



Rustic News

www.rustic.org

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Secretary: Don Echelberger, echelberg@aol.com
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NEXT RUSTIC REUNION: 10-13 October, 2002, at the famous cattlemen's Menger Hotel in San Antonio TX., located next to the Alamo and the beautiful San Antonio River Walk. This will be the Rustics third reunion. Come join us for a great weekend of camaraderie, fellowship and just plain fun!! Our thanks go to the San Antonio Reunion Committee of **Ron Van Kirk, Bill Decabooter, and Tom Clinch, and their wives** who have worked to put together a great reunion weekend for us.

REUNION REGISTRATION: The June 2002 newsletter will contain the registration forms for our 2002 reunion; however it is recommended that you make your reservations now for the Menger Hotel.

MAKE YOUR RESERVATION NOW FOR THE HOTEL MENGER:

Ron Van Kirk has reserved a block of 70 rooms at the Menger Hotel at a special Rustic reunion rate. These rooms will be held till 28 August. After that, the rate guarantee will expire. The Rustic rate is \$111 for one bed, \$115 for two beds. There is also a 17% tax on all hotel rooms in San Antonio. (These rates reflect the fact that we're in a popular town that routinely hosts large conventions.) Reservations may be canceled up to three days prior with no penalty.

If you plan to stay at the Menger Hotel, Ron asks that you make your reservation NOW. The block of rooms we have reserved are available on a first-come, first-served basis, but if we find we need more rooms, Ron may be able to book additional rooms if he acts quickly.

Here's how to reserve your room: Call 800-345-9285 or 210-223-4361

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1. You must reference the "**Rustic FAC Association**" and **booking number 6372**.
2. Specify your required dates - 10, 11 and 12 October (Thur, Fri, Sat.) and any other dates you may require.
3. Specify your preference for both Bed Type and choice of Wing:
 - Antique Wing** - King Bed or Double
 - Center Wing** - King or Double bed
 - New Wing** - 2 Double Beds (and Balcony)

Note: **Antique** gives you the original flavor of the Hotel from the late 1800's, upgraded to current amenities. The **Center Wing** was built in the 1950's - and consists of smaller rooms, usually recommended for one person. The **New wing** was built in the 1980's, and are much larger rooms, most with a balcony overlooking the pool and Rustic "Hootch" area.

Call NOW. Do not wait. If we fill the current block of rooms, we need to move quickly to obtain more. For any questions please contact **Ron Van Kirk** at (210) 491-0567.

WHO'S COMING? It's still early, but the following Rustics and their guests have already indicated they'll be attending the 2002 Rustic reunion: Doug Aitken, Gloria Auth, Tom Capps, Tom Clinch, Si Dahle, Ron Dandeneau, Bill Decabooter, Walter Dodd, Don Echelberger, Lendy Edwards, Jim Gabel, Joe Garand, Don Haller, Roger Hamman, Ned Helm, Steve Hopkins, Hank

Keese, John Koppin, Don Mercer, Marcel Morneau, Claude Newland, **Kohn Om**, Jim Reese, Jim Seibold, Bill Sleigh, Ray Stratton, Jack Thompson, Ron Van Kirk, Mike Wilson, George Winkler, and Richard Wood.

This list will surely grow! As of this printing, we're not sure if **Sam 'The FAC'** or **Nady Tan** will be able to attend the reunion, but **Doug Aitken** is still working with them to see if we can make it happen. We'll keep you posted.

REUNION SCHEDULE OF EVENTS (Tentative):

WED, 9 OCT

1900 Pre-Party at Van Kirk's house. All invited if you're in town early.

THURS, 10 OCT

- 0900 Hospitality Suite set-up. Bring your Rustic memorabilia.
- 1200 Hospitality Suite (Rustic Hootch) opens. Registration Open. Sign up for optional activities.
- 1530 Hotel Check In - room guaranteed available.
- 1700 Optional Dinner on the Riverwalk or America Towers? Meet at the Hootch.
- 2000 Reunion Official Welcome - Menger Patio Room (wear of party flight suit-optional).
- 2100 Banquet Participants' Meeting - Executive Suite.

FRI, 11 OCT.

- 0800 Optional Activities - Tour/shop day for non-golfers.
- 0800 Golfers meet at (TBD). Tee times (8:30-9:30 AM) Quarry Golf Course (10 Min. north of Hotel)
- 1430 Golfers arrive back at Menger Hotel.
- 1700 Awards And Decs Program Update - Hospitality Suite. Briefing by Don Mercer.
- 1830 Mexican Dinner on the River at Casa Rio Restaurant (On the River Walk. First 60 to sign up for boats, all others dine in Casa Rio Restaurant.)
- 2100 Hospitality Suite open.

SAT, 12 OCT.

- 0800 Optional activities; Hospitality suite open.
- 1430 Rustic Happy Hour/Business Meeting/Elections. Hospitality Suite, or Executive Suite TBD.
- 1630 Banquet Set-up.
- 1800 Banquet Happy Hour (Room TBD)
- 1845 Group Photos. All present.
- 1915 Reunion Banquet/Program (Coat & Tie)
- Till? Hospitality Suite open.

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION AND BY-LAWS ADOPTED: Your Rustic officers have drafted and approved a set of Articles of Incorporation and By-laws for the Rustic FAC Association. A copy of the Articles of Incorporation and By-laws are included with this newsletter for your review. Our thanks go to **Bill Sleigh** who worked with **Charlie Jones**, of the FAC Association, to draft these documents. If you have any comments or recommended changes, please contact **Bill Sleigh**, Rustic FAC Association Vice President, [NLT 15 May](mailto:fancy295@cox.net), at fancy295@cox.net or 850-897-1045. If there are any recommended changes, we will present them to the membership in the June 2002 newsletter and will have a vote with the results announced at the 2002 reunion business meeting.

RUSTIC ELECTIONS. OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS SOUGHT. In accordance with the new Rustic By-laws, the Rustics will hold elections for the following offices this year:

President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Historian and three Directors.

Note: Each of the above will be voting members of the Rustic's Board of Directors and will participate in conducting the affairs of the association. In addition to officers, THREE Directors are needed. In order to communicate in a timely manner, it will be necessary for each Board member to have E mail capability.

Election Ballots will be mailed to all Association Dues Paying Members in June. Ballots must be received NLT the Rustic Business Meeting held in conjunction with the Rustic reunion in San Antonio in October (12 Oct). Results will be announced at the reunion business meeting.

Bill Sleigh is chairing the *nomination committee*. If you would be willing to serve in one of these positions, and would like to have your name put in nomination, please contact **Bill Sleigh NLT 15 May 2002** at: fancy295@cox.net or 850-897-1045.

REUNION GUEST SPEAKER: Invitation Letters are being sent out; speaker TBA.

RUSTIC BOOK TO BE LISTED ON RUSTIC WEBSITE: **Lendy Edwards** continues to maintain an excellent website for the Rustics by continually updating the site with new information and improving its many user friendly applications. In the future, he will be adding a Hot Link to the Smithsonian Institute Press's (SIP) website that will allow you to order copies of the new Rustic book published by SIP.

TWO RUSTIC INTERPRETER/BACKSEATERS RECEIVE BELATED DFC'S: **Don Mercer's** leadership in spearheading an Awards and Decoration's effort for overlooked Rustics, along with many of you who helped provided supporting mission affidavits, have now paid big dividends! Don recently informed us that the Air Force has just approved two Rustic interpreters for belated recognition for their superb efforts as Rustic backseaters. **Roger Hamann** has been approved for a DFC with two Oak Leaf Clusters, and **Marcel Morneau** will receive a DFC with an Oak Leaf Cluster. A hearty congratulations to Roger and Marcel and A BIG THANKS to Don for all his work in putting these awards packages together! It was a superb effort!!

Appropriate awards ceremonies are currently being planned for Roger and Marcel by their respective local congressmen. Again, **Don Mercer** is helping coordinate the details. Our congratulations go to Roger and Marcel for being recognized as the top combat performers we always knew they were. (*Editor's note: An awards recognition ceremony is also being planned for Roger and Marcel at the Rustic Reunion Banquet in October.*)

The following press release has been prepared by Don: (*Note: a similar press release has been prepared for **Marcel Morneau***)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mr. Roger J. Hamann, a resident of Greene, Maine, to Receive Three Awards of the Distinguished Flying Cross for missions flown in 1972 over Cambodia as a U. S. Air Force Airborne Interpreter

Lewiston, Maine — February ??, 2002 — Congressman John Baldacci, representing the Second Congressional District of Maine, is scheduled to present the Distinguished Flying Cross and First and Second Oak Leaf Clusters constituting three awards of the Distinguished Flying Cross to Roger J. Hamann on February ??, 2002. Mr. Hamann is a native of Lewiston, Maine, and has been a resident of Greene, Maine, since 1976.

Mr. Hamann, then a Sergeant in the U. S. Air Force, served as an Airborne Interpreter, speaking fluent French, with the 23rd Tactical Air Support Squadron (TASS) based at Ubon Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand. He flew on 169 combat missions over Cambodia in a then classified operation in support of the government of Lon Nol.

Declassification of the operation, known by the call sign "Rustic", has occurred within the last few years. This, together with Congressional legislation, has made it possible for the pilots and commanding officer of Mr. Hamann's unit to submit him for these well deserved awards.

On each of the missions for which he is being presented the Distinguished Flying Cross, then Sergeant Hamann, while flying in the back seat of an OV-10 Bronco aircraft acting as a Forward Air Controller (FAC), coordinated U. S. tactical fighter aircraft in support of allied Cambodian ground troops. On each of these three missions, his aircraft was the target of intense antiaircraft fire directed by enemy Khmer Rouge forces that were engaged with friendly Cambodian Army soldiers.

Numerous additional factors placed the aircrews at extraordinary risk in conducting these missions deep into hostile territory. These included a lack of suitable navigational aids, only one airport in the Area of Operations, Pochentong Airport at Phnom Penh, that could serve as a divert field in the event of an emergency and adverse weather conditions that fluctuated substantially in the theater of operations as it was not unusual to be over 100-150 miles from their home base.

Mr. Hamann's calm and commanding actions in the heat of highly fluid battle situations, his professional competence, aerial skill and devotion to duty that he displayed reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force and saved the lives of many Cambodian allied forces.

BOOK UPDATE: Dick Wood reports that our book is on track to be commercially published in time for our October reunion. That's great news! We hope you'll come to the reunion to pick up your personal copy and to get the Rustics in attendance to autograph your book. The Smithsonian Institute Press (SIP) will publish the book under the title: *Call Sign Rustic: The Secret Air War Over Cambodia, 1970-1973*. The book is approx. 160 pages in length. This is a revised, shortened version of our original printing. This was necessary to meet SIP's criteria for publication.

For the book cover, they used the same OV-10-over-the-convoy picture we used on the original book. The primary colors are red and black. The Cambodian troops on the vehicle are the same size as the original print. The OV-10 is lower and smaller to maintain the same perspective and get it into the 6x9 format. The title (CALL SIGN RUSTIC) is at the bottom in big letters and the subtitle is in the blank space to the left of the Cambodians on the vehicle and below the OV-10. Dick reports "it is very well done. They did a good job with it". The Good News is that the general public will now have the opportunity to learn about the Rustic mission through this commercial publication.

Again, our thanks go to Dick Wood who voluntarily spent many hours editing the book and working with SIP to prepare the manuscript for publication. SIP is marketing the book and will have the book listed on their world-wide website. It is a hard bound book and the cost is \$24.95. Here's what their Advertisement will say:

Call Sign Rustic (Title)
The Secret Air War over Cambodia, 1970-1973 (Subtitle)
Richard Wood

The first history of the White House's classified air operations in support of the Cambodian government, written by one of the pilots.

American army troops entered Cambodia in April of 1970. President Richard Nixon could not keep ground troops in Cambodia beyond June 1970 without authorization from Congress, which was not forthcoming. He did not want to desert Cambodia's anticommunist Lol Nol regime, so he ordered top-secret, round-the-clock air support over Cambodia, and the Rustics were born.

This three-year mission was so secret--managed directly from the White House--that there are no official records of it. Richard Wood flew as one of the Rustics, a group of forward air controllers (FACs) who provided twenty-four-hour air support to the Cambodian ground commanders by flying low and slow over enemy positions. Wood bases his book on his own experiences and those of the other pilots and Cambodians who took part in the operation. He shows how the Cambodian fighting men welcomed the American pilots like they were the cavalry, and how the Rustics played a major part in the fight against the North Vietnamese and Khmer Rouge guerrilla forces. The Rustic pilots and their enlisted interpreters unequivocally expressed admiration for the courage and dedication of the Cambodian field troops, commanders, and radio operators. They were proud to support the Cambodians, and when all U.S. operations ceased in 1973, many of them were devastated at abandoning their friends.

This covert air war ended on August 15, 1973; the Cambodian radio operators' calls for air support were no longer answered. The Rustics, while in action, played a major part in staving off both the North Vietnamese and Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge. The loss of American air support eventually contributed to the fall of Cambodia and the horribly dark period of Cambodia's history that will live in infamy as "the killing fields."

More information about the Rustics can be found at www.rustics.org.

Richard Wood is a retired United States Air Force colonel, and has logged more than 6,000 hours flying military aircraft. His most recent book is *Aviation Safety Programs: A Management Handbook* (1996). He is a consultant specializing in aviation safety and lives in Snohomish, Washington.

Aviation · Military History, 35 b&w photographs, 6 x 9, 160 pp.
Cloth: 1-58834-049-X \$24.95, October 2002

(Editor's Note: We'll let you know if we are able to get the books at a discounted rate. SIP is also preparing a one page advertising Flyer for the book that we'll be able to distribute at the All FAC Reunion in Hawaii, 10-13 April 2002.)

HOUSE OF HOPE AND CAMBODIAN ORPHANAGE: Last year was a good year for the Kompong Cham House of Hope and Orphanage and also for the Rustics. We donated \$2,451 to these worthwhile organizations and your donations were divided as per your requests. Tammy Fong, a director at the House of Hope, has assured us that the donations were needed, welcomed, and put to good use in furthering their goals of providing care, guidance and a home for those individuals in the two organizations. Currently, we have \$100, a recent contribution, in the account for the House of Hope and the Orphanage. The picture below was sent to us by Tammy Fong. It shows all of the bright smiling faces of the children at the orphanage after Tammy delivered gifts (basic necessities) from you, the Rustics.



The following letter was sent from Tammy Fong to Tona Newland and the Rustics and is as follows:

Hi Tona (Rustics), Finally I am getting back to you! Life has been very hectic. Last week our staff had our annual retreat where we were gone 4 days in Kompong Som., the beach town. There was a lot of prep work involved. It went well! :A good mixture of work and play. I just love our staff!

Afterwards I had a 2 day conference on “The Christian Response to Sexual Abuse, Exploitation and Trafficking.” I shared about HOH and had 3 of our staff join in also. So by the time I got back to KCC I was totally exhausted. This weekend was long also and I am still not yet recovered for the new week! I need several good night’s sleep and God’s grace!

Tona, thank you SOOO much for all your help with Hands of Hope. You are amazing! All the contacts you are making for us! Your suggestions are great also. I will consider taking photos. Creating a web page is also a consideration! It is just finding the time in the midst of all we already do.

I will be sending you more newsletters (from KCC) and more brochures (from the US). So you shall get those soon. Thanks for distributing those for us.

Tammy Fong

(Editors Note: Rustic Wives, if you’d like to know more about how you can help support the work of the House of Hope, please contact Tona Newland at cnewland@gnt.net or 850-654-2955.)

SHORT BURSTS:

- 1) **ALL FAC REUNION.** Will be held in Honolulu, HI 11-14 Apr 2002. 200-300 FACs are expected to be in attendance. Several Rustics are serving on the organizing committee. For details and to register contact EEM Tours at: 1-888-TOURS-12 or email info@eemtours.com.
- 1) **WINGS OVER LAOS AIR SHOW.** 20 July 2002 in Lacrosse, Wisconsin. Invited are all Veterans, Ravens FACs, Air America, Air commando, Warbird Owners of 0-1, L-19, and T-28 aircraft, and anyone who supported Laotian operations. The Airshow will honor **General VANG PAO** and all those that fought during the Vietnam War and the Secret War in Laos. Please direct questions and RSVP's to **Locha Thao at:** lcthao@hotmail.com or (608)239-4940.

