



RESEARCH
ARTICLE

A Series of Past-Life Visions and Intuitive Impressions Surfacing in Middle Adulthood with Behavioral Influences Beginning in Childhood

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HIGHLIGHTS

A woman whose past-life memories began to surface in her 50s appears to have been influenced subconsciously by past-life experiences beginning in early childhood, but increasingly after a near-death experience as a teenager.

ABSTRACT

In the wake of several traumatic experiences, a French woman in her early 50s began to have visions and intuitive impressions about seven past lives she felt she had lived. She was able to verify memories of the most recent life and identify the deceased, an American Marine fatally wounded in Vietnam. It then became clear that she had been subliminally influenced by this life in various ways from childhood, most strongly following an NDE at 18. On the eve of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, she began to have detailed visions of a Don Cossack who had served in the Imperial Guard of Catherine the Great and Alexander I, dying during Napoleon's retreat from Moscow in 1812. Although the Cossack story is plausible, it has not been possible to investigate it or to identify the individual involved; nonetheless, here too there are apparent behavioral influences on the subject's present life. Although the subject recalled the other five lives in fragments only, some of these also seem to have impacted her unconsciously. This study explores the nature of past-life remembering and demonstrates how presumptive past lives may exercise an influence behaviorally, emotionally, and somatically, even in the absence of conscious recall.

KEYWORDS

Declarative memory, implicit memory, memory cues, memory retrieval, memory verification, past-life memory, reincarnation.

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INTRODUCTION

In the great majority of reincarnation cases studied by Ian Stevenson and colleagues, the subjects are young children, typically 2–4 years, when they begin to speak of previous lives. Past-life memories surfacing in adulthood have received little attention, partly because it is more difficult with them to rule out ordinary sources of information. Also, adults' past-life memories tend to be more

fragmentary and less richly developed and, therefore, are less often "solved" (determined to refer to a particular deceased person). Whereas children's past-life memories frequently present in the waking state, those of adults are more likely to arise in dreams and other altered states of consciousness, suggesting that past-life memory retrieval is influenced by developmental factors related to the maturation process (Matlock, 2019).

Adults claim to recall multiple past lives more often



than children do (Matlock, 2019; Wehrstein, 2017). Although it is unusual for more than one of multiple past lives to be solved, there are a few adult cases with two identified previous persons. Stevenson (1983) wrote about Pratomwan Inthanu, a Thai nun who, at 20 years, while meditating, recalled two lives with sufficient clarity to solve both. Jenny Cockell (1993, 2008, 2017, 2021) self-reported memories of several lives, two of which she was able to solve. KM Wehrstein (2019a, 2021) studied two solved past lives of Will, an American who claims to recall bits of what may be as many as 30 lives. In no cases so far reported has it been possible to verify more than two previous lives.

One finding from Stevenson's work with predominantly child cases is that people tend to reincarnate close to where they die—the median distance between the places of death and rebirth in Stevenson's cases is only 25 kilometers (15.5 miles) (Stevenson, 2001, p. 242). Long-distance (of over 50 km from the place of death to the place of birth) and international child cases are unusual, and solved international child cases are rare; Matlock (Haraldsson & Matlock, 2016, pp. 229–235) found accounts of only 14 of the last. Adults may recall reincarnating internationally more often than children do, but as yet, there are too few reports to be confident of this pattern. It may turn out that reincarnating over long distances is culturally influenced, with Westerners more likely to reincarnate internationally than Asians (Matlock, 2019, pp. 186–187). Will's most recent life entailed reincarnating internationally, from Germany to the United States (Wehrstein, 2019a). Another example of international reincarnation is described in the present paper: the French-born subject, E.C., recalled being an American Marine, fatally wounded during the Vietnam War, who died at Clark Air Base in the Philippines.

The Marine life is the only one of seven past lives recalled by E.C. that is solved, although apparent memories of a Don Cossack who served in the Russian Imperial Guard in the time of Catherine the Great and Alexander I, dying during Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812, include numerous plausible details. E.C. recalled five other lives in much less detail. In some ways, E.C.'s life series is typical of adult recollections, although her verified memories and unverified visions are distinguished by their appearance in a variety of states of consciousness—waking, hypnagogic, and nocturnal dreaming, as well as meditation to music and regression under hypnosis utilizing YouTube protocols—and are regularly accompanied by intuitive impressions. E.C.'s case is interesting as well for the course of its development. As in other instances in which past-life memories arose principally in adulthood, there were childhood precursors (Matlock, 2019, pp. 204–205),

but the majority of E.C.'s past-life memories, visions, and intuitive impressions emerged following a near-death experience (NDE) at 18 and, more forcefully, after other traumatic events in her early 50s.

INVESTIGATION

I learned about this case through my Signs of Reincarnation Facebook group and, starting in November 2022, investigated it through the group page, instant messaging, and emails. Although E.C. is the primary source for both her experiences and their verifications, I inspected many of the web sites and other materials she employed in her research. By these means, I was able to confirm all important elements of her account. I consulted with Benjamin Bagley, another member of the Facebook group who had been in touch with E.C. at the height of her experiences. Not only is the Marine life solved, it has written records made before verifications of the memory claims, adding to the small number of published cases with this feature (Matlock, 2021).

PROGRESSION AND PRESENTATION OF E.C.'S PAST-LIFE MEMORIES, VISIONS, AND INTUITIVE IMPRESSIONS

Table 1 lists key events in E.C.'s life affecting the development of her past-life memories, visions, and intuitive impressions.

E.C.'s Early Years (1968–1976)

E.C. was born on August 9, 1968, in Orléans, France. As a young child, she preferred to play with boys at boys' games. Her favorite toys were farm animals and, above all, horses. As a toddler, she would sit on the arm of the family sofa, pretending to ride it like a horse. When she was 6 or 7, she requested a Zorro or pirate costume but received a pink princess dress she never wore. When induced to use girls' clothes or make-up, she felt as if she were donning a disguise. She liked the name David and noticed it everywhere—a classmate named David, an actor, a singer. She had recurring dreams of walking through a dark forest with other people, taking care not to be seen or heard. She was strongly attracted to helicopters. Whenever she heard one, she would step out onto her apartment balcony and search the sky for it. She needed to identify the "bird" and see whence it was coming; she was disappointed when it did not fly in her direction.

In retrospect, E.C. recognizes these things as related to past-life experiences, but at the time, they seemed no more than expressions of her individuality.

NDE and Aftermath (1986–1990)

Table 1. Development of E.C.’s Past-Life Memories, Visions, and Intuitive Impressions

Date (E.C.’s age)	Event
Aug. 9, 1968	Born in Orléans, France.
1978 (10)	Parents purchase weekend house in country; begins riding lessons.
1985 (17)	Is given first horse, a young Norwegian fjord horse.
Dec. 27, 1986 (18)	Has NDE following accident with two-wheeled sulky.
1987 (18)	Begins to be drawn to things military and American; applies to French military, but after rejection for medical reasons returns to horse breeding.
Mar.–June, 1990 (21)	Performs internship with equine vet and quarter horse training stable in Wichita, Kansas.
1998 (30)	Purchases 15 acres of land, begins to breed quarter horses.
2010 (41)	Starts to work as sales and export associate in defense and aerospace industry.
2016 (48–49)	Is forced to sell farm. Several horses die.
Jan. 2018 (49)	Stops working in defense and aerospace industry due to undiagnosed illness.
Dec. 2019 (51)	Begins regular, daily meditation to assist with health issues; apparent past-life memories surface during these meditations.
Jan. 2021 (52)	Seeming afterdeath communication from pet dog encourages spiritual development.
Feb. 2021 (52)	Suffers second accident, badly injuring arm.
Oct. 23, 2021 (53)	Has meditation vision of landing strip at Chu Lai, Vietnam and, with aid of pendulum, recalls name John David Smith. Starts using guided meditation and hypnotic regression in hopes of recovering memories.
Oct. 2021–Aug. 2022 (53)	Begins to make regular notes of memories and visions. Memories of Smith surface in various states of consciousness; many verified.
Dec. 2021–May 2022 (53)	Envisions fragments of five other lives in various states of consciousness, including guided meditation and hypnotic regression.
Feb. 2022 (53)	On eve of Russia invasion of Ukraine, begins to have visions of Don Cossack who served in Russian Imperial Guard.
July 3, 2022 (53)	Stops using music meditation to relax and guided meditation and hypnotic regression to retrieve information about previous lives.
Aug. 11, 2022 (54)	Involuntary memories of Smith cease on anniversary of his death; thereafter, visions and impressions of Cossack guard dominate.
Nov.–Dec. 2022 (54)	Identification with Smith resurges in response to case investigation.

E.C.’s father was a telephone company manager, and her mother was an English teacher. When she was 10, they purchased a small country house on the Loire River for weekend getaways. E.C. took lessons at a nearby riding school but gave them up because they were mostly about show jumping and dressage, whereas she was more interested in trail riding. She made a new friend who rode and at 15, asked for her own horse. At 17, she was given a young Norwegian fjord horse, which she boarded on an adjacent farm and trained to pull a two-wheeled sulky. All went well until the end of December 1986, when she was 18. She needed to go to the nearest village on an errand, and decided to drive her horse there, pulling the sulky. Unfortunately, along the way, a fighter jet flew noisily directly above them. The horse spooked and galloped off; the sulky struck something, and she was ejected.

E.C. recalls viewing her body from above, with the thought that this was not a good place to lie down. She felt no pain, nor the hard ground or December cold, but saw an exceedingly bright yet not dazzling white light. In the light were silhouettes from which two luminous fig-

ures detached and moved toward her. A voice advised her that it was not her time to die and that she should return to her body. She then heard her name called by a paramedic in the ambulance that had come for her. Although it seemed that only a few minutes had elapsed, in fact it had taken two and a half hours for her to be found after her horse had been spotted alone in a field. She was carried to a hospital with head trauma but otherwise uninjured, very concerned for her horse. When she was discharged 48 hours later, she asked her parents to take her straight to his pasture, because she did not believe them when they assured her he was unhurt.

