

Volume 23, Issue 1

1 June 2019



Rustic News

www.rustic.org



President: Johnny Drury, Rustic04@aol.com
President Emeritus: Claude Newland, Rustic19@cox.net
Vice President: Roger Hamann, RusticYankee72@aol.com
Secretary/Treasurer: Jim Nuber, jnubes@cableone.net
Rustic SEA Photo CD: Ned Helms, rusticfac15@gmail.com
Reunion Photo CD: Jim Seibold, seiboldjim@aol.com
Search Committee: Rog Hamann, RusticYankee72@aol.com

Director: Jim Reese, jimboree@bellsouth.net
Director: Tom Capps, cappstom@gmail.com
Director: Don Ellis, donellis@sc.rr.com
Historian: John Safley, rdleader77@verizon.com
Website: John Charlton, jtespcp@gmail.com
Health & Wellness: Doc Thomas, shialary@msn.com
Database: Lendy Edwards, lendy@cox.net

PRESIDENT'S PERSEPECTIVE

Laura and I are looking forward to seeing all of you at the Rustic Reunion in Las Vegas. **Shad Kimball** and **Claude Newland** have been putting together an agenda that I am sure will be memorable. Please check out the discussions later in this Newsletter concerning the event and get you're your registration in early.

Congratulations to all of the Rustics who participated in our "quick turn" support to the Sunrise Ministries in Cambodia. We not only met our initially ambitions goal, but far exceeded it. SUPER!! See **Jim Nuber's** treasurer report late in this Newsletter for details.

And lastly, many of you visited the Aviation Museum in Colorado Springs during our Rustic Reunion in 2013. Since then the museum has achieved the U.S. Congressionally-designated title of The National Museum of WWII Aviation. The Museum has grown greatly with now over 30 flying WWII aircraft and will move into a larger facility this summer. Lately, much of my free time has been spent volunteering at the Museum. I invite anyone who comes through Colorado Springs to plan at least a half day touring our facility. I would be glad to provide you and your family a private guided tour.



Johnny and Laura at a recent A-37 Association Reunion in Whichita, KS

IT'S TIME TO REGISTER FOR THIS YEAR'S RUSTIC REUNION. Las Vegas, NV, 1-4 Oct 2019. Shad Kimbell has done a great job of setting up this year's reunion. It is being held Tuesday-Friday to take advantage of some great room rates at the Tuscany Suites and Casino, but breakfast is not included. The hotel has a restaurant available for breakfast or any other desired meals. Parking is free. The hotel location is only two blocks from the famed Las Vegas Strip. The Schedule of Events include a visit to Nellis AFB, plus time for some optional entertainment and time for roaming around Las Vegas.

If you arrive early on Monday, 30 Sep, we will get together for dinner that night. See the Schedule of Events for details.



There are three things you need to do now if you plan to attend:

1. Register.
2. Make your hotel reservations.
3. Make your reservation for the “Rat Pack is Back” Show (optional event). See details below.

Once again, **Kohn Om** will be attending this year’s reunion as our honored guest. He has not missed a reunion since we first gathered in Ft Walton Beach in Sep 1997. We have some money in the kitty to bring him to Las Vegas but need a few more donations to help cover his expenses (*see Registration Form to contribute*).

Hotel Reservations. Each person is to make their own hotel reservations:

Tuscany Suites and Casino

255 East Flamingo Road

Las Vegas, NV 89169

Call 877-887-2261. Ask for the “Rustic Reunion” group rate.

www.tuscanylv.com

\$ 79.00 + 13.38% tax (**\$89.57**) per night Sunday through Thursday, single or double occupancy.

\$ 139.00 + 13.38% tax (**\$157.60**) per night Friday and Saturday, single or double occupancy.

Each individual is required to provide a major credit card for first night’s room and tax deposit, which will be charged in order to guarantee accommodations. All reservation requests must be received no later than 9/15/2019 prior to the group’s arrival date. Reservation requests received after the **9/15/2019** cutoff will be confirmed on a space available basis at the prevailing rate.

“Rat Pack is Back” Show Reservations. If you want to attend the optional “Rat Pack is Back” show on Wednesday, 2 Oct, you will need to call the Tuscany Hotel Rat Pack box office (702- 947-5981) or go on-line (www.ratpackisback.com) and make your own reservations.

