



# Rustic News

**www.rustic.org**

**NEXT RUSTIC REUNION:** It's official! The next Rustic reunion will be held in **San Antonio, TX** in the **FALL 2002**. Exact dates will be announced later this summer. Targeted months are either September or October 2002. This change of venue is a result of the positive feedback received from the reunion survey sent with our last newsletter. **Ron Van Kirk, Bill Decabooter, and Tom Clinch** have volunteered to serve as a local committee to work reunion details. Anyone involved with the recent Rustic Return Visit to Cambodia can tell you what a great job Ron did coordinating this trip, so we know these guys will be going all out to help us put together a Texas-sized Rustic Reunion in San Antonio.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR 'EXPANDED' REUNION 2002 COMMITTEE:** If you have any suggestions for the Reunion 2002 Committee, or would be willing to serve as a member of the 'Expanded' Reunion Committee to assist/advise in making final hotel selections, set dates, and itinerary, etc. please contact **Ron Van Kirk at: ronvankirk@aol.com** or call 210-545-1612. It's possible the Reunion committee may be hosting a reunion planning weekend this summer, so if you'd like to get-away to San Antonio for some Mexican food and a good time on the River Walk, let Ron hear from you. The more the merrier! **Claude Newland** has already volunteered to serve on the Expanded Committee. Are there others?

**QUARTERLY OFFICERS MEETING:** Your Rustic officers conducted their quarterly meeting in early March. All were in attendance. Updates were given on the various projects that the Rustics have been involved with. Appropriate reports are included in this newsletter. The main item of business was to review a 'draft' copy of suggested **Association By-Laws**. **Bill Sleigh** has been the point man in getting these by-laws together. Our objective is to have a set of by-laws to present to the membership for ratification at our next general membership meeting in conjunction with the San Antonio reunion. A copy of the suggested by-laws will be mailed to each member prior to the 2002 reunion for review.

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**ASSOCIATION'S FINANCIAL STATUS:** **Lendy Edwards** reports that the Rustic treasury is very sound, in fact in excess of \$10K. As a result of an increasing balance of the general treasury (resulting primarily from membership dues), the officers may consider the feasibility of decreasing annual dues in the future, or suspending them temporarily. Another possibility is to only charge \$10 annual dues, vice \$20, for those who submit a 'Rustic Story' along with their dues. This would encourage us to continue recording our Rustic history and, at the same time, help expand our Rustic heritage. We'd like your input on this subject. At the current time, we have a little over \$4000 in the book fund, \$850 still to go to the House of Hope and the balance in the general, memorial and Cambodian reunion funds. If anyone desires a detailed breakdown, they can contact Lendy at [lendy4@home.com](mailto:lendy4@home.com) or 850-651-6766. He will be glad to provide the data upon request.

**RUSTIC BOOK PROJECT UPDATE:** **Dick Wood** reports that **Mark Gatlin** (publisher) has sent out the prologue and first 4 chapters of our book to another reviewer; this time a FAC. We're still awaiting final word as to whether Mark will be able to get our book published through his company. Their company's review of our book is to be completed on 9 Apr 01. In the meantime, **Doug Aitken** has been reviewing and formatting the pictures that will go into the revised book project. Additionally, **Jim Reese** is contacting our original printer to keep our lines of communications open and to insure they continue to preserve/protect our original manuscript.

A point of interest: Over \$4000.00 of the Rustic treasury is attributable to proceeds from sales of our book, The Rustics - A Top Secret Air War in Cambodia. For the time being, this money is being held in reserve to act as seed money for republication, if needed. Only a few books are still available for sale and these are earmarked for Rustics and their immediate family members. If you want additional copies of the book, contact **Lendy Edwards** at [lendy4@home.com](mailto:lendy4@home.com) or call 850-651-6766.

**BOB CLIFFORD INTERVIEWED:** While on a Delta layover this past Jan. in Brussels, Belgium, **Claude Newland** got to visit with **Bob Clifford** and his wife, **Dorte** and **Hank Keese** and his wife **Annie**. (Both Bien Hoa OV-10 Rustics.) On a second visit, Claude was able to get an audio interview with Bob detailing Bob's year as the Bien Hoa OV-10 Rustic ALO. Ron Van Kirk has volunteered to transcribe the tape interview and excerpts will undoubtedly add to our Rustic history. This completes the oral interviews of all of our various Rustic ALO's and commanders.

**SOUTHEAST ASIA TOURS:** **Marcy Roberds** and her husband **Dick** went on last years' Rustic Return trip to Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. Marcy is also a qualified travel agent with Eagle Travel. She had such a wonderful time on the trip that she is now offering her services to help plan and or lead additional trips back to SEA for those that might be interested in such a visit. She writes, "I am very much interested in helping anyone who wants to go to Southeast Asia. I can work with individuals, couples, groups, etc. to work up any type of trip they may want. Dick and I are talking about taking a group in May of 2002. But I will be glad to go with another group before then. If you will send me a list of anyone I can contact about the trips, I will be glad to contact them. I would be willing to go to any meetings they may have and bring brochures or just answer their questions."

If you'd like to learn more about such a trip, contact **Marcy at: [marcyroberds@hotmail.com](mailto:marcyroberds@hotmail.com)** or call 540-432- 9146.

**RUSTIC CHARITABLE GIVING:** The results of the Dec 2000 Rustic Survey indicated overwhelming support for your officers' recommendation that we make a \$500.00 charitable donation to each the House of Hope (HOH) and the Cambodian orphanage in Kompong Cham. With the memberships concurrence, these contributions have been made to these very worthwhile organizations in the Rustics name. This money is in addition to money donated by the Rustics when they personally visited the House of Hope and orphanage last November. (*Note: We are holding the HoH donation (\$500) you authorized until they ask for it.*)

Following our visit to the HoH last November, we received the following messages from **Tammy Fong**, Co-director of the House of Hope.

Hi Lendy, ...I hope this email finds you well! It was such a pleasure to meet up with you and the Rustics group earlier this month. I trust that your trip up to Siem Riep to visit Angkor Wat was a wonderful trip! Isn't it amazing? The Khmer people are incredibly talented people. Such history!

I am enclosing the address for our main office in the US per your request. It is Church Resource Ministries, 1240 N. Lakeview Avenue, Suite 120, Anaheim, CA 92807-1831. If in the future the Rustics would like to donate further to the House of Hope just be sure to indicate that on the memo part of the check. Our

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office staff will make sure it goes directly to our account.

Can you please give me your address? Our girls and the children at the orphanage would love to send you some pictures they drew for you all! They used the crayons you gave them. There are many delightful pictures!!



(Note: Other pictures are posted on the web page).

Also we purchased 10 bikes for the kids at the orphanage and were able to give them to them last Sunday. What a lovely event. I'll send you photos. (*See next page*) They were very, very grateful. Their faces were all lit up! You've made some kids very happy. Please send my greetings to all. Thanks for visiting us and blessing us all!!

Warmly, **Tammy Fong**

The following email was received after the association sent the authorized \$500 donation to the orphanage:

“Hi Lendy, ... I will use all the orphanage money to purchase bikes since the director thought that was the highest priority for now. We had an outreach in Memot district and 6 new girls left the brothels to come to HOH. Four will stay with us since 2 are over 20. I'll take the other 2 to a program in PP. It was exciting for us!

Take care!” **Tammy**



**The House of Hope girls ready to deliver the bikes you purchased to the KPC Orphanage**

**CAMBODIA TRIP VIDEO OFFERED:** Doug Aiken has done a masterful job of editing the videos he and Ron Van Kirk took of the Rustics "Return Trip" to Thailand and Cambodia. The finished video (actually two full tapes) are now available at Doug's cost which is \$40.00 for both tapes, plus shipping and handling (approx. \$3.00-4.00) . If you'd like to order a set, contact Doug at: 76140.3076@compuserve.com or call him at 919-387-8519.

**FAC ASSOCIATION LAUNCHED:** The first newsletter of the fledgling FAC Association was mailed out 30 Jan 2001. Over 350 charter members have already joined. If you didn't receive the 30 Jan. newsletter, that means you're not in the master FAC database. To correct this, please contact Jimmy Carter at jimmywho@aol.com or call him at: 912-922-0073 Provide him with your address and as much information as you can about your FAC background.

