

Roy Sullivan, the man who survived seven lightning strikes



Roy Cleveland Sullivan, born February 7, 1912, in Greene County, Virginia, USA, is a name that, while not widely known, holds a unique place in the annals of human history. He became famous not for heroic feats or scientific discoveries but for an astonishing and tragic peculiarity: he was struck by lightning seven times throughout his life and survived each time. This incredible record earned him the nickname "the human lightning rod" and a spot in the Guinness World Records.

The Seven Strikes of Lightning

1. **1942:** Sullivan's first encounter with lightning occurred while working as a park ranger in Shenandoah National Park. The lightning struck his leg, leaving him with a burn scar.
2. **1969:** Twenty-seven years later, Sullivan was struck again while driving a truck on a mountain road. Lightning hit a nearby tree twice before entering the open window of the vehicle, burning his eyebrows and eyelashes.
3. **1970:** A year later, while in his garden, lightning struck Sullivan again, this time causing a burn on his left shoulder.
4. **1972:** While on duty at a ranger station, lightning struck Sullivan, causing burns to his hair and igniting a fire.
5. **1973:** The fifth strike occurred while he was on patrol. Lightning hit his hat, burning his head.
6. **1976:** Three years later, Sullivan was struck while trying to escape a storm in his truck. Lightning went through the vehicle's roof, hitting his ankle.
7. **1977:** The final strike happened while he was fishing. Lightning hit him in the head, causing burns to his chest and abdomen.

An Extraordinary Fate

Despite these recurring and traumatic incidents, Sullivan continued to work as a park ranger, a job he loved deeply. His colleagues and himself were often puzzled by this seemingly supernatural misfortune. Scientists and meteorologists attempted to explain his case, but no satisfactory explanation emerged for why Sullivan seemed to attract lightning so disproportionately.

The End of an Unusual Life

Despite his impressive physical resilience to lightning strikes, Roy Sullivan's life was not without hardship. Outside of these electrical mishaps, he experienced emotional trauma. He lived in constant fear of storms, which profoundly affected his social life. On September 28, 1983, Sullivan died at the age of 71, not from his repeated lightning strikes but from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Sources

- fr.wikipedia.org

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