Following her NDE, E.C.’s interests changed in significant ways. She had planned to become a veterinarian and, in her first university year, took classes in biology and chemistry. After the NDE, she realized she preferred to work outdoors and began to study horse breeding in an agricultural school. Her riding style changed. Whereas before her NDE, she had ridden in the English style, holding the reins in both hands, she now shifted to Western style, holding the reins in one hand only. She began to dress

in military surplus green and khaki camouflage clothing with American caps and elected to write her thesis on American quarter horse import and breeding in France.¹

E.C. developed a preoccupation with the Vietnam War and decorated her dormitory room with pictures of military helicopters and fighter planes. She was strongly drawn to helicopters and wanted to take flying lessons, but these turned out to be too costly to pursue. She would have liked to have done a stint in the French military, but after tests, was told she would never be a paratrooper or equestrian due to a bad back, an assessment that left her devastated. During the same period, she experienced a second recurring dream, involving a military transport plane crash in watery terrain.

E.C. received her breeding technician diploma in 1989, and in March 1990, when she was 21, she arranged to go to Wichita, Kansas, Orléans's twin city, for internships with an equine vet and at a quarter horse training stable. She recalls—and believes she will always remember—that when the airplane door opened at the Wichita airport after an eleven-hour flight, she felt as if she had come home. Everything seemed familiar and easy—buying a used car, the food, the way of life, the sound of the language. She quickly made new friends, one of whom picked her up one day in a Ford Mustang convertible with the top down. She was wearing Ray-Ban sunglasses and listening to the radio, when a strange déjà vu feeling and sense that she was someone else washed over her. When she visited McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita for an open house with the Blue Angels demonstration squadron, the atmosphere felt familiar. She purchased a souvenir pin depicting two UH-1 Huey helicopters, the emblematic chopper of the Vietnam War.

Strangely, when a friend suggested they visit Colorado, she had an anxiety attack. Although she could not explain why, she was absolutely opposed to going to Colorado. Nor did she want to depart the United States when the time came to leave in June. She should have been happy to return to her parents, her friends, and her horses, but instead was in tears, feeling as if she were saying goodbye to her country forever. Upon her return home, she began to joke that she was the reincarnation of an American soldier killed in Vietnam.

Renewed Trauma (2015–2021)

E.C. acquired her first quarter horse foal in 1989 and her first broodmares in 1994, renting pastures and shelters for them not far from her residence in rural north-central France. In 1998, she bought 15 acres of land east of the Loire and built an American-style ranch house and barn, decorating the house with Americana.

She took office jobs to augment her income but did not like any very much until she was hired as a sales associate at a firm in the French aerospace and defense industry in 2010. There, she enjoyed typing contracts, dealing with the supply chain to improve lead times, and assisting clients from around the world with export licenses for aircraft and submarine parts. The office walls displayed appealing pictures of airplanes and helicopters.

E.C. was happy in her career until a succession of events precipitated major life changes. She was forced to sell her farm and house in 2016 after five of her horses died in quick succession. This was followed by the emotional blow of losing her father in 2017. At the office, the workload increased, leading to her resignation, along with others, at the start of 2018. She could feel her health declining, partly as a result of having lost so much of the life she had spent years building. Suffering from insomnia and pains throughout her body, especially in her left side and back, she submitted to an array of medical exams. Doctors, however, were unable to find a physical cause for her symptoms, and told her that her malady was all in her head. They prescribed antidepressants, but did no more.

Now disenchanted with conventional medicine, E.C. began to research treatments utilizing medicinal herbs she could grow on her farm. She studied Reiki energy healing and dowsing and taught herself to use a pendulum. At the end of December 2019, she started meditating daily with 432hz music she found on YouTube. The procedure instructed her to imagine a quiet place to relax, and she repeatedly envisioned a serene scene of waterfalls in a forest, a mountain of dark gray rocks, and a river. Sometimes, there were communications with animals and messages that there was something behind the waterfall that would lead to knowledge of the past and future.

E.C. felt herself opening spiritually, a process furthered by an experience after she had to put down her Australian shepherd, Gibbs, due to cancer, early in 2021. After Gibbs's death, she lit a candle near his picture in the living room. At about 10 p.m., she realized the candle had gone out on its own. When she retired for the night, she checked to make sure it was still extinguished, but when she awoke at 2 a.m., the house was suffused with a soft glow, and she found the candle lit again. She felt certain that this was a sign from Gibbs. A week later, he appeared in one of her music meditations as a healthy young dog and conveyed to her that she should not worry about him or be sad, because he would soon be returning as a dog named Sam. He showed her a beautiful place with lots of dogs, all of whom seemed happy. Before she could pose the question, Gibbs assured her that a similar place existed for horses, and she imagined an exquisite pasture with

many horses.

Not long thereafter, in the third week of February 2021, E.C. suffered a second serious accident. She was holding a horse when it bolted, dragging her and almost severing her right arm. Her wrist was broken, and muscles and ligaments of her arm were torn as far as the shoulder; the shoulder's tendon was torn as well. She could not drive a car for four months. Today, she has less strength in her right arm than previously and has trouble lifting it above her shoulder. She has had to give up riding.

On the morning of October 23, 2021—eight months after being dragged by the horse—while meditating with her eyes closed, E.C., for the first time, saw a landscape unfold as if she were flying above it. There was dry land with lots of sand, long dark buildings side by side, some bright metallic buildings, a watch tower, and a barbed-wire fence. She knew intuitively that this was a landing strip and heard the names “Chu Lai” and “Da Nang.” She recognized these as places in Vietnam and felt a profound conviction that she had been there in reality. Retrieving her pendulum, she asked if this were so, and received the answer “yes.” Recalling that she had often joked about having a past life as an American soldier in Vietnam, she decided to see if she could get his name. By reciting the alphabet and noting on which letters the pendulum swung to the right (yes) or left (no), in growing astonishment, she recorded the name John David Smith.

John David Smith (2021–2022)

E.C. lost no time looking online for John David Smith. She entered his name, followed by “Vietnam,” and the search engine returned a row of photographs, along with page links. Shocked by one of the pictures, she clicked on it, bringing up the information that John David Smith of Camden, New Jersey, had been killed in action in Vietnam. One of the page links went to the Wall of Faces,² where she learned that Marine Sergeant Smith had died on August 11, 1966, two years before her birth on August 9, 1968.

At this juncture, E.C. began making notes of her apparent memories and her efforts to verify them, jotting on loose papers and in old notebooks. She was not yet taking these activities fully seriously and was so excited by what she was finding that she did not think to record the dates of writing, but her internet search history logs the dates she accessed web pages. Dates are also available for online posts, messages and emails to friends, and calls she made from her smartphone.

On the evening of October 23, the day she discovered Smith's name and identity, E.C. decided to try to recover more memories through a past-life regression uploaded

on YouTube by French hypnotherapist Frédéric Barbey, something she had not done before. After guiding her through relaxation, Barbey's voice directed her to see an important moment in the life she recalled. She visualized Smith in a military uniform lying on a cot in a tent, writing a letter. Other men in uniform were playing cards and laughing at him, because he was writing to his family, rather than to a wife or girlfriend. When Barbey asked her to move to another important moment, she saw Smith walking in file with other Marines down a road and then haphazardly through a rice paddy to the left of the road, carrying a pack, in heavy rain. He had a bad feeling about walking to the left of the road, but they had been ordered to walk there, so he proceeded. Suddenly, shots rang out, and he was aware that someone named Harry or Larry had been hit. Then he felt an intense burning on his left side and fell into the water. He heard a voice say, “Sergeant's hit! Sergeant's hit!”

In a related scene, perceived from the inside, in field perspective, Smith was lying on a stretcher, immobile and unable to speak. A voice to his left said, “It's gonna be OK, son! We're taking care of you.” Another voice to his right said, “Stay with us, stay with us!” Smith was aware of a crew member of the medevac helicopter that had brought him to this place lying dead on a stretcher to his right, accompanied by the sense that he was the cause of the man's death. Smith was aware that he was going to die as well, and E.C. cried out, “I'm sorry! I'm sorry!” although she did not know why she said this. When Barbey asked her to move to the end of the life, she saw Smith in a well-lit modern building, still unable to move. He was not afraid of dying, although he would have preferred to be at home with his family. Then E.C.'s perspective shifted and she was looking down from above. Doctors and nurses surrounded someone, seemingly very busy. She emerged from the regression lying on her sofa shaking, but otherwise unable to move for some minutes.³

When she regained control of herself, in an effort to verify the details of these images and impressions, E.C. returned to Smith's Wall of Faces page, where she read Remembrance comments she had passed over before. The longer ones needed to be expanded to view the texts in their entirety. One by W. Killian, headed “Final Mission of Sgt John D. Smith,” gave details of the Operation Colorado mission in which Smith was fatally wounded:

At about 1100 hours on August 10, 1966, during Operation Colorado, the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, made contact with elements of two NVA battalions in the vicinity of Cam Khe hamlets (1) and (2) on Route 586, 5 miles west of Tam Ky in Quang Tin Province, RVN. The initial con-

tact developed into a full-fledged battle fought in a driving rainstorm, which did not clear until about 1730 hours. Although Marine Observation Squadron 6 (VMO-6) provided armed helicopter gunship support, and both shore-based artillery and naval gunfire supported the Marines, fixed-wing aircraft were unable to operate in the area until the rainstorm broke. The 1/5 Marines suffered 14 men killed in action, with another 65 wounded, but killed more than 100 NVA troops before the battle ended on the morning of August 11th. Three Navy corpsmen were among the dead, including HN Lawrence T. Steiner, HM3 James T. Elrod, and HM3 Walter P. Jackson. SSGT Robert T. Walsh, a gunner on a medevac helicopter from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 361 (HMH-361), was also killed after suffering gunshot wounds to the chest during a medical evacuation. The lost 1/5 Marines included SGT Ernest B. Amador, LCPL Richard P. Donathan, PFC David L. Faught, CPL Douglas B. Haddix, LCPL Robert D. Higbee, LCPL Gregory M. Howard, PFC Lawrence J. Kindred, PFC Melvin Rolle, PVT Richard A. Skinner, SGT John D. Smith, PFC Paul E. Sudsbury, PFC Kenneth E. Tasker, PFC Everette A. Thompson, and LCPL Richard W. Williamson. [Taken from coffeldatabase.org and thevirtual-wall.org]⁴

E.C.'s attention riveted on "Colorado," as she recalled her intense reaction to the suggestion of visiting Colorado in 1990. Killian's Remembrance listed the names of several Marines from Smith's company killed that day, among them PFC Lawrence J. Kindred, perhaps the "Harry" or "Larry" about whom Smith thought just before he himself was struck. Further, it stated that "SSGT Robert T. Walsh, a gunner on a medevac helicopter ... was also killed after suffering gunshot wounds to the chest during a medical evacuation." Although she has not been able to confirm the impression, E.C. felt and continues to feel that Staff Sergeant Walsh was the man lying on the stretcher next to Smith in her regression memory.

