

Wilde Bill Cody
The Cook Becomes a Talented Knife Maker
BCCI Lifetime Member



WBC's father was a scientist, inventor, and worked in the aerospace industry. Bill is one of 10 children and was born in San Diego in July, 1953. He didn't get a driver's license until he was 32 years old. One big reason for his starting to drive at an older age was — "We only had one car growing up, and with 10 kids I didn't get a chance to drive very much". Another reason for his not getting a license —he joined the Navy when he was 17.

During Navy boot camp, he said that one morning his class was ordered to 'line up'. He was picked, along with several other guys to be "Cooks". So, he served on the U.S.S. Knox, a destroyer during the Vietnam War. He was married during much of his Navy service and when his four years were up, he decided to get out. As he reflects back about that time, he said, "I should have stayed in for 20 and retired." During those four years as a Navy cook, he learned several job related skills that would prove to be beneficial later in his knife making career. He indicated that he bought a Buck 120 aboard ship and used it quite frequently during his days at sea.

When he was discharged from the Navy, he lived in Seattle and worked as a private security officer. Two years later he moved back to San Diego and became a cook at an International House of Pancakes. Because of his living in Seattle and San Diego with good public transportation, he still had no driver's license. After a fellow cook had indicated to Bill that Buck Knives was hiring people to work in their factory, he applied and was hired to work on the assembly line putting 500's together. He found that he could perform the line tasks quickly and with quality. He moved to several other line jobs, including working on the Bucklites and 110's. In 1991, he moved to the Custom Shop where much of the work was customizing several Buck models

Wilde Bill said that for as long as he can remember he has had a drive to be creative. His experience as a front line cook paid him big dividends as he pursued his skills as a knife customizer. As a cook, he had to work fast with timing and quality so that meals left his station as ordered, hot and ready to eat. Plus, he learned to work with both hands. He could to turn pancakes with one had while

scrambling an egg at the same time with the other. Thus, as a line worker at Buck, he was fast in completing his tasks.

He also worked at home perfecting his inlay and creative ideas as he made belt buckles, bolos and did re-handling projects for friends and family. He read how to do inlay work and did his first project with a 112 and a buffalo inlay. Later he began the unique task of 'raised inlays' on knife handles.

As far as he knows, he's the only person doing such work. He indicated that there is no name for the process. When the Buck Factory moved to Idaho, Wilde Bill stayed in San Diego and for several years has done limited editions and custom work for the company. Through the years he has had a close working relationship with his friend Leroy Remer. Leroy taught him several things, including how to hollow grind a blade. WBC is a very unique artist with all facets of knives. Both Bill and Leroy prefer working with 440C steel saying it polishes well, is easy to grind, and sharpens well with just a stone.

Bill learned about the BCCI during the Club's 15 year anniversary celebration. When asked about the Club he said, "It's great. It's the spirit of Buck Knives". Many Club members collect Bill's work and find his creative artistry to be top notch.

Bill has a daughter and an adopted son. He also has a granddaughter that he picks up from school most days. If you have met Bill, you will understand why most folks discover that he is an incredibly nice person. People are drawn to his pleasant personality and gentle spirit. This is one man whose exceptional talent has not swelled his head and Bill has more creativity in the tip of his little finger than most of us have in our entire body.

BCCI KNIVES:

2010 903 Buck Custom for raffle at Smoky Mountain Rendezvous

2013 - Anniversary Knives

2013 Limited Edition 532 Turkey Track Bear Track with David Yellowhorse

2013 904 Custom Sub Hilt Bowie, 106 Custom Ax (Leroy Remer, Wilde Bill, Heath Stone)