**RUSTIC FOUND:** Larry Gill. <lgill\_32@hotmail.com> Rustic Fac.....Hello From Blackmax... Date: Thu, 25 Jan 2001

Dear Claude; I was surfing the net last night and decided to see if there was anything about Rustic Facs. My heart almost stopped when I saw all of the information. My name is Larry Gill, and I was with the Rustic Facs from December 1970 to November 1971. I was one of the intelligence specialist who would brief and debrief combat air crews. During my tour, I was also able to fly one mission in the 02 Bird Dog, and about 4 missions in the OV-10. During the time I was able to fly back seat, I used the call sign Rustic Y. I don't know if you remember, but we at one point decided to have nicknames, and I was given the name "Blackmax". I would like to get information on joining the Rustic FAC Association, and getting to the reunions to get to see some old friends. Take care, and have a great day.....

**Larry G**

*(Editor's Note: Welcome Larry to the Rustic Association; We look forward to seeing you at future Rustic reunions.)*



## OV-10 BRONCO ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES 3<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL BRONCO FEST, 19-21 Oct,

**2001:** The Clarion Hotel located in the Sundance Square tourist area of Fort Worth will be the site of the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Bronco Fest. This event is open to all members and friends of the OV-10 Bronco Assoc. The OBA Mission is to preserve and perpetuate the history of the OV-10 Bronco and the people who designed, built, flew, and maintained the aircraft from its inception to the present.

Friday's events will include Registration, an Armed Forces Day tour of NAS Fort Worth, JRB, a flight suit party and briefing by Howie Pierson on the OV-10's last flight in SEA.

Saturday's events will start with breakfast and an update briefing by the OBA staff of the progress of the Association. All will then be bussed to the OBA Museum located at the Vintage Flying Museum at Fort Worth Meacham International Airport. During the museum tour, a commemoration ceremony for the first factory mock up of the OV-10 is planned. This mock up was North American Aircraft's conceptual model for what the OV-10 would become. The days' events will continue by watching the U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Team (The Blue Angels) perform at Fort Worth Alliance Airport. The Annual Bronco Fest Banquet will be held in the evening followed by an after banquet social reception.

The OBA is currently raising funds (\$25,000) to purchase the OV-10 mockup for the museum. Their efforts so far have raised over \$13000. Your support is needed to reach the final goal. For further info, please contact Jim Hodgson txavi8or@flash.net".

Additional information on Bronco Fest can be found at the OBA website at [www.OV-10Bronco.net](http://www.OV-10Bronco.net) or by contacting Bronco Fest Project Managers **Jim "Boomer" Bloomberg** at 1BOOMER1@NETSCAPE.NET or **Ron "Sand\$" Fix** at SNDLR07@AOL.COM

### ONE LINERS:

- 1) The next **All FAC Reunion** will be held in Oahu, Hawaii in **April 2002**. Details will be announced in an upcoming newsletter.
- 2) A **FAC Memorial** fund drive is soon to be initiated to dedicate a FAC memorial in Hawaii in conjunction with the 2002 FAC Reunion. Rustic Bill Ernst is spearheading this effort.
- 3) The new **Air and Space museum**, located near Dulles Airport, will be open in 2004. What do you think? Possible Rustic Reunion?
- 4) If you have a **Rustic story** to tell, send it to **Claude Newland** (4033 Indian Trail, Destin or [cnewland@gnt.net](mailto:cnewland@gnt.net)) for inclusion in future newsletters.



The HoH girls on their spring outing



House of Hope staff at Christmas



**Rustic Tour Group at the entrance to Ankor Wat.**

Rustic FAC Association  
11 Poplar Avenue  
Shalimar, FL 32579-1113

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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# Rustic News

**www.rustic.org**

**NEXT REUNION ANNOUNCED:** Grab your hat and boots! The 2002 Rustic FAC Reunion is going to be held **10-13 October, 2002** in **San Antonio , Texas** at the historic cattlemen's **Menger Hotel** which is located within walking distance of the Alamo and the picturesque downtown River Walk area. Start making plans now to come join all your Rustic friends for a great weekend of camaraderie and FAC fellowship. Tentative reunion plans include:

Thursday evening,	- Welcome Dinner, and Rustic Memorabilia
Friday	- Tours, Golf, and a Mexican dinner on the River Walk
Saturday	- Tours, Rustic Business Meeting, and Dinner Banquet
Sunday	- Farewell Breakfast

**Ron Van Kirk, Tom Clinch** and **'Deke' Decabooter** are coordinating the San Antonio details for the reunion. Their enthusiastic and thorough pre-planning will undoubtedly ensure a great reunion weekend!! Thanks guys (and their ladies) for all your help!! If you have any suggestions for the reunion committee, contact **Ron** at: [ronvankirk@aol.com](mailto:ronvankirk@aol.com) or call 210-545-1612

**Ron** reports that the Rustic Hootch will be located in the Patio Room, adjacent to the hotel pool . This will be our primary "hootch"/memorabilia/gathering site - which will allow for flow onto the poolside area. Looks like a great weekend in the making. Hope you'll plan to come join us.

REUNION REGISTRATION AND HOTEL INFORMATION WILL BE PUBLISHED IN FUTURE RUSTIC NEWSLETTERS AND POSTED ON THE RUSTIC WEB SITE. Stay tuned for news!

ALSO, PLEASE COMPLETE THE 2002 REUNION SURVEY AT THE END OF THIS NEWSLETTER AND SEND IT TO RON.

**SAM 'The FAC' TO ATTEND RUSTIC 2002 REUNION?:** When the Rustics returned to Phnom Penh in November, 2000, they were delighted to be reunited with a long-lost Rustic friend, San Sok -- better known as **Sam 'The FAC'** -- who was one of the most respected and admired Cambodian radio operators with whom we worked.

**Inside this issue:**

Rustic Book Update	1/2	It's our hope that <b>Sam</b> will be able to attend the 2002 Rustic reunion, <u>but he'll need our help financially</u> for airfare, and miscellaneous expenses. <b>Doug Aitken</b> has volunteered to coordinate Sam's trip and work with Sam to get necessary passports, etc. <u>If you'd like to help sponsor Sam's attendance at the reunion</u> , please mail your contribution (payable to: 'Rustics' and designated for 'Sam Fund' ) to <b><u>Lendy Edwards</u></b> , Rustic Treasurer, 11 Poplar Ave., Shalimar, FL 32579.
Web Site News	2/3	
AF Museum Project	3	If any of you 'airline jet-jockey' types have any suggestions as to how we might get Sam air travel to the States, please contact <b>Doug Aitken</b> at: 76140.3076@compuserve.com or call 919-387-8519.
Last Flights	3/4	
All FAC Reunion	4	<u>Other Cambodians:</u> We would also like to assist <b>Col Oum and Ltc Om</b> to attend the 2002 reunion. If you'd like to make a contribution to assist their attendance, send your contribution (payable to 'Rustics' and designated for 'Cambodians') to <b>Lendy Edwards</b> . See address above.
Letters to Editor	5	<b><u>RUSTIC BOOK TO BE COMMERCIALY PUBLISHED:</u></b> <i>GREAT NEWS!</i> <b>Mark Gatlin</b> of <b>Smithsonian Institute Press (SIP)</b> has confirmed our book, "The Rustics - A Top Secret Air War in Cambodia" has been approved for publication by his company. As of this writing, SIP is preparing a contract for our approval. <b>Dick Wood</b> , a member of the Rustic Book Review committee, is handling the negotiations and details. A celebration is in order and a <b>BIG Rustic</b>
Hank Keese Saga	5/6	

special 'thanks' goes to **Dick Wood** for his unilateral efforts in revising our original book and successfully preparing it for commercial publication.

**How did all this happen? Here's the inside scoop!** At the Rustics' 2000 reunion, the Book Review Committee established the goal of finding a commercial publisher within the next two years for our 'self-published' book. Only one problem: who has the expertise (and time) to take on such a project? The Rustics were very fortunate in that among our midst is a very capable and talented published author – **Dick Wood** --who volunteered to take on this project on his own time and at his own risk and expense. There were no other volunteers, so Dick was THE MAN. Dick immediately began sending our book out to publishers for their review and comments.