They offer a dinner/show combination or just the show. The show begins at 7:30 PM. Go to the website to see seating diagram. Costs are as follows:

	VIP Seating:	General Seating:
Dinner (beginning 5:30 PM) & show	\$94.95	
Show only	\$74.95	\$64.95

The Rat Pack show has been a Las Vegas smash hit for 18 years. It is a live tribute to Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., and Dean Martin at Tuscany Suites & Casino COPA Showroom Theatre. Come and re-live the magic of the Rat Pack! The hotel contact person says this is a great show and there is not a bad seat in the house which means the General seating section has good seats. Paying extra for VIP seating may not be necessary. All show seats are First-come, First-served table or row seating in the rear or side of theater You can also order your tickets on-line. All Sales FINAL. No refunds, exchanges or cancellations permitted.

A multiple course gourmet dinner is served in the Tuscany Gardens Italian Restaurant (This is a separate dining room from the Tuscany’s Marilyn’s Café). Dinner seating begins before the show at 5:30 PM and concludes after the show at 9:30 PM. You will need to contact the restaurant at (702) 947-5910 to secure your dinner seating time.



Tuscany Hotel Pool

2019 REUNION - SCHEDULE OF EVENTS
Tuscany Casino and Suites, Las Vegas, NV
1-4 October 2019

DATE/TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION or NOTES
MONDAY, 30 Sep 2019		
1800-2200	PRE-PARTY - Dinner at local restaurant	1740-Meet in hotel lobby. Walk to restaurant at 1750
TUESDAY, 1 OCT 2019		
0600-1030	BREAKFAST (not included w/room)	Tuscany Marilyn's Cafe
0900-Noon	HOOCH SET-UP	Hooch
Noon-1900	REGISTRATION/HOOCH OPEN	Hooch (Firenze Rm)
1600-1730	EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING	TBA
1800-2000	DINNER (Walk to restaurant). --Order from menu	1800-Meet in hotel lobby; depart 1810
2030-2100	OFFICIAL WELCOME	Hooch
WEDNESDAY, 2 OCT 2019		
0600-1030	BREAKFAST on your own	Tuscany Marilyn's Cafe
0830-1415	NELLIS AFB VISIT	0830-Meet in hotel lobby to carpool; depart @ 0840
	<i>(Someone in each vehicle needs a military ID.)</i>	
	0915 -- Briefing on Nellis' many missions/ Red Flag	
	1030 -- 19 Weapon Sqn Visit/Briefing	
	1200 -- LUNCH (Buffet)	Nellis AFB Club. A.A1 Ballroom
	1300 -- Thunderbird Museum	
1500-1800	FREE TIME	
1730	RAT PACK DINNER	
1800-2100	DINNER (Location TBD) --Order from menu	If not going to RAT PACK DINNER
1930-2130	RAT PACK SHOW (at hotel, Optional)	Tuscany Hotel
2100-TILL	HOOCH OPEN	
THURSDAY, 3 OCT 2019		
0600-1030	BREAKFAST on your own	Tuscany Marilyn's Café
0900-1430	FREE TIME, HOOCH OPEN	
1430-1630	BUSINESS MEETING/ELECTIONS	Hooch
1630-1700	BANQUET SET-UP	Tuscany Rm
1800-1900	BANQUET HAPPY HOUR—CASH BAR --Individual & couple photos	Tuscany Rm Business Casual, Tie Optional.
	--1845-1900 GROUP PHOTOS	Tuscany Rm
1900-2130	DINNER BANQUET (Business Casual)	Tuscany Rm
2130-TILL	RUSTIC HOOCH OPEN	
FRIDAY, 4 OCT 2019		
0600-1030	FAREWELL BREAKFAST	Tuscany Marilyn Cafe
Noon	HOOCH CLOSES	

Reunion Registration Form. See last page of newsletter. Make checks out to "Rustic FACs" and mail registration to **Lendy Edwards**, reunion treasurer, NLT 1 Sep 2019, at: 11 Poplar Ave, Shalimar, FL 32579. We suggest you keep a copy of your registration for your own records.