NEWEST ASSOCIATION MEMBER: Welcome **Bill Voss**, Rustic Bien Hoa Intel officer, who is the newest member of the Rustic FAC Association. (*Editor's note: Bill, please send Lendy Edwards (Rustic20@cox.net) your current email address. We couldn't get through on the one given us initially. Thanks.*)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

From: **Roger J. Hamann:** rstcyankee@aol.com

To my fellow Rustics,

How do I begin to thank you all? This mission has truly been one for the ages, one that at times felt as if it would last that long as well! To all the pilots who sent in affidavits on my behalf, especially **Jerry "Mac le FAC" McClellan, Doug "Dougie Poo" Aitken and Ron Van Kirk**, a most heartfelt thank you. I salute you.

To all my fellow GIBS who sent in info to **Don Mercer** in order to show those supposedly "in the know" what in hell was really going on, merci beaucoup.

To **Generals Trapp and Case**, whom I'm told had some input in this matter, ahhhhh the power of Rustic brotherhood, a 3-star salute to you both, sirs.

To all those involved in some manner, shape or form, some of whom I've never even had the pleasure of meeting, thank you Rustic brothers.

And a most sincere thank you to **Don Mercer**, the man who spearheaded this operation. There was a time near the end of this mission when I felt like RTBing, having heard enough of the bureaucracy's BS. But Don, not being one to take "no" as suitable BDA for the mission at hand, insisted we battle on. The results.....are what I have before me today, approval of the award of the DFC. After 30 years.....you don't know how much this means to me.

Forever a Rustic, Rustic Yankee, **Rog Hamann**

From: **Marcel Morneau:** rusticv@juno.com

Dear Brothers-in-arms: What a Christmas present! Let's change **Don Mercer's** call sign to Rustic "St. Nick". What can you say to repay everyone involved in this great mission. A few people deserve special thanks: **Ron Van Kirk** for your eloquent recommendation and all the factual data that you provided. **Doug Aitken**, for your undying positive attitude and constant support. **Generals Trapp and Case** for their timely intervention and providing the right contacts to speed up the process. To my fellow GIBS, for your support, camaraderie and insight into our own little world, Merci pour tout. We are a band of brothers who fought the good fight. We can hold our heads high. 9/11 was a sad day in American history, but the tidal wave of patriotism and pride in our military forces offsets some of the negative aspects of this tragedy. If we had that kind of support 30 years ago, who knows what would have happened.

To echo Roger's comments, we were highly frustrated at the end of this race. **Don Mercer** stayed the course and kept us focused. That man deserves a Pulitzer prize for the awards packages he built in our behalf. Don will be recognized at the next reunion. We will all see to that fellow Rustics. Warm regards, thank you for everything that you did, large or small. Happy Holidays or Joyeux Noel as we say back home in Quebec.

Hope to see all of you in San Antonio next year. Happy New Year from Cincinnati.

On a personal note: Denise and I gave our daughter in marriage on June 2nd, 2001. We are future grand parents for now. Our son

Shawn will graduate as an electrical Engineer from UC in June 2003 and, will be commissioned as a Reserve Officer in the US Army. Ya, Ya, I know. He's a traitor to the cause but we forgive him. It will be a very proud day when Denise and I pin his bars on.

Marcel Morneau, Rustic Victor
Bien Hoa/Ubon 71-72, A Rustic Forever.

(Editors note: Marcel and Denise, the Rustics share in your joy and pride in the accomplishments of your son and daughter. You're going to love being a grandparent! We look forward to seeing you in San Antonio.)

From: **Doug Robertson**, Para4T5@aol.com

While I was at Rustic Alpha [located atop Nui Ba Den mountain] in September of 1971, we would handle radio traffic from upwards of 30 planes during the early evening hours but on into the night things got a little boring at times. If my memory serves me correctly I believe it was a Sundog FAC trying to RTB during a "Severe" thunderstorm and had lost most of his Nav equipment in his O-2 and used my radio signal to home in on to find his way back to TSN. I remember how vividly he was describing the lightning, especially when it was going "cloud to cloud" "cloud to airplane" with a few expletives thrown in for good measure. I think I talked to him for about 45 minutes while he was making his way through the storm trying to get back to TSN. The pilot whose name I have forgotten was so happy to have me to talk to he invited me to call upon him if I ever made it to TSN. As luck would have it the Army chopper that I hitched a ride on from Nui Ba Den took me to TSN and I called the pilot on the phone and he came down and picked me up and took me back to his barracks, found me a empty clean bed and a hot shower and something to eat. It was such a good feeling to know that we radio ops were appreciated and depended upon. If anyone out there fits this story I'd like to hear from you.

Sgt. **Doug Robertson**, Rustic Radio

(Editor's note: Doug, it was always a great comfort for us aircrew members to know that we had guys like you on Nui Ba Den looking out for us and checking our six. Your flight following service, thought probably somewhat tedious work for you, provided us with peace of mind knowing that someone cared.)

Subject: Nui Ba Den "Rustic Alpha"

Here is a photo for FACNET of "RUSTIC ALPHA" Nui Ba Den, RVN taken on September of 1971. Radio room was in door to the left at the rear of the building. The radios sat on top of the "Black Witches Tomb" or at least that is what I was told.... It was a nice place to visit but I wouldn't want to live there. Sgt. Doug Robertson, Rustic Radio Ops



From **Roger Hamann**: RstcYankee@aol.com (As posted on the FACNET)

Subject: From the "newbie" FACNET member

Thanks for the "Welcome"and the pat on the back. To a man, I believe every French speaking " Rustic backseater" was very proud to have served their unique tour as a FAC "GIB" . On a personal note..... left a SAC base in Michigan in late summer of '71 as a POL "flight line gas attendant" arrived incountry (Phan Rang AB) in late October,(after some survival school training) , a few days short of my 21st b'day. As yet, Uncle Sam still hadn't given any clue as to what exactly I'd be doing, other then flying.....and speaking French. Word was that I might possibly be shipped back to the states because the "backseater program" had run it's course. Needless to say, the backseaters continued to fly FAC missions until Aug. 25,1972. The 10 months I spent as Rustic Yankee were the most gratifying of my short Air Force career. To be able to say that, yes, I was an enlisted man while serving my country.....and yes, I was a gas jock for most of those 4 years....but yes, I DID get to fly while I was in the Air Force, with a group of fantastic Rustic pilots who treated me as a fellow "comrade in arms", as part of the team, is something I will forever be proud of. On the occasion of the Rustics' second reunion in 1999, I was privileged to share a few beers with the same Cambodian ground commander for whom the

Rustics had put many an airstrike in for some 27 years earlier. That, my friends, was a moment to remember! The passage of time has erased memories of most of the missions I flew as a Rustic GIB...but as **Ned Helm** stated, not of how we left the people of Cambodia. To a man, I'm sure all Rustics felt we should have left when the mission was completed.....and not a moment sooner. I've rambled on long enough.....I've enjoyed already the FACNET e-mails that have found their way to this home in Maine, far



away from that little village of Kompong Thom in central Cambodia. But I shall never forget those people....nor my FAC brothers who flew "The Friendly Skies Over Cambodia". **Roger Hamann**, Rustic Yankee, '71-'72

Above, Final Rustic flight 15 August 1973
Photos below, Miscellaneous O-2 shots from the FACNET





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| Secretary: Don Echelberger, echelberg@aol.com | Website: Lendy Edwards, lendy@cox.net |
| Historian: Jim Gabel, jagabel@aol.com | Air Park Liasion: Don Echelberger, echelberg@aol.com |

IT'S BEEN THREE YEARS SINCE OUR LAST REUNION, CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?

IF YOU'RE COMING TO THE REUNION, RECOMMEND YOU SAVE THIS NEWSLETTER FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.



SAN ANTONIO, HERE WE COME. NEXT RUSTIC REUNION 10-13 October, 2002, at the famous cattlemen's Menger Hotel located next to the Alamo and the beautiful San Antonio River Walk. This is the place where **Teddy Roosevelt** hung out with his Rough Riders buddies during the Spanish American War era. Grab your hats, your boots, and your senorita and come join the Rustics for a great weekend of fun and camaraderie. Our Reunion Committee, **Ron Van Kirk, Bill Decabooter, and Tom Clinch, and their wives**, have set up a terrific schedule of events. Don't miss out on seeing all those who attend, so call your Rustic buddies and tell them to meet you at the Alamo! Some Rustics will be attending for the first time, including **Lt Gen (Ret) Lanny Trapp**, who will be our banquet quest speaker. Another reunion highlight will be an awards ceremony, in conjunction with our banquet, to present two Rustic interpreters, **Marcel Morneau** and **Roger Hamann**, with the Distinguished Flying Cross which was recently approved by the Air Force.

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FIRST TIME EVENT--ELECTION OF RUSTIC OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS. From **Bill Sleigh**, Nomination Coordinator. Now that the Rustics are formally Incorporated as an Association in the State of Florida, we are conducting our first official elections. For the past several months, nominations have been solicited and the following slate of Officers and Directors are being put forth for a memberships vote. If you are a current 'dues paying member' of the Association (i.e.member), an enclosed voting Ballot is provided. Please mail your ballot to **Bill Sleigh NLT 15 September**, or you may bring it to the reunion and Bill will accept them till end of day on Friday, 11 October. A final tally of votes will be made at the reunion business meeting on Saturday, 12 Oct.. If you are a dues paying member and did not get a ballot (enclosed), please contact **Lendy Edwards** to correct the discrepancy (lendy@cox.net, or call 850-651-6766.)

Nominations:

| | | | |
|-----------|------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| President | Claude Newland | Director: | Doug Aitken, |
| V.Pres | Jack Thompson | | Don Mercer |
| Treas. | Lendy Edwards | | Jim Reese |
| Secretary | (open-no nominations as yet) | | Mike Wilson |
| Historian | Jim Gabel | | Dick Wood |

Note: Three Directors will be elected.

RUSTIC VIDEO ORDERS BEING TAKEN: **Doug Aitken** has volunteered to produce additional copies of the Rustic Video which he made for our first reunion. This video consists of home movie footage and still pictures taken in Vietnam and Thailand of almost all phases of the Rustic mission to include personnel, aircraft (OV-10 and O-2) and airstrikes of all types conducted by Rustics. Doug has done a great job putting this video together with special effects and musical background. Cost of the video is \$27 which includes shipping and handling. If you'd like to order a video, see the Reunion Registration Form (enclosed) or contact Doug at: 76140.3076@compuserve.com or call 919-387-8519.

HURLBURT AIR PARK UPDATE: By **Don Echelberger**. We are sad to report that **Mr. Gary Tayman**, who was instrumental in helping the FAC Association install the new FAC Memorial in the Hurlburt Air park in 2000, passed away this past year. To honor his memory, a new Walkway and Memorial Directory has been approved and will be installed in the Air park. The design of the Air park Directory has been approved by the 16 SOW/CC and funding is being worked. The walkway connecting the Chapel side to the rest of the Air park was also approved and will be installed during the widening of Independence Road later in 2002. Also, lighting is to be installed near the FAC memorial in the near future.

EVER HEARD OF THE TYPOON FACs? Did you know that **Jim Gabel**, Rustic Bravo, the Bien Hoa Rustic Intel OIC, ran the Typhoon FAC program as his first job after he arrived at the 3rd TFW at Bien Hoa? Jim reports, "We flew three A-37 missions a day, primarily in Kratie and Mondolkiri Provinces of Cambodia. It was mainly a reconnaissance operation, using the KB-18 strike camera for photo reconnaissance. The results of the visual and photo reconnaissance was then used to frag targets for subsequent strikes. The Typhoon program flew its last mission on 27 June 1970 and the A/O became part of the A/O of the III DASC Task Force, later the 19th TASS Task Force, composed of Rustic, Sundog and Tilly FACs. I became Chief of Intelligence for the Task Force, but worked primarily with and flew with the Rustics, for the remainder of my tour."

AWARDS AND DECS - AND HOW YOU CAN HELP: From **Don Mercer**. "Gentlemen, (Bien Hoa Rustic Commanders and OV-10-pilots), I need your help. The Issue: A number of our Bien Hoa OV-10 Rustic Backseat Interpreters, as well as our Intel officer, **Jim Gabel**, either were never submitted for an award, were submitted for well-deserved awards which were never acted upon, or had their awards submissions get lost in the quagmire of Vietnam's red tape or the war's wind-down.

"The Solution: As you may know, I have been working to help correct these injustices and I need your help. To date, with proper documentation assistance from the Rustics, we have been able to get DFC's approved for two Ubon Rustic backseaters, **Marcel Morneau** and **Roger Hamann**. Unfortunately, **Jim Gabel** and several of our Bien Hoa backseaters are still waiting for redress in this issue. For Example:

Jim Gabel (was submitted for the BSM which was lost in the transition to Thailand.)

Ronald J. Dandeneau (one of the original three backseaters - submitted and denied);

Joseph D. Paquin (recalls being submitted for DFC but apparently never acted on)

Jean Paul Doyon (then an Airman First Class - never received DFC and does not know if submitted).

Walt Freidhofen (No awards submission-although pilots received awards for mission they flew together.)

Gil Bellefeuille (No awards submission-although pilots received awards for mission they flew together.) There may be others who are also deserving.

"If you have any additional nominations, send them to me. Here's how to help:

"The bottom line is that I need a 3-5 page mission write up in affidavit form (signed by a notary public) as the basis for any submission. Additionally I then need at least two endorsements from senior or commanding officers and as many 1-2 paragraph (one page) affidavits from other pilots in the unit who flew or served with these men as can be obtained. "The optimum would be that of obtaining two mission write ups per backseater where possible in the event that one would be viewed as being stronger than the other. I can provide copies of the mission write ups that were submitted and resulted in the approval for the two Ubon backseaters to anyone as a guideline. I can also send to anyone interested a couple of the one page supporting affidavits from the unit's pilots that were submitted. These would be used as guidelines for pilots not submitting the actual mission write-up to be used for a given backseater.

"I can only stress that we want no dilution of the award of the DFC but, where warranted, I am confident if we submit packages based on solid mission write-ups coupled with appropriate endorsements and supporting affidavits together with **Col. Lineberger's** assistance that we will obtain approvals. Your assistance would be greatly appreciated."

"If you can help provide documentation for **Jim Gabel** or you flew with any of the above backseaters, you may be able to help. Please contact me at: dmercerc@life-insure.com. or call 757-412-2272. Thanks for your support." **Don Mercer**

EDITORS NOTE: *Don, you have been a real work horse in guiding these awards submissions and resubmissions. Our sincere thanks to you for your efforts!! Gentlemen, can you help? YOUR ATTENTION IN THIS MATTER IS GREATLY APPRECIATED. LET'S NOT LET THIS SLIP THROUGH THE CRACK. Contact Don if you can help.*

RUSTIC BOOK BEING COMMERCIALY PUBLISHED AND SOON TO BE AVAILABLE: From **Dick Wood**. The commercial version of our book, Call Sign: Rustics, The Secret Air War Over Cambodia, 1970-1973, is on track to be printed this summer and ready for distribution in September. I plan to have copies available at the Rustic Reunion in October in San Antonio. If you'd like to place an order with me now, you can do so on the Reunion Registration Form. If you won't be coming to the reunion, I'll mail the book to you.

Chris Orcutt is the advertising manager for Smithsonian Institute Press (our publisher). I just finished approving the book jacket copy. The front cover will be the same photo that was on our original dust jacket cover -- the OV-10 flying low over a Cambodian ground convoy. The back cover will have **Joe Vaillancourt's** group picture of the OV-10 Rustics at Bien Hoa. That was another marketing decision. Other Details:

Title: Call Sign Rustic. The Secret Air War over Cambodia, 1970-1973

Author: Richard Wood

Category: Aviation, Military History

Size: 6 x 9 Cloth-bound. 160 pages; 35 photographs.

ISBN: 1-58834-049-X

Publication: September 2002. Sales Area: Worldwide

Retail Price: \$24.95

Amazon.com has the book listed at \$17.47 plus shipping and handling (which will make the total cost about \$21.00.)

Here is the advertising copy that appears in the Smithsonian Institution Press catalog for the Fall, 2002. The same copy (or a short version of it) will appear on the book dust jacket and in promotional material.