**Initial Results** were mixed and not very encouraging. Finally, SIP's **Mark Gatlin** responded with a detailed professional critique of our book and offered several pages of suggestions and recommendations. This was unusual in itself because book reviewers don't normally take the time to offer such comments. Obviously, Mark thought our book had potential, but it needed some work if SIP was to seriously consider it. For the next year Dick worked on the manuscript and addressed SIP's concerns. Major effort was required to make the book more reader friendly and to have the text flow more chronologically. Also, all individual stories needed to be written in the third person to improve 'single voice' readability. Length was also a problem. SIP said their books of this genre were usually limited to 160 pages. Could we shorten the book? Now the tough part: Dick had to make some decisions about how to shorten the book. The solution was to focus on telling the heart of the 'Rustic Story' (with all its various members, groups, aircraft, missions, etc.) and to include only those individual chapter stories which complimented each chapter text by giving an example of the point being illustrated. Unfortunately, the 'anthology' stories at the end of each chapter had to be deleted. The Cambodian chapter also was deleted. Additionally, Dick corrected all the known errors in the original book found after printing. Finally, each picture had to be reviewed, and SIP is still in the process of determining how many they will be able to include in the book. SIP's recommended title is: "The Rustics -- The Secret Air War in Cambodia, 1970-1973". Details such as Maps, book cover and other format issues are still being coordinated/worked with SIP. SIP will have a large say in how these items go.

**Book Accepted:** After extensive work and many hours of editing, **Dick Wood** sent his revised manuscript to the three Rustic Final Editors (The guys who worked the Final Edit on our original book.) After their review, the revised manuscript was sent to SIP and the rest is now (almost) history. Our book was accepted for publication!

**Royalties:** The Book Review Committee (which guided our book from a first rough draft to its first printing) realized that Dick's task would be considerable – requiring a great deal of time and effort!! . As appropriate compensation, the Book Review Committee and Rustic Officers agreed in October 2000 that, if the book should be published commercially, Dick would receive 25% of the royalties for his efforts. The remaining 75% would go to the Rustic FAC Association. Dick concurred.

**Bottom Line:** The 'Rustic Story' is finally going to reach the general public, and the world will now know about the Rustics' secret air war in Cambodia. A BIG RUSTIC 'THANKS' goes to **Dick Wood** for his persistence and literary efforts on our behalf!! Well done Dick!!

Additional details will be forthcoming as they become known. Print date and cost are not known at this time.

*(Editor's note: I've read the revised manuscript. It's reader friendly, easy to read, and well written. I think you'll be pleased and proud of the final product.)*

**ADDITIONAL RUSTIC STORIES SOUGHT:** Each of you are encouraged to continue writing your personal stories about your tour of duty as a Rustic FAC. Please send your stories to **Claude Newland** (4033 Indian Trail Dr, Destin, FL 32541) for inclusion in future newsletters. If sufficient stories are forthcoming, we may want to consider self-publishing all of the personal stories (to include the original stories you submitted for the book) under a separate cover. This would be a valuable addition to FAC history and something your families would all certainly appreciate. So, don't stop writing your personal stories -- just because we now have a book in publication. Each new story needs to be heard!!

**WEBSITE FINDS ANOTHER RUSTIC:** **Bill Bennett** recently located us through the Rustic Website and sent us the following message:

'Would like to add my name to the members of the 23rd TASS. I was maintenance scheduler and Debriefing at Ubon until I left in Aug 73 and went back to NKP. I rotated state side in Oct. 73. I was one of the fortune ones to come from the 20th TASS stationed at DaNang AB RVN. A lot of the pilots came with me from the 20th to continue the flights in to PaPa. I located one Pat Kennedy still looking for Turk Cunningham Capt. with the 23rd. If you have links to some other Rusty Nail drivers I would like to know some of them. Thanks and good site.'

**Bill Bennett**, e-mail [bbennett@inflow.com](mailto:bbennett@inflow.com)

*(Editor's note: Bill, Welcome aboard! We hope you can make the Rustic Reunion in San Antonio 10-13 Oct 2002.)*

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**RUSTIC WEBSITE RECEIVES HONOR:** In March of this year "Military.com" notified us that the Rustic website was selected as a top military site!

"Congratulations on being selected as a top military site! Our editors have selected your site as one of the best military sites on the Web. Military.com recognizes your website as a valued resource for the military community. We salute you and your efforts. In appreciation, we would like to present you with our Distinguished Military Site Award! Earning this award entitles you to display the award on your site for the remainder of 2001. Please visit our awards page and select the medal of your choice. Each medal has its own special HTML code which can easily be placed on your home page.

Our thanks go to **Lendy Edwards** for his outstanding efforts in designing and maintaining our web site!! Well done Lendy!!

**WEBSITE UPDATED:** Keeping the site current is an ongoing process and sometimes I seem to get lazy and content with what we have. Recently I added the "House of Hope" newsletter which I found very interesting and informative. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. Also added was the FAC Map Case to the "Interesting Links" section. Thanks to George Lattin for this link and the addition of the Cambodia Maps. If you have aircraft pictures or patches you would like to see added, please mail them to me or send me a digital image and I will include them on our site. I am always open to suggestions on how to improve or change the format.

Lendy Edwards (Webmaster)

**DONATIONS SOUGHT FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA PARTY SUIT PROJECT:** The USAF Museum is doing research on SEA 'Party Suits' leading up to a major display/exhibit. The exhibit will portray the widest range possible of both missions and units. They would very much like to include the Rustic community in this exhibit. To support the exhibit the museum needs background information, personal reminiscences, photographs, patches and insignia used on party suits and, of course, a selection of actual suits. If you would like to help by sharing either your memories or items, please contact:

**Mr. Terry Aitken**, Senior Curator, US Air Force Museum  
Attn: USAFM/MU  
1100 Spaatz St.  
Wright-Patterson AFB OH 45433-7102  
(937) 255-7204 ext. 337, DSN 785-7204, ext. 337

E mail: [terrill.aitken@wpafb.af.mil](mailto:terrill.aitken@wpafb.af.mil)  
Website: <http://www.wpafb.af.mil/museum/>

*(Editor's note: if anyone would like to contribute to this effort, or would be willing to be the Rustic point-of-contact for such an effort, please notify **Claude Newland** at: [cnewland@gnt.net](mailto:cnewland@gnt.net) or 850-654-2955.)*

**BOB VIRTUE'S FINAL FLIGHT:** In early June, we received a card from **Karen Virtue**, daughter of **Bob Virtue** with the following message:

Dear Mr. Newland,

I ran across a letter from you to my father, **Robert B. Virtue**, this past weekend as I was sorting his papers. I'm sorry to pass on to you that dad passed away on January 8<sup>th</sup> after a period of declining health.

My sister and I were both able to be with him and his passing was peaceful and dignified. His service was likewise with a nine member Honor Guard from the local Honor Guard from the local Air National Guard base. We used the Air Force Hymn and the Battle Hymn of the Republic as service music and a cousin, who's an F-18 pilot read "High Flight" by John Magee as a reading. I know dad would have enjoyed the service.

If there is another Rustic reunion, please pass on that dad really enjoyed the past ones and will be there in spirit!

Regards,

**Karen Virtue**  
92 Willow  
Providence, RI 02909

*(Editor's note: a card was sent to the Virtue family, on behalf of the Rustics, to express our condolences and sympathy. Please feel free to contact the family at the above address. I'm sure the family would appreciate hearing from those who knew Bob.)*

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**DON HAGLE'S FINAL FLIGHT:** (From Don Mercer, Rustic 41) On 11 July 2001 Don Hagle, Rustic 40 - "Beagle", passed away shortly after 8:00 AM at the ICU at Wilford Hall in San Antonio, TX. As many of you know, Don was in need of a liver transplant, but unfortunately one was not forthcoming. Several O-2 Rustics attended the funeral service which was held on Sunday, 15 July. Interment was at Fort Sam Houston.

The cards and get well wishes sent to Don and Lynette during the last few weeks were greatly appreciated as were the efforts by quite a few to procure medical assistance in obtaining a liver transplant. Thanks to all who provided their support in some very difficult times. Don's family may be reached at: 220 PR 4660, Castroville, TX 78009, (850) 931-3477.

