked into the ER like there was nothing wrong. Women gasped when they saw Roy's face covered in bright red blood. Blood was dripping from Roy's nose and chin leaving a trail of red behind him. When the ER doctor saw Roy, they took him in right away. After some x-rays, they took Roy into a room where they shaved his head, then stitched up the gash the best they could. It was a difficult job because Roy's scalp was completely destroyed and torn up very bad across his entire head.

Roy's father arrived and Roy could see his father & mother talking to the doctors in the hallway. Roy's mom was crying. Roy thought "I wonder what's going on?" Later in life, Roy' asked his dad what did the doctor tell you that night in the hospital hallway. His father said" the doctors were giving us the worst-case scenario. One being, you could die, or be paralyzed for the rest of your life or survive while having many physical disabilities. I guess this is something no parent would ever want to hear about their child. After a few minutes Roy's father and the doctor came to Roy and told him he had to stay there overnight. Roy didn't want to stay. He said

stitch up the hole and I will return tomorrow. Unfortunately, Roy's injury was more severe than anyone had first assumed.

Meanwhile a police investigation was under way to locate the kids who sent down the rocks onto Roy and his friends. The second set of X-Ray results showed Roy's skull had been shattered leaving 36 sharp pieces of skull bone scattered throughout his brain, the doctor said there is no choice. Emergency surgery was needed to remove the dangerous shards of bone. One doctor said" he thought there was a piece of shale in Roy's head, but they could not be sure until they took a look inside. In the early morning hours Roy called a nurse and asked for a pillow. Roy never slept without a pillow before and he was uncomfortable without one. He told the nurse he had a terrible headache and she said, "everything will get better after the operation on your head in the morning." Roy thought...operation...surely it must be for someone else? All I need is some stitches. Before this event Roy had been struck on the head a dozen other times resulting in stitches to close the opening in his scalp. This time, Roy had no idea of the extent of his injury.

The next morning Roy was rolled downstairs to an operating room where his mother and father were waiting. Roy also met Neurosurgeon; Dr. Bernard Winkler. Dr. Winkler told Roy what they were going to do and asked him if he had any questions. Roy said no questions, but added "*I'm only 13 years old, so do a good job. I'm too young to die!*" which gave Dr. Winkler, Roy's parents, and the OR Staff a good laugh. He said" don't worry son, I'm good at this." The operation took 8 hours, but after all the bone shards and a piece of shale were removed from Roy's head. Dr. Winkler grinded down the jagged hole in Roy's skull so there were no sharp edges. After a daunting house to house search the police found the boys responsible, when a youngster fessed up and named all the kids involved, but

since they were mostly minors, no charges could be made.

After the successful operation was completed, Dr. Winkler told Roy and his parents, because Roy is still young and still growing, there have been instances when some youngsters have grown tissue over and inside a hole in the skull, which could form into hard cartilage that can act as enough protection for the brain. The plan was to wait for six months and see if anything developed. Roy prayed the tissue would grow, but after 6 months the x-rays showed insufficient tissue growth so the doctor made plans to install a Teflon coated stainless steel plate as a replacement for Roy's skull. Without any protection Roy could be killed instantly by even a tennis ball because the only thing protecting Roy's brain was the thin layer of skin. If you touched Roy's head it was as soft as a belly, which was way too risky to leave like that. There were issues to reserve an operating room that could serve for this type of operation, so Roy had to wait for 4 months before the operation. During this time Roy was very vulnerable and had to be very careful. Any bump on the head could be deadly, but Roy took extreme care and made it to the operation day.

In August 1967, Roy was admitted to St. Joseph's hospital in Paterson, NJ and Dr. Winkler installed the steel plate in Roy's head. It was cut and grinded down to be a perfect customized fit. Roy's scalp was stretched over the plate and stitched in place so there was no indication of it. Plus, Roy's thick brown hair covered the 6-inch scar. Roy didn't like the feeling of something foreign in his head. Roy said "It felt like someone was poking you on your head with a finger, but in time that passed. It took years to get completely used to it. Anyway, from that point forward Roy could do almost anything he wanted, except for rules the school board made specifically for Roy. The school's legal department saw Roy as a big liability. They would not permit Roy to return to school