“American army troops entered Cambodia in April 1970. President Richard Nixon could not keep ground troops there beyond June 1970 without authorization from Congress, which was not forthcoming. He did not want to desert the anticommunist Lon Nol regime, so he ordered top-secret, round-the-clock air support over Cambodia, and the Rustics were born.

“This three-year mission was so secret -- managed directly from the White House -- that there are no official records of it. Richard Wood flew as one of the Rustics, a group of forward air controllers (FACs) who provided twenty-four-hour air support to the Cambodian ground commanders by flying low and slow over enemy positions. Wood bases his book on his own experiences and those of the other pilots and Cambodians who took part in the operation. He shows how the Cambodian fighting men welcomed the American pilots like they were the cavalry, and how the Rustics played a major part in the fight against the North Vietnamese and Khmer Rouge Guerrilla forces. The Rustic pilots and their enlisted interpreters unequivocally expressed admiration for the courage and dedication of the Cambodian field troops, commanders, and radio operators. There were proud to support the Cambodians, and when all U.S. operations ceased in 1973, many of them were devastated at abandoning their friends.

“This covert air war ended on August 15, 1973; the Cambodian radio operators' calls for air support were no longer answered. The Rustics, while in action, played a major part in staving off both the North Vietnamese and Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge. The loss of American air support eventually contributed to the fall of Cambodia and the horribly dark period of Cambodia's history that will live in infamy as "the killing fields."

Since we are now incorporated in the State of Florida as a not-for-profit organization, we have also obtained a bookseller's license which, as a not-for-profit organization, cost us nothing. All we have to do is collect sales taxes.

Our present plan is to purchase books from SIP at a booksellers discount and sell them to Rustics who attend the Reunion at a small discount. Figuring in our costs, we intend to make the book available to Rustics who can come to the reunion and pick them up for \$18.00. If you order a book and want us to mail it to you, the cost will be \$21.00. The remainder, we will offer on our website at retail (or for the same price plus sales tax, shipping and handling.)

RIGHT NOW we need to know how many books to order. As part of your registration, please indicate how many books you want and they will be waiting for you. **Dick Wood** and probably **Mark Berent** will be available to autograph your copies. You may add the book cost to your registration or pay by cash or check when you arrive. No credit cards. We are not quite that well organized, yet.

2002 REUNION INFORMATION

IT'S TIME TO REGISTER FOR THE SAN ANTONIO REUNION: See Registration Form at the end of this newsletter. Don't delay. Send in your Registration ASAP. Room and meal rates are guaranteed only till **28 August 2002**. If you have any questions, contact **Ron Van Kirk** at (210) 491-0567.

MAKE YOUR RESERVATION NOW FOR THE HOTEL MENGER:

Everyone is responsible for reserving their own hotel accommodations. A block of 70 rooms have been reserved at the Menger Hotel at a special Rustic reunion rate till 28 August. After that, the rate guarantee will expire (room rates have gone up since we signed our contract, but our rates are locked in.). The Rustic rate is \$111 for one bed, \$115 for two beds. There is also a 17% tax on all hotel rooms in San Antonio. (These rates reflect the fact that we're in a popular town that routinely hosts large conventions.) Reservations may be canceled up to three days prior with no penalty.

If you plan to stay at the Menger Hotel, Ron asks that you make your reservation ASAP. The block of rooms we have reserved are available on a first-come, first-served basis, but if we find we need more rooms, Ron may be able to book additional rooms if he acts quickly. **Here's how to reserve your room:** Call 800-345-9285 or 210-223-4361

1. You must reference the "**Rustic FAC Association**" and **booking number 6372**.
2. Specify your required dates - 10, 11 and 12 October (Thur, Fri, Sat.) and any other dates you may require.
3. Specify your preference for both Bed Type and choice of Wing:
 - Antique Wing** - King Bed or Double
 - Center Wing** - King or Double bed
 - New Wing** - 2 Double Beds (and Balcony)

Note: **Antique** gives you the original flavor of the Hotel from the late 1800's, upgraded to current amenities. The **Center Wing** was built in the 1950's - and consists of smaller rooms, usually recommended for one person. The **New wing** was built in the 1980's, and are much larger rooms, most with a balcony overlooking the pool and Rustic "Hootch" area.

Call NOW. Do not wait. If we fill the current block of rooms, we need to move quickly to obtain more. For any questions, please contact **Ron Van Kirk** at (210) 491-0567.

ALTERNATIVE HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS: **Ron Van Kirk**, reunion chairman, reports that virtually all hotels in the down town area (and within about a 5 mile radius) have similar rates as the Menger Hotel; however, if you have a car, and are willing to drive a little, he suggests you check with the **Red Roof Inn** which is just across from the airport with rates of \$40-46/night, depending on type of bed - 1 full, 2 full or King. This hotel is 10 minutes up the freeway from the Menger. The address is 333 Wolf Road, San Antonio, TX. Phone 210-340-4055. Reservation line is 1-800-Red-Roof.

TRANSPORTATION FROM THE AIRPORT: **Taxi from the Airport** is about \$15 each way - a short 10 minute ride. There is also the **Airport Shuttle** - SATrans - that runs between 7AM and 1 AM. The shuttle stops at several hotels, so takes a bit longer, but costs \$9 one way, or \$16 for round trip. If you're flying in, Ron Van Kirk will provide info to you on how to make 24-hr advance reservations.

RENTAL CARS AND PARKING FEES: Rental cars are available at the airport. Parking will be \$5 - \$10/nite in downtown San Antonio. There is NO free parking.

WHO'S COMING? It's still early, but the following Rustics and their guests have already indicated they'll be attending the 2002 Rustic reunion:

Doug Aitken, Gloria Auth, Don Brooks, Tom Capps, Tom Clinch, Si Dahle, Ron Dandeneau, Bill Decabooter, Walter Dodd, Don Echelberger, Lendy Edwards, Jim Gabel, Joe Garand, Dick Goddard, Dick Green, Drake Greene, Don Haller, Roger Hamman, Ned Helm, Steve Hopkins, Hank Keese (from Belgium), John Koppin, Don Mercer, Marcel Morneau, Claude Newland, Kohn Om, Col Oum, Jim Reese, Dick Roberds, Doug Robertson, Jim Seibold, Bill Sleight, Frank Sovich, Ray Stratton, "Doc" Thomas, Jack Thompson, Lanny Trapp, Ron Van Kirk, Mike Wilson, George Winkler, and Dick Wood.

This list will surely grow! As of this printing, we're not sure if **Sam 'The FAC'** or **Nady Tan** will be able to attend the reunion ,

but **Doug Aitken** is still working with them to see if we can make it happen. We'll keep you posted.

CAMBODIANS IN ATTENDANCE TO BE RUSTIC'S GUESTS: **Col Oum** (Hotel 302) and **Ltc Kohn Om** are both planning to attend this year's reunion, and , again, we would like to make them guests of the Rustics. If you would like to contribute to our Cambodian Guest Fund, please indicate your support on the Reunion Registration Form. We thank you in advance for your support and generosity.

ADDITIONAL REUNION INFORMATION

- 1) **WELCOME RECEPTION AND DINNER**, Thursday, 1800, 10 Oct, poolside. A buffet styled 'Welcome Dinner' will be served to who attend the reunion. A cash bar will be available. Dinner price is included in the reunion Registration fees. The official Reunion Welcome, introductions, and announcements will be approx.1930. Party flight suits optional.
- 2) **BREAKFAST WITH THE RUSTICS AT THE MENGER:** Each morning (Friday, Sat. Sunday) the Rustic will start their day with a group breakfast. On your Rustic Registration Form you may pre-pay for a full buffet breakfast, or you may order off the menu. The buffet breakfast in an extensive, full buffet (with made-to-order omelet's and eggs) which includes sausage, bacon, meats, hash browns, fruit, pastries, cereals, yogurt, juices and coffee. It has everything! Tax and gratuity are include. The \$12.50/person price is only available if you pre-register using the Reunion Registration Form. The price at the door is approx. \$14.00, plus tax and tip. Breakfast is actually available 0630-1100 daily, so golfers can get breakfast early on Friday before they depart for the golf course. Tickets will be issued to you when you arrive at the Hootch, if you pre-register for the buffet breakfasts.
- 3) **DINNER ON THE RIVERWALK:** Reservations have been made for Friday night at the Casa Rio Mexican restaurant on the Riverwalk. We were able to reserve 60 seats on three river barges and a complete private dining room in the restaurant for everyone else. The cost for the River Barge dinner is \$23.50/person. The full Mexican dinner in the restaurant is \$16/person. Reservations for the river barge dinner will be on a first come basis, based on the post office date on your Registration Form, so get your Registrations in early!. If refunds are necessary, they will be made at the reunion.
- 4) **RUSTIC BANQUET:** Cost for the Rustic Banquet is \$40/person.
- 5) **REGISTRATION FEES:** Will be used to cover miscellaneous administrative costs, welcome reception/buffet, name tags, Hootch refreshments, snacks, beer, soft drinks, special gifts, and reunion extras.

2002 REUNION SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

WED, 9 OCT

1900 Pre-Party Potluck at Van Kirk's. All invited if you're in town early. Address: 2696 Pebble Dawn, San Antonio. Phone: 210-491-0567.

THURS, 10 OCT

1000 Hospitality Suite set-up.
 1200 Hospitality Suite opens. Registration Open. Get details for optional activities/ directions.
 1530 Hotel Check in - rooms guaranteed available by this time.
 1800 Happy Hour and Welcome Buffet, Menger Hotel Poolside.
 1930 Reunion Welcome - Menger Hotel Poolside (wear of party flight suit-optional).
 2100 Banquet Participants' Meeting - Executive Suite (for those with a speaking part at banquet) .
 2200 Drink at the Tower of the Americas. Optional. Great view of the city skyline.

FRI, 11 OCT.

0700 Breakfast for Golfers, Menger Breakfast Room.
 0745 Golfers meet at (TBD).
 0800 Rustic Group Breakfast, Menger Breakfast Room.
 0830 -0930 Golfers Tee Times. Quarry Golf Course (10 Min. north of Hotel)
 0900 Optional Activities - Tour/shop day for non-golfers.
 1430 Golfers Arrive Back at Menger Hotel.
 1700 Awards And Decs Program Update - Hospitality Suite Briefing by Don Mercer.

1830 Mexican Dinner on the River at Casa Rio Restaurant. (On the River Walk. First 60 MAX on boats, so first come first served. all others preferring to dine in Casa Rio Restaurant, will enjoy a private dining room at the restaurant.)

2100 Hospitality Suite open.

SAT, 12 OCT.

0800 Rustic Group Breakfast. Menger Breakfast Room.

0900 Optional activities; Hospitality suite open.

1430 Rustic Happy Hour/Business Meeting/Elections. Hospitality Suite.

1630 Banquet Set-up.

1800 Banquet Happy Hour (Room TBD)

1845 Group Photos. All present.

1900 Reunion Banquet/Program/Dancing (Coat & Tie)

2130 Hospitality Suite open.

SUN, 13 OCT

0800 Rustic Farewell Breakfast. Menger Breakfast Room.

0900 Hospitality Suite open.

1100 Room Check-out time.

1200 Hospitality Suite Closes.

ALAMO TOURS IN SAN ANTONIO: The Alamo has free escorted tours every 30 minutes from 9:30 AM till 4:00 PM daily. Tours may be done in small groups, or as desired, with no reservations required.

RUSTICS ATTEND SECOND ALL FAC REUNION—WHICH IS A BIG SUCCESS! Ten Rustics and their wives had a great R & R weekend together as they attended the All FAC Reunion in Hawaii 10-14 Apr 2002. Over 260 FACs, guests and supporters were present, including Rustics **BGen ‘Putt’ Richards** (Rustic 14), who gave the memorial remarks at the FAC Memorial Dedication Ceremony, and **MGen Tom Case** (Rustic 30) who took time out from his busy schedule to attend the FAC Banquet. Other Rustics in attendance included: **Tom Capps, Si Dahle, Tim Eby, Bill Ernst** (who lives in Hawaii), **Randy Hetherington, Steve Hopkins, Claude Newland, and Dick Wood.**

Every TASS was represented and a number of Aussie FACs attended as well, which always helps liven things up a bit! Eh Mate? The festivities took place at the Ilikai Renaissance Hotel on beautiful Waikiki Beach. Highlights of the reunion included a Welcome Buffet dinner, Tours of the USS Arizona Memorial, a Hawaiian Luau, a Sunset Dinner Cruise, City Tours, FAC Business Meeting, the FAC Banquet, and a first class FAC memorial dedication ceremony at the National Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl) which was masterminded and coordinated by one of our own, **Bill Ernst (Rustic 04.)**



Rustic FACs at FAC Memorial dedication ceremony at the National Cemetery of the Pacific.
L-R Standing: Dick Wood, Bill Ernst, BGen “Putt” Richards, Steve Hopkins, Tom Capps, and Tim Eby. Kneeling: Mark Berent “Papa Wolf”, Randy Hetherington, Claude Newland and Si Dahl.



FAC Association Officers were elected for the next two years. They are:

President: **Toby Rushforth** (rushfortht@aol.com) .
 Vice President: **Dennis Crouch** (denniscrouch@earthlink.net)
 Secretary: **Howie Pierson** (gilguth@aol.com);
 Treasurer: **George Ferkes** (beachflyr@aol.com).

Picture on left of new officers: L-R "Gibber Gibbs, Howie Pierson, Randy Hetherington, Glenn Bremenkamp, Toby Rushforth, George Ferkes, and Hen Min Hiu.

The next All FAC reunion is planned for 2004. Details TBA.

FUTURE FAC REUNION IN AUSTRALIA? Based on discussions at the All FAC reunion, if I were a betting man, I'd bet the Aussies will also be hosting a 'Down Under' FAC Reunion in Australia in April 2005. Start making plans now to attend and start saving your nickels!

FAC HISTORY BOOK PROJECT IS GETTING HUGE! At the 2000 All FAC reunion, the FAC Association formed a book committee (using the experience gained from the Rustics) and began developing a FAC History Book. Every FAC, including the Rustics, are encouraged to contribute their individual stories to this book effort. Clearly, this book will become the definitive FAC book on Southeast Asian FAC operations. The material submitted so far indicates this book will be a major project.

Charlie Pocock, Author of *Viper 7*, is spearheading the Book Committee's efforts. Copies of a 100 page 'Sample' FAC History Book were provided to each Hawaii reunion attendee for their review and to give them an idea of what the book is all about. It was terrific! The FAC Association is considering providing a copy of the Sample Book to each FAC Association member who pays their 2002 dues. Be on the lookout for their next newsletter (due out this summer) which will solicit dues. This book will give you a much wider appreciation for the various types of different 'FAC Wars' being fought in southeast Asia. The reading is fascinating.

Additionally, both the PACAF and Air Staff History offices had representatives at the reunion. The Air Staff History Office personnel spent their entire weekend collecting video interviews and stories from FACs. The A.F. History Office personnel have indicated they may be able to support the final publication of the FAC History Book. They are very interested in supporting this project.

RUSTICS: IF YOU STILL HAVE A STORY TO TELL, WRITE IT DOWN AND SEND IT TO CHARLIE PO-COCK at: CharMarPock@aol.com, or **Mike Morea** (moreas@ij.net.) **Mike Morea** is handling the 19 TASS chapter, which includes Rustic Operations.) It's still not too late to get your story published. Don't be left out. Do it today! SEND A COPY AS WELL TO OUR RUSTIC HISTORIAN, JIM GABEL AT: jagabel@aol.com.

RUSTIC STORIES MAY BE SUBMITTED TO FAC HISTORY BOOK PROJECT: **Dick Wood** has confirmed that the individual Rustic stories that were included in the Rustic's first book, which we self-published, can be submitted to the FAC History Book project, if we so desire. Since the commercial version of our book has been edited and re-written in what is known as 'one voice' (which is easier to read and more palatable to the commercial market), there are no copy write infringement issues, or conflict of interests, as far as the publisher is concerned. By submitting our stories to the FAC History Book project, they will then be included in the overall FAC History Archives that may someday be published by the Air Force History office. Another reason for submitting our original 'First Person' stories to this project is that not all of our individual stories made it into the final commercial book. For Example, most of the stories that were included in the respective end-of-chapter Anthology sections were not included in the commercial book. For two reasons: 1) because they did not fit into the main message of the respective chapter, and 2) because SIP required that the book length be kept to approx 160 pages, thus requiring further editing.