*(Editor's Note: Don Mercer wrote a poetic eulogy honoring Don Hagle which he has shared on the Rustic FAC Net. The following email is from Lynette Hagle and was received today.)*

Message to Beagle's Special Rustic Friends:

This note is my very sincere "Thank You" for all of your efforts in finding a transplant facility and doctor for Don. We were successful in our search, by the way. Doctors at Mayo Clinic in Minnesota were waiting for Don. He just wasn't able to get through the problems that had overwhelmed his body. Don was free of cancer when he died. It was the cure (complications from the radiation) that eventually took his life.

Over the last year and a half, your encouraging visits, cards, e-mails, phone calls, and prayers kept Don fighting for his life. All men die, but only few men really live. . . .and Don lived more in his 57 years than anyone twice his age. And the best part is that he truly loved his life and every adventure and friendship in it, and I believe that is why he fought so hard to stay here. God must be so proud, I know I am! One of Don's doctors wrote to me, "Don will remain in my memory as one of the most courageous men I have known. It was an honor taking care of your husband. His fight against his disease was inspiring." And one of the most memorable moments during Don's six weeks in ICU came one day when, during his understandable confusion about time, we asked him if he knew what day it was. He thought for a moment and then answered with a smile, "It's a Happy Day". I know those four words will help me in dealing with my grief during the months and years to come, and I hope they will help you also.

To love Don and be loved by him, and then to be without him is the most painful hurt I've ever known. That is why it has taken me so long to write to you. Don's physical absence is unbearable to me right now. I miss the sound of his voice, his laughter, his stories, the light in his eyes, his touch, the way we danced together, and even the smell of him. But his soul is with God and his spirit remains in me and in everyone who knows him. He was a leader in death just as he was a leader in life. Don was not afraid to die or to be one of the first in his wide circle of friends to begin his new life in heaven. Know that his friendship with you here on earth is unending, and he one day will extend his hand and help us on our final journey into God's Holy Kingdom. What joy that day will be for me!

Love From Beagle's Wife,  
Lynette

P.S. "Over" (Don Mercer): The heartfelt eulogy you wrote for Don on your way to Alaska was absolutely wonderful, and was read by Don's sister at his memorial service. Thank you from the bottom of my heart! I hope you have sent a copy to all the Rustics.

"Slapper" (Frank Sovich), "Redeye" (Bob Harris), "Stump" (Wayne Baker): Thanks for being here with me and Don's family during the three days of celebrating Don's life. Your presence was very special to us. And, Bob, the pictures you took at the cemetery during the Honors Ceremony will always be treasured.

Note: Please forward this to any of the Rustics I may have unintentionally forgotten. You may also go to [www.porterloring.com](http://www.porterloring.com) to view Don's obituary in the Remembrance Registry. It will be available for one year.

**ALL FAC REUNION IN HAWAII:** An All-FAC 'Hawaiian R & R 'Reunion is going to be being held at the Iliakai Renaissance Hotel in Honolulu, HI 10-14 Apr, 2002. All Rustics are invited. (The last All-FAC reunion was held in Fort Walton Beach, FL in Sep 2000 and had over 700 FACs and guests were in attendance) For registration information, contact EEM tours: 1-888-TOURS12 (1-888-868-7712) to make reservations or E-mail [info@eemtours.com](mailto:info@eemtours.com). Snail Mail goes to EEM Custom Tours and Special Events, 4703 West Lovers Lane, Dallas, TX 75209.

Reunion information can also be found on the ALL- FAC website at: [www.fac-assoc.org](http://www.fac-assoc.org)

*(Editor's note: If you plan to attend this reunion, please contact Claude Newland at: [cnewland@gnt.net](mailto:cnewland@gnt.net) or 850-654-2944. We'll*

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*see how many Rustics will be going.)*

**ALL FAC NEWSLETTER:** An All FAC newsletter was mailed out in late July. If you didn't receive it, contact **Jimmy Carter** at: jimmywho@aol.com or call 912-922-0073.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:**

From: **Ron Dandeneau** (DandenR@aol.com)

Hi Claude,

I will be returning to my old job at the Pentagon the second week of March 2002 and will move back into my townhouse at 7775 Durer Court in Springfield, VA. I'll reconfirm everything once we get closer to my return date.

'Looking forward to making the next reunion; however, I have really enjoyed my tour in England. Great people and a great place to live. Weather isn't great but everything else is.

**Ron Dandeneau**, Rustic Foxtrot



**HOW HANK KEESE BECAME A RUSTIC:** *(Editor's note: While **Dick Wood** was busy re-editing our Rustic book in hopes of finding a commercial publisher, Hank Keese submitted the following information to help clarify some previous misconceptions about how Hank became a Rustic. This is a good example of how being your' own' personnel manager can make a difference!)*

To make a long story short, I volunteered. I had managed to fight my way out of SAC where I was a new and relatively young aircraft commander in B-52s. After many months of my insisting that I could fly fighters, TAC got tired of my harassing phone calls and sent me to A-37s where, I suppose, they thought I couldn't get into too much trouble. It wasn't going to be "Steel Tiger" or "Barrel Roll" up North, but it was better than going to "trash hauling" in a C-7. (Little did I know how much those guys got into harms way. I saw a few of their missions that made flying the A-37 look like a Sunday outing in a Cessna 172.) Anyway, I ended up at Bien Hoa in the 8th Attack Squadron (The Dogs).

So, how did I end up in OV-10s? Simple, it was SAC's fault. The 8th Attack was told to close up shop. Some of the pilots went to the other A-37 outfit at Bien Hoa (the Raps), but those of us with more than 6 months left on our tours were given "other assignments" in country. No, that didn't get me to the Rustics. I'll explain. Early in my A-37 tour, I had received a letter from AFMPC in Randolph asking me if I wanted to volunteer to be a "backseater" in a secret project in SEA. No specifics were given, but I was told that the reason for my being selected was that I spoke French. It appears whoever sent the letter had no idea I was

rated. Being stationed at Bien Hoa I knew about the Rustics, but had no desire to give up my place at the controls of an A-37 for a ride in an OV-10 back seat no matter how neat the mission was, so I ditched the letter.

Enter SAC. Again trying to mess up my life. It seems that SAC wrote outstanding (inflated) OER's to hold onto its people and, as a result, my name popped up on a list in Saigon as being a great writer and speaker. (How they could tell from my 1800 hours in the cockpit of a B-52, beats me.) The General's Staff Briefing Team in Saigon decided that I was their boy, and they were determined to make me a REMF. I screamed loud and long, but to no avail. Finally I had to face facts, as I watched my career as an A-37 pilot wind down, it was clear that I was really going to have to move to Saigon. Then, I remembered "the letter" (probably while drunk in the Dog Bar) and wandered over to the new Rustic's Hooch. The Rustics were just moving into the old F-100 hooch next door to the 8th Attack. One of the guys I heard about that day was Lou Currier, the Rustics only French speaking pilot. Guess what? He was due to rotate, and there was no replacement on the books. In fact he and the Rustics seemed a bit panicked about the situation. I asked to speak with Lt Col Lester, who I was told was running the outfit, but he was not in. The next day, after sitting Hawk 3 alert in my A-37 (and flying twice), I showed up at Lester's office in a sweaty flight suit and asked him for a job. I explained that I had received a letter offering me a back seat because I spoke French, but went on to tell him that I would rather take the job that was coming open when Lou left. Lt Col Lester's reply has stayed with me all the years since. He said, "We can't send you to pilot training just because you speak French. Sorry, but its back seat or nothing." I looked down at my wings, just in case they had come unstitched or covered with lunch, but saw that I was still in uniform and yes, still a pilot. I told him that I was already a pilot and that I had just finished two missions that same morning in his AO. He blinked once, stood up, held out his hand and said, "Welcome to the Rustics."

Post Script: While in SAC, I had to put up with one particularly annoying B-52 co-pilot who thought I was being given special attention because my dad was a 2 star in AFSC. Naturally, I am here to tell you that is not the truth at all. In fact, my father and I did not get along very well in those days. He was a good and correct officer and pilot and told me the day I entered the Air Force that I was on my own. My personality dictated that I tell him that I did not want nor need his help. (I'll admit I wanted to ask for his help when SAC took 98% of my UPT class (67-A) but I didn't.) Most of the folks who knew my dad was a 2 star could have cared less and that was how I wanted it. Up until my arrival in the 60th Bomb Wing, competition for getting a left seat in a BUFF was among the majors and major selectees. Since I was a brand new captain I knew that to get a crew I had to work harder and be a lot better than the competition. One of those who did not like my beating him out for a crew was quite vocal about my "2 star advantage." I found out later that he had failed his aircraft commander's check ride and, in effect, had given me my chance to move up by not being ready when a new crew came available.