ROSTER UPDATES:

Doug Aitken	FAC@nc.rr.com
Rog Hamann	rusticyankee72@aol.com
Wallace J. "Dave" Davis	Weapons specialist, dwp@daviswoodproducts.com
Robert "Redeye" Harris	9425 Rolater Rd., Apt 415, Frisco, TX 75035, cell: 703-677-7860
Pierre Ligonde	12680 SW144 Ter, Miami, FL 33186
Earl "Shad" Kimbell	5724 Pikes Peak Loop NE, Rio Rancho, NM 87144
Phillip Morneault	145 Manous Dr., Holly Springs, GA 30115, c 678-815-8881, H 678-880-2811, morneault@windstream.net
Jim Reese	5253 Wyntercreek Dr., Dunwoody, GA 30338
Doug Robertson	925-759-5729; Wife: Bobbi
Jon Safely	44860 Audubon Square #324, Ashburn, VA 20147.

WINGMAN SUPPORT: Keep **Carol Aitken** in your thoughts and prayers. Doug reports her tumor treatment has gone well and she is regaining her strength through physical therapy.

SUPPORT FOR CAMBODIAN CHARITIES. **Jim Nuber**, Treasurer, Dec 30, 2018. I am happy to report that on behalf of the Rustic FAC Association, I have just sent an electronic funds transfer of \$29,700 to Sunrise Ministries in Cambodia. As you recall from past support it is done through CRM (now called NOVO) and Sunrise account 9500. We are pleased to provide this support of the Sunrise missions and hope and pray it can be put to good use.

Background. Soon after the adjournment of our Oct 18 Rustic Board meeting, an emergency proposal was submitted by **Tom Capps** to respond to a critical need of our charity recipients in Kompong Cham. A special Board meeting was convened via email. The proposal was to initiate an immediate initiative to contact our Rustic Family and attempt to raise \$10,000 of donations by 31 Dec 2018, with matching funds from the RFA. The proposal was overwhelmingly passed. The initiative's details were outlined in the Nov 2018 Rustic Newsletter. The positive response from the Rustic family was overwhelming. In only 10 weeks the Rustic Family contributed \$9,700 to this effort. The association contributed \$10,000 and an anonymous donor contributed an additional \$10,000. *Thanks to all who help make this possible!*

SUNRISE RESPONSE TO RUSTICS' CHARITY CONTRIBUTION. **Susan Smith**, Jan 2019. Wow! What a surprise to get such a large gift from you guys! You have funded about ¼ of our work for 2019. This is a much-needed shot in the arm for me and for the Sunrise staff.

Your gift has shown up in our Sunrise account at CRM (now Novo). In time, we will wire it over to Cambodia.

I will send you our quarterly report from January-June and also part of my personal newsletter that details some of our newer work in October. The annual report will have to wait until I return to Cambodia in February so expect to see it in March. Let me know if there is any other type of reporting that you would like to see.

We have a lot of visitors coming in March that would be able to carry something back to the USA. Would there be anything I could send to the Rustics members? For example, a little set of money of denominations 100, 500, and 1000 would be easy and cost only about 40 cents each (1600/4000) for each person. I know you don't want us spending your support on items for yourselves, but some things are not too expensive.

Also, I'm travelling frequently to the US these days—once or twice a year. My daughter is in transition from high school to college and my mother is in declining health. Anyway, if you have any meetings, I might be able to arrange coming to give report in person. Let me know if there is a date that you will meet. In addition, I'm in Baltimore through Jan 24 and in LA/OC until Feb 4, if there is anyone in that area that would like to meet up.

May God bless you richly for your generosity! Love, **Susan Smith** (Sunrise Cambodia, a project of Novo/InnerChange).

RUSTIC OV-10 TAIL # 639 RESTORATION NEARING COMPLETION DOWNUNDER. **Ken Semmler**, May 2019, khsemmler@optusnet.com.au. While we're not quite at the 'drum roll' stage, the spirit has moved in a positive direction. The completion of our beloved 639 to static display condition is planned for December (THIS year!!). Our beloved aircraft is now adorned in a delicate shade of USAF grey! As to the unveiling/dedication, no date has been set other than early 2020.