Killian's Remembrance had nothing to say about several other details of her regression memories. In subsequent research on Operation Colorado, E.C. learned that Smith's company had been walking through a rice paddy to the left of the main road at the time he was shot and that the heavy rain had delayed medevac helicopters from reaching the battlefield to rescue the wounded.⁵ Was that delay why she had always been preoccupied with helicopters and, as a child, had gone out on her balcony whenever she heard one in the air? And could Smith's being shot

from the left explain the persistent pains in her left side?

Searching the internet two days later, on October 25, E.C. found a New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation Facebook page with a post honoring Smith, again said to be killed in action.⁶ The post was authored by a sister, Joyce Hammel, who disclosed that Smith, who had gone by "Dave," had seven sisters and two brothers. He had written numerous letters home from Vietnam, some arriving after his death. Hammel also related that at the age of 4 or 5, Dave had suffered a terrible accident with one of his arms, sticking it in an old wringer his mother was using to wash clothes. She had taken a basket of wet garments to hang on the line, but rushed back into the house when she heard Dave's screams to find his arm caught in the wringer up to his shoulder. His arm was crushed; over 100 stitches were required to close the wounds and reattach his muscles, and his arm growth was stunted thereafter. Dave did not let this stop him; he continued to enjoy sports and, in adulthood, joined the military, first the Army and later the Marine Corps. E.C. cried upon reading Hammel's account. She thought about her own recent accident and damaged arm. That Smith had not let his injury stop him encouraged her to persevere in recovering from her own impairment. She returned to the post on the anniversary of Smith's death in 2021 and 2022, leaving the comment, "RIP. You will not be forgotten."

On October 27, E.C. called her best friend and sent her an instant message with Smith's photograph and the caption, "Voilà c'est moi avant," "This is me before." In the days and weeks following the regression, E.C. experienced, in her waking state, apparent flashbacks of Smith's life. In one, he was an adult with something important to say to his parents: that he had decided to join the Marine Corps.⁷ His mother was in the kitchen, and his father was sitting in an armchair, reading a newspaper. He could not see his father's face, because he would not lower the newspaper. There was no apparent reaction, and then his father said, "Did you tell your mother?" Smith answered that he had not yet, although he presumed that his mother could hear the conversation from the kitchen. "You should tell her," said his father, the newspaper still raised.

In other flashbacks, Smith was a child. In one, he was playing in front of his house with other children. Three or four stairs led up to the entrance. He jumped on the first step, then on the second with two feet and the third with one foot, a kind of challenge. On another occasion, E.C. saw Smith at his fourth or fifth birthday party. He was sitting at a table with many girls in front of him, happy because he was the center of attention. A woman behind him, whose face E.C. could not see, was holding a baby in her arms. In a third flashback, Smith and the rest of

the family were dressed in winter clothes, preparing to go out for some important event, but he could not find his gloves. He did not want to confess this, so he held his hands behind his back but was found out and scolded for it. His eldest brother Bill, meanwhile, was upstairs, refusing to come down. In a fourth flashback, he was holding a bat at a baseball game. His family was there to watch him play, which pleased him.

E.C. also experienced intuitions short of imaged memories about Smith's life. She had the sense that Smith was repeatedly told not to annoy his middle brother, perhaps due to health concerns. She recalled the expression "my second mom," although she did not understand its meaning. She felt that Smith had not done well at school; that he enjoyed playing tricks, even nasty tricks, to draw attention to himself; that he was jealous of Bill; and that his father regularly implored him to follow Bill's example. Oddly, E.C. has no imaged memories or intuitions of Smith from the ages of about 7 or 8 until he was 19 and told his father that he had decided to join the Marine Corps. She recalls, however, that on the eve of his deployment to Vietnam, Smith was approached by a young nephew who tugged on his sleeve and asked him, in a high-pitched voice, "Uncle Dave, are you going to kill people?"

Along with these imaged memories and intuitions, E.C.'s interests and behavior patterns changed. She began to listen to American popular music from the late 1950s and early 1960s, watch movies in their original English (she could not abide movies or television shows dubbed into French), swear spontaneously using English words and expressions, and eat peanut butter sandwiches on pre-sliced processed white bread. She became obsessed with documentaries about the Vietnam War and was inspired to sing the Marine Corps hymn every morning—realizing only then that she had been whistling the tune for years while riding on trails.

In November 2021, E.C. discovered that Smith had not been killed in action but had died the following day at Clark Air Base in the Philippines, consistent with her regression image of him dying in a well-lit, modern facility.⁸ E.C. accessed her first video about Chu Lai, the site of a Marine Corps air base from 1965 to 1970, on November 9, and realized that the landscape was similar to that surrounding the landing strip she had imagined while meditating on October 23.⁹

On December 9, E.C. left a virtual flower on Smith's Find a Grave page, and on Christmas Day, she started to type out her recollections to share with family and friends. She included a few pictures that spoke to her strongly. Two cousins and three friends read parts of her account, but she discovered that the majority of her family and acquaintances had little interest in past lives. She

began to look around the web for more receptive communities. She joined Carol Bowman's Reincarnation Forum on February 2, 2022, but made only brief comments, not wishing to divulge details in a public setting. It was the same on Military Past Lives. E.C. was equally circumspect in commenting in the Signs of Reincarnation Facebook group, and it was only in private messages and emails that the depth and complexity of her experiences became apparent.

E.C.'s obsession with Smith ended abruptly on the anniversary of his death (August 11) in 2022. Not only did she no longer need to research the Vietnam War, but she no longer felt compelled to listen to oldies radio stations and no longer experienced a longing to return to the United States. This proved to be only a lull, however; it was terminated when my case investigation brought a resurgence of her intense identification with Smith, more tears, and a renewed desire to go home to New Jersey. I comment on these later developments below.

A DON COSSACK IN THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL GUARD (2022)

E.C.'s insomnia abated significantly late in 2021, but shortly before Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022—when the threat of that action was much in the news—it returned strongly. Russian words and songs sounding in her mind made it impossible for her to sleep. After three consecutive nights of this, she began to experience headaches, shaking, and heart palpitations during the day. She decided to try to relax using her music meditation. This led to visualizing the life of a Don Cossack who served in the Imperial Guard for Catherine the Great (reigned 1762–1796) and Alexander I (reigned 1801–1825).

The first images of this life appeared in black and white or shades of gray, but before long, there were colors. E.C. visualized herself as a young boy on horseback on an immense, slightly hilly plain with dry yellow grass. The boy was dressed in a long white shirt with a wide belt, boots, and a Russian fur hat. He was racing with other young riders and felt immense joy, freedom, and happiness. Around them were dozens of stallions, geldings, mares, and foals, but when he turned, he saw a long white wall and a wooden gate that appeared to enclose a courtyard and buildings.

Wanting to know more about this life, E.C. took up her Barbey regression. She was surprised to see wooden ships, sailboats, and a port. Unaware that St. Petersburg had a port on the Neva River and thinking she must be remembering a different life, E.C. momentarily considered halting the regression but let it proceed. She next saw someone emerge from a long building along the docks. It

was the same person as in her meditation, now a man in his early 20s—tall, with black hair, dressed in a long red coat with a belt, a black hat, and leather boots, carrying a dagger and long saber. He was with two other men outfitted in the same fashion.

When Barbey's voice asked E.C. to move to another scene from this life, she saw the man standing before the gate of a large, wide-U-shaped palace. Passing through the gate, he turned immediately to the right and entered a long building. In the next scene, he was in a stable. He called his mare, saddled her, and rode into the courtyard in front of the palace with other similarly dressed men. They formed an escort, riding behind a carriage. He was in the left rear. He could hear the noise of the carriage wheels and horseshoes on the gravel road. When the carriage turned to leave the courtyard, he had the sense that someone inside was watching him; feeling somewhat anxious, he instinctively checked his uniform and his horse's harness. E.C. was aware that the someone was an important woman, the Empress Catherine II, Catherine the Great. Barbey directed E.C. to view the end of this life, and she saw the man, some years older, lying on a battlefield, cold and tired. He had been shot in the back and could not move. He realized that he was going to die and was greatly concerned about his horse, who had disappeared. In a final scene, E.C. viewed the battlefield from above, as the man flew around, looking for his horse, unable to find him.

Following this regression—the only one concerned with this life—E.C. gradually filled in the man's story through spontaneous waking visions and intuitive impressions. His family were Cossack horse breeders living near the Volga, in southern Russia, although she has the firm sense that they were members of the Don rather than Volga host. In one waking vision, E.C. saw herself as a youth of 15 or 16 when an important man, a rich noble (Alexei Orlov, she intuited), came to buy horses from his father. After watching the youth ride, Orlov offered to enroll him in cavalry school. Although this meant he would not see his family again, the boy and his father welcomed the opportunity, especially inasmuch as he was allowed to take his mare with him. A second rich man (perhaps Grigory Potemkin) recruited him into Catherine's Imperial Guard around 1785, when he was 19. E.C. felt that he remained in the empress's employ until her death in 1796, first mainly on horseback and then as a guard at the Catherine Palace gates and in the building's corridors. By this point, he no longer had his mare, but E.C. has no appreciation of how he lost her, or exactly when. She has no recollection either of the period immediately following Catherine's death in 1796, and thinks the guard must have left St. Petersburg. She recalls Alexander I, who assumed

the throne in 1801, and believes the guard returned to the palace at his invitation. She imagined the guard wearing a red vest and dark blue trousers, the uniform of the Life Guards Cossack Regiment organized within the Imperial Guard at that time. With her pendulum, E.C. determined the guard's name and patronymic to be Igor Ivanovitch, but she is uncertain of his surname and continues to refer to him as "the Cossack guard."