Change scene to the DaNang O'club bar after my first day of "in country" training in the OV-10. Who should I see, but my old nemesis, the Major who had spent more of his time running me down than he had preparing for his BUFF AC check. Not being one to hold a grudge, and being a long way from faces I knew, I parked myself next to him at the bar and offered to buy him a drink. He accepted with a forced smile on a very unhappy face. His life, it seems, had just come crashing down. He was an F-4 back-seater in the "Triple Nickel" (555th Squadron) out of DaNang. He was just getting ready to move into the glory slot of an F-4 front seat when, out of nowhere, came orders for him to go to the General's Staff Briefing Team in Saigon. I bought him a lot of drinks and never told him why he was on his way to Saigon.

My change to the Rustics added some time to my tour, but it was the best thing that happened to me in all of my three tours in SEA. It was also the catalyst for my ending up two years later working in the Embassy in Phnom Penh as an Assistant Air Attaché. But, that is a story for another time.

Hank Keese  
Rustic 16



The Joe Gambino Memorial in Cambodia. Photos by Mark Berent





Tom Clinch and Sam in "serious" discussion over dinner in Phnom Penh, November 2000

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SURVEY AND MAIL TO:**

**Ron Van Kirk** 2696 Pebble Dawn, San Antonio, TX 789232

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you plan to attend Rustic San Antonio Reunion, 10-13 Oct 2002? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you plan to arrive on Wednesday \_\_\_\_\_, Thursday \_\_\_\_\_ or Friday \_\_\_\_\_ (9,10, or 11 Oct, 2002.)?
3. Do you plan to drive \_\_\_\_\_ or fly \_\_\_\_\_ into San Antonio?
4. Do you plan to attend the reception on Thursday evening, 10 Oct.? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you plan to arrive more than 2 days before or depart more than 2 days after the reunion? \_\_\_\_\_
6. If yes to above, then do you plan to stay at the Menger for these extra days?
7. For Friday night we will plan a picturesque Mexican dinner ON the river. Are you interested in having dinner on the riverboat \_\_\_\_\_ (Note: This is VERY popular and requires a long lead time) or in a restaurant \_\_\_\_\_?
8. Do you plan to attend the Saturday night reception/banquet at the Menger? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
9. Are you interested in playing golf on Friday? \_\_\_\_\_ Public Course? \_\_\_\_\_ Military only? \_\_\_\_\_
10. The Hotel is 7 miles from the airport, and has limited parking space, and NO parking in San Antonio is Free.  
Will you need info on Rental Cars, shuttles, cabs, etc? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Do you plan to visit Mexico (150 miles to Laredo) while you are this close? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Would you be interested in information on:  
Fiesta Texas 6 Flags \_\_\_\_\_, Sea World \_\_\_\_\_, Institute of Texas Cultures \_\_\_\_\_, The Missions \_\_\_\_\_, Buckhorn Museum \_\_\_\_\_, Witte Museum \_\_\_\_\_, the San Antonio Zoo \_\_\_\_\_, Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch and Caverns \_\_\_\_\_, IMAX \_\_\_\_\_, River Center Mall \_\_\_\_\_ or Tours? \_\_\_\_\_ All of these are within a 30 minute drive from the hotel. The river walk is 2 blocks, the Alamo is next door !
13. Do you need information on accommodations at nearby military bases? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Will there be one, two or more in your party? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you plan to bring children? \_\_\_\_\_ Ages \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY --San Antonio Reunion committee



**Rick Scaling (Rustic 09) and Sam at PP**

Rustic FAC Association  
11 Poplar Avenue  
Shalimar, FL 32579-1113

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



# Rustic News

[www.rustic.org](http://www.rustic.org)

**2002 RUSTIC REUNION IN THE LONE STAR STATE:** Road Trip! For our next reunion, the Rustics are leaving the sugar white beach of Florida and traveling to the land of Willie Nelson, Mexican food, and Lone Star beer,-- The 'BIG' state of TEXAS. Grab your boots and hat and come join us at the historic cattlemen's **Menger Hotel** in downtown San Antonio, TX on **10-13 Oct 2002**. This hotel is practically located in the shadows of the Alamo and is within short walking distance of the beautiful River Walk area of downtown San Antonio. We'll have a lease on happy hour in the wood paneled hotel bar made famous by Teddy Roosevelt! **Ron Van Kirk, Bill Decabooter** and **Tom Clinch** are serving as the local reunion planning committee and have already worked out most of the details. A schedule of events and registration forms will be mailed to everyone in the **June 2002** newsletter. Start making your plans now to come join us for a great weekend of Rustic fun and camaraderie in San Antonio! Tentative plans include:

- |                   |                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thursday evening, | - Registration, Welcome Dinner, and Rustic Memorabilia, and, if able, distribution of the new Rustic book published by SIP |
| Friday            | - Tours (to include the Alamo), Golf, and a moonlight Mexican dinner by boat on the 'River Walk'                           |
| Saturday          | - Tours, Rustic Business Meeting, and Dinner Banquet                                                                       |
| Sunday            | - Farewell Breakfast                                                                                                       |

**MEMBERSHIP AND TREASURER'S REPORT:** Submitted by **Lendy Edwards**, Treasurer:

**Membership:** In 2001 The Rustic FAC Association had 88 paying members. To determine if you have been a dues paying member, check the year date on your newsletter address label. The year date indicated will tell you to what year your dues are paid up (some members are paid up for several years in advance.) If you are not a member, it will state 'Non-Member'.

**Treasurers Report:** Treasury balance prior to this newsletter being printed was in excess of \$10K. If anyone desires a detailed breakdown, they can contact Lendy at [lendy4@home.com](mailto:lendy4@home.com) or 850-651-6766. He will be glad to provide the data upon request.

**RUSTIC 2002 ANNUAL DUES DUE—BUT PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!** If you're presently a **non-member** of the Rustic FAC Association but would like to join, please fill out the registration form at the end of this newsletter. Annual dues is \$20.00.

**Inside this issue:**

This will insure you'll continue to receive the quarterly Rustic newsletter and information on future Rustic reunion. (If you are currently a non-member, it will state 'non-member' on your newsletter address label.)

- |                      |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| House of Hope Update | 2 | If you are a present <b>member</b> , dues for the year 2002 will <u>not</u> be required!. Due to the large balance in the Rustic treasury, your Rustic officers have waived your dues for 2002. (Membership does pay. And thanks for your continued support!) |
| Awards and Decs      | 2 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

- |                           |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Rustic Book update        | 2   | <b>ANNUAL ROSTER ENCLOSED:</b> The annual Rustic roster is enclosed with this newsletter. Please review your information carefully. If find a mistake or need to update any information, please respond as instructed on the roster. Take a good look at the list of 'Missing Rustics'. Do you know where any of them are located? |
| OV-10 Pilot Opportunities | 2/3 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

- |                        |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Rustics Remembered     | 4   | <b>ASSOCIATION BYLAWS AND ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION DRAFTED:</b> <b>Bill Sleigh</b> , vice-president, has prepared a 'first draft' set of Rustic Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation which are currently being reviewed by your officers. A complete set of bylaws, etc. will be mailed to each <i>Association member</i> in March 2002 for <i>your</i> review, comments, and approval. Only dues paying members will be allowed to vote. These Articles and Bylaws will govern our Association and it's officers, and will establish us as a non-profit organization. Expect further news in March 2002! One thing to keep in mind for the future; as a non-profit organization the Rustic FAC Association will have to annually document that at least 51% of its income has gone to charities, etc. [Editor's note: this will be a pleasure, not a problem.] |
| All FAC Reunion update | 4/5 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Rustic Survey          | 7   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

**HOUSE OF HOPE AND KOMPONG CHAM ORPHANAGE UPDATE:** **Tammy Fong**, one of the administrators at the Kompong Cham House of Hope (HOH), had been in the States for several months recently, but she has just now returned to Cambodia (late October) to resume her work at the House of Hope. As many of you know, the House of Hope is a home for young women who are voluntarily leaving prostitution. While at the House of Hope they learn skills that will enable them to begin a new life and become self supportive. Thanks to your generosity, Tammy is returning to Cambodia with **\$1,451.00** from the Rustics. This money will be used to support programs at both the **House of Hope** and the **Kompong Cham Children's Orphanage**. Per you donations, some of these funds have been earmarked for specific needs as follows:

\$240.00 for bicycles for the Orphanage  
\$221.00 for the House of Hope

The remainder of the money will be used to support programs for both the HOH and the orphanage. Tammy will be giving us periodic updates on what the money is being used for.