without some external protection. It was suggested that Roy must wear a football helmet while in class or anywhere else on school property. Even the bus company refused to transport Roy. In those days there were no stylish helmets like today. The only helmet the school would allow was an older leather football helmet which was ugly and bothersome. Roy tried to fight it, but to no avail. Everyone was against him. Dr. Winkler told the school board that Roy was no more of a risk than any other kid. The plate was actually stronger than bone and could deflect a bullet. No one wanted to hear it. Roy's mother still had to drive Roy to and back from school every day. Kids made fun of Roy every day and soon Roy began to attend class without the helmet. When Roy was dropped off by his mother, Roy would go into the wooded area behind the school and hide the helmet in a shrub. This went on for 2-3 months before one of Roy's teachers mentioned to administration Roy no longer wore his helmet to class. His teacher wanted to know what had changed in Roy's status. Right after that Roy took his helmet and painted it blue and gold—the schools colors. After that no one ever bothered Roy, so Roy began wearing the helmet full time. The thing that upset Roy more than anything was he was prohibited from going outside for recess with his friends. The school board thought it was too risky with balls being thrown all over the school grounds. So, during the 45-minute recess or 60-minute physical education (PE) class, Roy had to report to the library to read or study. The problem with that schedule was PE was a mandatory class you had to pass or you would be left behind and not advance to 8th grade. At the end of the school year, Roy was informed he had to stay behind and attend summer school to make up for getting a Zero in PE. Roy was all for it, except the school did not offer a summer PE class. When the school board realized Roy's dilemma was completely due to the schools policies they permitted Roy to pick an alternate class which would give Roy a score

for PE. Roy picked Science which was his favorite topic. Roy excelled in summer school and because Roy already had a passing grade by mid-term, he was permitted to spend the last four weeks at home. This was huge and Roy was thankful to have the time to fish and do other joyful things, like camping and hiking with the boy scouts.

Roy finished other accomplishments during the short summer. One was he completed the 17-mile hike through Valley Forge, where General George Washington had a big win against the British in 1774. Another thing Roy completed was the 1-mile swim competition, then the 5-mile swim test. Actually, Roy completed the 1-mile swim 10 other times in the next ten years. Sometimes he did it only to encourage others to go along with him. Each swimmer had a row boat with two rescue swimmers in it just feet away, in case a boy tired and couldn't finish. Roy never attempted the 5-mile swim again, because the first time he almost had to give in at the 3 and 4-mile mark. Roy felt fortunate to have completed it once and that was enough for him. In Troop 107 Roy already had enough fame and respect, so he focused on other national goals.

Every year the Three Rivers Boy Scout council would send up to 20 select boy scouts to the Philmont Boy Scout Ranch in New Mexico where up to 50,000 scouts converged every summer. Troop 107 was part of the in North New Jersey Three Rivers Boy Scout Council. Roy wanted to go, applied, and was soon accepted. Roy was one of the chosen few and quickly paid the \$450.00 fee. Roy loved the trip which started out at LaGuardia airport in NYC, they flew to Chicago where they caught a train to Denver. Roy spent the entire time in the observation car watching the night sky change. Many times, he saw a meteor or two. He only came down to eat or use the bathroom.

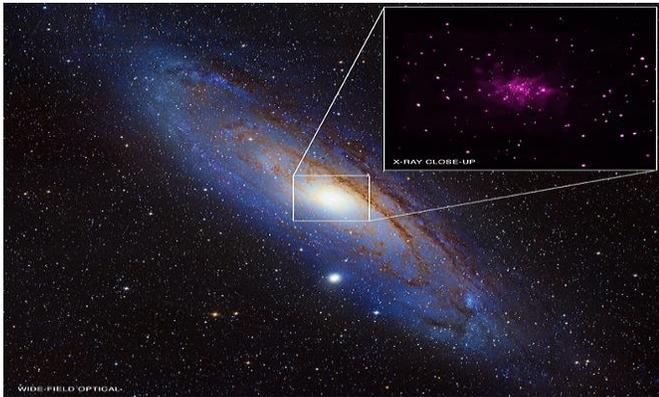
After arriving in Denver, they took a bus South on Interstate 25 stopping at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, where you could see all kinds of fighter jets. Then they went up Pikes Peak. After a short stop they continued south to Cimarron, NM. Pulling into Cimarron was a real culture shock for Roy. Cimarron is right in the center of Navaho Indian activity and seeing Indians on Horseback was new for Roy. More than once the bus had to stop to allow Indians, cattle, or sheep to cross the road. More than new, it was exciting for Roy.