When Napoleon invaded Russia with his Grande Armée in 1812, the Cossack guard joined a cavalry regiment. He had a new horse, a dark bay, whom he loved as much as his mare. E.C. visualized a scene in a forest, perhaps near Smolensk or Krasnoi (names which resonated with her). Many riders were gathered in this place. It was early in the morning, with scattered snow on the ground, so possibly the Battle of Krasnoi, which was fought November 15–18, when Napoleon was retreating from Moscow. The guard held his horse's reins in his left hand with his saber forward in his right, awaiting the order to charge. Then they were galloping down the valley. He saw a horse and rider fall in front of him. Something hit his back, his horse stumbled, and he fell off. At this point, the vision coincided with E.C.'s regression memory of the guard lying on the ground in the cold, concerned with the whereabouts of his horse. He would have been about 46 at his death.

At the time memories of the Cossack guard began to surface, E.C. knew little about Russian history or geography. When she started to read articles in Wikipedia and other online sources in the middle of March 2022, they struck her as inaccurate and not very interesting, focused on the wrong issues. She reacted viscerally to certain names, such as Platon Zubov, who, she learned later, was only interested in power and money and acted badly when Catherine was dying. E.C. watched her first video about Napoleon's invasion of Russia on April 1. Subsequently, she discovered more scholarly materials in lectures posted to YouTube. Many of these were in Russian, but she was able to follow them with English subtitles and came to appreciate why she had the reactions to the people and events she did. She started studying Russian online partly to understand the words of Cossack songs but also because she liked the sound of the language. She purchased a Russian-French dictionary and a biography of Catherine the Great on May 9, 2022.

After the anniversary of John David Smith's death on August 11, visions of the Cossack guard dominated E.C.'s mind. Increasingly, she felt impelled to watch videos about St. Petersburg and came to think of Russia, not the United States or France, as her country. She became convinced that one of her quarter horses was the reincarnation of the guard's dark bay, which was the reincarnation

of his mare. On August 29, she messaged a friend that she had had the name “Tsaritsyn” in her head at night. A web search determined that, until 1925, this had been the name of the city now called Volgograd, on the upper Volga. A picture of the surrounding steppe terrain showed a gently sloping field with yellow grass, exactly what she had imagined in her February 2022 meditation.¹⁰ Don Cossack families had lived in this area during the 18th century.¹¹

E.C. was increasingly confident in the accuracy of her visions and impressions, but felt that something was missing. She did not possess a Cossack saber, a shashka. She ordered a replica of an 1881 Don Cossack design forged in Samara, upstream from Volgograd on the Volga. When she opened the package, she was simultaneously delighted and disappointed, because it was not “her” shashka. Nonetheless, there was a sense of familiarity about the weapon; she knew how to wield it, as if she had a somatic memory for the gesture. E.C. had enrolled in an online course teaching the Cossack sword dance, flankirovka. When she pulled the shashka from its scabbard, she felt as if she were the Cossack guard. In practicing the sword dance, she was better able to lift and swing her right arm, and could do so without pain. This exercise has become a central part of her physical therapy.

E.C. considers the Cossack guard to be her “soul’s” favorite life, partly because of its connection to horses, but also because she senses the guard was a good man who enjoyed life; was pleased with all the beautiful things he saw; was always optimistic, faithful, and honest; and never mourned the family he left as a boy, except in his last moments while going to battle. At the same time, E.C. worries that in telling his story, she is violating a pledge

of confidence. Although she has told me little about the Cossack’s work as a guard, other than a recurring dream of walking through the Catherine Palace corridors, she relates that in a hypnagogic state in December 2022, she kept saying aloud: “I can’t talk about that, I promised. I promised I won’t talk about what I saw, what I heard in the palace. What happened in St. Petersburg stays in St. Petersburg. I have sworn.” When she finally fell asleep at about 4 a.m., she dreamed about the park outside the palace at Tsarskoe Selo.

Fragments of Five Lives (2021–2022)

Between late November or early December 2021 and May 2002, E.C. had visions and impressions of five additional lives. The first visions surfaced unbidden during a music meditation. She was a trader riding a horse along a path through a forest, leading pack horses. They were set upon by thieves, who attacked the trader, killed his horse, and stole the goods he was carrying. From the atmospherics and the name Knud, which she obtained with the help of her pendulum, E.C. deduced that the trader was a Viking and placed this life in a Nordic country during the Middle Ages, the earliest of the seven lives she was to recall.

At the end of February 2022, E.C. wrote to her best friend about another life that appeared when she undertook a regression in hopes of recalling more about John David Smith. She entered the regression thinking about Smith but was surprised with images of a military parade through a city. The citizens were excited and seemingly happy, but they were waving Nazi flags. There were Nazi flags flying from surrounding buildings as well. E.C. was

Table 2. Reverse Chronology of E.C.’s Ostensible Past Lives

Dates	Life Ostensibly Recalled	Conditions of Recall
Aug. 9, 1968–	E.C. (present life), born in France	
Oct. 4, 1941–Aug.11, 1966	John David Smith, U.S. Marine, died at Clark Air Base in Philippines after being wounded in Vietnam.	recurring dream; music meditation; pendulum-assisted; guided meditation; regression; waking flashback; intuitive impression
c. 1920–c. 1940	Austro-Hungarian orphan, immigrated to US in 1938, died about age 20, perhaps of tuberculosis.	regression; recurring dream; music meditation; intuitive impression
c. 1897–1914/15	Canadian man killed in WWI in Europe, probably in France.	guided meditation; dream; intuitive impression
19th century?	Native American healer, perhaps Lakota.	music meditation with native American drums, flute, and singing
c. 1766–1812	Don Cossack in Russian Imperial Guard who died fighting Napoleon’s army in 1812.	music meditation; regression; hypnagogic visualization, dream, recurrent dream; music meditation; intuitive impression
No later than mid-1700s	Young man on Ua Pou, Marquesas Islands (French Polynesia), before arrival of Europeans.	music meditation; guided meditation; regression; intuitive impression
Late 700s–late 1000s	Viking trader in Nordic country.	music meditation; regression; pendulum

able to relate these images to a video of Hitler's arrival in Vienna in March 1938,¹² then through recurring dreams, music meditations, and intuitive impressions, constructed the narrative of an orphaned Austro-Hungarian Jewish boy who was living with his grandparents in Vienna, but in 1939 was sent to the United States for his own protection. The boy seems to have died in the U.S. at about age 20, perhaps of tuberculosis. E.C. sensed that the boy's mother, who would have died around 1922, was reincarnated in 1926 as her own mother.

Early in March 2022, while listening to Native American music with flute and drums for relaxation and meditation, E.C. saw an image of a Native American woman she felt to be herself, seated at the summit of a hill. She could see the stars in the sky above and the tepees and campfires of her village along a river in the valley below. In a second image, the same woman, now older, walked away from the village to collect medicinal herbs, but when she returned, all of her people, together with their dogs and ponies, were dead. E.C. described these memories on Bowman's forum on March 7. On March 19, she discussed them with a friend conversant with North American native culture, who told her that they were consistent with the Lakota, famous for their vision quests. Although it was mostly men who undertook this activity, women were not barred from it.

E.C. had long been attracted by the interior landscape of the Hawaiian Islands, with its craggy peaks and dense rainforests. She had the sense that Smith had visited Hawaii, perhaps en route to Vietnam, although she could find no record of this travel. Toward the end of April or beginning of May 2022, she encountered a friend she had not seen in some time. He had been living on Tahiti, in French Polynesia. Reflecting on what he told her about it, E.C. began to have the feeling that she, too, had once lived in that region.¹³ On May 2, she told her best friend that she had narrowed the area down to the Marquesas Islands and, on the following day, started watching YouTube videos about the archipelago. She watched her first video of the Marquesas on May 3 and discovered that the images fit the culture of native people of these islands, then found a video with a scene on Ua Pou which depicted the waterfalls in a forest, mountain of dark gray rocks, and river that had repeatedly come to her mind during her music meditations.¹⁴ It was a well-known spiritual retreat on the island. E.C. felt that her visions related to a period at the very beginning of contact with Europeans, no later than the mid-1700s.

The Ua Pou life was the fourth life preceding John David Smith, of which E.C. had become aware. She decided to arrange the lives in sequence, and she told her best friend on May 18. Noticing that there appeared to be a

gap between the Native American healer and the Austro-Hungarian orphan, she inquired of her pendulum if she had lived another life then. Assured that she had, she turned to her favorite guided meditation to learn about it. When prompted to visualize an important event in this life, she imagined a man of around 30 and a black-haired woman in a claw-foot bathtub. The woman, whom E.C. sensed was not his wife, called the man "Andy." After dressing in a military uniform, including a cap with a badge and an unusually broad brim, Andy took his leave. In the next scene, he was on a dock with many people, saying goodbye to a young, blonde woman holding a baby in her arms. E.C. knew this woman to be Andy's wife. They were Canadian. Andy turned and boarded what appeared to be a cargo ship carrying horses along with a variety of materiel. In the final scene, he was in a muddy trench at night, with explosions sounding around him. There was one last blast, then silence.

With Andy, E.C. had had enough of guided meditation and regression to learn about past lives. Each life had its own affective tone, and the combined effect of so many different lives surfacing close together, at times overlapping, left her emotionally drained and physically exhausted. She stopped using the technique for a while and then undertook a final regression on July 3, 2022, after having been asked to recommend a YouTube regression video. The images she saw at that time concerned John David Smith but included no new memories. Afraid of seeing things she did not want to see when she closed her eyes, E.C. also gave up her music meditations, but memories of Smith and visions relating to the Cossack guard continued to surface spontaneously in her waking state thereafter.