**Tammy's** recent email to **Lendy Edwards** concluded by saying, "Thank you so much (and please do extend it to the Rustics!) that we (the orphanage and HOH) really appreciate all your generous gifts of love and care for the children in Kompong Cham. Bless you."

**RUSTIC LADIES- WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP THE GIRLS AT THE HOUSE OF HOPE?** (From Tona Newland.)

Dear Rustic Ladies,

If you would be interested in helping young women who are trying to make a new start in their lives after working as prostitutes in Cambodia, please consider helping through the work of House of Hope in Kompong Cham. House of Hope is a project of CRM/ INNERCHANGE and is currently being run by several American women and a staff of 17 Cambodians. HoH works alongside the local police, government officials and human right organizations to help Cambodian young women ages 22 years old and under their jobs in the sex industry. Some are rescued and some leave prostitution voluntarily. HoH helps give these young women a new chance for life. Current statistics show that as many as 45% of the prostitutes will die from HIV from their vocations.

To supplement their income and help learn a trade, the girls make these wonderful purses (little purses with or without shoulder straps). They put a lot of work into each one. The cost is \$5.00 each and orders need to be placed in orders of tens. That is, ten purses of one color because they can get ten from one piece of fabric (actually, each piece of fabric usually has two colors.)

The color choices are: Black/Gold, Royal Blue/Gold, Gold/Gold, Silver/Gold, Burgundy/Gold, Red/Gold, Green/Gold, Sky Blue/Gold, and Purple/Gold. Unfortunately, they do not sell them in assorted numbers. Color orders have to be in lots of ten.

If you would like to support this worthy program by placing an order, please contact Tammy Fong at: Tfong@crmnet.org (If you don't have e mail, call me at 850-654-2955, and I will place your order.) Tammy will give you instructions on how to get the money to her. The money needs to be paid in advance so the girls can purchase the fabric. Since the annual income of most Cambodians is only about \$300, the sale of these purses provides a significant, and much needed source of income, for these girls. Also, please ask Tammy to send you brochures and newsletters which will help educate yourself and friends about this program. I have ordered in the past around 100 or more purses. They are pretty and inexpensive. There are no specific shipping dates -it's whenever the next missionary visiting Cambodia returns to the states. I've received PURSES (from missionaries) postmarked Washington, Ohio, and Texas. It's always exciting when the box appears at your door (usually UPS.)

Sally Gabel has recently sold a bunch, and my cousin in Anacortes, WA, showed them to the teachers at her school. She said they went 'wild' when they saw them, and obviously would like to have them now, but were willing to wait till the PURSES could be made.

As you may know Tammy and Sue HAVE WORKED in Cambodia for SEVERAL years NOW. Your e mails and orders are great for their morale. If you've ever searched for a 'cause' -this is a good one. You truly will be supporting the House of Hope. Let me know if I can be of assistance. Thanks.

God Bless, Tona Newland

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**AWARDS AND DECS:** Don Mercer has been quietly and meticulously steering several Rustic Awards submissions through the myriad of hoops required to get these award submissions reconsidered for approval. Unfortunately, the events of 11 Sep have caused the normal process to be disrupted somewhat, but he is continuing to press on and is working with the various boards/agencies which will be ruling on these request. Hopefully, some good things will come from Don's efforts. If any of you have questions concerning your own Awards and Decs circumstances, contact Don at: 703-768-0843 or dmercer@life-insure.com. [Thanks **Don** for your efforts on behalf of the Rustics!]

**RUSTIC BOOK TO BE PUBLISHED BY THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTE PRESS (SIP):** Dick Wood, our resident magician, has pulled a rabbit out his hat!. Dick has completed the re-editing of the Rustic book and it has been accepted by the SIP to be published sometime in 2002. Many of the format and layout details, etc. are still being worked out as of this writing.. SIP has assigned a staff editor to edit the manuscript and work with Dick throughout the production process. Dick has informed SIP that it would be good thing if copies of the book could be made available for our October 2002 Rustic reunion. However, SIP determines the print dates and they have not, as yet, informed us of the book's planned print schedule. We'll keep you informed as information becomes available.

Here's the 'projected' publishing schedule:

20 Nov 01 – Edited manuscript provided to Dick Wood for review  
 14 Dec 01 – Return manuscript with comments  
 18 Jan 02 – Clean printout to proof (in lieu of galleys)  
 1 Feb 02 – Return proofed printout (no problem there)  
 29 Mar 02 – Typeset page proofs and index  
 12 Apr 02 – Return page proofs (no problem there)  
 19 Apr 02 – Return Index. (I am paying for the index. No problem there.)  
 Early August, 2002. Book printed, bound and delivered to SIP warehouse.

*[Editor: As you can see there's a lot involved in getting a book ready for publishing. Thanks again Dick for your perseverance in seeing this project through to a successful completion! ]*

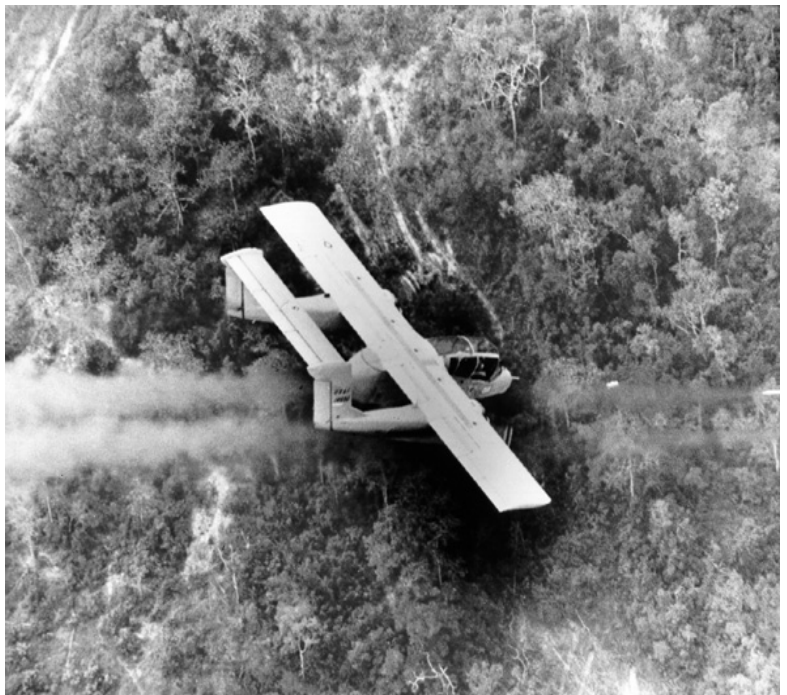
**ONLY 33 BOOKS LEFT:** Of the original 400 Rustic books which we self-printed, 366 have been sold and one book has been donated to the Air Force Museum. The remaining 33 copies are being held in reserve and are now available for sale **only to Rustics**. Price per copy remains \$40.00 plus \$4.00 shipping and handling. If you'd like to order a book, contact **Lendy Edwards** at: lendy4@home.com or 850-651-6766. These original copies will inevitably become collectors items.

