

MAY 21 - "OUT OF THIS WORLD" - METEOR CRATER, AZ

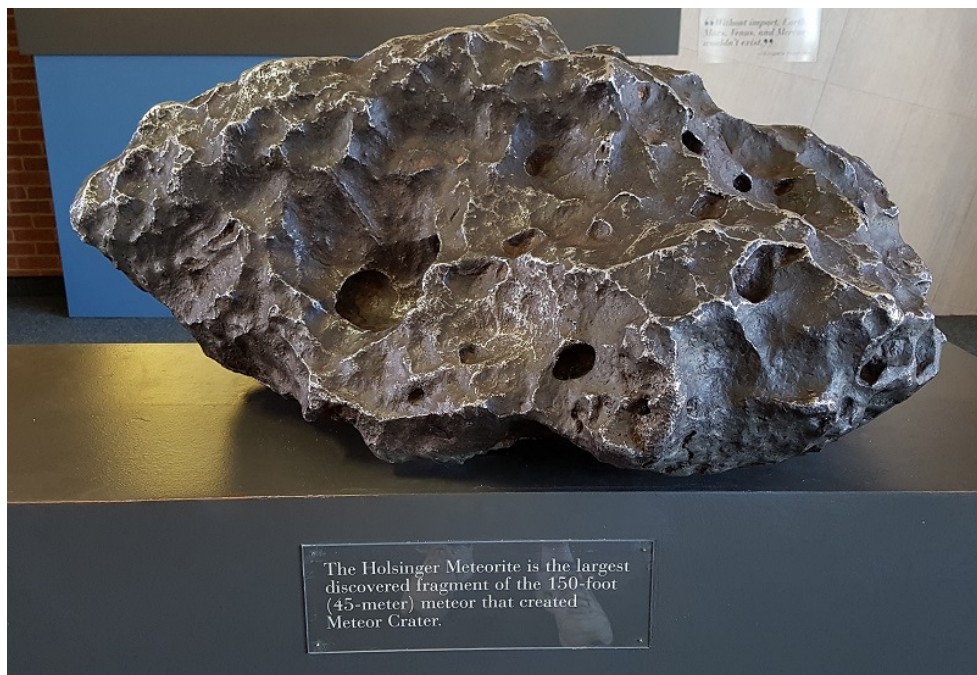
Six miles down the road outside the RV park is Meteor Crater, one of the best preserved meteor impact craters in the world. We are off to see this out-of-this-world site today.

We don't drive too far before we see what looks like the profile of a crater in the distance.



We parked Alfie and wandered into the facility. Elevators made it easy to get to the various levels. Almost the first thing you see when you've paid your admission fee is this meteorite fragment.

You can take a look at the link to get the full story of the crater and Daniel Barringer's search for the meteorite itself. Although no meteorite fragments have been found within the crater, this fragment was found a couple of miles away towards Diablo Canyon.



Meteor Crater is the **Best Preserved and First Proven** meteor crater on Earth.



Meteor Crater was formed when a meteor slammed into the Earth. Though dramatic, this event is far from unusual—collisions and impacts involving meteors and comets have been critical to the formation and development of Earth and the entire solar system.

Today, Meteor Crater appears much as it did when it was formed nearly 50,000 years ago. It remains the world's **Best Preserved and First Proven** example of a large impact crater, and a valuable laboratory for research into the origins and evolution of our solar system.

“Without impact, Earth, Mars, Venus, and Mercury wouldn't exist.”

—Dr. Eugene Shoemaker

IMPACT FACTS

- The meteor that created Meteor Crater was traveling about 40,000 miles per hour (64,000 kilometers per hour), or more than 11 miles per second (18 kilometers per second).

- The meteor that created Meteor Crater was about 150 feet (45 meters) in diameter.

