

## WE DROVE THROUGH THE ECLIPSE AT 12,000 FEET!

"Drove" my plane through the beginning and end of the August 21, 2017, full eclipse of the sun including the "totality" phase at 12,000 ft (above the smoke from the Oregon fires - tops 10,000).

Heading east at 12,000 ft\* just east of Madras OR we experienced:

- 1) The gradual eclipse of the sun to about 3/4 covered -- about 45 minutes, then
- 2) from 3/4 covered to 2 minutes of totality, then 3/4 covered again-- 20 minutes, then
- 3) the sun rising in the "west" on the way back home for 45 minutes.

I must tell you phase #2 was absolutely one of the most outstanding events of my life. The temperature at 12,000 ft was 3 degC when we started the second phase; by the time we got into totality it had dropped to minus 2 deg C; it was totally dark except for the horizon off in the distance where they did not experience totality; it was so dark we had to put on the interior lights to see the instruments. Bizarrely, but as filed, we were just north of **Dayville** Oregon (population 145) at 10:20 am during total nightness in Dayville.

Then and there the reverse took place and when we entered phase 3 we started south back to our staging area at Klamath Falls Oregon and we could see the reformation of the full "son" (see below) on our left (with glasses on).

All of us did take off our special glasses to see the totality and it was spectacular and is etched in our minds. My cousin George took the attached picture during *TOTALITY* & my bro-in-law selected it.

I will remember this experience in relation to "the Star of Bethlehem" and as the "SON of Bethlehem!" It was a marvel of nature and the universe. Just imagine the effect centuries ago!

All I can say is "thank goodness for Doolittle" as the first instrument pilot in the (19)20's, and then Sperry (Rand), and then my STEC 30 autopilot which was liberally called to duty as we flew through "IT" on an Instrument Flight Plan filed 24 hours before with the following in the remarks section: "*oxygen on board!*"\*

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\*Pilots reading this will smartly think "we were at the wrong altitude" for an easterly heading. However, Seattle Center assigned us that altitude. Few planes were there as the great magnitude of general aviation planes couldn't get up to 12,000 ft. with such high temperatures in the desert area of Oregon. A great number of higher performance planes were above us, mostly just below 18,000 ft in order to stay out of "Alpha" air space.

J. Ben Vernazza  
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Soled in July 1956 at Moore Air Base Texas



N9212W-1967 Cherokee 235 - camping at Monument Valley

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