Bottom Line: The FAC History Book project may be a great way to insure all of our stories are preserved for posterity in a larger arena, and there's even the possibility that a future book project might be forthcoming. Interesting prospects! If you have any suggestions or recommendations, please get in touch with your officers, and let us hear from you.

HOUSE OF HOPE UPDATE: From: **Tammy Fong**, lotusflower@bigpond.com.kh, 8 Apr 2002

Hi Claude Greetings! Happy Khmer New Year! Our girls are getting really excited about their home visits toward the end of this week. I'll take 15 year old Srei Rome home for a visit. She is excited. There is a lot of energy going around at HOH. Some girls are nervous and some are scared. Some are concerned their parents will pressure them to leave and they don't want to. It is a hard time **Page** for them. We keep praying for them. Thanks for your continued support (emotional and financial!). HOH is doing well. In our

goal to have our Khmer staff take more ownership of the program and create new aspects to our program, we are allowing them the joy of creating some new component to HOH. They are in the process of doing this and we (expat staff) are taking them through the process of decision making. It is all very exciting! We want them to dream big and yet we also want them to be able to analyze things well and clearly. I'll let you know what they come up with and if we have special needs. Thanks for asking! As far as the orphanage is concerned, I think they are well covered for now. The last donation was very generous and we were able to get a lot of supplies for them. They were sooo happy. A consideration is for June 1st which is International Children's Day. Perhaps that would be a good time to check in to see if they need other supplies. What do you think? We continue to be busy. Our Hands of Hope business is slowly growing. We are so grateful for all you and Tona do for us! Warm blessings to you, Tammy

(Editor's note: All Rustic donations earmarked for the House of Hope and Orphanage have been sent to Tammy for the 1 June celebration.)

RUSTIC UPDATES:

- 1) **Bob Clifford** and **Lendy Edwards** are both retiring from Lockheed Martin in June. Bob is in the process of shopping for a second home in Florida. He and his wife, Dorte, they dropped in for a brief unexpected visit with Tona Newland in Destin, FL in early May. (Unfortunately, Claude was out of town on a trip and missed them.) *Congratulations Bob and Lendy!*
- 2) **Ron Dandeneau's** new address: 7775 Durer Court, Springfield, VA 22153 Tel: (703) 451-8498 Email: Rustic Fox-trot@aol.com
- 3) **Woody Baker's** new e mail address: joewbaker@aol.com
- 4) **Don and Katrin Echelberger** are spending several months in Iceland running a Bed and Breakfast they purchased last year, and are visiting with Katrin's parents.

OV-10 AND O-2 WOODEN MODELS TO BE AVAILABLE FROM THE PHILIPPINES: Wooden models of the OV-10 and O-2 will be available for sale at this year's Rustic reunion. Per unit cost is still being determined (we are getting a multiple-order discount), but it will probably be less than \$100.00/copy. Aircraft will be custom ordered to our specifications and will be mounted on a wooden stand that can have be personalized with a unit patch or other distinctive emblem. Each aircraft is approx. 16 inches long. More to come as details become known.

ANOTHER FAC DOES GOOD: Secretary of Defense **Donald H. Rumsfeld** announced today that the president has nominated Air Force Gen. **Ralph E. Eberhart** (O-2 FAC, 20th TASS, Pleiku, '70) for assignment as commander, U.S. Northern Command, and commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command, Peterson Air Force Base, Colo. Eberhart is currently serving as commander in chief, U.S. Space Command; commander in chief, North American Aerospace Defense Command; and Department of Defense manager for Space Transportation Systems Contingency Support, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado.

LETTERS TO THE RUSTICS:

*(Editor's Note: **Jim Gabel** received the following letter from **Constance Eddy**, sister-in-law of **Gary Eddy**, after Jim sent the Eddys a package of information about Gary Eddy, and a copy of the Rustic Book, compliments of the Rustics).*

Dear James,

We received the package from you, and I can't tell you how deeply it affected us. I finished reading its contents through my tears. As you know, we were told so little about Gary's death. It was a forbidden subject in the family, and if my father-in-law had still been alive and you had reached him, I doubt that we would have been informed of your contacting him. To finally know some of the details makes it seem more bearable and finite somehow. We can't thank you enough for your kindness. Of course, it is still very hard for my husband John to face his older brother's death, but I think somehow that the things you sent will help. John was in the Navy and had just returned from a tour in the South China Sea on an ammunition ship when Gary was killed. John's ship sailed back to Nam without him so that he could escort Gary's body home from California.

It was a very difficult time for us all. What you sent us will be an important part of our family history someday for our two sons and their future children. The poems were so obviously filled with respect and affection that I can't imagine a better tribute to Gary and Mike. Gary's funeral was enormous, filled with Seattle's most successful and well-known people, but it seemed hollow and meaningless to me. The comments from the book, the poems, and your kind words were, I feel, a far more touching and more fitting memorial. You asked for a photo of Gary. As most of Gary's father's effects have yet to be gone through, we have very few photos of Gary as an adult. When we do find an appropriate picture we will be sure to send you a copy. Thank you especially for sending **Don Mercer's** address, as we would like to thank him personally for the poems. And we appreciate your giving us **Donn Stone's** address. When he visited Gary's father some years ago we were not included in what I understand was a lengthy conversation. I suppose it must have been just too painful for my father-in-law. But I know it would have been beneficial for John and his sister to have been able to ask their questions and hear what he had to tell. Perhaps, someday John will feel the impulse to contact **Donn Stone** or **Mrs.**

Vrablick. My two sons, one of whom carries Gary's name as part of his own, may want to pursue information about their uncle, and you have given them a starting point in your organization. We are grateful. We also received the book and want you to know how much we appreciate having it. Your thoughtfulness will be remembered always by this family. Thank you. Sincerely,
Constance Eddy

From Colin Berry, coberry7@hotmail.com

Hello, my name is **Colin Berry**. I am the son of **Bob Berry**, who's call sign was Rustic 17. I was trying to find some information about FAC's and stumbled across a few people the referred me to this (*Rustic website*) site. I'm going to round up all of my pictures and slides and video and send them to him. Basically I'm just saying HI and seeing if you were interested in me making some copies for your organization's archives. Also, did you know my father? By the way, my father can't do this himself; as he flew west in January of 1994. I'm doing what I know he would do. Thank you for your time! Sincerely,
Colin Berry

P.S. I just looked at the memorial on your site (Website). I did not know that you knew that he (*my father*) had died. Thank you very much for remembering him. It means a lot to me to see that he has not been forgotten. Thank you very much.

In a second message from Colin:

Gentlemen,

As promised I said I'd make copies of my father's stuff and send them on to you. He took up writing in the early nineties and began to put some of his experiences down on paper. He sent them all to me, and later on I double checked to make sure I had all of the stories. Every one of these stories will be copied into my computer from the original text. I've cleaned up some of the typos, but have otherwise not altered a thing. These are the stories verbatim from my father. Some of the stories are quite long, and as my scanner is broken it might be a while between stories. They will, however, be on their way as fast as I can type. I hope you gentlemen enjoy these stories. If you don't want me to send them to you, just let me know and I'll stop. You have my permission to send them to anyone that you want. This includes buddies, AF museum personnel, and friends. Please, however, let me know if you are sending them out for commercial purposes. Take care. Sincerely,
Colin Berry

Editor's Note: Colin, great to hear from you, and we have really been enjoying the stories and memoirs of your father that you have been sending to us. We have added you to our newsletter mailing list, and hope to meet you in the future..

Here is the third installment of my father's stories. It is not, however, the last; even though the story ends with a flight home to the states. Take care! **Colin Berry**

VIET NAM MEMORIES **By Bob Berry**

I don't consider myself old at forty-four; but occasionally I am reminded that large amounts of time can slide by, virtually undetected. Such an event occurred last summer. June 16, 1991 marked the twentieth anniversary of my arrival in Viet Nam. I was twenty-four years old. Half my life-span has passed since I first put boot to pavement at Cam Ranh Bay, RVN, along with seventy other lucky fellows. My stay at Cam Ranh was brief. Ten of us were soon herded into a waiting C-130 and five of us were delivered to Bien Hoa Air Base. I recall that day clearly. Some things tend to stick with you; and a young man's first experience with war is one of them.

The heat and humidity were about equal at Bien Hoa: somewhere in the nineties. I was not met plane-side as had been promised; so I wandered off in search of my assigned unit. I found it in a wood frame building on the flight line. I walked in, announced myself, and was warmly greeted by several of the veterans. They steered me through a quick "in-processing" and then showed me to a room in the Rustic "Hootch." Rustic was the standing call sign of our unit, and each FAC (Forward Air Controller) was given a discreet number. I became Rustic 17.

The hootch wasn't the Ritz; but it did have its own bar and barmaid. Officers lived on one side of the bar and enlisted on the other. Sleeping was the only thing we didn't do together. We flew together, drank together, ate together; and for a few priggish officers in other units who would not accept our special working relationship, we tormented them, team-style. Our enlisted troops were crew members, our "Guys in Back." Officially translators, their main task was to converse in French with the Cambodians. In truth, they were much, much, more. They were an integral part of a fighting team; and we would have been considerably less effective without them.

The realization that twenty years have passed gave me ample excuse to renew some memories. Please join me in a journey through an "old fart's" memory. Time frame: June 16, 1971 to June 16, 1972. Place: Bien Hoa Air Base, RVN, Ubon Royal Thai Air Force Base, and most points in between.

I remember keeping a flak jacket and helmet under the lower bunk. One night the rockets rained into Bien Hoa and the second explosion sent me rolling out of the upper bunk and onto the floor. Before I could roll under the lower bunk, Larry (225 lbs.) Rolled out **Page** of the lower bunk and landed directly on top of yours truly (150 lbs.). We were laughing so hard that by the time we donned our flak jackets and helmets the all clear was sounding.

The gathering of the survivors in the bar was the next item on the agenda. No one was hurt, all the rockets having landed on the far side of the base. We all looked a bit silly though, standing around in unlaced boots, skivvies, flak jackets and helmets; but we didn't much care. The "rocket beer" was free and the adrenaline abundant. About an hour of this usually produced a batch of newly sleepy lieutenants who put themselves to bed like good little boys.

I definitely have memories of pre-fighting the OV-10A. It was not a small airplane, and a good bit of time was spent peering up at appropriate parts of the airframe. The armament, however, could be inspected from a slight stoop. We carried two nineteen hole rocket pods loaded with 2.75" FFARs (Folding Fin Aerial Rockets) with high explosive warheads and two seven hole pods with six 2.75" FFARs with white phosphorous marking warheads. We were allowed to keep our guns; but most units removed them. We kept ours because we were often our own air support in Cambodia. The center-line station was taken by a 230 gallon fuel tank. This was necessary because out transit time to our "beat" was so long. Other units used a 150 gallon tank. I enjoyed pre-fighting the armament amid dreams of making things go "boom."

Takeoffs could be a real problem in a heavily loaded OV-10; and I have some very distinct memories of 7,000 plus feet takeoff rolls in an airplane designed for STOL operations. We weren't alone, however. Everyone flew overweight at some time or another in Viet Nam. A marginally powered OV-10 taught many of us the value of "go-no go" charts. Large flaps, reversing propellers, slow approach speeds, and good brakes guaranteed short landing rolls. Overall, the airplane fell into the "slow, but ugly" category. I grew to love it. I remember Fred, a middle aged Technical Sergeant, barfing in the back seat after our first marking pass. And the second. Also the third. When I expressed my concern he replied, "No sweat, lieutenant. I've been barfing since my first flight with you guys two months ago. I'm okay once I get my breakfast up. See, I even carry my own barf bags with me now." Fred continued to experience physiological distress every time he flew for the next two months. Then one day he didn't, and the curve was absolute. Never once did Fred complain or beg off a mission. Damn, that man was brave.

June 16, 1972 certainly was a memorable day. After standing in line for two hours I was told I couldn't board the "Freedom Bird" because of a neglected inoculation. Begging on my knees had no effect, so I made a frantic call to the Rustics and five minutes later a jeep showed up to rush me to the Flight Surgeon's office for a quick needle poke. Another wild jeep ride left me standing at the foot of the boarding ladder of a C-141 with a load master urging me to get aboard. I didn't debate the issue as I climbed aboard. It was my first experience at sitting backwards in an airplane. When the Starlifter broke ground a hundred voices erupted in a long, loud cheer. I don't remember much about the trip home. Amnesia is indeed one of the ingredients found in a bottle of Tennessee sour mash. From the hand of **Bob Berry** (Rustic 17)

From Lou Agger

Good morning and greetings from Merritt Island, Florida. I'm **Louis R. Agger Jr.**, Retired CMSgt after 30 years and 19 wonderful days in the best damned Air Force the world has ever known. I entered the AF in July 1968, assigned to Patrick AFB for 4 1/2 months after basic and tech school for Aircraft Radio Repairman training. I barely got enough training to know my butt from a hole in the ground before I was on my way to the 22 TASS, then stationed at Bien Thuy, down in the Delta, working mostly O-2s and a few OV-10s. Arrived in country November 1969. I learned fast. The unit moved to Bien Hoa and I was one of the last two Avionics Troops to go in January 1970. At Bien Hoa we joined forces with the 19 TASS maintainers and worked each other's birds without a thought to which squadron they belonged to. One big family of maintainers. Tuesday was sometimes my one day off. (I still think of Tuesday as special)

The AF, in it's ultimate wisdom, took away my membership to a flying squadron sometime late in 1970 and put all us maintainers in a Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, whose designation I would have to look up in my records because I continued to think of myself as part of the 22 TASS. I worked long, long hours on the O-2s & OV-10s and loved them to this day. I remember times when I went back to my room after being gone for about two days, just to get some fresh clothes and get back to the flightline. The most important thing in the world to me was... when the pilot pressed that Mic button and call for help, I wanted it to work EVERY time and for the pilot to be able to hear the reply he wanted EVERY time. There was no room for error in my work. I treated emergency beacons and radios as if my own life might depend on them in the next five minutes. Can you tell that I was proud of what I did? I remained in Vietnam almost two years, leaving in late August 1971.

Retirement came on 1 AUG 98. The east coast of Florida is home. I get to watch some very special OV-10s fly out of Patrick AFB regularly and I pull over to watch them fly while I reflect. It brings back some great memories. If you feel it's appropriate, I'd love to have my name associated with your long list of professionals. No call sign.... just Comm/Nav or Maintenance.

Thanks for your time. It was a real pleasure visiting your site.

Lou

(Editor's Note: Welcome Lou! The Rustics would be honored to have you as a member of our Association. I'm sure I speak for all of the Rustics when I say we can't thank you enough for the work you did, and all the other maintainers, to keep us safely in the air. You were a vital part of our mission. . We salute you.)

From **Doug Robertson**, Para4T5@aol.com

When I arrived in Bien Hoa on 31 July 71 I hung around the club and BX cause they didn't know what to do with me since the 19th TASS had been de-activated about the time I got in-country. After a few days they sent me to Phan Rang where they had Beaucoup radio operators and told me just to check in every day or two. After a couple of weeks of that they sent me back to Bien Hoa to the 21st TASS and they promptly sent me to Nui Ba Den.....you can see there is a pattern developing here.. after 3 plus weeks at Nui I went out to Tay Ninh West with Lt Ron Van Kirk to direct air strikes with him. Then it was off to Ubon where I spent 159 days TDY and they finally PCS'd me to the 23rd in March of 72. Like you said I could have made myself scarce and no one would have known the better. Cheers, **Doug**, Rustic Radio Operator

(Editor's note: It was a big war, Doug, and like you, many of us had our moments of being 'lost' within the system. Anybody else have a story to share?)



REUNION REGISTRATION FORM 10-13 October, 2002

Please print or type all information requested and return with payment as soon as practical, but **NLT 15 AUG, 2002**. (This will ensure time to order reunion shirts and hats, etc.)