A CLOSER LOOK AT E.C.'S PAST-LIFE RECALL

The seven ostensible lives recalled by E.C. are listed in reverse chronological order in Table 2. The conditions under which the confirmed memories, unconfirmed visions, and intuitive impressions emerged are given as well. The number of lives is not unusual for an adult rememberer, nor is the global hopscotching uncommon for a Western case. Only the most recent life is confirmed, and we should not assume the rest are accurately recalled. They are superficially plausible, however, and if we examine the sequence provisionally, we see that it is not as great a departure from recognized patterns as appears at first glance. Although there is no evident reason the Cossack guard should reincarnate as a Native American healer, the next three lives lead logically from one to another, given the tendency to be reborn in the general vicinity of one's death. The healer returns as a Canadian man who dies in Europe during World War I. His next life is in Europe, but

Table 3. Subliminal Influences on E.C.’s Behavior, Personality, and Emotions

Date	Type	Influence	Past-Life Source
John David Smith			
From early childhood	Behavioral	Preferred boyish activities, felt wrong in girl’s attire.	Smith was male.
From early childhood	Emotional	Attracted to name David.	Smith was known by his middle name, David.
From early childhood	Behavioral	Fascinated with helicopters, looked for them to fly in her direction.	When Smith was fatally injured, medevac helicopter was delayed.
From 1987	Somatic	Chronic phantom pain on left side.	Smith was shot from the left.
From c. 1987	Behavioral	Whistles Marine Corps hymn while riding horse on trails.	Smith would have been familiar with the Marine Corps hymn.
1988	Behavioral, emotional	Sought to enlist in French military, devastated when rejected for medical reasons.	Smith enlisted in both Army and Marine Corps.
1988-1989	Behavioral, emotional	Preoccupied with Vietnam War, decorated room with pictures of helicopters and fighter planes.	Appropriate for Smith.
2010-2018	Behavioral, emotional	Works in French aerospace and defense industry.	Smith’s career in Marine Corps would have made him familiar with aircraft.
1990	Emotional	Has panic attack when trip to Colorado is proposed.	Smith was fatally wounded during Operation Colorado.
1990	Emotional	Purchases souvenir pin depicting UH-1 Huey helicopters.	Appropriate for Smith.
1990, June	Emotional	Distressed upon leaving the USA to return to France.	Smith died before returning to the USA from Vietnam.
From Oct. 23, 2022	Behavioral	Builds American ranch house.	Unknown if this is specific to Smith
	Behavioral	Enjoys listening to oldies radio stations from NJ; is especially fond of songs from late 1950s, early 1960s.	Smith was from NJ.
From Oct. 23, 2022	Behavioral	Begins to eat plain peanut butter sandwiches on white bread.	Unknown, but possible for Smith.
From Oct. 23, 2022	Linguistic	Begins to swear spontaneously in English.	Unknown, but possible for Smith.
From Oct. 23, 2022	Behavioral, linguistic	Inspired to sing the Marine Corps hymn every morning.	Appropriate for Smith
After Oct. 23, 2022	Emotional	Strong reactions to images, words related to Vietnam War, especially circumstances of Smith’s death.	Appropriate for Smith.
2022, Dec. 5	Emotional	Dreams of flying back to US and meeting Smith’s family at airport.	Shows continuing identification with Smith.
2022, Dec. 25	Emotional	Dreams of talking to Smith’s older brother Bill.	Shows continuing identification with Smith.
Cossack Guard			
c. 1970	Behavioral	Favorite toys are farm animals, especially horses.	Farm animals, especially horses, were central features of the family life of the Cossack guard.
c. 1970	Behavioral	As toddler, rode family sofa as if it were a horse.	Riding was a central feature of the life of the Cossack guard.
From early 1980s	Behavioral	Likes trail riding, dislikes show jumping and dressage.	Appropriate to Cossack guard.
From mid 1980s	Behavioral	Collects horse-related artefacts.	Shows strong concern with horses, appropriate to Cossack guard.
From Dec. 1986	Somatic	Phantom pain in back	The Cossack guard was fatally shot in the back.
From 1987	Behavioral	Preference for Western-style riding.	Western-style riding is similar to Cossack style in holding reins with one hand rather than both hands.
1990-2016	Behavioral	Chooses horse breeding as career.	The Cossack guard’s family were horse breeders.
From 2022	Emotional	Strong reactions to images, words related to Cossacks and Russia at time of Catherine the Great.	Appropriate for Cossack guard.
2022	Behavioral	Impelled to stand when hears “Let the Thunder of Victory Rumble!”	Appropriate for Cossack guard.

he immigrates to the United States and is reborn there. John David Smith died in the Philippines and was reborn in France, but if E.C. is correct in her intuition that her mother is the reincarnation of the Austro-Hungarian orphan’s mother, this conforms to other patterns—the importance of personal links between lives and the ten-

dency for there to be a motive for reincarnating abroad in international cases (Haraldsson & Matlock, 2016, pp. 232–235).

Conditions of Past-Life Recall

In *Signs of Reincarnation* (Matlock, 2019), I theorized that memories are registered in the subconscious stratum of mind and carried forward to a new incarnation when a stream of consciousness possesses a new body. After reincarnation, past-life memories remain in the subconscious unless drawn into conscious awareness. With children, past-life memories most often surface in waking awareness, less commonly in nocturnal dreams or altered states of consciousness. With adults, dreams and altered states play a larger role, and apparent past-life memories may be induced through age regressions or other means. E.C. is unusual in having a good number of intuitive impressions, which help place her fragmentary autobiographical memories in the context of other life events, amounting to what memory researcher Michael Conway (2005) called “autobiographical knowledge” of the lives in question.

The distinction between involuntary (for E.C., waking, hypnagogic, dream, music meditation, intuitive impression) and induced (guided meditation, past-life regression, pendulum-assisted) recall is important, because the two classes are associated with different degrees of evidential strength. Involuntary memories have proven far more reliable than induced ones (Matlock, 2019; Mills & Tucker, 2013). This is especially clear in cases with both involuntary and induced memories (Matlock, 2019, p. 219). In childhood, Jenny Cockell had a recurrent nightmare of being struck by a large vehicle. During a past-life regression in adulthood, she imagined a death due to illness. The regression included a name, which enabled her to obtain a death certificate—but this recorded a cause of death that matched Cockell’s childhood dream, rather than her regression (Cockell, 2008, p. 270).

Induced past-life memories may be distorted by the subconscious as a psychological defense, I have proposed (Matlock, 2019, p. 222). Involuntary memories arise with the acquiescence of the subconscious, but the attempt to elicit memories engenders an effort to protect the conscious psyche from reexperiencing traumatic events, such as deaths. There may be an example of this dynamic in E.C.’s memories of John David Smith. In her waking flashback of jumping up the steps of his house, she had the image of a two-story clapboard house, but in a guided meditation, when asked to visualize the house in which she lived, she saw a larger three-story dwelling. The possibility of distortion is why we should regard all unverified images as visions, rather than as memories. They may be compromised memories, but we cannot pinpoint where the inaccuracies lie without knowing the underlying truth.

E.C. reports that her past-life images present from both field and observer perspectives. She can begin a memory or vision viewing a scene from the inside (field

perspective), then see herself from the outside (observer perspective). The field perspective predominates in her waking and dream images, whereas field and observer perspectives are about evenly represented in regressions and guided meditations. With the exception of the Native American healer, memories and visions of all lives surfaced both spontaneously and through induction procedures. Although it is not clear that the order of conditions of recall influenced the recall, their order is preserved in Table 2.

Subliminal Influences on Behavior, Personality, and Emotions

Past-life memories are not exclusively declarative and explicit; they have implicit dimensions as well (Matlock, 2019). This would make sense if memories are recorded in the subconscious mind—there would then be no reason they should not influence a case subject subliminally. Particularly interesting are the unconscious impacts on E.C. before October 23, 2021, when the first episodic memories of John David Smith entered her awareness, and the persistence of her identification with Smith and the Cossack guard after she ended attempts to induce memories of her previous lives. The non-conscious subliminal influences (implicit memories) that may be traced to Smith and the Cossack guard are listed in Table 3.

From early childhood, E.C. felt more like a boy than a girl. She preferred to play with boys and resisted dressing in a feminine way; when made to wear girls’ clothes and make-up, she felt as though she were in disguise. This sort of gender nonconformity is common in reincarnation cases with a change of sex between lives (Pehlivanova et al., 2018; Wehrstein, 2019b) and is what we should expect, given that John David Smith was male. Indeed, E.C. was male in all but one of her recalled (or imagined) previous lives.

Other influences from Smith’s life may be seen in E.C.’s early fascination with helicopters, especially her going out on her apartment balcony to look for them when she heard them in her vicinity. She hoped they would fly her way and was disappointed when they did not, a reaction she understood only when she learned that heavy rain had delayed medevac helicopters from reaching the Marines after Smith had been fatally wounded. For no evident reason, she became fascinated with the Vietnam War shortly after her NDE and decorated her dorm room with pictures of helicopters and fighter planes. She began to dress in full camouflage attire. She sought to enlist in the French military and later found employment in the aerospace and defense industry. She was in the habit of whistling the Marine Corps hymn long before she realized

Table 4. Principal Cues to E.C.’s Past-Life Memories, Visions, and Intuitive Impressions

Date	Modality	Cue	Reference
John David Smith			
Early 1970s	Auditory	Name “David.”	John David Smith went by his middle name.
Early 1970s	Auditory	Sound of helicopter may have been start of memory incubation process.	Medevac helicopter was delayed in reaching Smith after he was wounded.
Apr. 1, 1990	Experiential	Riding in Ford Mustang convertible with top down, listening to radio.	Unverified in relation to Smith, but the rushing air could have been reminiscent of helicopter rides.
early May 1990	Auditory	Proposal to visit Colorado.	Smith was fatally injured during Operation Colorado.
June 9, 1990	Experiential	Visiting McConnell Air Force Base.	Smith would have been familiar with the culture of American military installations from serving in the Army and Marine Corps.
2009–2017	Visual	Photographs of airplanes and helicopters on office walls.	Aircraft would have had a prominent role in Smith’s Marine Corps experience.
Feb. 2021	Experiential	Injury to arm after being dragged by horse.	Smith injured his arm in a clothes wringer when he was a child.
Feb. 2022	Experiential, auditory	While driving across Loire to Orléans and listening to oldies radio broadcast, has sense that she is driving across the Ben Franklin Bridge to Philadelphia.	Unverified for Smith, but Ben Franklin Bridge connects Camden, NJ, to Philadelphia and is a route Smith might have driven.
July 2, 2022	Visual, auditory	YouTube video about Operation Harvest Moon prompts reactions to “ambush,” “sniper,” and “machine gun.”	Operation Harvest Moon was conducted in the same area as Operation Colorado, during which Smith was fatally wounded.
July 23, 2022	Auditory	Mention of Da Nang in an episode of <i>NCIS</i> prompts cry of “I want to go home!”	The air base at Da Nang was used by the U.S. military to fly personnel in and out of Vietnam during the war.
Aug. 23, 2022	Unclear	Viewing episode of <i>Hawaii 5-0</i> prompts line from Marine Corps Rifle Creed.	As a Marine, Smith would have been familiar with the Rifle Creed.
Cossack Guard			
From early 1970s	Experiential	Horseback riding.	Riding was a central feature of the life of the Cossack guard.
1984	Visual	American quarter horse show in Paris.	Americans ride Western style, holding the reins in one hand, similar to the Cossack style of riding.
Dec. 1986	Experiential	Falling off sulky after horse was spooked.	The Cossack guard fell off his horse when shot from behind.
1990–2015	Experiential	Horse breeding.	The Cossack guard’s family were horse breeders.
2022	Experiential	Holding glass of vodka distilled in St. Petersburg.	triggered a memory. I was in a long dark room, standing with other people in uniform, around a long table and we were singing while holding glasses.

what it was. While in Wichita in 1990, she suffered a panic attack when invited to visit the state of Colorado, unbeknownst to her the name of the operation in which Smith was fatally wounded.