The Director of the Australian War Memorial (AWM) in Canberra, Dr. Brendan Nelson, has again stated his commitment to the project for which we are grateful. We are pushing for the OV-10 ceremony to be aligned with **ANZAC Day, the 25th Apr 2020** (a Saturday), i.e., a re-run of the precious sharing we enjoyed with ye kind folk in 2008. As you'd understand, it's the call of the AWM which's understandably inundated with functions over the ANZAC period, 'owever, it'd be really great if both could be combined. All we can state with certainty is 'early 2020'. Heck, would be good and an added incentive for you kind folk to visit us and, once again, march together (*in the Anzac Day Parade*). 'Will advise as soon as a date is known. The AWM has much appreciated all the input from the US. Indeed, Mrs. Laura Kennedy, the head of Conservation, has oft stated that, in her 16 or so years at the AWM, she's never witnessed such interest and input to a project. Don't stop now! Enough from me. Thanks so much for all you do and please spread the good news far and wide. With thanks and best wishes, on behalf of all the funny mob down-under, **Ken**

The Rustics flew OV-10 # 639 at both Bien Hoa and Ubon. Those who have reported they flew this aircraft are: Aitken, Calvanelli, Dufresne, Edwards, Ernst, Helm, Montmarquet, Newland, Ryals, and Yarborough. Others?

*If anyone is interested in attending the dedication of 639 in conjunction with the ANZAC Day celebration and parade on 25 Apr 2020, please contact **Claude Newland** at rustic19@cox.net. Marching with our Aussie allies in their ANZAC Day parade is a once in a lifetime experience.*

WHAT RUSTIC TAIL NUMBERS DID YOU FLY? We recently realized we do not have a list of the OV-10 and O-2A tail numbers flown by the Rustics in Southeast Asia. To remedy this situation, please sent your inputs (*last three numbers of tail number is sufficient*) to **Claude Newland** at: rustic19@cox.net Over the next few months he will send out an updated list. In the future we may post this information on our Rustic website. It might come in handy for folks who are researching tail numbers for historical purposes.

O-2A crew inputs have been received from: **Jerry Dufresne, David Hull, Don Mercer, and Jack Strickland.**

OV-10 crew inputs have been received from: **Aitken, Calvanelli, Dufresne, Eby, Edwards, Green, Montmarquet, Newland, Parsons, Rinehart, Ryals, and Van Kirk.**

SEA MAP WEBSITE. (www.rjsmith.com/topo_map.html). Check out this interesting SEA map website, "Ray's Map Room," **Ray Smith** has posted 186 digital 1,50,000 map images cover areas in South Vietnam, North Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. He scanned Series L7014 (SVN) and L7015 (Laos) 1:50,000 metric topographic maps to create these digital map images and superimposed place names and markers on the images. All digital map images are copyright © 1996-2007 Ray Smith. Do not copy or reproduce map images or text without prior written permission. Enjoy.

DID YOU FLY O-2A TAIL #s 67-21353 or 68-11036? **Marinda Davis**, dmarinda32@gmail.com, 385-444-1488. I am an accounting student at Utah State University. I work at the Space Dynamics Laboratory in Logan, UT. Our company does engineering projects for the defense industry. We currently own two Cessna O-2 Skymasters that are used for testing some of our technologies. Aircraft 68-11036 came to us in pieces back in 1999 and has since been put back together and is also flying. Does anyone know anything about either of these two aircraft? We'd love to know more about them. Thank you and thank you for your service! (*See Mike Thrower's Story on Page 10.*)

A-37 ASSOCIATION REUNION, Johnny Drury, May 2019. Laura and I had the honor of attending the recent A-37 Association Reunion in Wichita, Kansas.

The A-37s and the Rustics frequently worked together on targets in the Cambodia area of operations. Many a Rustic has stated that the A-37 Dragonfly was the "fighter of choice" when working sensitive and difficult ground targets.

Lon Holtz, President of the A-37 Association, and the members/spouses greeted us as family. The A-37 guys hosted a great 3-day agenda that included a tour of the Textron (formerly Cessna) aircraft facility where we saw the company's new "Scorpion" aircraft that some say is a follow-on to the A-37. We later enjoyed an enjoyable lunch at the well-known Stearman Restaurant.



A-37 Association 2019 Reunion

Many of us in the group toured a local museum where we were able to climb in the cockpit of one of only two flying B-29s. Later, **Dee Friesen** gave a very interesting briefing and discussion titled “Cambodia Typhoon” detailing the A-37’s first missions in Cambodia in the Spring of 1970. Their call sign during the first move into Cambodia was “Typhoon.” Dee noted that at the very beginning of the incursion, the A-37 was often tasked as a Forward Air Controller with a second pilot riding in the right seat with a camera.

The A-37 Association appropriately concluded the week’s activities with an elegant banquet attended by the Mayor of Wichita plus an Air Force Colors Honor Guard from nearby McConnell Air Force Base.