Name _____ Nickname (for name tag) _____
 Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Telephone (____) _____ E Mail _____ FAX (____) _____
 Spouse/Guest Name _____ Nickname (for name tag) _____
 Rustic/Other Call Sign _____ Rustic Dates: Month _____ Yr _____ to Month _____ Yr _____
 What day and time do you plan to arrive at the reunion? Wed. _____ Thurs. _____ Fri. _____ Sat. _____
 Approx. time of day: _____ Coming by: Car _____ Air _____ (Flight Number _____)
 (Arriving San Antonio International Airport)

If unaccompanied, would you be interested in sharing a room/expenses with another Rustic? Yes _____ No _____

Survey: I would like to see the Rustics have another reunion in the next: Year _____ 2 Yrs _____ 3 Yrs _____ 5 Yrs _____

Where would you like a reunion to be held? (Indicate priority 1 thru 8)

Las Vegas ___ San Antonio ___ Wash DC ___ Ft Walton Beach ___ Orlando ___ Denver ___ Branson ___ Other _____

Would you be willing to work the Hospitality Suite for a couple of hours? Yes _____ No _____

Will you be attending the pre-party at the Van Kirk's on Wed, 9 Oct? Yes _____ No _____

I will not be attending, but would like the Rustic Reunion items ordered below mailed to me. _____

Please send NLT 15 Aug 2002, this completed form and check to: Ron Van Kirk 2696 Pebble Dawn, San Antonio, TX 78232

REGISTRATION FEES

(Make check payable to: "Rustics")

| | <u>Cost:</u> | <u>Number:</u> | <u>Sub-total:</u> |
|--|--------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Registration Fees: \$35 for each Rustic; \$25 per Guest (Fee includes Welcome Reception Dinner, expenses for Hospitality Suite set-ups, snacks, drinks and ice, cleanup, name tags, and misc. reunion expenses such as protocol invitations, table decorations, etc. Not required for those guests attending just the Sat. night Reunion Banquet.) | \$35 / \$25 | x _____ | = \$ _____ |
| Pre-paid Breakfast Buffet (all-inclusive) 11, 12, or 13 Oct. | \$12.50 | x _____ | = \$ _____ |
| Golf Tournament: Fri. AM, 11 Oct. (Incls. Cart; Clubs extra) | \$97.00 | x _____ | = \$ _____ |
| Dinner on the River Boat Fri. PM, 11 Oct: (Max 60 people) | \$23.50 | x _____ | = \$ _____ |
| Or, Dinner at Casa Rio Restaurant Fri. PM: | \$16.00 | x _____ | = \$ _____ |
| Reunion Banquet , Sat. PM, 12 Oct: Banquet - Buffet Del Rio - Seafood Bisque, Romaine Salad, Boneless Breast of Chicken "Bombay", Sautéed Beef Medallions, Grilled Salmon, Wild Rice, Herb Roasted Potatoes, Vegetable Medley, Pecan Pie, Assorted Fruit Tarts, Fresh sliced fruit and berries. | \$40.00 | x _____ | = \$ _____ |
| Contribution to Cambodian Guest Fund (Optional): | | | \$ _____ |
| Contribution to the Rustic's House of Hope Fund (Optional): | | | \$ _____ |
| Rustic Commercial Book Order (Optional): Picked up at reunion: | \$18.00 | x _____ | = \$ _____ |
| If we mail you the book: | \$21.00 | x _____ | = \$ _____ |
| Rustic Video Order(s) | \$27.00 | x _____ | = \$ _____ |

Optional Reunion Memorabilia Items:

You can pick them up at the reunion or have them shipped to you if you are not coming.

White T Shirt: Sizes: Large _____ X-Large _____ \$ 11.00 x _____ = \$ _____

Birch T Shirt (Lt Grey): Large _____ X-Large _____ \$ 11.00 x _____ = \$ _____

White _____ Birch _____ XX-Large _____ \$ 12.00 x _____ = \$ _____

(Shirt front will have Reunion Logo over heart and artwork on full back with both an OV-10 and O-2 aircraft, and Angkor Wat.)

Baseball Caps: Maroon with "RUSTIC" and 'Reconnaissance Armee', and will have crossed flags on the side.

\$ 10.00 x _____ = \$ _____

Shipping costs if not attending reunion: Hat: \$2.50 Shirt: \$3.00 Hat & Shirt: \$3.50 x _____ = \$ _____

Be sure to fill out front side of this form.

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____



Rustic News

www.rustic.org

| | |
|---|--|
| President: Claude Newland, cnewland@gnt.net | Awards and Decs: Don Mercer, dmercerc@life-insure.com |
| Vice President: Bill Sleigh, fancy295@cox.net | Book: Dick Wood, woodrh@ix.netcom.com |
| Treasurer: Lendy Edwards, Lendy@cox.net | Reunion Coordinator: Ron Van Kirk, ronvankirk@aol.com |
| Secretary: Don Echelberger, echelberg@aol.com | Website: Lendy Edwards, lendy@cox.net |
| Historian: Jim Gabel, jagabel@aol.com | Air Park Liaison: Don Echelberger, echelberg@aol.com |

WEBSITE OF INTEREST: Bill Sleigh passes along this bit of info: "Gents, www.MilitaryUSA.com is a web site with veteran data bases by war/conflict. It is free. Just register, log in and go to Vietnam data base. You need to enter queries by name. I have just written them asking if we can access the data base by 1444b MOS (AFSC)."

RUSTIC PICTORIAL HISTORY PROJECT BEGINS. Jim Seibold has volunteered to record our Rustic Association pictorial history on a Compact Disc (CD). He wants to scan everyone's pictures, slides and digital photo from our two previous Rustic reunions (and is willing to include pictures from our Cambodia trip, House of Hope, Kompong Cham Orphanage, and current family and individual photos, etc.) and format them so they may be accessed by subject. The finished product will be much like a Rustic Recent Current Events Year CD.

The CD will be provided at cost, so this will not be a money making project. We'd like everyone to have a copy.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?: If you're coming to the reunion, bring your Rustic photo albums, slides or digital pictures on a CD or floppy, along with a current picture of yourself/or your family. Jim will borrow these to accomplish his project, and then return them to you. Be sure to put your name on the back of each photo and explain the details in the picture. If you have any suggestions for Jim, or would like to help with this project, please contact him at: 602-969-3523 (or seiboldjim@aol.com).

(Editor's comment: Jim, we're sure glad you got a new scanner' toy'!! This should be a great piece of Rustic history when its completed. Thanks.)

ROCKY BROWN'S FINAL FLIGHT: We regret to inform you that Rocky Brown, passed away on 14 Sep 2002. From Randy Roberts, Nail 38, 23 August., nail38@earthlink.net. "Recently, I talked to Rocky - he did not sound optimistic or good. Diane and I plan to visit him next week and Si Dahle (Rustic) just got home from his visit. Si delivered the Rustic Book to him and he was reading it when I called - said he was reading the bible and I took it to mean the good book. Rocky replied, no it was the really good book that the guys had sent - Da' Rustics Book!!!! Atta Boy Buds!!!! Will advise upon my RTB but am concerned that he receive treatment that will keep him as comfortable as possible until the final RTB. Will advise as I can - Believe me when I say no finer "9" level maint. weenie or Bud has been than the Rock. More as I said, later.....R2

Inside this issue:

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14 Sep: "To All Troops, it is with a heavy heart that I pass the news that Rocky had his final RTB last night [14 Sep] in a hospital in Seattle. He was someone who really made a difference and cared about "his airplane and airplane drivers" and the successful completion of every task assigned; or otherwise. We have lost another comrade-in-arms. I am relieved that his suffering and waiting for the last final hoorah is over. I plan to offer a toast at 1800 sharp Mountain Time today to Rocky and all the good things he stood for- in and out of uniform. I will pass-on any info about his memorial or whatever for those who care to send some flowers or whatever the family decides is appropriate. RIP, BUD - you've earned it." R2

(Editor's note: Both the Rustics and Nails all raise a glass in Rocky's memory. Fair winds! Rocky)

AWARDS AND DECS: Don Mercer has submitted DFC Submission packages for Ron Dandeneau, Walt Friedhofen, Gil Bellefeuille and Joe Paquin to the Air Force Board via FedEx. By the time your receive this newsletter, he should have the remaining packages out for the remaining DFCs and Aircrew Badges for 4 backseaters.

COMMERCIAL BOOK PROGRESS REPORT. By Dick Wood. The Rustic book has been printed by Smithsonian Institute Press (SIP) and is available for shipping. I've received the copies

I personally ordered. Amazon and Barnes and Noble has it in stock on their websites. I don't think it has made it to the stores, yet, but that's a matter of ordering and shipping.

The 200 copies ordered for the Rustic FAC reunion in San Antonio should show up within a week or so. I've been in touch with Mark Berent (Papa Wolf at Phnom Penh, who wrote the book's Forward) and he intends to be at the reunion with signing pen in hand. I'm arriving Wednesday afternoon, 9 Oct, in San Antonio if Continental airlines is still in business.

I'm giving a presentation to the local Daedalians (McChord AFB) next week and I'm booked into a Barnes and Noble store on 24 Sept. By the time I get to the reunion, I should be able to give a short pitch on how to do these presentations to anyone who is interested. From now on, if any of you notice any ads or reviews on the book, please clip them and hold them for me. All in all, things are perking along quite nicely. **Dick Wood**

(Editor's note: Dick and Doug Aitken, the Rustics can't thank the two of you enough for all the work you've put into the book project. Dick, the fact that the Rustic Story is now being told to the world is due to your perseverance and skill as an author and writer. We also want to acknowledge Doug Aitken's assistance in putting together the book's photo package. We all owe you gentlemen a cold one!! Well done!)

RUSTIC WEBSITE UPDATED BY OUR WEBMASTER. Lendy Edwards recently completed several updates to the web page to include information on the new book "Call Sign Rustic". He states, "I have more work to do on the picture files but will keep plugging away to I get it like I or we want it. If anyone has suggestions, or see something wrong, let me know. Its often difficult to find errors in your own work. The file on the House of Hope is the July "Interchange" newsletter sent to us by **Tammy Fong**. Quite informative and interesting." **Lendy**

FAC ASSOCIATION IS ACCEPTING 2002 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS. The All FAC Association is currently accepting dues for 2002 membership. Dues are \$20, made payable to the 'FAC Association', and can be sent to the treasurer, **George Ferkes** at 472 Parish Blvd, Mary Esther, FL 32569. Every 2002 member will receive a FREE hard copy of the 100 page Interim Sample FAC History Book. This book is a jewel of FAC information and stories. Its captivating reading! And a foretaste of what to expect from the FAC History Book project that is growing to immense proportions. The next All FAC Reunion will be held in 2004. Date and location TBA in their Winter newsletter. We encourage you to consider joining and participating in this organization's activities.

13 DAY TOUR TO VIETNAM PLANNED WITH OPTIONAL 4 DAY ANKOR WAT SIDE-TRIP. **Donna Reyher**, of Davis Travel and Tours (she set up the 1999 Rustic tour to Cambodia) is organizing a 'Discover Vietnam' tour that departs 3 Feb 2003. For information, contact her at: 850-897-6660 or - kreyher@davistravel.com.

RUSTICS CONTRIBUTE TO THE McCLUSKIE FOUNDATION IN MEMORY OF JESSE ADERHOLDT. Many of you personally know BGen. Ret. **'Heine 'Aderholdt**, who is widely recognized as the Father of the Air Commando Association-- which is home based near Hurlburt Field, FL. From the very start, Heine has been a strong supporter of the Rustics and the FAC community at large. He was also one of our association's first non-Rustic members.

We regret to report that Heine's beloved wife, Jesse, his life-long partner and avid supporter, recently passed away. In celebration of her life, Heine has asked that any contributions in her name be made to the McCluskie Foundation, which is the ACA's charitable organization that provides much-needed support to the beleaguered Hu'Mong tribesmen of Laos. Accordingly, the Rustics have made a contribution to the McCluskie Foundation in Jesse's honor. **Bill Sleight** and **Lendy Edwards** represented the Rustics at her 'celebration of life' memorial service, which was attended by over 1,000 people at the Hurlburt club.

LARRY GILL'S NEW ADDRESS. Rustic Intel. Larry Gill, Rustic Y, also know as 'Bluemax', recently passed along the following information about himself. His current address is 225 Richfield Dr. #22, San Jose, CA. 95129 Phone: 408-241-7019 E mail: lgill_32@hotmail.com. His tour of duty with the RUSTICS was from DEC 1970 to DEC 1971 as Intelligence specialist with Jim Gabel. During that time he had the opportunity to fly several missions as 'backseater' in OV-10. He spent four years in the Air Force. For the past 20 plus years, he has worked in the San Francisco bay area as a system tech in the telecommunications industry. He is also a professional musician/vocalist, has recorded two CD's with his last band, and continues to do studio work as a vocalist on other projects. Hobbies are cooking, and riding horses. He currently owns two quarter horses, WINDWALKER, and PREACHER and plans to be at this year's reunion in San Antonio. *(Editor's note: Larry, we are all looking forward to seeing you in San Antonio after all these years! Come ready for a good time.)*

DOUG CAYWOOD'S new address and e mail: 8537 E. Pine Valley, Tucson, AZ 85710, E mail: dougcaywood@cox.net

RON DANDENEAU PARTICIPATES IN THE USAF LECTURE SERIES/ORAL HISTORY PROJECT. **Ron Dandeneau**, the Rustic's first interpreter NCOIC, gave a one hour lecture on the French Speaker participation in the Rustics Operations at the Smithsonian on 7 August 02. Here's what the brochures had to say about the event, which was well attended and well received:
August 7 Wednesday- Lecture

USAF LECTURE SERIES/ORAL HISTORY

CMSgt Ron Dandeneau, USAF (Ret) will discuss the Air Force enlisted translators' participation in Rustic Air Operations in Cambodia during the Vietnam War. Beginning in June 1970, the White House ordered top-secret, round-the-clock air support over Cambodia, and U.S. forward air controllers provided twenty-four-hour air support to the Cambodian ground commanders by flying low and slow over enemy positions. Sitting in the back seat of the OV-10 aircraft, Dandeneau's proficiency with the French language allowed him to act as interpreter between the American pilots and the Cambodian Army field commanders. Dandeneau's talk will be accompanied by a slide presentation. He served 27 years in the Air Force, retired as Chief Master Sergeant, and is currently a civilian employee with the Air Force. His combat experience included 84 missions (450 hours) as a French Translator in the back seat of the OV-10 Bronco aircraft in Southeast Asia. Noon. Room 105.

WHO'S COMING TO THE REUNION (as of 10 Sep.) If you're coming but haven't already registered or gotten a room, get in touch with the Reunion Coordinator, Ron Van Kirk, immediately at: 210-491-0567 or ronvankirk@aol.com. Here's who's registered:

Doug & Carol Aitken, Ben Atkin, Gloria Auth (wife of Jerry Auth), Wayne & Leslie Baker, Gary Ball, Mike & Linda Ballard, Mark & Rachel Berent, Colin Berry (son of Bob Berry), Tom & Peggy Capps, Bob & Dorte Clifford (from Belgium), Doug Caywood, Tom & Lonna Clinch, Si Dahle, Ron Dandeneau, Bill & Jan Decabooter, Waldo Dodd, Roger & Linda Dodd, Don Echelberger, Lendy & Sue Edwards, Jim & Sarah Gabel, Karla Gabel, John Gambino (brother of Joe Gambino), Joe & Rocky Garand, Mick & Mary Gibbar, Dick & Judy Goddard, Charles & Suzanne Greene, Dick & Liz Green (from Australia), Carl & Joyce Hagle (parents of Don Hagle), Lynette & Holly Hagle, Don & Mary Haller, Roger & Joan Hamann, Curt & Ruth Hawker, Ned Helm, Jim Hodgson (Bronco Assoc.), Ron Fix, Dave & Linda Hull, Hank & Annie Keese (from Belgium), Shad Kimball and Anita, Mike Kiraly, John & Georgie Koppin, Sue Lloyd (House of Hope), Bill & Cathy McAdams, Don & Noreen Mercer and daughters Cheerie, Noelle and Erin, Marcel & Denise Morneau, Claude & Tona Newland, Jim & Lynne Nuber, Kohn Om, Col Oum, Joe & Pat Paquin, Jim & Marcia Reese, Dick & Marcy Roberds, Doug & Bobbie Robertson, Jim & Diane Seibold, Bill & Nancy Sleigh, Shell & Christine Storer, Ray & Jan Stratton, Doc Thomas, Jack & Anne Thompson, Lanny & Nancy Trapp, Larry "Doc" & Ginger Underwood, Dave Van Dyke, Ron & Janette Van Kirk, Mike & Sherry Wilson, Tony & Nancy Winkler, and Richard Wood.

