

The twenty first of October I headed out of the base, seven months in that hell hole. I surely signed up for the wrong program. I set it up to take the bus to Florida on purpose so I could look at the country as I headed south. I had a long wait for the bus from Great Lakes and a stop over in Chicago. The people at the depot were nicer than I thought, for a bus. I was about a block away from Pon's Steak Palace which I ate at before. The bus station had that fundamentalist Christian atmosphere. The people were dirt poor, and some wiggled out punks were there too. I was all dressed up in my sailor suit and haircut. I slept a lot of the time on the way to Indianapolis and changed buses there at 3:00 a.m. I looked out at some regional looking suburbs and urban renewal in progress, saw a wizard Hospital and Courthouse that looked real "architectural". For some reason I thought of Pueblo, CO. The sun was up by Cincinnati south through Kentucky which was real beautiful hill country and small farms and towns. Thornhill, KY is a cute little town, good for photos, by Frankfort. Benson Valley, good locale. I come up with another novel outline: a writer joins the service, reported killed, lost at sea, he had an ESP pact with a cult prior, another takes his works and becomes famous, ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ because he was a hero, he resurfaces to expose the sham. 110 miles out of Knoxville on south 75 the fall colors are fantastic as the hills become more mountainous. The trees are very tall and slender with flame shaped tops of leaves and color of the same with other species interspersed. Had a lunch around 1:30 in Cumberland Gap country, the fall colors remain beautiful, but there are more pine trees. Appalachia, if this is correctly that, is unreal. The people live in flimsy little shacks in the valley, or built into the hills, whites at that. They keep chickens and trash and burned out cars in the backyard, they must live there for free as I cannot see why they live in such squalor unless they were brainwashed hippies, or don't know any better. It's odd because they have shiny cars and trucks, but like the little beat looking shacks. Civic center Knoxville looks O.K, but it is not much more than Waukesha, WI for downtown area. Some of the other areas look like hell too. I get to Jacksonville the next day about nine in the morning. The trip to Albany where I connect to Jacksonville was bad as I kept falling asleep and thinking I missed my stop. What a nightmare. It's quite cool down here, other than I expected and I can sleep on the bus. I never thought people could stink the way they do down here. The station sure felt stuffy with the odor. The bus comes in I-10 from Georgia. It's foggy most the way, and the foliage looks like its mostly pine forest and the soil looks real sandy. There's a real nice woman on the bus with a real sweet voice, a real turn on, but she's talking to someone else.