My thanks to the Association for welcoming Laura and I during their important event. Lon Holtz and his wife, Barbara, plan to join us in October for the 2019 Rustic Reunion in Las Vegas.

RUSTICS ON THE MOVE. Bob Harris. I’ve wanted to move to Texas since retiring four years ago. Cheryl and I are both from God’s country. Plus, medical challenges require us to be closer to medical facilities and living in a two-story house wasn’t good on bad knees. We really like where we are, North side of Dallas. Easy to get around and my son and family live in area. Come see us anytime. We may try to get to Destin. FL later this year.

Jon Safely. Kathy and I decided to downsize, sell our home, and move to a retirement community in Ashburn, VA. We’ll be settled in early June.

Earl “Shad” Kimbell, has recently left Las Vegas for Rio Ranch, New Mexico. Despite all the turmoil of moving, he has continued to serve as our primary coordinator for our 2019 reunion in Las Vegas.

RUSTIC TRAVELERS. Bob (Rustic 03) and Dorte Clifford briefly visited Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 27 December 2018. They arrived via cruise ship at Sihanoukville at 0700 and departed at 2000 after a trip up to Phnom Penh (an estimated 4 hour and 30-minute trip up and 4 and 30-minute trip back). There wasn’t much time spent in PP, but Bob reported they had “a lovely luncheon in Phnom Penh with Nady Tan and Linda Tan. His memory isn’t like it used to be, but at 82 (like me) I can understand that. Linda is a wonderful woman. This return visit also reminded me of the day Pierre Ligonde and I had to divert into Phnom Penh with only one engine running. We received a wonderful reception upon arrival.”

John and Sally Charlton were in Aruba, Feb 17, 2019.

Don Mercer continues to take photographic trips to our national parks and passes along his wonderful photos of Facebook.

Claude and Tona Newland took a two-week repositioning cruise from New York to Rome in early May. Stops along the way included Portugal, Spain, France and Italy.

Jim and Marcia Reese are now back at home in Dunwoody, GA after Jim’s year working as an airline executive in Tajikistan. He “thinks” he may be retired at this point.

SHORT BURSTS.

New FAC Assoc. website feature called “Geezer.” Harry Pearce and Bob Gorman have added a new section to the FAC Association website. They would like to introduce you to the “Geezer”. In the future, if you would like to contribute one of your unpublished “feats of fame” feel free to send it to **Harry Pearce** at: harry@pearce.com. Rustic **Zot Barazzotto** recently posted a story entitled, “Splish Splash-I was taking a bath” (RCF-135 refueling training mission.) The Geezer can be found at <http://www.fac-assoc.org/War%20Stories/War%20Stories.htm>.

Rustic Book Royalties. Income earned since 2011 from Lulu Press for sales of our Rustic book totals \$1,455.24.

RUSTIC FINAL FLIGHT. Wayne St. John, Rustic 08, took his final flight on 5 December 2018. A Celebration of Life was held 23 Dec, 1-3 PM, at the Cottonwood Recreation Center, Cottonwood, AZ.

Initial reports indicate he passed from lung cancer. Wayne flew the OV-10 at Bien Hoa AB, Vietnam as a Rustic from Dec 1970 to Aug 1971. He attended the 2017 Rustic reunion at Ft Walton Beach. Slow hand salute for gentleman and fellow patriot.



THE FINAL SALUTE SOCIETY. Zot Barazzotto, FACNET posting, May 2019. I've had the honor of attending three funeral services at the VA within the

last seven days. There is a group here in Dayton called "The Final Salute Society." This is a group of vets who show up to honor vets who have few or no friends or family. They email when the services are scheduled and the hard core show up with an honor guard to fire the gun salute, Patriot Rider flag bearers, flowers, and people to conduct the ceremony. Included are members of the vet's branch of service to fold the flag and present it to someone who represents the family. Today it was two Korean war vets, one Army and one Navy. Pretty impressive that vets make sure that no vet fails to get a final salute. You might check with the local VA cemetery to see if anything like that exists in your area and if it doesn't, maybe start one.

DID YOU FLY 0-2A AIRCRAFT 67-21334? Douglas Blake, Rash 22, blake_db@yahoo.com. Hello, I'm a former Rash FAC who flew for the 20th TASS in 1968, Now, among other things, I am a volunteer at the Cavanaugh Flight Museum in Addison, TX. In addition to duties as a docent, I keep the museum's O-2 looking pretty.