2002 REUNION SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

WED, 9 OCT

1900 Pre-Party at Van Kirk's (All invited if you're in town early. Address: 2696 Pebble Dawn, San Antonio. Phone: 210-491-0567)

THURS, 10 OCT

1000 Hospitality Suite set-up.

1200 Hospitality Suite opens. Registration Open. Get details for optional activities/ directions.

1530 Hotel Check in - room guaranteed available by this time.

1800 Happy Hour and Welcome Buffet, Menger Hotel "Minuet" Room.

1930 Reunion Welcome - Menger Hotel Poolside (wear of party flight suit-optional).

2100 Banquet Participants' Meeting - Executive Suite (for those with a speaking part at banquet) .

2130 Drink at the Tower of the Americas. Optional. Great view of the city skyline.

FRI, 11 OCT.

06:30 Breakfast for Golfers, Menger Breakfast Room.

07:00 Golfers meet at Valet Parking Area next to Pool, Depart by 7:15.

08:00 Rustic Group Breakfast, Menger Dining Room.

08:00 Golfers Tee Time (Shotgun Start). Quarry Golf Course

09:00 Optional Activities - Tour/shop day for non-golfers.

1430 Golfers Arrive Back at Menger Hotel.

16:00 Cambodia Update - Col. Oum (Patio / Memorabilia Room)

1645 Awards And Decs Program Update - Don Mercer (Patio / Memorabilia Room).

1800 Meet at Casa Rio Restaurant - **Texas Room** (upstairs) - Margarita social

19:00 Dinner Barges Board / Depart, Restaurant Meals served

2100 Hospitality Suite open.

SAT, 12 OCT.

0800 Rustic Group Breakfast. Menger Dining Room.

0900 Optional activities; Hospitality suite (Patio Room) open.

1430 Rustic Happy Hour / Business Meeting / Elections. Hospitality Suite.

1630 Banquet Set-up.

1800 Banquet Happy Hour (Ballroom) with Brad Turner on Acoustic Guitar

1845 Group Photos. All present.

1900 Reunion Banquet (Ballroom) (Coat & Tie)
2130 Hospitality Suite open.

SUN, 13 OCT

0800 Rustic Farewell Breakfast. Menger Dining Room.
0900 Hospitality Suite open.
1100 Room Check-out time.
1200 Hospitality Suite Closes.

REUNION WEATHER AND LOCAL TAXI SERVICE: **Weather** can change quickly in Texas, however, the first major cold front does not usually make it this far south until about 30 October, or later. Temperatures should be in the low 60's at night, and somewhere in the 80's during the day. Casual dress accepted everywhere. Bring a sweater or jacket, but don't forget the shorts.

SATRANS Airport Shuttle: 1331 N. Pine, San Antonio, TX 78205. Reservations:(210) 281-9900 or (800) 868-7707 Contact: Annette Holmes.

SERVICE BETWEEN AIRPORT AND DOWNTOWN hotels \$9 one-way, \$16 round trip. Services also available to other area destinations. ADA accessible mini-buses. **Taxicabs.** Metered service based on \$1.60 during daytime hours (5 a.m.-9 p.m.); \$2.60 during nighttime hours (9 p.m.-5 a.m.). Time to downtown business district is approximately 15 minutes, average fare \$13.40-\$14.40 **plus tip**. There is **no extra charge for additional passengers**. Rates subject to change. Large mini-vans are also available and can transport up to 7 passengers downtown for an average of \$15 per trip

DOWNTOWN TRAVEL is a breeze on the VIA Streetcar. Open air, authentic reproduction of a rail streetcar which traveled the streets of San Antonio more than 50 years ago. Five streetcar routes to downtown locations, including the Alamo, Spanish Governor's Palace, La Villita, Market Square, Sunset Station, Southwest School of Art and Craft, University of Texas, Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio, the King William area, downtown shopping and south town areas. Convenient access to all routes from the downtown streetcar station on Convention Plaza. Fare is 50 cents. Please call **210-362-2020** for information on all VIA Services or visit. For additional info, you can visit the San Antonio Visitors Bureau sanantoniovisit.com

SEE YOU IN SAN ANTONIO!

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Rustic News

www.rustic.org

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| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
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Project Coordinators:

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| <u>Website/Database:</u> | Lendy Edwards, lendy@cox.net | <u>Rustic SEA Photo CD:</u> | Ned Helms, ned@wingset.com |
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| <u>Air Park Liaison:</u> | Don Echelberger, echelberg@aol.com | <u>Rustic input to FAC book:</u> | Ned Helms, ned@wingset.com |
| <u>Search Committee:</u> | Ron Dandeneau, RusticFoxtrot@aol.com | | |

NEXT RUSTIC REUNION: 2005 in Ft Walton Beach, Florida. Dates to be announced.

RUSTICS ELECT NEW OFFICERS AND FIRST-TIME DIRECTORS: Now that the Rustic FAC Association is officially chartered as a non-profit veteran's organization in the state of Florida, formal elections were held for the first time. Results of the election were announced at the reunion's business meeting in San Antonio. Names of the new officers and directors are posted at the top of the newsletter. **Claude Newland** will continue to serve as president and newsletter editor. Our congratulations to each of those who were elected as new

Inside this issue:

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| Rustic Election | 1 | officers and Directors, and a special thanks go to our outgoing 'interim' officers: Vice Pres., Bill Sleigh ; Treasurer, Lendy Edwards ; and Secretary, Don Echelberger !! |
| Dues to include Lifetime rates | 1/2 | |
| Reunion Highlights | 2-4 | |
| Awards and Decs | 4 | |
| Rustic Final Flights | 5 | At the reunion banquet, each of the outgoing 'interim' officers were recognized for their five year's+ service with the presentation of a beautifully hand carved wooden OV-10 model aircraft with Vietnam markings and tail number #626 on the tail. <i>This is the Rustic aircraft that is on display at the Hurlburt Air Park.</i> Thanks Bill, Lendy and Don for a job well done! |
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ANNUAL DUES ARE DUE -- LIFETIME MEMBERSHIPS NOW AVAILABLE: Yep, it's that time of the year again! Please renew your annual Rustic Association membership using the membership renewal form at the end of this newsletter. By paying your dues you will (1) continue to receive our quarterly newsletter, (2) be supporting our efforts to promote Rustic camaraderie and future reunions, (3) help us preserve our Rustic heritage through several on-going Rustic history

projects, and (4) most importantly, will keep in touch with your Rustic buddies.

For the first time, lifetime memberships are now being offered. The following lifetime rates were approved at the San Antonio Reunion's business meeting by the general membership:

| <u>Age:</u> | <u>Lifetime Membership Rate:</u> |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 55-56 | \$250 |
| 56-60 | \$225 |
| 61-65 | \$200 |
| 66 or older | \$175 |

Please make check payable to "Rustics" & mail your check and membership renewal form to our treasurer: Don Ellis 235 Glenwood Drive, Manning, SC 29102

RUSTIC'S THIRD REUNION A BIG SUCCESS—THEY JUST GET BETTER AND BETTER! Over 125 Rustics, family members, friends and guests attended the Rustic's third reunion in historic downtown San Antonio on 10-13 Oct 2002. The Rustics gathered at the famous cattlemen's Menger Hotel which is located adjacent to the Alamo, and only a short walk to the beautiful San Antonio River Walk. This turned out to be another magical weekend as Rustics renewed old friendships, made new friends and exchanged stories and remembrances with their Rustic and Cambodian brethren whom some had not seen in over 30 years. Some long over due back slapping, hugging, gawking, and friendly rounds of drinks took place as first-time attendees got reacquainted with their ol' buds. After each day's activities, an informal late-night party usually took place in the Menger bar—the bar made famous by Teddy Roosevelt and his rough-rider's frequent visits. On one occasion, a few hearty souls got into a real partying mood (to include songs) and were respectfully asked to vacate the bar for a more private locale. Since flexibility is the key to air power, the Rustics quickly regrouped—rebriefed an alternate target, put the smoke down and continued the celebrations in **Ron Van Kirk's** suite (*Ron, how much sleep did you really get that weekend?*).

SOME REUNION HIGHLIGHTS: The reunion weekend began with a festive Wednesday night pre-party at **Ron and Janette Van Kirk's** home. Great food and great margaritas! The traditional Welcome dinner on Thursday evening officially kicked off the reunion. A number of first-time Rustic attendees were introduced--among them were: **Bob and Dorte Clifford** (Bien Hoa OV-10 commander, recently retired from Lockheed Martin), **Ron Dandeneau** (First interpreter NCOIC), **Ned Helms** (one of the 'Final' Rustics), **Mike Kiraly** (another 'Final' Rustic), **Doug Robertson** (Radio operator at Nui Ba Den mountain), and **Lt. Gen. Ret. Lanny and Nancy Trapp** (our banquet speaker; recently retired from the Air Force but has found a new job with Lockheed-Martin, and now lives in Virginia).

Special guests in attendance included **Col Lieou Phin Oum** (Commander 'Hotel 303' at Kompong Thom), **Lt. Col. Kohn Om** (Cambodian fighter pilot and former Rustic interpreter), **Sue Lloyd** (Director of the House of Hope, Kompong Cham, Cambodia), **Mark Berent**, (Papa Wolf, former Rustic-era Attaché to Cambodia), and **Karen Binkley** (visiting O-2 pilot).

The persons traveling the greatest distance to the reunion included **Hank and Annie Keese** (Belgium), **Bob and Dorte Clifford** (Denmark), and **Dick and Liz Greene** (Australia). **Bob and Dorte Clifford** recently purchased a beach front condo in Sandestin, FL (near Ft Walton Beach, FL) so we hope to see them more often in the future.

Former Rustic commanders/ALOs in attendance included **Tom Adams, Bob Clifford, Si Dahle, Jack Koppin, Dick Roberds, and Ray Stratton**. A complete list of who attended the reunion can be found later in this newsletter.

Friday morning's activities included golf or free time for sight-seeing. Friday afternoon **Col Oum** debriefed the Rustics on his recent (third) trip back to Cambodia. He reports that he was able to rent a car and travel across a good portion of Cambodia (since the roads are getting better) to include a visit to Kompong Som and Kompong Thom. Unfortunately, despite his efforts, he was not able to get in touch with **'Sam The FAC'**—who lives near Kompong Thom. To our surprise, he announced that he has purchased some land about 30 km south of Phnom Penh and is considering retiring there when his wife retires from her job next year. Due to the favorable cost of living, he says he can live 'like a king' in Cambodia for about \$1,000.00/month--with a personal driver, maid, and gardener. Sounds like the life



of the Rich and Famous!

Following Col Oum's presentation, **Don Mercer** gave an update on the Awards and Decorations process that he used to get approval for the recently approved awards for Rustics. Don's work in getting approval for these awards has been monumental and the Rustics are forever indebted to him for his tireless work on our behalf.

Friday evening the Rustics enjoyed a margarita Happy Hour at the Casa Rio Restaurant and then 60 of the attendees went on a Riverwalk dinner cruise along the canals and river that flows through the heart of the city. The remaining attendees had their Mexican dinner at the Casa Rio in a private room reserved for the Rustics. At the conclusion of the dinner, **Sue Lloyd** (Director of the House of Hope in Kompong Cham) gave an update/short presentation to the entire group on the work being done to rescue Cambodian girls from prostitution in Cambodia. She reports that not every case is a success story, but that they are making a difference in some lives and they greatly appreciated the financial support received from the Rustics.

(Editor's note: the Rustics visited the House of Hope in November 2000 when they made their return trip to Cambodia. Since that time we have collectively and individually made contributions to the House of Hope in support of their work. At this year's reunion banquet, a \$930.00 check from the Rustics was presented to Sue Lloyd and the House of Hope. Thanks to all who contributed to this effort.)

SATURDAY WAS AWESOME--MORE HIGHLIGHTS. Despite some poor morning weather (fog), **Karen Brinkley** took a number of Rustics flying in her 0-2 -- which she flew into San Antonio just for the reunion. (see Letters to the Editors). **Don Haller** also led a group on an optional morning tour of the renown San Antonio zoo which was very well received. Don is a zoo docent (guide), so he has an 'in' with the folks who do these sort of things. *Thanks Don for setting this up!*

Tours of the Alamo, sight-seeing and shopping in historic downtown San Antonio kept many busy in the morning.

Many Rustics, however, just spent the day hanging around the 'hootch' perusing the memorabilia on display, visiting with late arriving attendees, getting caught up on the intervening 30 years, retelling old stories, and getting autographs in their Rustic books. **Dick Wood** (author of the commercial version of the Rustic book) and **Mark Berent** (who wrote the preface) were both on hand to personally autograph any book purchased by a Rustic.

Jim Hodgson ('Grump') of the Bronco Association, also magically appeared and set up a well-stocked FAC store which included patches, model aircraft, party suit shirts, and a host of other items. His custom made OV-10 models were a big success, as he sold all ten which he brought. If you want to contact Jim about a model or a party flight shirt, etc., he can be reached at: txa-vi8or@flash.net.

The Rustic Business Meeting was held in the Afternoon. Officer elections were completed. The membership (1) Approved the submitting of Rustic stories to the All FAC Book project with Ned Helm being the Rustic POC, (2) Voted that all royalties received by the association from the sale of our new book would be designated for Cambodian charities, (3) Approved Lifetime Membership dues rates, and (4) Coordinated the initiation of two new Rustic history Photo projects—**Jim Seibold** as Reunion Photo History CD Project POC, and **Ned Helm** as POC for a Rustic Southeast Asia Photo CD project (Details are included in this newsletter in a separate paragraph.)

Prior to the evening banquet small group pictures were taken of each Rustic pilot and interpreter group. **Jim and Diane Seibold** also took pictures of each individual or couple in attendance. These photos will be included in the reunion CD that Jim is



preparing. Throughout the Happy Hour and during the buffet portion of the banquet, Brad Turner provided music on his acoustic guitar.

Ron Van Kirk, master of ceremonies, kicked off the evening's program with the posting of the Colors by the Reagan High School JROTC Color Guard, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Welcoming remarks and introductions of guests were made by Ron. In addition to a number of family members in attendance, the Rustic's were especially honored to have as their guests: **Col Carl and Joyce Hagle**, (parents of Rustic Don Hagle who recently passed away); **Lynette Hagle** (Don's wife), and **Holly Hagle**, (Don's sister).

A hallowed moment was acknowledged as we toasted our Rustics departed, and then **Claude Newland** gave the blessing for the meal. During the short break following the meal, **Dick Wood** informally entertained guest with his many magical card tricks. Properly fed and watered, the big event of the evening were just beginning.

Don Mercer then took charge and narrated a truly memorable awards and decorations ceremony which included long overdue awards presentations to six Rustics in attendance (see following paragraph.)

The other highlight of the evening was undoubtedly our guest speaker, **Lt. Gen. Lanny Trapp**, Rustic 07, Bien Hoa OV-10 pilot. This was Lanny's first Rustic reunion. A gifted speaker, Lanny succinctly related a number of his active duty experiences and gave us his perspective on the aftermath of 9/11. Interjecting humor and irony, he also made some historic and interesting comparisons between his own flying career and the somewhat parallel flying careers of his family members who also served in the armed forces. It should be noted that Lanny is from a large family and all of his brothers served in uniform.

In appreciation, the Rustic's presented **Lt. Gen. Trapp** a copy of the original Rustic book which was signed/autographed by each Rustic in attendance--a gift for which he was most appreciative!

The evening's events concluded with several historic presentations. On behalf of the Rustics, and in recognition of his support to the Rustics and their esteemed respect for him, **Claude Newland** presented **Lt Col Kohn Om** a set of silver Air Force Command Pilot wings. Also on behalf of the Rustics, **Roger Hamann** presented an 'honorary' Distinguished Flying Cross medal to **Col Lieou Phin Oum**, commander Hotel 303, whom we all consider a friend and hold in the highest regard and respect. It has been a privilege and an honor to have them as our guests at each of our past three Rustic reunions. *Gentlemen, we salute you!*

The banquet concluded with **Claude Newland** acknowledging the tireless work of **Dick Wood** and **Doug Aitken** in preparing the original Rustic book for commercial printing. As a token of our thanks and appreciation, each was presented with an inscribed plaque that contained a color replica picture of the book's front dust jacket cover photo of the Cambodian ground convoy with an OV-10 overhead. Without their efforts, the commercial version of our book would never have been published. *Hand Salute!*

In conclusion, Claude Newland presented **Ron Van Kirk** with a special plaque in recognition of his superb efforts in organizing and coordinating this year's reunion. **Ron and Janette Van Kirk**, along with **Bill and Jan Decabooter**, put on a first-rate show in San Antonio. In closing, Claude Newland introduced our newly elected officers and announced that the next Rustic reunion will be in Ft Walton Beach, FL in 2005. Start making plans now to attend. See you there!