Twice while listening to American popular music in cars, E.C. experienced brief dissociations in which she felt she was Smith. She particularly enjoyed oldies from the late 1950s and early 1960s, a period appropriate for Smith. She took to eating peanut butter sandwiches on white bread, a quintessentially American meal. Her spontaneous use of English when recalling scenes from Smith’s life and adoption of English-language profanities is noteworthy as well—these might be included under the heading of xenoglossy, or unlearned language, which sometimes appears in reincarnation cases (Matlock, 2017b; 2019, pp. 142–143), E.C.’s fluency in English notwithstanding.

At the same time, other behaviors reflect influences from the Cossack guard. Horses were among E.C.’s favor-

ite childhood toys and as soon as she was able to do so, she rode the arm of her family sofa as if it were a horse. She later took up riding and collected horse-related artifacts, then made a career of horse breeding, even though there was no model for these activities in her family. She preferred trail riding to show jumping and dressage, and her riding style tended toward the Western rather than the English, which was in line with the Cossack one-handed style. After her NDE, she permanently adopted the Western style. E.C. continues to search online auctions and antique sites for what she recalls was “her” shashka (which had a distinctively carved hilt), but when she pulls the one she purchased from its scabbard, she has the sense that she is the Cossack guard. She has an intuitive understanding of how to swing the saber, a procedural memory enactment of a skillful behavior sometimes seen in reincarnation cases (Matlock, 2017a; 2019, p. 140).

After her NDE, E.C. began to experience chronic pain in her left side and in her back. This worsened after 2018,

but doctors were unable to determine a cause for it. Phantom pains are known to be associated with amputations of limbs in the present life; when similar pains appear in reincarnation cases, they typically are related to injuries to the past-life body (Matlock, 2019, p. 157). So it is with E.C.—John David Smith we know was shot from the left, and E.C. believes that the Cossack guard was shot in the back. With acknowledgment of the past-life experiential source, this fits well with the model advanced by Gentsch and Kuehn (2022), in which “negative bodily experiences of the past that are stored in memory and influence behavior, contribute to the development of somatic manifestations of mental health problems including somatic symptoms, traumatic re-experiences or dissociative symptoms.”

E.C. assesses her continuing identification with Smith and the Cossack guard to be equally strong, although there is considerably more emotion involved with Smith. When recalling the Cossack guard, she is not given to violent bouts of crying, as comes with remembering Smith. The crying fits are often accompanied by chest and back pains and insomnia. They were brought on in November and December 2022 by my requests to confirm dates and other details of her experiences, which necessitated re-viewing previously triggering materials. The chief issues expressed in these reactions are Smith’s desire to return home and his regret that he did not fulfill his promise to kill the enemy before it killed him. E.C. thinks that, before he deployed, he also promised his sister Joyce that he would return home safely. She has the sense that Smith was emotionally immature in comparison with the Cossack guard and the other personalities she has recalled.

On the night of December 4, 2022, E.C. dreamed that she (as E.C.) was flying to the United States, where she was met at the airport by one of Smith’s sisters and other members of his family. She hugged the sister, saying, “I’m back!” and awoke, in tears.

Memory Cues

Cues are critical in evoking involuntary past-life memories. They are not always noticeable with young children, but become more apparent as subjects age (Matlock, 1989, 2019). E.C.’s case is unusual for the series of cues from early childhood and the relatively long period before the memories began to surface in her conscious awareness. In most cases, past-life memories surface soon after a triggering stimulus. Occasionally there is an incubation period, but in no other reported case is it so long. The next longest occurred with Rylann O’Bannon, who began to behave as if she had subliminal memories at around 12 months. She first put words to them at 41

months but did not recall them clearly until she was ten years old (Matlock, 2019, pp. 22–23, 28–29).¹⁵

The various cues to E.C.’s past-life memory of John David Smith and visions of the Cossack guard are listed in Table 4. Apart from her recurring dream of walking through the dark forest, E.C. had no episodic memories of Smith until the music meditation when she was 53. Her visions of the Cossack guard began during a music meditation when she was the same age. With both lives, there were significant cues beginning when E.C. was much younger. The name “David” and the sound of helicopters impacted her in childhood. Being around horses in her teens might well have reminded her subliminally of the Cossack guard, and falling off the sulky prompted a response (worrying about her horse) very similar to that of the guard at his presumed death. Another cluster of cues (to recall Smith’s life) is associated with E.C.’s internship in Wichita in 1990. Following her internship, she began celebrating the July 4 Independence Day annually by drinking a Budweiser beer, signaling an increasingly strong unconscious identification with Smith.

After identifying Smith in October 2021, E.C. experienced a more immediate response to cues. In February 2022, while driving over the Loire to Orléans, listening to an oldies radio broadcast from New Jersey on her smartphone, for a few seconds, she had the sense that she was driving across the Ben Franklin Bridge from Camden to Philadelphia. On July 2, she wrote to Benjamin Bagley about a strong reaction she had to a YouTube video documentary about Operation Harvest Moon, which had been fought in December 1965 in the same part of the Que Son Valley as Operation Colorado. Mention of Ky Phu and the words “ambush,” “sniper,” and machine gun” made her burst into tears, and she heard herself exclaiming aloud in English, “Why? Don’t make me walk on the left side of the road! Help me, Help me!” On July 23, the mention of Da Nang in an episode of *NCIS* (Season 12, Episode 7) prompted her to cry, “I want to go home!” A month later, on August 23, something in an episode of *Hawaii 5-0* brought her to quote a line from the Marine Corps Rifle Creed, “I must shoot him before he shoots me, I will,” followed by, “I broke my promise. I’m sorry.”

E.C. evinced interest in horses and horseback riding spontaneously from early childhood, but as she grew older, she encountered circumstances that might have reminded her subliminally of the Cossack life. After her family purchased the weekend house on the Loire, she spent her spare time near the river, playing, fishing, and later riding her horse. Although she has the sense that the guard’s family did not live on the Volga, they would have been near enough to it for him to have been acquainted with the river. The guard spent his adult life in St. Peters-

burg near another river, the Neva. E.C. was already riding in 1984 when she attended an American quarter horse show in Paris and observed the Western manner of holding reins. This was different from the English style she had been taught, but in its one-handed technique, reminiscent of the Cossack style. Her decision to breed horses following her sulky accident and NDE could have been influenced by subliminal awareness that the guard's family were horse breeders, but her career choice would, in turn, have acted as an ongoing reminder of that life.

E.C. found that viewing pictures of places or hearing music or words could trigger visions or emotions. The many videos of St. Petersburg and the Catherine Palace she watched after her visions of the Cossack life began never failed to induce reactions, but there were other cues too. Holding a glass of vodka distilled in St. Petersburg triggered the apparent memory of being in a long, dark room, standing with other people in uniform around a long table, holding glasses of vodka and boisterously singing, "Let the Thunder of Victory Rumble!" the informal national anthem of Catherine's day. E.C. located a recording of the Russian "Гром победы, раздавайся!" on YouTube. After listening to the song once, she found that she could intone it without reference to the score or lyrics.

Another surprise came in connection to the last of the foals born before she was forced to give up breeding in 2016. It was a filly E.C. named Princess. Although Princess was a purebred Western Pleasure quarter horse with World and European champions as grandsires, she moved like a trotter, characteristic of a Cossack don. By the Spring of 2022, E.C. was in the habit of playing and singing Cossack songs while cleaning stalls in the morning. Most of the horses went to the paddock in front of the stables to eat grass or hay, but Princess, and Princess alone, stood at the fence intently observing, ears forward. On March 6, E.C. told her best friend about a new development. She had begun studying Russian, and that morning, when she had gone to clean the stables, she had greeted Princess unthinkingly with the phrase, "Привет моя душенька!" "Hello my darling!" It was then that it occurred to her that Princess was the reincarnation of the Cossack guard's dark bay and mare.

Princess always regards E.C. attentively when E.C. speaks to her in Russian. When she looks at Princess, E.C. feels as if she is perceiving herself as if in the Cossack life; it is the same when Princess looks at her. There is something about Princess's eyes that seems to give her away. She has a presence, a kind of magnetism, that E.C. does not sense with her other horses. Princess is also the only horse who stays near, unafraid, when E.C. practices flankirovka with her shashka. E.C. has the definite

feeling that they were together first in her Viking trader life, when Princess was the trader's horse. E.C. says she does not know why the horse would be with her again, but speculates that it has to do with the Cossack guard's worrying about him as he lay dying. E.C. is certain that her love of horses derives from her past lives because no one in her present family has any concern for them.

Memory Verifications

With children's reincarnation cases, it is customary to list past-life memory claims and indicate whether statements are correct, incorrect, or unverifiable in reference to an identified previous person. In many adult cases, items to be verified must be abstracted from written texts or other materials because adults tend not to talk about their memories as children commonly do. E.C.'s case is no different from other adult cases in this respect. The statements in Table 5 are drawn from E.C.'s apparent memories and intuitive impressions about John David Smith.