Its tail number is 67-21334. I know it flew for the 20th TASS. But I think its radio setup is different from the aircraft I flew. I checked my logbook just to be sure I had never flown it. If memory serves, our radios replaced the rear seats. This aircraft still has the back seats, with the radio rack behind them. It also has a simple gun sight where we had to put a grease pencil dot. Was it a Covey or Rustic aircraft?

It would be nice for the museum if we could find some pilot(s) who flew it so we can fill in the history a bit. It would be particularly interesting to know who was flying it when it got the nine bullet holes in the tail which are now patched. I'll try to pose the question at the next reunion if I am able to get there. But I also want to work on it in the meantime. If we can tag the group who flew that configuration, we'd be halfway there. Can you help?

Was this a Rustic bird? Send your inputs to Douglas Blake and cc Claude Newland at rustic19@cox.net.

RUSTIC STORIES OF AN UNUSUAL NATURE. After Claude Newland related how his first SEA in-country flight and landing was at a remote airfield in a pilot training classmate's C-7 Caribou (before Claude's FAC Orientation class started at Cam Rahn Bay AB), several other Rustics shared their Non-FAC stories.

If you have any misadventures or unusual stories about your tour in SEA, (FAC or non-FAC) send them to our newsletter editor, Claude Newland, at: rustic19@cox.net.

From Don Mercer, Rustic 41

Seesaw callsign: I arrived at Bien Hoa just a few days prior to the KIAs of Garrett Eddy and Michael Vrablick on October 1, 1970 and met and shook each of their hands as they headed down to the flight line that fateful night of September 30. As such, Maj. Jim Hetherington was primed to shut down combat checkouts, and stated as much to those of us FNGs; but I did not want to die in the war zone while sitting on the john and not having done my part.

So, I began hitching rides unbeknownst to the powers that be on both O-2A Seesaw missions and on three Army "Huey" gunships as a door gunner. "Seesaw" was an admin daytime flight that went around to every base in III Corps that had O-2As. They flew "up and down" profiles between the Fire Support Bases and other airstrips to deliver mail, parts, and such. I think that it flew several days a week, but I don't remember exactly.

As I recall, the seesaw mission was using a Hunt aircraft from the squadron ops at Bien Hoa, and usually had a Sleepytime or Hunt pilot (our stan/eval, and check pilots) assigned to fly the missions. The first one that I ever went on was with Milt Ross, who later went to Sundog. It was a great way to become familiar with some of the countryside and get some bearings. Once I began training in local area, night, and controlling airstrikes, I had seen the last of my Seesaw flights.

I found a friend of a friend from VMI in the 145th Aviation Battalion at Bien Hoa who got me a chicken plate vest and sent me on my way, all the while shaking his head. I managed to get in a fair amount of flight time between October 1 and 5, 1970. The chopper flights launched out of Bien Hoa from the 145th Aviation Battalion's pad a fair ways down the flight line to the west.

I was standing at the bar one afternoon a few days after we lost the aircraft NW of Tang Kouk, with a beer in hand, when Maj. Hetherington, our ALO, walked by and overheard one of my fellow pilots note that I would most likely get my first Air Medal from the Army, as he was aware of my chopper flights. That did not go over well with the major, as I was then ordered down the hall to his room for a stern dressing down. I was given a direct order never to fly on another Huey as a crewmember, so my stint as a door gunner was

short lived, but it was a hoot for three missions. The upside was that shortly thereafter, combat checkouts were again resumed; and I was then first out of the gate in my local area, night, and combat checkouts. I began to get the overall gist that we were not there to win any war in the early going.

Pretzel callsign: A Pretzel pilot took me down to Tan Son Nhut following the F-4 destruction on a night strike that I controlled of the large pagoda across the river from Kratie. I was given a no-notice meeting with Major General Wilson at 7th AF HQ to explain my actions on that airstrike, and I was eventually cleared of any errors in my judgment, as it was determined that the F-4 lead, purportedly a staff colonel trying to get his minimal flight time, had lied on his statement submitted to the general.