TEN RUSTICS RECEIVE LONG OVER DUE AWARDS AND DECORATIONS: Thanks to the single-handed efforts of **Don Mercer**, ten Rustics were recently awarded long overdue decorations and/or aircrew member badges. For the past three years, Don personally took it upon himself to research, document and substantiate the cases for each award and then contacted the Air Force to submit award's packages for



their approval. After a lengthy process of submissions and re-submissions, Don won approval for every case! Our unqualified thanks and gratitude go to Don and to the many Rustics who submitted supporting documentation and letters for this successful effort.

During the reunion banquet, six Rustics received their awards during a formal Awards and Decorations presentation ceremony. Fittingly, **Don Mercer** served as master of ceremonies for this portion of the program and read each citation. **Lt. Gen. Lanny Trapp** did honors of presenting and pinning each award, with assistance from **Jim Seibold** who pinned **Walt Friedhofen**. Those in attendance who received awards include:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Ronald J. Dandeneau , CMSgt | DFC |
| Walter L. Friedhofen , SMSgt. | DFC |
| Joseph D. Paquin , MSgt. | DFC |
| Marcel J. Morneau , MSgt. | DFC w/1st OLC |
| Roger J. Hamann | DFC w/ 1st & 2nd OLC |
| James A. Gabel , Lt. Col. | Bronze Star Medal (BSM), Air Medal, Aircrew Member Badge |



Others receiving awards (but not present at the reunion) include:

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| Gil B. Bellefeuille , MSgt. | DFC |
| Ronald L. Gamache , Lt. Col. (USAR) | Aircrew Member Badge |
| Joseph R. Vaillancourt , TSgt. | Aircrew Member Badge |
| Philip Morneault , | Aircrew Member Badge |

Note: All are retired with the exception of Ron Gamache who is still working in the Army Reserve, hence the Army's rank of "Lt. Col."

OUR CONGRATULATIONS TO EACH AWARD RECIPIENT FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE RUSTIC MISSION AND FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE NATION!



Following the presentation ceremony, **Roger Hamann** gave a very warm and heartfelt 'Thank You' message to **Don Mercer** on behalf of all the of Rustic personnel who received awards. As a surprise ending to the awards ceremony, **Marcel Morneau** and **Roger Hamann** presented Don with a hand carved 0-2 model aircraft with Vietnam markings and paint job as a token of our appreciation and gratitude to Don for his work on behalf of the Rustics. **Don** graciously received his gift while receiving a standing ovation from the Rustics—Job well done **Don!!**



RUSTIC'S WHO TOOK THEIR FINAL FLIGHTS ARE REMEMBERED AT THE RUSTIC REUNION AND THE ANNUAL ACA MEMORIAL CEREMONY:

Rustic Bien Hoa 0-2 pilot **Don Hagle** and maintenance NCOIC, **Rocky Brown**, took their final flights in 2002. Our sympathy and condolences are extended to their families and loved ones.

During a solemn moment at the banquet, the Rustics stood and made their traditional toast to all their Rustic brethren who have taken their final flight—we shall never forget them! Also, since this year's Rustic reunion dates coincided with the Air Commando's reunion, **Charlie Jones**, Butterfly FAC, and former president of the Air Commando Association (ACA), graciously represented the Rustics at the annual ACA Memorial service at Hurlburt Field on 13 Oct to read the names of this year's Rustics departed.

THIS YEAR'S REUNION ATTENDEES: Tom Adams, Doug & Carol Aitken, Ben Atkins, Wayne & Leslie Baker, Gary Ball, Mike & Linda Ballard, Mark & Rachel (Daughter) Berent, Karen Brinkley (0-2 Lady), Don & Yong C. Brooks, Tom & Peggy Capps, John & Sally Charlton, Bob & Dorte Clifford, Si Dahle, Ron Dandeneau, Bill & Jan Decabooter, Waldo Dodd, Roger & Linda Dodd, Don Echelberger, Lendy & Sue Edwards, Walt & Sharon Friedhoffen, Phil Frishmuth, Jim & Sarah Gabel, Karla Gabel

(daughter), Joe & Rocky Garand, Mick & Mary Gibbar, Dick & Judy Goddard, Charles & Suzanne Greene, Dick & Liz Green, Carl & Joyce Hagle (parents of Don Hagle), Lynette & Holly Hagle, Don & Mary Haller, Roger & Joan Hamann, Curt & Ruth Hawker, Ned Helm, Jim Hodgson (Bronco Assoc.), Dave & Linda Hull, Hank & Annie Keese, Shad Kimbell and Anita Poots, Mike Kiraly, John & Georgie Koppin, Sue Lloyd (House of Hope), Bill & Cathy McAdams, Don & Noreen Mercer and daughters Cheerie, Noelle and Erin, Mitt Miitendorf, Marcel & Denise Morneau, Clint Murphy, Claude & Tona Newland, Jim & Lynne Nuber, Kohn Om, Col Oum, Joe & Pat Paquin, Jim Reese, Dick & Marcy Roberds, Doug & Bobbie Robertson, Jim & Diane Seibold, Bill & Nancy Sleigh, Shell & Christine Storer, Ray & Jan Stratton, Jack & Anne Thompson, Lanny & Nancy Trapp, Larry "Doc" & Ginger Underwood, Dave Van Dyke, Ron & Janette Van Kirk, Mike & Sherry Wilson, Tony & Nancy Winkler, and Dick Wood.

*Our thanks to everyone who attend this year's reunion and to everyone who helped make the reunion such a success!! (What a good lookin' group!) We also want to wish a speedy recovery to **Marcia Reese** who was at the Atlanta airport, preparing to depart for the reunion, when she developed a knee injury. Marcia get well soon! After a 2 day delay to ensure Marcia was in good hands, Jim was able to catch a last minute flight to join us on Saturday for the business meeting and banquet. Thanks for the extra effort Jim—it was good to have you with us!*

REUNION KODAK MOMENT. By **Ned Helms**. Reunions are by their very nature hot and cold. Most people tell me that they don't want to go because ol' so an so will be there...on the other hand ol' What's his name, the guy you liked might be there.

The Rustic Reunion was the first gathering of 7 Rustics who had "turned out the lights" in August of 73. Most of us had never been to a Rustic Reunion and with the exception of a couple of us we had not seen each other for around 30 years. We had no axes to grind...we got along fine then...so I don't think anyone was nervous or on edge...curious but eager might express this kid's feelings.

Well every once in a while you get surprised by your emotions.. On Thursday afternoon I was sitting talking with some one when I felt a tap on my shoulder. I turned around and...it Was Major (now **Col**) **Kohn Om**. The last time I saw him was on 14 Aug 73 when I taxied out for takeoff for the last time from PP. He was standing on the ramp with a couple of his Tango Jocks near the bomb dump. As I went by I snapped him a stiff salute...it was returned by all three...and I, like all the Rustics and Nails, vanished from his equation.

For years I wondered what had happened to all the Khmers I had known...then at the 2000 Reunion in Ft. Walton (The mother of All Reunions) I made the acquaintance of the Rustic Association and obtained a copy of the Black Book (the Original rustic Book-the new one I call the Red Book).

In this book was a chapter on what happened to our Khmers. It was then that I learned that **Col Kohn Om** survived the killing fields. I'll post his story some other time but the short version is that he walked out of PP with the whole population, became a fisherman, fled to Vietnam where he and his family became farmers, E&E'd across the length of Cambodia to the Thai border, was rescued by Mark Berent (Papa Wolf), moved to the states, and then later got his family out of Vietnam. It really wasn't that easy...hopefully someone will write the book!!)

We embraced...we remembered each other...I remembered him for his heroic Fighter Pilot cockiness and the vision of him in his T-28 taking off for his umpteenth sortie of the day, with his canopy rolled back and his scarf in the propwash...he remembered me for ...crapping up his runway with broken OV's!!

He was never alone for an instant all weekend...if for a nano second he looked unsure of himself (awash in a sea of old FACs)... another Rustic would latch on to him. All the Rustics knew Kohn because in the early days he flew his Mig into Bien Hoa and flew combat sorties with the Rustics . He along with our revered Khmer ground commanders represented all we admired from the days we spent in and over Cambodia.

Well... later, on Friday a bunch of us were in the Rustic Hootch.... when in comes **Mike Kiraly** (Rustic 22) dressed in his traveling togs straight off of the airplane with...a Nail Scarf around his neck!!! (we used both the Rustic Scarf [Yellow, Blue, and Red] and the Nail Scarf [Purple on Purple] interchangeably.). Mike went up to the room and changed and came back down to the Hooch.

A bit later I tapped him on the shoulder and pointed to Kohn who had just walked in to the room... at that instant , Kohn saw Mike..the two bear hugged in the middle of the room ...and...then... moved to arms length and regarded each other.

Click....Kodak moment #1. This is why I go to reunions...you just never know. In the picture of Kohn and Mike... Claude Newland (Rustic Assn President) is in the far background... and I'd say he was pleased by what he saw...Reunion successful!! and **Dick Goddard** (Rustic 20) who was trying to greet Mike when he and Kohn beat him to the punch.

Mike and Kohn went to SOS in 72 . When in 1973 Mike,



now a Rustic FAC, and Kohn ...now the commander of the Scorpion Squadron, Cambodia's elite (and only?) fighter squadron, met in Scorpion ops...Kohn ran to get his SOS yearbook...and they held their first reunion....this was the second....and the most unlikely.

Good moment...glad the camera was there...sorry about the focus...but...I'll take it. There were many moments...some less intense...but none the less important. Good Reunion. Crash (**Ned Helms**), Rustic 15

RUSTIC SEARCH COMMITTEE AND NEW FOUND RUSTICS: We are in need of volunteers to form a Search Committee which will try to locate our 'missing' Rustics (See enclosed roster for list of 'missing'.) **Ron Dandeneau** has agreed to work on the Committee. Anyone else able to help? If so, please contact Ron at: **RusticFoxtrot@aol.com**. Ron recently located **Norman Cimon**, one of our Bien Hoa French-speaking interpreters. (*Good work Ron!*)

Norman Cimon

1208 1st St
La Grande OR 97850
Tel: 541-963-0853

UPDATED E MAIL ADDRESSES: **Randy Hetherington**, baiglobal@bellsouth.net; **Paul A. Riehl**, rustic06@cox.net; **Mike Wilson**, sher85745@mac.com

COMMERCIAL BOOK UPDATE: From **Dick Wood**. Our book, *Call Sign Rustic* is off to a good start. It was officially released in September and was available at our October reunion in San Antonio. The publisher, Smithsonian Institution Press, works on a fiscal year that ends September 30th. Sales through the end of the fiscal year were 1302 copies. The Rustic FAC Association's cut of the royalties was \$1,230.65. SIP pays royalties annually, so we will not get anything more until next year.

Royalties (obviously) depend on sales. Sales depend on reviews and marketing. The book has been out for review for about a month, but it usually takes two months to actually get any reviews. Serious marketing starts then, assuming, of course, that the reviews are favorable. We'll see.

In the meantime, you can help. If any of you have an opportunity to speak to any group about your experiences as a Rustic or the Rustic mission in general, I can help you with a sample script and a few 35mm slides. My e-mail is woodrh@ix.netcom.com, phone is 425-335-1327. This marketing effort can continue as long as the book is in print.

(Editor's note: Dick recently received a royalty statement for the Smithsonian Institution Press indicating the Rustics should be receiving their first royalty check (approx \$1,200) in the near future. Not bad for the first two months of sales! These funds have been approved by the membership to go exclusively to Cambodian charities.)

RUSTICS' NEW BOOK AND SEVERAL NEW LAPEL PINS ARE NOW AVAILABLE THROUGH THE RUSTIC FAC ASSOCIATION: If you'd like to order copies of our new book, '*Call Sign Rustic*' (by **Dick Wood**, 189 pages, Smithsonian Institution Press) please use the order form at the end of this newsletter. The Rustic discounted cost for each book is \$18.00/book, plus \$4 shipping and handling for the first book, and \$1 added shipping for each additional book. (Note: The commercial list price is \$24.95 and Amazon.com's price is \$18.50, plus shipping and handling.) If you buy from the Rustic FAC Association, the association actually makes some royalties and profit, so we hope this is what you'll choose to do.

Also available, are two new lapel pins, a "Let's Roll" pin and a Rustic Logo pin. Cost per pin is \$2.00. Pins can be ordered using the form at the end of this newsletter.

TWO NEW RUSTIC PHOTO HISTORY PROJECTS BEGIN—YOUR HELP IS SOLICITED. Great Smoking Willy Petes! Where do we get these guys? Two Rustics voluntarily stepped forward at this year's reunion to propose two new projects to preserve our Rustic history. Both projects involve sharing your old photos with them so they can put them on a Master CD so we can preserve the photos as part of our Rustic heritage. Both projects are deserving of your support! Here are the two projects and how you can help:

(1) Rustic Southeast Asia Photo History CD: POC: Ned Helm. Background: Most all of us have a photo album of pictures we took in Southeast Asia. If we don't attempt to preserve a record of these photos today, in all likelihood, they will eventually get lost or destroyed. What a shame! **The Goal:** Ned Helm wants to preserve these photos on a CD which can be reproduced and made available to the Rustics at our next reunion in 2005. In reality this project is an extension of our two previous book projects. We have successfully recorded the Rustic story in writing, but unfortunately, only a few of our pictures made it into the books. Here's our chance to save/record all of our most historical Rustic Southeast Asia pictures for posterity. This project will become the property of the Rustics FAC Association--have copy write protection—and thereby be preserved for our enjoyment and use.

Ned requests you either scan and E mail him your photos at **ned@wingset.com** (better yet, put them on a CD yourself and mail him your CD) or mail the actual photos to him at: 1725 Gabert Road Woodstock, VT 05091. Ned's phone number is: 802-457-9922 if you have any questions.

To make things go smoothly, please put your name on the back of each photo, describe each picture, give approximately when and where it was taken, and indicate who(list names)/what is in the picture. All photos mailed to Ned will be return back to their original owner!

The holiday season is a busy time of year, so it's OK to defer your start on this project till early 2003, but get your album out and make yourself a new year's resolution to get started on this soon.

WHEN THIS PROJECT IS COMPLETED, YOU'LL BE GLAD YOU PARTICIPATED. DON'T BE LEFT OUT!!
This will become the 'Mother of All Rustic Southeast Asia Photo Albums'!!

(2) **Rustic Reunion Photo History CD: POC: Jim Seibold.** The Goal: Jim Seibold has volunteered to put together a CD which will contain the complete photo history of each of our past Rustic reunions (1997, 1999, and 2002.) Similarly as above, please send Jim your best reunion photos either (1) via E mail scanning to: seiboldjim@aol.com, (2) or mail your photos to Jim at 1853 E Inca Circle, Mesa, AZ 85203. Be sure to indicate year of picture, who is in it, etc. If you have any questions contact Jim via e mail or call him at: 480-969-3523. All photos will be returned to you.

YOUR SUPPORT OF THIS PROJECT IS GREATLY APPRECIATE. PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO HELP!

From: Ned Helm (observations/requests which go along with his CD project [see above] for which he has volunteered)

There were a lot of photo albums sitting on the table in San Antonio...and lots more at home...they need to be scanned...preferably by the owner...and sent via CD (or email) to me for inclusion in a Rustic archive for use in the stories and to be recorded for history!! (and to be distributed to one and all!!) If need be I can consume numerous bottles of Apple Brandy while scanning my ass off....for which I will charge the Association!!!(for the rehab that is...) Seven months will be VERY tight...perhaps there should be a very strident

notice in the newsletter on "shit or get off the pot" as far as all inputs are concerned (BOLDFACE might be employed!!)...while at the same time playing to collective vanity...nothing like seeing your picture in a book to bring back the memories...both good and bad.

Generic warnings and solicitations (such as those on the FACnet) seem to have little impact. Since taking over the 23d TASS I have had ONE new submission!!!! Thus a plea./demand from the President would seem to be in order.