#### **OV-10 PILOTS SOUGHT - LOOKING FOR A JOB?**

**Doug Aitken** informs us that his old boss, **John Fairfield**, a retired three star who now works for the DynCorp, has notified him that his company is looking for OV-10 pilots. DynCorp just won a contract to operate the Calif. Division of Forestry airplanes for fire fighting - 16 OV-10's and 27 SA-2's!!! They'll be based at McClelland. Average age of the incumbent pilot force is 67 1/2!!!!!! Help!!!! We need pilots!!!! Together with the 14 OV-10's we are flying in South America for the State Department. DynCorp is the largest operator of OV-10's in the world. If anyone wants to fly OV-10s and operate five radios at one time contact **John Fairfield** at: jfairfield@juno.com for more information. **Doug Aitken** can be reached at 919-387-8519 or e mail: 76140.3076@compuserve.com

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

My name is **Art Trask** and I am the CDF Division Manager for DynCorp. This is going to be a fun contract with a really great mission. In my opinion, aerial wild land fire suppression is about as rewarding as it gets. As you can imagine, it can get pretty hairy at times and unfortunately,



we have lost nine air tanker pilots since the Grumman S-2 program started in 1975. The midair this year was an especially tragic loss of two really outstanding and dedicated tanker pilots!!

As you may know, the OV-10A's are used for command and control of aviation assets in and around the fire area and to coordinate retardant drops with the ground troops. Just like Vietnam except we usually don't have people shooting at us (unless there is some nut on the ground guarding a pot garden). The backseater is a State employed Air Tactical Group Supervisor (ATGS) who has lots of wild land fire suppression experience.

The OV-10's are really neat since they have been totally refurbished and highly modified to include: new instrument panels, wiring, lots of AM&FM radios, new instruments, tinted glass, removed hot seats and replaced with seats that us old folks can sit in for extended periods (seven hours a day max.), removed external hard points and belly mounted drop tank, installed internal aux. fuel tank (we have up to six hours endurance), installed air conditioning system, and a new classy paint job. They perform well and can just about keep up with the turbine S-2's, C-130's and, P-3's. The old Cessna 0-2's which we used to operate prior to getting the OV-10's were really sucking pond water trying to get to the fire area before everyone else - even some of CDF's helicopters beat 'em!

Now that you have a picture of what the program is about, the bad news is that despite the aging workforce - we are fortunate to have a very stable group of highly dedicated pilots who REALLY love their work. We will need to replace the two tanker pilots that were lost this year - not an easy task since they are a specialized group as you might well imagine. The OV-10 pilots are generally a younger group when compared to tanker pilots (they probably average around 45 or so). Needless to say, right now we are getting calls from pilots all over who are looking for flying jobs. I anticipate that we may have two or possibly three seats open up this year - but you never know for sure. As I stated earlier, we are fortunate to have a cadre of outstanding pilots who really know the business and like seasonal work.

It truly is a VERY unique business that takes time to learn! I would encourage anyone interested in CDF's program to check out DynCorp's new web site at: [CDF.DynCorp.com](http://CDF.DynCorp.com) You can fill out a resume right off the web site. If you have questions, need further information etc., please call me at my home number 530-626-4528 (Placerville) or send me an email to: [artandfaye@earthlink.net](mailto:artandfaye@earthlink.net). If you get to Sacramento let me know and we will show you around CDF's operation which is presently located at Mather Field but will be moving to McClellan Field in the near future. Thanks again, **Arthur H. Trask**

**NEW FOUND RUSTIC:** **Walt Krueger** recently helped us locate **William P. 'Bill' Healey, Bien Hoa 0-2, Rustic ????**. Bill's address is: 3185 Fairlawn Land, Prior Lake, MN 55372 Telephone: 952-492-6661 E Mail: [billhealey@sprintmail.com](mailto:billhealey@sprintmail.com)

**RUSTICS REMEMBERED:** Final Flights in 2001:

**Robert B. 'Bob' Virtue**, Bien Hoa 0-2, Rustic 30 --- 8 Jan 2001,  
**Don Hagle**, Bien Hoa 0-2, Rustic 40 --- 11 July 2001

**RUSTIC GENERALS STILL ON ACTIVE DUTY:** Two Rustics continue to serve on active duty with distinction:

**Lansford E. 'Lanny' Trapp, Jr.**, Bien Hoa OV-10 Rustic; now a Lt Gen.--Has been serving as Vice Commander, Pacific Air Forces, Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii since 23 Sep 1999.

**Tom R. Case**, Bien Hoa OV-10 Rustic; now a Lt Gen.—Has been serving a Deputy Commander In Chief and Chief of Staff, U.S. Pacific Command, Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii since 23 Sep 2000.

### **SHORT BURSTS:**

- 1) **OV-10 GUNSIGHT:** **Don Echelberger**, Rustic Representative to the Hurlburt Air Park Council, is working with the Hurlburt History office to request (through their channels) that an OV-10 gunsight be obtained to be installed in OV-10 aircraft 626 which is on static display in the Hurlburt Air Park.
  - 2) **ALL FAC REUNION—A HAWAII R & R:** The next all FAC reunion will be held in Honolulu, Hawaii, **10-14 April 2002**. All Rustics and their guests are invited. One of the highlights of the reunion will be the dedication of a new FAC memorial to be placed in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (commonly known as the 'Punch Bowl Crater'.) Information on the reunion can be obtained at the FAC website: [www.fac-assoc.org](http://www.fac-assoc.org). or [www.dallasdmc.net](http://www.dallasdmc.net). Tours, local excursions, golf, sunset sailing, and luau's are just part of the fun-filled weekend. The banquet speaker will be **Gen Bill Bergert**, Cmdr PACAF, a FAC veteran with over 300 combat hours in the O-2A. **EEM Tours** is handling reunion registration. They can be reached at 1-888-868-7712, at [www.dallasdmc.net](http://www.dallasdmc.net), or e mail: [info@eemtours.com](mailto:info@eemtours.com) (ask for Carolyn or Toni).
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- 3) **HAWAII FAC MEMORIAL FUNDS NEEDED:** If you haven't contributed to the Hawaii FAC Memorial Fund, but would like to do so, please mail your tax deductible contribution to: Hawaii FAC Association, PO BOX 894213, Mililani, Hawaii 96789. Make your check or money order payable to: "*Hawaii FAC Association*" and enclose your name and address. On behalf of all FACs and our fallen comrades, we thank you for your support. **Bill Ernst** Nail 09, Rustic 04, Memorial Committee Chairman
- 4) **TO BECOME A CHARTER MEMBER OF THE FAC ASSOCIATION:** Send \$20.00 (payable to: *FAC Association*) to **George Ferkes**, Treasurer, 472 Parish Blvd., Mary Esther, FL 32569 Include your name, address, phone, e mail address FAC unit, call sign, aircraft and tour dates, etc. As a charter member you'll receive a free copy of the 84 page FAC Trivia Booklet. Membership is currently at 604. All Rustics are eligible and encouraged to join this worthwhile organization.
- 5) **RUSTIC INPUT TO THE FAC BOOK PROJECT:** **Dick Wood** has submitted a 16 page condensed history of the Rustic FACs to the FAC Book Committee for inclusion in their ALL FAC book. No individual Rustic stories are included. If you have a personal story for inclusion in their book, they would like to hear from you soonest. Please submit your input to: **Charlie Pocock**, Book Committee Chairman, at: CharMarPock@aol.com or mail it to: 910 Forest View Rd., Monument, CO 80132. (Send the Rustics a copy too!! To **Claude Newland**, 4033 Indian Trail, Destin, FL 32541.)

**AIR FORCE MUSEUM PLANNING LARGE EXPANSION FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA EXHIBITS.** **Milt Ross**, Bien Hoa 0-2, Rustic 42, has volunteered to be the Rustic FAC POC for the Air Force Museum's Southeast Asia expansion project. Milt reports, "Claude, I will certainly keep track of the Museum's Vietnam/Southeast Asia and FAC expansion. Short version is that this next major addition (a new third hangar equal in size to the first two) will enable the museum staff to establish a much larger Southeast Asia exhibit. All the era planes will be inside with appropriate displays and mementos to go with the aircraft (POW display among others). **Terry Aitken** has this special interest in the FAC mission from that era and the party suit thing has the substance of a colorful display, likely to be popular with the typical museum visitor. Curators and historians cannot have too much info I've found. Terry still has my Rustic book on loan and is trying to get a bunch more for in-house use and sale after this next printing. Any Rustic (or any other FAC) who'd like to contribute their party suit to the museum may certainly do so, care of **Terry Aitken**. The suits do become permanent museum property. I've given him mine and he has 10-12 others from other units including fighter and Ranch Hand (only ones I could identify at casual glance). If anyone needs any further info have them send me a message -- I'd be glad to help. The AF museum, in about 3 years from now will contain a tremendous Vietnam era display, occupying about 15%-20% of the total floor space and will truly be worth a visit or a revisit." **Milt** can be reached at: 310-798-8387. *[Editor's note: Guys, this is something to think about...this may be a place to consider for safekeeping of Rustic memorabilia at some future date. Food for thought.]*

**RUSTIC WEBSITE HAS BEEN ADDED TO THE SPECIAL FORCES SEARCH ENGINE:** The Rustic web site now has a hotlink on The Special Forces Search Engine which can be access at: [www.sfahq.com](http://www.sfahq.com) or the Rustic website: [www.rustic.org](http://www.rustic.org).