The trip to Philmont was going to take Roy and his 20-person group on a 12-day, 55-mile hike through the Rocky Mountains. The emphasis is on endurance and survival skills. Roy was excited at the chance to show off his wilderness skills and couldn't wait to get started. After a day of orientation, the group was supplied with some dry foods that was supposed to provide enough substance for 12 days. They were also provided purification tablets for when they harvested water from rivers or creeks. Any other food needed would be by living off the land. There were 3 manned stations along the trek where you get help or assistance if needed. During the orientation, they were shown edible plants and roots. Because the Philmont Ranch overlapped with the Navaho nation, they were forbidden from killing or eating any animals.

The first day of the hike they had to cross a creek. Roy noticed a bunch of watercress under the water and stopped to harvest it. Roy ripped up about 5 pounds worth, shook off the water and stored it in his backpack. Later that night they decided to only boil some water and cook rice they received in camp. Starting a fire at 8000 feet elevation was a challenge. Because the air is so thin, any fire is hard to maintain. Roy was an excellent fire starter and got two fires going right away. The trick was to keep fanning the fire which provided just enough air for it to keep going. If you stopped fanning the fire, it would quickly

go out. Roy shared the watercress with everyone. There was enough to provide everyone with a handful.

That first night under the New Mexico stars were memorable for everyone. There is very little light pollution in the remote regions of the Southwest and you could see the entire Milky Way. Another joy was being able to see other spiral galaxies with the naked eye. Before this Roy only saw the Andromeda galaxy from a telescope. Roy was good at Astrometry and talked for hours showing his group all the constellations.



The NM night sky provided a fantastic show. At one point through the night, Roy was awakened and looked up. The sky was so full of stars there was more white stars than black space. It was very weird, but wonderful. Roy shared the experience at daybreak and everyone agreed they should wake at 4am the following morning to see the wonder, which they did the following 3 nights.

New Mexico is a beautiful state with wonders at every turn. For the next 9 days, the hike was very uneventful, except for the sighting of a bear, cougar, or deer. The days flew by, but it was a difficult time for Roy. Climbing 9000-foot mountains was difficult for everyone. As you go up in elevation, the air gets thinner and you will have difficulty breathing. Then you finally reach the summit and start down only to start up the next mountain. As hard as the hike was, you encountered the most beautiful scenery which made everything better. At night when resting

you had the nighttime sky show. No one ever really complained. Why would you complain when you volunteered for this? Roy would say to those who were tired and wanted the trek to end.

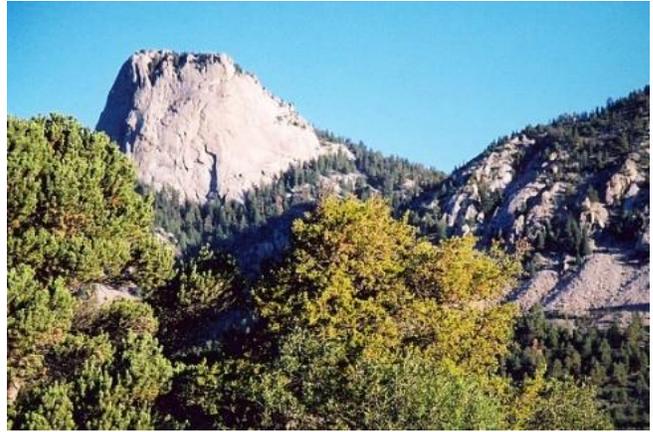
On the 10th day, they had an up and down 9-mile difficult hike to the next water station. It was called Devil's Gulch and they had to get there due to a water shortage. To save on the weight many boys didn't keep their cantinas full. So, getting to Devil's Gulch was imperative. The group pushed on until the late afternoon when they reached Devil's Gulch. Unfortunately, there was only a dry well with no water. A huge debate got going where some thought to turn back while others insisted on moving forward. On their map there was a river at the next camp, so they pushed on even though everyone was hungry and tired. So, it was decided the group would complete two days of hiking in one day. They walked for hours into the night using their flashlights to stay on the trail.