CRATER FACTS

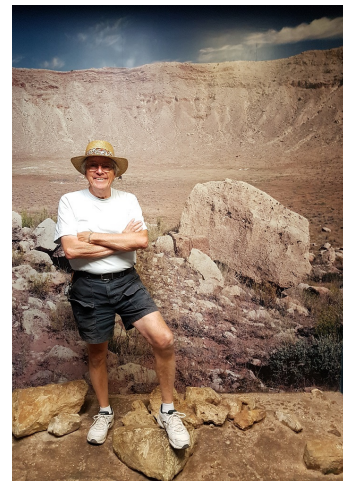
- Meteor Crater is more than 4,000 feet (1,200 meters) across, about three-quarters of a mile (1.2 kilometers).

- At the time of impact, Meteor Crater was about 700 feet (210 meters) deep, and could have engulfed a 60-story building. Due to erosion of the rim and walls of the crater, the crater today is 550 feet (165 meters) deep.

- Twenty football games on 20 football fields could be played at the same time on the floor of Meteor Crater, while two million spectators watched from its rocky slopes!

The facility houses a theatre, museum, gift shop, etc. Pretty much the first thing we did was watch the 10-minute film. This was excellent; the graphics were superb. It gave you an extremely vivid explanation of the creation of the crater - it took all of 10 seconds!

We then toured the museum displays. I especially liked the one that "transported" me to the bottom of the crater.



After climbing back to the rim of the crater, I walked to the top lookout area and took this panoramic shot. You can see the buildings on the right as well as the mid-level viewing platform.

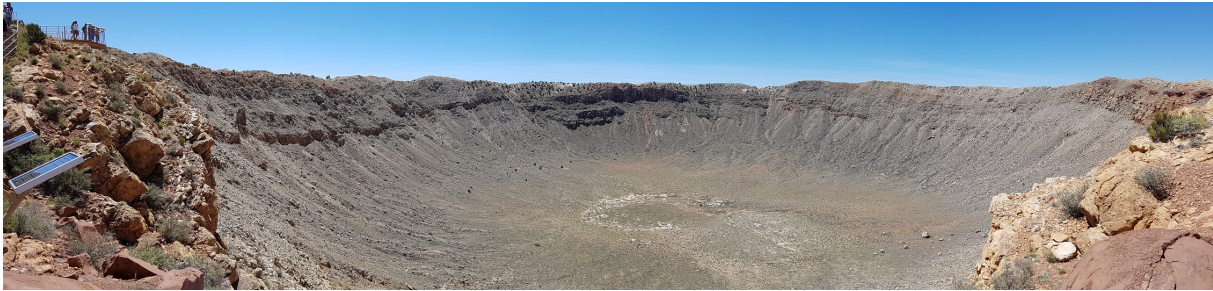


The topography around the crater is...well, uh, ...pretty flat.



I caught up with Jen and we walked down to the viewing platform about mid-level. Telescopes there made it easy to see the various features of the crater. By the way, this is where the original astronauts trained for their moon missions back in the '60s!

After we returned to the main level, I went down to the lowest level and took this picture. You can see the mid-level viewing platform to the left.



Okay, seems it's about time for a coffee and there's a Subway restaurant on site.

The sun was shining and there was a bit of shade at the American Astronaut Wall. Here all the names of the various Americans who have ventured into space are listed along with the "mission(s)" they undertook. A number of astronauts flew in space 7 times!

We chatted with other visitors to the crater as we enjoyed our coffee and chocolate-chip cookie. I answered a question about the train ride to the Grand Canyon to a couple of people. They left and we struck up a conversation with a gentleman from Nampa, ID. We must have chatted for close to an hour. We avoided, until the end, any discussion of politics.

Dwight is a member of the Church of the Nazarene. He's in Winslow helping rebuild a church there. Over the years, he's been to many places helping out. It reminded me of when I went out with my old chum, Colin, a couple of years ago to do a similar thing - help out. Anyway, after saying our goodbyes, I bumped into Dwight again and he said he'd like to take a picture. Yes, indeed! Jen and I really enjoyed meeting Dwight. What a very nice man!

Here we are in front of the "picture window."



Tomorrow we head into Flagstaff to visit the library. We also have to find a campsite for a day or two. The US long weekend is this coming weekend, so we are also trying figure out where we might be to ensure we have a campsite reserved for the weekend. Or else it might be Walmart, etc. for a few days.

Catch ya later!