The Cossack guard and other lives are omitted from Table 5 because, with unsolved cases, it is impossible to determine which memory claims are correct and which are incorrect in reference to a particular deceased person. The contours of all the lives E.C. seemed to recall are plausible, and certain aspects of them are confirmed, but the confirmed features are of a general nature and do not prove the existence of the previous persons. It is known that there were Don Cossack horse breeders on the upper Volga in the 18th century; Don Cossacks were included in the Russian Imperial Guard under Catherine the Great and Alexander I; and Don Cossacks fought and died defending Russia from Napoleon's army in 1812. If records from that period have survived, it may be possible to establish that Igor Ivanovitch existed, but this is by no means a certainty. The other lives have fewer clues to follow up, and it is difficult to see how any can be properly assessed.

E.C.'s memories of John David Smith surfaced under a variety of conditions—during guided meditation and past-life regression, in meditation to music, in hypnagogic states and in dreams, in waking flashbacks, and as intuitive impressions. Many, although not all, of these memories were recorded in writing by E.C. shortly after she recalled them. They are listed in Table 5, along with the dates and conditions under which they were recalled and their verification status. Web page URLs or other sources of verification that are footnoted in the text are not repeated in Table 5. The dates show that E.C. remembered many things about Smith before verifying them in online sources. Some items were verified the same day as they were recalled, but, as discussed above, at a later

Table 5. Verification Status of E.C.’s Memories of John David Smith

		Memory Claim		Verification		
Date	Condition	Memory	Date	Status	Comment	
Early 1970s	Intuition	Affinity for name David.	Oct. 25, 2021	Correct	Smith was known by his middle name, per his sister Joyce Hammel.	
Early 1970s	Recurring dream	Walk through dark forest taking care not to be seen or heard.		Unverified		
Middle to late 1980s	Recurring dream	Seeing a military transport plane crash in watery terrain.		Unverified	Possibly Fairchild UC-123B Provider crash on June 18, 1966.	
Oct. 23, 2021	Pendulum	Her name had been John David Smith.	Oct. 23, 2021	Correct	Name verified on Wall of Faces profile.	
Oct. 23, 2021	Music meditation	View of landing strip from above with names Chu Lai and Dan Nang.	Nov. 27, 2021	Correct	Scene matches Chu Lai, Vietnam, where there was a Marine base 1965-70.	
Oct. 23, 2021	Regression	Lying in cot, writing letters home.	Oct. 25, 2021	Presumed correct	Joyce Hammel noted that Smith wrote many letters home.	
Oct. 23, 2021	Regression	Shot walking through paddy field ...	Feb.16, 2022	Correct	Smith’s company was walking through a rice paddy at the time Smith was shot.	
Oct. 23, 2021	Regression	... to left of road.	Feb.16, 2022	Correct	The rice paddy was to left of a road.	
Oct. 23, 2021	Regression	Shot in left side.	Feb.16, 2022	Presumed correct	Sniper fire came from the left.	
Oct. 23, 2021	Regression	During heavy rain.	Oct. 23, 2021	Correct	Mentioned by W. Killian in Wall of Faces Reminiscence.	
Oct. 23, 2021	Regression	Someone named Larry was shot before him.	Oct. 23, 2021	Partially unverified, likely correct	Killian mentions that PFC Lawrence J. Kindred was among the fatalities, but it is not known if he was shot before Smith.	
Oct. 23, 2021	Regression	He was lying wounded in a tent, surrounded by medical personal.		Unverified, but likely correct	Smith would have been airlifted to base at Chu Lai before Clark AB.	
Oct. 23, 2021	Regression	A crew member from the medevac helicopter which rescued him lying dead on a stretcher.	Oct. 23, 2021	Unverified, but likely correct	Killian mentions that Robert T. Walsh, a gunner on the medivac helicopter that evacuated Smith was shot during medical evacuation.	
Oct. 23, 2021	Regression	He died in a well-lit modern facility.	Nov. 5, 2021	Correct	Smith died at Clark AB in the Philippines on Aug. 11, 1966.	
Fall-winter 2021	Waking flashback	As a child, he played a game hopping up steps of his house.		Unverified		
Fall-winter 2021	Waking flashback	It was a two-story clapboard house.		Unverified		
Fall-winter 2021	Guided meditation	His house was a gray three-story clapboard house.		Unverified		
Fall-winter 2021	Waking flashback	When he was 4-5, he had a birthday party at which he was sitting at a table with many sisters.		Partially verified	Joyce Hammel said Smith had 7 sisters.	
Fall-winter 2021	Waking flashback	Smiling woman behind him was holding a baby girl in her arms.		Unverified		
Fall-winter 2021	Waking flashback	Scolded because on a winter day he had lost his gloves and was hiding his hands behind his back rather than confess.		Unverified		
Fall-winter 2021	Waking flashback	His older brother Bill was upstairs and at first did not want to come down.		Unverified		
Fall-winter 2021	Waking flashback	Young boy holding bat at baseball game, family watching him play.		Unverified		
Fall-winter 2021	Waking flashback	Glimpses of being on a military ship at night, no lights, looking at the sea, the sky and other ships side by side everything is quiet.		Unverified		
From fall 2021	Intuition	Feeling that Smith visited Hawaii at some point.		Unverified		
Fall-winter 2021	Intuition	He had not done well in school.		Unverified		
Fall-winter 2021	Intuition	He had enjoyed playing pranks.		Unverified		
Fall-winter 2021	Intuition	He had been punished for locking another child in a room and swearing he had not done it.		Unverified		
Fall-winter 2021	Intuition	Was always looking for attention.		Unverified		
Fall-winter 2021	Intuition	Expression “my second mom”		Unverified		
Fall-winter 2021	Intuition	He was jealous of his older brother Bill.		Unverified		
Fall-winter 2021	Intuition	He was repeatedly told not to annoy his oldest brother, perhaps due to health issues.		Unverified		
Fall-winter 2021	Waking flashback	When he told his father he was joining the Marine Corps, his father did not put down his newspaper but said, “Have you told your mother.”		Unverified		
Fall-winter 2021	Waking flashback	Before deployment, a young nephew asked him, “Uncle Dave, are you going to kill people?”		Unverified		

time. For instance, E.C. recalled Smith’s name and details of how he had died some hours before confirming their

accuracy on October 23, 2021.

Of the 33 items listed, none have been shown to be



incorrect. Thirteen are correct, likely correct, presumed correct, or partially verified; 20 are entirely unverified. Several confirmed memories surfaced during past-life regression or guided meditation, contrary to what might be expected. However, veridical past-life memories sometimes appear with induction procedures, especially when involuntary memories of the same life emerge either before or after the regressions (Matlock, 2019, p. 220). Moreover, not all of E.C.'s induced visions have been shown to be valid; it may turn out that the guided meditation image of the three-story Smith family home, currently unverified, is incorrect.

It has not yet been possible to determine the basis of E.C.'s recurring dreams of walking through a dark forest and crash of a military transport plane in watery terrain, but in her research, E.C. discovered that a Fairchild UC-123B Provider was shot down by small arms fire while on a defoliation mission, crash landing in a rice paddy near Tam Kỳ, not far from Chu Lai, on June 18, 1966.¹⁶ E.C. thinks Smith may have observed the crash while on patrol in the area.

The other unverified items are mostly of a personal nature and can only be evaluated by Smith's surviving family members who, unfortunately, have chosen not to cooperate with this study. Early in May 2023, I wrote to three of Smith's sisters and three of his nieces whom E.C. had identified on Facebook. E.C. had had some written contact with some of these persons, but had not confessed to having memories of their brother or uncle. When writing to them, I attached a PDF document that included drafts of four sections of this paper: "E.C.'s Early Years (1968–1976)," "NDE and Aftermath (1986–1990)," "Renewed Trauma (2015–2021)," and "John David Smith (2021–2022)." None of Smith's sisters responded to my inquires, nor did two of his nieces. I received only a single response, from his niece Barbara Groves, on May 5:

Hello. I'll be honest, I really don't know to react to this and I am not sure how you found me. I'm not one to believe in this kind of thing although I am a paranormal author. I am torn between relaying this message to my family or just letting it go. I read the report and most of this info is readily available online. So, that makes me so inclined as to say the lady does not have good information or intentions for my family. Thanks.

Groves admits to a disbelief in past-life memory, which evidently prevents her from assessing E.C.'s claims dispassionately. Groves's response ignores the many behavioral features from E.C.'s early years that are consistent with Smith and the fact that E.C. can show that she

recalled items verified in online sources before verifying them. Groves does not say any of E.C.'s memories of Smith are wrong, only that because many items can be verified online, she supposes that E.C. "does not have good information or intentions for my family." The phrase "or intentions" implies Groves thinks that E.C. is hoping to gain from identifying herself with John David Smith, but why? The family is not well-known, nor, insofar as E.C. and I are aware, are any of its members wealthy. It is hard to understand what Groves imagines E.C.'s motive in identifying with Smith might be, when, if she were after fame or fortune, there are many other more suitable marks. Smith's family's reaction has been a great disappointment to E.C.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Barbara Groves is not alone in suggesting fraud on E.C.'s part. The possibility was also raised by a reviewer of this paper in draft. The reviewer considered it "challenging to believe that [E.C.] didn't read the information about Smith's final mission on the Wall of Faces website when she accessed it before the regression." The reviewer is not the first skeptic to have turned to fraud to explain that which is inexplicable except on the unpalatable alternative of past-life memory (Matlock, 2022d). To be sure, we are reliant on E.C.'s testimony about issues for which she cannot supply dated and time-stamped documents, but to suggest wrongdoing on no basis other than a priori convictions shows the challenges faced by researchers of cases such as hers. The fact that Smith's Wall of Faces page does not provide information about major elements of E.C.'s regression of October 23, 2021, is immaterial to a skeptic determined to explain away any suggestion of past-life memory.¹⁷

"The most straightforward explanation for the correlation between the subject's behaviors and items in her purported memories is that her unconscious mind used pieces and themes in her life to create imagined 'past-life' narratives when she was in her various altered states," the reviewer wrote. Perhaps, but what then is the origin of these behaviors, which have no model in E.C.'s early life? What led her to ride the arm of her family sofa like a horse, when she was a toddler? Why was she so consumed with helicopters as a child that she went out on her apartment balcony whenever she heard one in the sky, hoping it would fly her way? Why did she begin wearing military camouflage clothing following her NDE at 18? All of these behaviors (and other similar ones) seem to have been driven by something internal, but by what, if not by habits carried over from previous lives?