When they finally got to the river camp it was late evening and everyone was completely exhausted. After deciding on where to set up camp, they got to building a fire and cooking up a meal. Since they were not at a high elevation, Roy got the fire going right away, then Roy grabbed two pales and headed for the creek to fetch water. All water had to be boiled before consumption. This was a healthier alternative than using the purification tablets. The tablets were just Chlorine pills that left you thinking you were drinking pool water. Even though the water was crystal clear, you never knew what organisms were alive in the water. So, boiling would kill anything harmful.

A few feet from the water's edge, Roy saw a huge bear turn around and stand up on its hind legs. He let out a loud roar, and Roy did the same, while spinning the pales overhead to look bigger. Thankfully the bear turned and ran off. Roy filled up the two pales and shot

back to camp to warn the others about the bear. After a meal of dried beef and rice, the conversation moved to *what to do tomorrow?* The next day was supposed to be the hike from Devils Gulch to the river where they were camped at now. It was decided; everyone would stay at this camp and take the next day off to relax. There was a small water falls up river which some wanted to look at, so they all stayed put. In the morning they prepared some dry eggs, Roy took the flour and made biscuits for everyone. It was a great meal and everyone was grateful. After cleanup many headed for the river. Since this was a day off, everyone did whatever they wanted. Some took a shower under the waterfalls, some slept and some swam in the deeper end of the river. Roy found a 2-foot deep hole and just laid in there for hours. Since water was moving through the waterhole, it felt like a Jacuzzi. A few kids inflated their air mattresses and drifted down river which caught the others interest, so in the afternoon everyone decided to drift down river. It was so relaxing they did it a second time.

The next morning, they got a rude awakening when the bear returned and started rustling through last night's leftovers. Roy and a few others got out of their sleeping bags and began yelling at the bear and he ran off. There were still a dozen biscuits left over, which the bear never smelt so they were broken up and shared. After breaking down camp and ensuring the fires were extinguished. They started out for the Tooth of Time. The Tooth of Time was a large stone escarpment which took you into the sky. During the orientation it was noted the view from the tooth of time was the utmost experience. Everyone really wanted to end the trek by climbing the Tooth of Time.



From there Base camp was only a short hike and it was all downhill. Being near the end made everyone happy. By noon, they reached the beginning of the trail up the tooth of time. It was a tough trail where sometimes you had to go down the side to cross a crevasse. Some cracks were only a few feet wide and could be jumped over. Even-so as you got closer to the end, the elevation made breathing hard. They pushed on to the top.

Near the half way point, they were passed by a pair of Navaho Indians on horseback. Everyone said hello. The anxiety of getting to the top was overwhelming for most. By this time everyone wanted to get back to the civilized world where there was food. Roy never expected to be involved in such a wonderful experience and wondered when he would do this again? With the summit in plain sight, some were looking South at a big bunch of dark clouds that were moving toward them and you could see the rain pouring down. Roy never saw the clouds because he was too busy enjoying the scenery. From the summit of the tooth of time, you could see Philmont and all of base camp. The hike was stopped so everyone could fetch their ponchos from their back packs. There had been other times when dark clouds appeared overhead and dropped a torrent of rain. Once while hiking at 9000 feet elevation they even had 5 minutes of snow.

During the orientation they were warned that during the Summer, New Mexico can

experience extreme monsoon rains from Mexico. It is best to take cover away from trees because high winds can topple trees. As the storm got closer, they heard thunder, so everyone got ready to be rained on. As the dark clouds came overhead the winds picked up and was actually strong enough to blow you over. Roy suggested to go back down a little where he saw a side trail that took you into a wooded area. Most thought it would be better to stay where they were, so Roy and his buddy went alone.

Suddenly large hail-stones started to fall and it hurt. Roy placed his backpack over his head for protection. When Roy and his buddy went down the side trail, they saw a perfect alcove under a big ledge and went inside. In there you were completely protected.



They were totally away from the hail, sleet, and wind. Roy said, I wish everyone could be down here where it's nice and cozy. Roy even considered building a fire to help anyone dry up. Meanwhile a raging storm was happening above, and Roy felt bad he was so safe and secure while everyone else was being pounded. Roy told his buddy he was going up and try convince the others to come to this place.