I will also post finished stories to the web(FACnet)...and include requests for "the rest of the story" ...but a lot of us are not on the web.....perhaps we should be...at times it gets a bit mundane...but...nothing like some decent war stories to stir up the troops!! However...I will personally PING all of the LAST RUSTICS for stories.....and **Hank Keese** ..(they can be ANYMOUSE if necessary).....but you guys need to police your own "era" to make sure that no one is left out. Which brings to mind....the cover of both books...there is a story there...both of the Buzz job...and the political fallout that must have followed...would make good reading....I have solicited the "Guilty Party"....hope he or someone else writes it. I think, that even 30 years later some of us are worried about "what our peers will think"....that is NOT a factor...but some might be embarrassed or fear that they might embarrass someone else....History is what we write not what happened...so we might as well write it as it happened.....sorta

completes the circle. Crash (AKA **Ned Helm**...which some Khmer...who shall remain nameless...said sounds like "Needs Help")

PS...anyone who has pictures of any Khmer Hotels or personages...we need them. **Mike Kiraly** just scanned his party suit and a picture of Hotel Tonle A....Deke just emailed me a scan of Shan Te...there must be more....24 degrees and snowing....duck hunting in the morning....any time on Lake Champlain with Logan (My canine hunting companion of ten years..who is currently warming my bed!!) is almost as good as a day over the skies of Cambodia....we need to "take" one bird for a retrieve...but after that...my need to kill things is long gone....

ANOTHER RUSTIC BOOK IN THE MAKING? From **Don Mercer.** To the Officers and Directors: Thanks to all of you for making the reunion a most memorable experience. My family and I had an absolutely wonderful time.

As I am nearing the completion of activities surrounding Awards and Decorations I want to share with you a dream that I have had for almost 30 years. I confided this to my wife before we were married and it has now come time to take the steps to advance it. I have wanted for many years to write a book on the contributions of those in my unit as a tribute to the men with whom I flew and worked. Fortunately I kept detailed journals and log books that will serve as a jumping off point for my work.

This will encompass the first Night Rustic mission flown on June 20, 1970, until the cessation of night missions flown by the O-2s from Bien Hoa in September, 1971. I want to combine both the historical aspects of that mission and plan to continue conducting research, organizing material and writing during the next 12-18 months. Of perhaps additional significance I would like to expand on the existing material available pertaining to several of the battles such as that at Prey Totung and plan to call upon several OV-10 pilots to hopefully contribute to better depicting the round the clock support in several of those instances.

My book will take a different approach in that I plan to develop as background information how a number of the pilots came

to be in our unit in a most unpopular war; i.e. fathers' service in WWII, colleges attended, etc. Additionally, I plan to include information about the various survival schools and other specific aspects not previously addressed such as the night scope equipment used and classifications of different material. While I hope to call upon **Jim Gabel** to clarify several issues as I proceed, in any event I will be willing to share with him as our Historian any information which I obtain.

My goal is that of providing a human interest story woven with the historical perspective of the time. Needless to say, this will be a consuming undertaking but, if anything, I believe the work done with Awards and Decorations has better prepared me for pursuing this. I trust this will not be viewed by anyone as a conflict of interest as it will, when it comes to fruition, only serve to shed more light on the responsible and professional actions of the Rustics.

I met with **Dick Roberds** in Harrisonburg, VA, on Thursday, October 24, to convey some of my ideas and he agreed with me that it would be best to share with all of you my basic ideas. As I have the utmost respect for each and every one of you, I welcome any input and hope that I have your support in my endeavor. As an aside, I am pursuing the publication of some of my poetry, much of which addresses aspects of our work in Cambodia. But, rest assured, this is not the first windmill at which I have ever tilted!

After the Holidays I plan to begin work on a book to pay tribute to both the Cambodian troops with whom we worked and those men with whom I flew. While it is to be historically based, in part on the logs and journals that I maintained and those of others as well as further research, I want it to reflect the human interest of input from numerous Rustic personnel. Thus, the fabric of this book will include a more detailed focus on such battles as that at Prey Totung beginning in late November, 1970, and the battle for Highway 6 in August and September, 1971. Additionally other aspects of Chenla II addressing the round the clock support provided will be sought, as well as hopefully poignant comments from some whose letters and tapes sent back home to wives and parents may have been kept.

I want to distill into my book a number of the individual acts of heroism on the part of pilots and interpreters and those on the ground whom we supported. I also want to include some biographical information on a number of personnel to include how they came to be a pilot or interpreter or in Intel. Thus, I plan to contact quite a number of Rustics in the coming year. Should any individual be prepared to share personal thoughts and experiences that would possibly be included, please contact me at dmerc@life-insure.com or at 757-412-1400.

While the focus of this book is to encompass the period from just prior to our first Rustic flight on June 20, 1970, through the end of September, 1971, I am also hoping to gather input from that date through the culmination of activities on August 15, 1973. I have also advised that any meaningful research that results from my work will be shared with Jim Gabel as our Historian. I anticipate spending a minimum of 12-18 months in gathering material.

While the work of publishing our Rustic history to date has been most worthwhile, I am of the opinion that there remain considerable stories of the men who worked as Rustics. And as it's been said: if it's not written down, it may as well have not happened.

Don

(Editor's note: OK guys, if you have any ideas for Don, or if you can provide him with additional information for his book, let him hear from you at: dmerc@life-insure.com)

GREAT NEWS! RUSTICS TO HAVE THEIR STORIES INCLUDED IN THE ALL-FAC HISTORY BOOK PROJECT. YOUR INPUTS ARE SOLICITED. IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO WRITE YOUR STORY AND GET IT INCLUDED IN THE BOOK PROJECT: Charlie Pocock, the FAC History Book Project Chairman, has confirmed that all Rustic inputs to FAC History book project will be put together into one separate 'Rustic section' of the book .

Rustic FAC **Ned Helm** has agreed to be the Rustic project officer for coordinating/editing all inputs to the Rustic section of the FAC book. This project is not a duplication of our first book. Rather, the Rustic section will include an approximate 40 page summary of the overall Rustic mission (written by **Dick Wood**) and all of the individual, first-person, Rustic stories that were in the original book , plus any new stories that you submit to Ned. As yet, there is no firm cutoff deadline for getting your new inputs to Ned, but don't delay (*Editor's note: We expect a 1 July 2003 cutoff date to be announced.*). Start writing today, especially if you missed the chance to contribute to the first book.

Please E mail your inputs/stories to Ned at: ned@wingset.com or mail them to him at: 1725 Gabert Road Woodstock, VT 05091. Ned's phone number is: 802-457-9922 if you have any questions.

(Editor's note: If you had a story in the original Rustic book, it is already on a CD that we will submit to Ned—so you don't have to resubmit your story. We will do it for you. FYI: At the recent reunion's general membership business meeting in San Antonio, the membership overwhelmingly approved to support the FAC History book project with our stories.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

From **Paul Riehl**, rustic06@cox1.net

Claude, Glad to hear you are doing well and in good health. Except for my new ISP, my status is unchanged. I am still in harness and the time constraints pretty tight so I have missed the last 2 reunions. But I keep up with the Rustics and hope to make it a series within the next couple of years. Best regards, **Paul**

Rustic Reunion 2002 Thoughts. Doug Robertson, Rustic Alpha, para4T5@aol.com.

To all members...I just wanted to share a few thoughts regarding the reunion. First of all it was my first reunion and hopefully not my last. This is probably the first time I have come face to face with a group of people that I have not seen in over 30 years. Like fine wine we have all aged, but still have that un-mistakable vintage. **Crash (Ned Helms)** was 100% on when he said look at the eyes, they may have a few lines but they never change. It was so great to see all of those I served with. Without sitting down and making a list of Rustic's I served with I would estimate that probably half were in attendance in San Antonio. I think **Rog Hamann** (Rustic Yankee) had the dubious distinction of being the youngest member of the group with myself being a close second. I think **Lendy Edwards** summed it up nicely when he exclaimed "My God, you were just a kid the last time I saw you !! ". Both of my children are older than I was while I was there...go figure. Now that I think about it I was just a kid at the time and my year as a Rustic gave me something that I will always cherish.

There were also those who came up to me and wanted to meet one of the Nui Ba Den Radio operators and to thank me for being there for them. That meant a lot to me. I have always thought of my year spent in SEA as rather mundane and unimportant in the big scheme of things but I guess it took 30 years for me to find out that what I did over there did have some impact on the people I served with.



To see my old friend **Roger Hamann** and meet his wife was one of my personal high points of the weekend. The time we got to spend together was very special. Indeed, getting thrown out of the Menger Bar was pretty weird but we were in good company and we moved the party upstairs for more good times.

Meeting fellow FACNET members for the first time was also one of the high points of the trip. To finally put a face together with a name makes this net even more personal than before. There is indeed a brotherhood amongst all that served. I think that there was a good time had by all, saying Goodbye was not easy but hope to see all again and even more of you next time.

A Special Thank You to **Jack Thompson** for going out of his way to make sure we made it to places we needed to get to, much appreciated. **Ron Van Kirk** and all of his helpers.....GREAT JOB !!!!!!!

God Bless you all and keep you safe until the next time we meet. Cheers, **Doug Robertson**

*(Editor's note: if you're not on the FACNET and would like to join, contact **Skip Smotherman** at: skipsmo@swbell.net)*

From **Roger Hamann**, Rustic Yankee, rstcyankee@aol.com

Gents, for those of you who flew the Cambodian AO.....a book that should be of interest to you. Entitled "**First They Killed My Father**", this true story, written by **Loung Ung**, describes the author's family's escape from Phnom Penh in 1975. I discovered this book when I heard Ms Ung's lecture on NPR last year in regard to her work as national spokesperson for the Campaign for a Land mine Free World, a program of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation. I highly recommend this book to all--but especially to those among us who had personal contact with the Cambodian people in our role as FACs.

Dith Pran, the Cambodian journalist whose life was portrayed in the movie, "The Killing Fields", said, "Loung has written an eloquent and powerful narrative as a young witness to the Khmer Rouge atrocities. This is an important story that will have a dramatic impact on today's readers and inform generations to come." I had the opportunity to listen to, meet and speak with Dith Pran a few years before he was murdered in Los Angeles. We all know his story...now take the time to read Ms Ung's story. It won't make any of the Rustics feel any better about HOW we had to leave...but it will make you substantiate what we already knew...and that...was the determination of a proud people. Contact me through FACNET, or at home at ? : or BC with mailing info if interested.

From **Ned Helm**,

To the guys who put on the Rustic Reunion....or rather a comment....SIERRA HOTEL It was really well done...well organized...and the location was great (the Historic and classy Menger Hotel on the Alamo Plaza). Nothing I have ever done seems to

compare with... served...and meeting those I have read about...and those with More from "Ned Helm" Subject: Rustic bash. This is an open letter to all reuniting with fellow warriors and aviators with whom I have whom I have communicated with on the net (FACNET).

Someone said to me...You really get into this don't you?? Yup...sure do....better than an "A" ticket ride. A few memories pop up...will post pix when available--Rustic interpreters getting their "gongs" from **Lt. Gen (Ret.) Lanny Trapp** (Rustic FAC)...one got his from his "Nose Gunner"...first time I ever saw the "presenter" hug the recipient....works for me when two warriors hug each other...works very well...much better than words...which sorta get choked off. Meeting (again) **Col Kohn Om** the Scorpion Squadron Commander from PP....hearing history of escape from Cambodia in person andwatching his face when the Rustics gave him Senior pilot's wings (he had asked me to see if he could have a pair...and...I had to tap dance all weekend because I knew he was going to have them presented at the Banquet) ...he had given us all Khmer wings 30 years ago. Talking with Papa Wolf (**Mark Berent**...Air Attaché for Cambodia) for the first time in person rather than on the radio...Dressing up in our party shirts and suits (for the skinny bastards who could still fit in 'em) and taking pictures....**Mike Kiraly** getting into his suit...and not passing out...shooting "The Last Rustics" picture again. Finally finding out who the FAC was who is on the cover of CALL SIGN RUSTIC. (It shows an OV buzzing the Cambodian column on one of the pushes to relieve the garrison at KPT...at slightly lower than minimum altitude)...no I won't tell... but he put his John Henry on my dust cover....as an aside, that picture caused "A Bit" of trouble for the politicians in Washington at that time since there were no OV-10's in Cambodia. Meeting **Rustic Alpha** and **Rustic Yankee**....and all the other guys. Watching the guys go into a feeding frenzy when Grump (OBA BX manager and token Marine OV driver) put out the new OV 10 models...he brought 10...they are gone...and they are seriously backordered. More on them later. Had a blast....yup, sure do get into seeing my hooch mates 30 years later....and if you don't go you'll never know the feeling....Again to **Ron Van Kirk** and the rest of the guys who put on the show...one stainless steel attaboy...and in case you were not listening....to the FAC ASSN ...San Antonio was AWE-SOME...lots to do for everyone....the Alamo was literally across the street and the River Walk was a block away....nice spot for the 2004 All FAC gathering...and the Menger Hotel was...well...unbelievable....a monolithic pile with gardens, pool, nice rooms...but you did need a trail of bread crumbs to find your way around....even a few FACs got "momentarily disoriented". **Crash, Rustic 15, '73**



From **Karen Brinkley**,: "lady_duck_driver" <LadyO2Pilot@aol.com>. (Editor's note: Hearing about the Rustic Reunion on the FACNET, Karen flew her O-2 into San Antonio and joined us for the reunion. She also graciously offered rides in her O-2 on Saturday morning to a number of the Rustics and their family members. Karen, it was a pleasure meeting you and thanks for your generosity and support! We hope to see you again at future get-togethers.)

'Rustic Reunion: Thank you to all the Rustics and their families who welcomed me to your banquet last night. I had a wonderful time and truly enjoyed meeting and conversing with all. It was a great social time (Well Done to all involved in the planning) and learning experience. To those who flew with me in the O-2 yesterday morning, what fun we had (although a bit tiring for one of us....LOL). Wish we had had more time and the weather gods had cooperated more with clearer skies. For those of you who demonstrated some more accurate techniques for rolling in on the target....promise...I will practice well (at altitude) and get it right. Of course if I try it in the shows, I really will get "violated." Guess I can use to just play in the skies and terrorize some Texas barns or cattle. Thanks again for sharing and including me...THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!!!!!! **Karen Adams Brinkley**, O-2A, 67-21383

From **Marcel Morneau**

Claude, What a great reunion. We thoroughly enjoyed it and the award of the DFC' is the greatest highlight of my military career. Hope you enjoy the book ("Wings of Fame"). Here is the data on Alan Ewing: He gave these books to the Rustics in appreciation for all we did for our country. USAF Academy Class of 1984. Engineer by profession. Address: Alan Ewing, Marketing Mgr, JSF Program GE Aircraft Engines MD H3281 Newmann Way, Cincinnati, Ohio 45215-1988 Email: Tel: (513)243-9305 P.S. He is traveling this week. Back in office on 10/21. Regards, Marcel

(Editor's note: The above books were raffled at the reunion and the proceeds will be sent to the House of Hope. A letter of thanks

and appreciation was sent to Alan Ewing for his generous gift of books to the Rustics.)

2003 Rustic FAC Association Annual Membership Renewal Form Rustic Store and Book Order Form

YES, I would like to stay in touch with my Rustic buddies, continue receiving the Rustic FAC newsletter and help support efforts to promote continued Rustic FAC Association camaraderie, future reunions, and history projects.

Annual dues of \$20.00 for Jan. through Dec. 2003. \$ _____

Lifetime Membership in the Rustic FAC Association. \$ _____

| Age: | Lifetime Membership Rates: |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| 55-56 | \$250 |
| 56-60 | \$225 |
| 61-65 | \$200 |
| 66 or older | \$175 |

(Family members of "Rustics Remembered" do not pay dues.)

___ NO, I am not interested. I understand I will be taken off the quarterly newsletter mailing list.

I'd like to order the following from the Rustic Store:

New Rustic Book, 'Call Sign Rustic': Quantity ___ x \$18.00/each = \$ _____

Book Shipping and Handling costs: \$4.00 for first book; \$1.00 for each added book = \$ _____

'Let's Roll' Lapel Pin: Quantity ___ x \$2.00/each = \$ _____

Rustic Logo/Flag Lapel Pin: Quantity ___ x \$2.00/each = \$ _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Please make check payable to "Rustics" & mail to: Don Ellis 235 Glenwood Drive, Manning, SC 29102

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: _____