**RUSTIC WEB SITE. WHAT'S NEW?** **Lendy Edwards** recently update the Rustic web site with several new items and has added some new hotlinks. If you haven't taken a look at the site lately, do so and let Lendy know what you think. He's always soliciting inputs and comments on how to improve the site. Lendy can be reached at: [lendy4@home.com](mailto:lendy4@home.com)

#### **CAMBODIAN LANDMINES:** (From **Dick Woods**)

*[Editor's note: There are undoubtedly many deserving organizations in Cambodia that might well deserve Rustic support. **Dick Wood** files this report on Cambodian Land mines.]*

Cambodia is infested with land mines and suffers about 50 casualties per month. If not fatal, these almost always result in loss of limbs. As one expert put it, "The principal tools for locating mines are children and construction workers." The current estimate of land mines in Cambodia is between four and six million.

The mines all appear to be of Russian, Chinese or Vietnamese manufacture and, as far as I know, were not sown during the Rustic years. They were probably planted by either the Khmer Rouge or the North Vietnamese in the 1979-1998 time period. The main areas mined are to the north and west of the Tonle Sap and were meant to restrict access to the Thai border.

A related problem is unexploded ordnance or UXO. These must have been dropped during the years of the Rustic operation. Apparently, fighters returning to bases in Thailand would jettison their bombs over Cambodia. Personally, I have a little trouble believing that, but there is no question about the existence of UXO. Injuries from UXO are a significant percentage of the overall land mine injuries.

The problem is that mines are not cleaned up by the planters and do not self-destruct. They are a gift to the country where they are used; a gift that keeps on giving. Another problem is that modern land mines are small, cheap, and made of plastic. They are very hard to detect and there are few volunteers for the job.

Although the United States has declined to participate in an international campaign to ban all land mines, we have not been idle. All of our mines currently in use (except in Korea) are self-destructing (SD) or self-deactivating (SDA). The SD/SDA mechanisms are very reliable and exceed the standards of the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW). Unfortunately, deactivating a mine does not destroy the explosive. It still has to be removed, but it is a lot safer to look for it if you are confident that it has deactivated. We used SD/SDA mines in large quantities in the Gulf War and we know of no resulting civilian casualties.

The United States has a Humanitarian De-mining Strategic Plan involving a number of government agencies. A government laboratory here in the northwest has been working on a new type of mine detector that can find the little plastic ones. A lot of mine clean-up work is funded by the United States.

As it turns out, there is a lot of information available on landmines. You can find many websites by just searching for "Landmines." One of the most useful is <http://maic.jmu.edu>. That's the Mine Action Information Center at James Madison University in Virginia. **Dick Roberds** (Rustic 21) is a professor there and led me to it. The Center collects and organizes information from a few hundred other organizations and provides links to them. The amount of information available is a little intimidating. With a small amount of persistence, you can identify specific minefields in Cambodia and their present status. You can even join the Adopt-A-Minefield program and help sponsor the cleanup of one. By reading back issues of the Journal of Mine Action, you can learn more about land mines than you probably want to know. Issue 5.1 deals with Asia and the Pacific.

I have no specific objectives in this area. I've decided that live land mines are a lot closer to being an inhumane weapon than napalm ever was. I'm going to throw a few bucks into the pot somewhere and if the Rustic FAC Association ever accumulates any loose change, this might be a good use for some of it. **Dick Wood,** Rustic 11

*[If you think the Rustics should investigate supporting this program, let your officers hear from you.]*

**Rustic License Plates: Lendy Edwards** Does this look interesting to you? I am currently working with the manufacturer of these plates and hope to have an O-2 version shortly. I have requested a smaller airplane in the upper right corner, with the appropriate Rustic patch in the upper left corner, and call signs in larger letters across the bottom. Will provide a sample by email when it is available.





**RUSTIC SURVEY:** Please take 5 minutes to complete the following Rustic survey and mail it in today! We hope to get 100% participation. This information will help determine the future of your association. Thanks you for your continued support.

(Mail to: **Lendy Edwards**, 11 Poplar Ave., Shalimar, FL 32579)

## Rustic Survey

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ E Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

### 2002 REUNION:

Will you be attending the 2002 reunion in San Antonio? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Not Sure \_\_\_\_\_

Who would you like to see as the Reunion Banquet speaker and why? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to see Sam The FAC Attend the reunion? Yes \_\_\_\_ Col Oum? Yes \_\_\_\_ Ltc Kohn Om? Yes \_\_\_\_ Nady Tan? Yes \_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to make a donation to help cover their expenses, should they attend? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

### NEXT REUNION AFTER 2002 REUNION:

When would you like to see the next Rustic reunion (after the 2002 San Antonio Reunion)? Please rank order your preferences 1 to 3: 2003 \_\_\_\_\_ 2004 \_\_\_\_\_ 2005 \_\_\_\_\_

Where would you like to see our next reunion? (after the 2002 San Antonio Reunion)? Please rank order your preferences:

_____ Branson, MO	_____ Ft Walton Beach, FL
_____ Las Vegas, NV	_____ Los Angeles, CA
_____ Orlando/Cape Kennedy, FL	_____ San Antonio, TX
_____ San Diego, CA	_____ Seattle, WA (Boeing)
_____ Phoenix/Tucson, AZ (Air Force Bone Yard)	_____ Washington D.C. area (new Smithsonian Aviation Museum)
_____ Wright -Patterson AFB, OH (AF Museum)	_____ Other? _____

Would be willing to work on a team to help plan the next reunion if the reunion is held near you? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Maybe (tell me more) \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ ?

### RUSTIC ASSOCIATION:

**The new Rustic Charter and By-laws will provide for election of Officers and Directors. Directors will help set Association policy.**

**(More on this in the March 2002 Newsletter.)**

If elected, I'd be willing to serve: As an Officer: Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ ( Pres. \_\_\_\_\_ V-Pres. \_\_\_\_\_ Sec. \_\_\_\_\_ Treas. \_\_\_\_\_ )  
As a Director: Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ Tell Me More: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

I have some computer skills and would help, where able, with:

\_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter Formatting  
\_\_\_\_\_ Maintaining the Rustic Database  
\_\_\_\_\_ Maintaining the Rustic Website  
\_\_\_\_\_ Maintaining the Rustic E Mail Address Book

### RUSTIC HISTORY:

If the Rustics were to publish a follow-on booklet of stand alone additional Rustic stories, would you contribute a story or two? (This booklet would be printed once sufficient stories are accumulated.) Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Maybe \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (I'm storied Out!)

**IF YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ASSOCIATION, PLEASE SEND THEM TO US ALONG WITH THIS SURVEY.**

## 2002 Rustic FAC Association Annual Dues

\_\_\_\_ YES, I would like to continue receiving the Rustic FAC newsletters and also help support efforts for continued Rustic FAC Association camaraderie and future reunions.

\_\_\_\_ **Enclosed is my check for the annual fee of \$20.00 for the period of Jan. through Dec. 2002.**

**Make check payable to "Rustics" & mail to: Lendy Edwards 11 Poplar Ave, Shalimar, FL 32579** (Family members of "Rustics Remembered" are honorary members-NO DUES REQUIRED.

\_\_\_\_ NO, I am not interested. I understand my name will be taken off the newsletter mailing list.

**Roster update:** Please indicate any changes/corrections needed to the Rustic roster, even if you're not a dues paying member of the Association. We'd like to keep a current address, etc. on each Rustic. Thanks!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's name: \_\_\_\_\_ (if applicable)

Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_ New Address? Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

E Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Rustic Call Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

Rustic Tour Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ FAC Aircraft Flown: \_\_\_\_\_