A second after Roy started up, there was a huge bright flash that hurt Roy's eyes and lit everything up. Where Roy stood the ground shuttered. Roy yelled to his buddy-Did you see and feel that? YES, was the reply. Roy thought it might be an earthquake and

continued to the top and looked toward the summit. He could see many of his group laying on the ground. Roy thought—that's weird. Why would they lay down? Roy went to the first person and tried speaking to them. There was no response from the boy and Roy did this with three more kids and there was also no response. Roy began his Red Cross first aid training. The first boy wasn't breathing so Roy began mouth to mouth. After a few moments the boy jumped up gasping for air. Roy asked; what has happened here? The boy was dumb-founded and in shock. Then Roy started doing CPR on the other boys. One by one they jumped up. No one could talk.

Roy heard a knocking noise, turned around, and saw the Navaho Indian pair they saw earlier on horseback only feet away. One of the Indians asked "is anyone hurt"? Roy said, "no one can speak" and he does not know why. The Indian said, from below we saw you guys take a direct lightning strike and some might have been stunned or have nerve damage. That was the bright light and shuttering Roy felt earlier.

It was starting to make sense now. Roy continued doing CPR, to revive as many as possible. The Navaho Indian said more of this storm is coming and being so high on his horse left him overly exposed. He said they are heading down to Cimarron to get help and both galloped away. After what seemed like forever, although only a few hours; Roy heard helicopters coming close. Two Blackhawks suddenly appeared from the clouds overhead and began trying to land on the Tooth of Time ridge.

The high winds were pushing the helicopters back and forth and you could see they were having trouble staying in one place. When they got close a bunch of men rappelled down ropes to Roy and the Sargent asked him who needed help? Roy said anyone who is not standing. After all the search and rescue men

were down, the helicopters landed a hundred feet down on the ridge from everyone, then the search and rescue team began taking each boy to the helicopters. Some walked with help and some were taken by stretcher. Roy and the Sargent were the last two to get on board. As soon as Roy was strapped in, they took off. It only took seconds to fly to and land in Cimarron, but when they landed there were a dozen ambulances waiting. Everyone was taken to an ambulance for a checkup. Only Roy refused. He said "I'm okay!"

After everyone was checked a Sheriff's deputy said come with me and I will take you to Philmont. Out of the 20 boys 17 were alright, but three were declared Dead on Arrival. Roy is still upset about this event even today. Maybe he could have done more to get everyone to shelter or do more to revive them.

When Roy got back to basecamp, an administrator was waiting. He had messages for some of the boys. When Roy heard his name, he jumped up. The message said-*call home*. First Roy went to mess hall to see if there was any food. When one of the chefs heard Roy was from the group that were hit by lightning, he said, "what would you like"? Roy said a cheeseburger would be nice. The guy said sit down and I will bring it to you. Roy said, "show me where the meat is and I can do it myself." The chef wouldn't hear of it and cooked Roy two Cheeseburgers along with home fries. Roy said it was the best meal he

ever had. Living off the land is Okay, but the choices are scarce and boring.

After filling up on food Roy went to the office to phone home. He asked the women if he could use the phone, and she said, "yes, but only for collect calls." Roy called, collect. Hearing his father's voice was a huge sigh of relief for Roy. Roy's father asked, "are you okay?" The story had already hit the nighttime news in New York. Now Roy's mother was on the line also and the questions were hitting Roy faster than he could think. After only 30 seconds Roy had a complete breakdown and began crying out loud. He couldn't explain what had happened because he was so sad and confused.

The trip home was a somber time for Roy. He didn't want to talk about the event with anyone including the boys who were affected. When Roy got home, he was mobbed by the press. Roy couldn't understand all the fuss. Just because he survived the lightning strike, some thought Roy was a hero. Roy knew he was NO hero and only did what anyone else would do. Roy adamantly stressed the New Mexico Search and Rescue guys were the only hero's that day. He also credited the two Navaho's who went for help. To this day, Roy still regrets not thanking them.

Roy Bardowell, CDDC, served as Operations Manager at Guardian Access & Door Hardware until 2014. He has been in the door and operator industry since 1973 and is known as one of the industry's most experienced operator technicians and trainers. Roy received the IDEA Commitment to Excellence award in 2008 and IDA's Jerry R. Reynolds Volunteer Service Award in 2017. Contact him at roythedoorman@gmail.com