Furthermore, there is the inconvenient matter that

many of E.C.'s apparent memories of Smith turned out to be valid, according to sources accessed well after she recorded them in writing. To take one example, several web pages—including Smith's Wall of Faces profile—state that he was killed in action, inconsistent with E.C.'s impression of his having been treated in two infirmaries, dying in the second, a well-lit, modern facility. In fact, Smith survived his wounds and died at Clark Air Base in the Philippines, to which he would have been airlifted from the Marine Corps base at Chu Lai, Vietnam. The environs of the Chu Lai base resembled the landing strip E.C. visualized during her music meditation, before she recalled the name John David Smith with the aid of her pendulum. It would be far-fetched to think that all these correspondences with Smith's final days were chance creations of E.C.'s subconscious mind, building upon a few elements she read about in Killian's Remembrance comments, supplemented by her earlier life experiences.

Smith is the only one of E.C.'s avowed past-life personalities to be identified with confidence. Uncertainties surround the others, including the Cossack guard. However, if we are to reach a satisfactory understanding of E.C.'s recall of Smith's life, we must take the other lives into account. This means considering E.C.'s case not strictly in a proof-oriented way, as has been traditional in reincarnation research, but attending to process concerns as well. We can do this if we remember that it is not the process of past-life remembering we are looking at, so much as the process of ostensible past-life recall, that is, the conditions under which people have what seem to them to be recollections of previous lives, whether or not these can be shown to be actual previous lives.¹⁸

The process approach I have adopted—an exploration of the nature of past-life visualization and the examination of the steps through which that visualization unfolds—furnishes a bridge between parapsychological interests and those of mainstream psychology (Matlock, 2022c). Like memories of our present lives, declarative past-life memories may be cued by things we see and do, but not all past-life memories are explicit. Many are implicit, expressed through behaviors, and may appear well before explicit memories enter conscious awareness.

There are differences in the ways children and adults recollect and talk about previous lives, but these differences are not absolute; rather, they lie along a developmental continuum (Matlock, 2019). It appears to be harder for past-life memories to surface in adults' conscious minds than children's, so whereas children's memories tend to come in the waking state, and only secondarily in dreams, adults' memories are more likely to arise in dreams and other altered states of consciousness (Wehrstein, 2017). With adults, there may also be a longer incubation period

between cues and the appearance of visions in conscious awareness, and these visions are less likely to be verified and shown to be true memories. Adults are more likely to recall multiple past lives, although few of these lives include sufficient detail to justify investigation and permit verification.

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

To date, most reincarnation research has concerned children, whose cases tend to be evidentially stronger than those of adults, but fully understanding past-life memory requires attending to adults and less evidential phenomena as well. The combined process- and proof-oriented approach taken in this paper demonstrates one way this may be achieved.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ENDNOTES

- 1 Although profound, these changes were not abrupt. After seeing the Western riding style at a quarter horse show in Paris in 1984, E.C. had sometimes ridden with one hand, but after her NDE, this became a permanent change. Her dress preferences also began to manifest before the NDE. A picture of E.C. on her horse in 1985, when she was 17, shows her wearing a camo-patterned scarf, khaki pants rather than riding breeches, and hiking boots rather than riding boots. The shift in clothing style, too, became much more pronounced following the NDE, however.
- 2 See <https://www.vvmf.org/Wall-of-Faces/48359/JOHN-D-SMITH-2/>.
- 3 This account of E.C.'s regression is based on notes she made immediately upon completing the regression before she returned to the internet for further research. Scans of these notes, together with a verbatim translation into English, are presented in the Appendix. Unfortunately, they are undated.
- 4 "Final Mission of Sgt John D. Smith." Posted on 1.12.2018 by W. Killian. <https://www.vvmf.org/Wall-of->

- Faces/48359/JOHN-D-SMITH-2/.
- 5 Following her regression, E.C. searched online and read accounts of Operation Colorado, but none supplied details not included on the Wall of Face's page until November 5, 2021, when she discovered and downloaded an article describing Small Unit Action in Vietnam, Summer 1966, <https://www.usmcu.edu/Portals/218/Small%20Unit%20Action%20In%20Vietnam%20Summer%201966.pdf>. In addition to checking this web page, I obtained West (1967).
 - 6 See <https://www.facebook.com/NJVVMF/photos/a.212053265516270/4263895640331992/?type=3> for Joyce Hammel's account.
 - 7 Smith joined the Marine Corps in 1960, having previously served in the U.S. Army, according to Joyce Hammel in the source cited in Note 5.
 - 8 At the top of Smith's Together We Served profile, he is listed as "KIA-Died of Wounds," but further down the page, it states, "WIA [wounded in action] sniper 10 Aug [1966], DOW [died of wounds] 11 Aug Clark AB Philippines." See: <https://marines.togetherweserved.com/usmc/servlet/tws.webapp.WebApp?cmd=ROHSBV&type=Person&ID=2751>, no. 77. E.C. downloaded this page on November 5, 2021. For images of Clark Air Base during the Vietnam War, see: https://youtu.be/C0mHWfCj_VU.
 - 9 On November 27, 2021, E.C. viewed a video at <https://youtu.be/rpCKWFE27vY>, which shows buildings in a sandy environment (3.44) and buildings with metal roofs (8.00).
 - 10 The photograph appears at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/DzuSmnsDwtip4HMP7>. Tsaritsyn was founded in 1589 and, in 1670, was seized by Don Cossacks under Stenka Razin (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Stenka-Razin>). Although tsarist leaders succeeded in suppressing the revolt, it is entirely conceivable that there were still Don Cossack families living in the area a century later, although any such families would have to have accepted Russian imperial rule.
 - 11 See https://factsanddetails.com/russia/Places/sub9_9d/entry-7058.html.
 - 12 E.C. wrote about this regression in Bowman's forum on March 7 and, that same day, searched for a video of Hitler's arrival in Vienna. The scene in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRSwWuVtHF4> was very much as she had imagined.
 - 13 I spoke to this friend, whose recollections of the interchange with E.C. match hers.
 - 14 See <https://fb.watch/h-BqTS3y-P/>.
 - 15 Other cases with notable incubation periods are Scott Perry (Matlock, 2022a) and James Leininger (Matlock, 2022b), but with neither did more than about 15 months

elapse from the triggering event to the verbalization of related episodic memories.

- 16 See <https://aviation-safety.net/database/record.php?id=19660618-1>.
- 17 The reviewer apparently is referring to Killian's Remembrance on Smith's Wall of Faces page, which E.C. states that she read after her regression, but even if she is misremembering or misrepresenting when she read Killian's comment in relation to writing her regression notes (see Appendix), these would not have supplied all the images and information conveyed in her regression (compare Appendix to text and Table 5). Date stamps on E.C.'s internet downloads show that she verified elements of her meditation and regression over a period of months. No one source contained the information needed to verify all elements of her meditation and regression of October 23, 2021.
- 18 To forestall misunderstanding, I would like to clarify that by a "proof" orientation, I do not mean an effort to "prove" reincarnation. I consider such an effort misguided because science is never about proof but rather about the accumulation of evidence and the testing of theory. Rather, I mean the emphasis on verifying past-life memories, in contrast to understanding how the memories function in the mind and life of the rememberer and other aspects of a case's development.

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APPENDIX

E.C. made these notes immediately after her regression of October 23, 2021, before returning to Smith's Wall of Faces page and reading W. Killian's Remembrance (<https://www.vvmf.org/Wall-of-Faces/48359/JOHN-D-SMITH-2/>). She recorded them quickly, for herself, never contemplating that they would one day be made public.

The following is a verbatim translation of E.C.'s notes. Paragraph breaks are added for ease of reading. Comments are added in brackets. Compare these notes to the account of the regression given in the text. For verifications of various elements, see text and Table 5.

The voice asks me to go to an important moment of this life. I guess I am in a building, no, in a tent, a military tent, one side is open. I am lying on a cot in military clothes. A radio on my right is playing music (from the 60ties ?) but I can't hear well because there is noise.

I am writing a letter, there are people in military clothes (3 or 4), they are playing cards and joking. They are laughing at me because I am writing to my family, not to my wife or girlfriend. They want me to join them but I am busy looking for the good words not to worry my family. I can hear [in English]: "Oh come on, Sarge!" There are other people on the left wearing khaki clothes who are busy. I understand the noise comes from helicopters!

The voice asks to move forward to another important moment. I see everything in gray and dazzling white. I am on a flat road. It's hot and I can feel the weight of the pack on my shoulders. I am not alone and we are walking in a straight line keeping our distance. I have a bad feeling. I don't want to go to the left. It makes me feel uncomfortable to go to the left. But we are told to go to the left so I go there. We are in a kind of rice paddy. I can feel warm and heavy rain. I can hardly

walk. Suddenly gunshots. I look back but run forward to a mound of earth.

I can feel panic, everything goes fast, I realize some have been hit. I can feel the mud, the rain, the lack of ammunition. Someone close to me is hit, Harry? [Note added before viewing Killian's Remembrance account: Larry? Note added after reading Killian's Remembrance account: Laurence [sic] Kindred?] I straighten up a little bit and feel a burn on my left side and I collapse in the water. I can hear a voice [in English]: "Sergeant's hit! Sergeant's hit!"

I am almost unconscious. It is dark, I can't see well or in a tent. I don't know. I can't move. I would like to speak, shout, but I can't. I can hear a voice on my left [in English]: "It's gonna be Okay son, we are taking care of you!" Another voice on my right [in English]: "Stay with us! Stay with us!" I guess someone is holding my hand. There's someone lying on a stretcher on my right. I am sure he is dead. I am sure he was one of the crew members of the medevac helicopter who rescued me. I think he died because of me. [Note added later: Robert Walsh?]

I know I am going to die and I am not afraid. I say to myself [in English]: "I am sorry, so sorry!" I don't know why.

The voice asks to move forward to the end of the life. Not the same place. A lot of light. It reminds me of a modern building [note added later: Clark Airbase [sic] Hospital] with square pillars, walls with a yellowish color. I can't move, I would like to call but I can't speak. I wonder what I am doing here. I am not afraid of dying but I want to go home, I want my family, I want to call someone, I can't.

Maybe I am already dead! As if I saw from above, I see the doctors busy on someone else, they don't see me!

I am shaking and I have cried!