Misc. Claude, yes, indeed, it sounds like we were of similar minds. Later in my tour, I had a similar experience in that a UPT classmate, **Jack Gatze**, came by the hooch one day and invited me to join him on his C-7 to Vung Tau where he let me land the aircraft, and then we came back to home plate. I also flew an exchange mission on an AC-119 out of TSN, and an OV-10 took me to Phan Rang one day near the end of my tour to out process with the 504th TASG. We had a great trip up and back, all the while giving the Bronco some exercise. I tried to get a ride in an A-37 and a few other aircraft, but nothing ever materialized.



Don Mercer, Rustic 41, relaxing and dreaming about all the national parks he will someday visit.

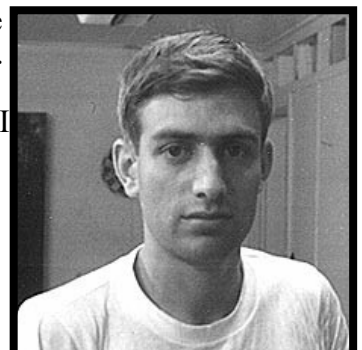
From John Litton, Sleepytime 22, Rustic 42, and Pretzel 03

Claude, all of these discussions bring back old memories. I arrived at Bien Hoa in August 70. **Don Mercer** was eventually my roommate for a while as I recall. I remember the “hoopla” about the pagoda bombing and Don being exonerated at Saigon. I had similar experiences along the way with a flight of F-100s where the pentagon time-builder “lead” couldn’t hit the broad side of a barn, or even arm the correct pylons, but “2”, the second lieutenant, couldn’t miss. ‘Safed up lead, got called on the carpet and won my case. Lead received additional training. FACs were just not screwed with during my tenure.

I knew Vrablick from Eglin. He was an O-1 trainee. **Gary Eddy** and major in the Rustic hooch whose name I do not recall, and I would go around during the days at Saigon and work with the Vietnamese Boy Scouts. Eddy’s shoot down shook the unit terribly. I woke up to some of our pilots crying in the hallway. I do not recall the temporary termination of combat check outs but I was already qualified and flying almost every night.

A friend of mine from pilot training showed up one night and I took him on the Sleepytime mission that was the lead-in training to cross-border Rustic operations. During pilot training, he “filled a bag” on every training flight but passed the course. He did the same that night. A few days later, he showed up in his C-7 and I rode shotgun as we flew the entire day all over south Vietnam dropping off supplies to a variety of awkward backcountry strips and forward operating locations on top of mountains where the PSP was lined with Claymore mines and the strip was barely as wide as the gear. I don’t believe I bothered to tell anybody about that, but I do remember the food was much better at the fire bases than it was at Bien Hoa.

Somewhere around February 71 time frame, I was asked to volunteer to go to the Pretzel unit as they needed an experienced night ops instructor pilot. I moved into the OV-10 hooch and did 3-4 days on and off at Quan Loi up on the border. The operation was day/night, solo during the day along the border up to Laos, and two pilots with an interpreter at night. We seemed to have LERP teams everywhere. There was about as much excitement as the Rustic mission with the difference that the only air I received was an occasional A-37 and Army Cobras based at Quan Loi. The most dangerous part of the job was trying to get into Quan Loi in the morning from Bien Hoa due the ever-present low fog that went right to the top of the rubber trees. Quan Loi was still an active French rubber plantation and a Frenchman would fly in daily in his Dehavilland Beaver to check the rubber buckets mounted on the trees. To get in, we made up our own instrument



John Litton

approach procedure using as accurate an alignment of the runway as we could determine and then using the DF steer needle as an ADF to get us on final. To make that work, the Army tower operator would hold down his mike button so the needle would point at him. The only problem was that he was always playing loud music and the needle jumped around like an ADF needle in a thunderstorm. Never-the-less, it worked, no one ever hit a tree or the tower and we rarely ever had to go back to Bien Hoa.

At Quan Loi, it seemed we were mortared every night, but the rounds just couldn't quite make it into the main camp. The "Yards" were are security and they would go out, kill a few folks, and that ended it for the night. The Army was actually the biggest threat. They lived underground, got drunk a lot, and tried to blow up the rubber trees with C-4 explosive every morning next to our hooch. Their rules of engagement were a little different than ours so relationships could be strained from time to time. A good number of them had been there too long and had gone "native." But it was all in good fun, no fights. Later, I learned that one of the enlisted guys "fragged" his captain with a grenade. Unfortunately, such things did happen.

How I ended up in the Long Binh hospital for a week is another story. There is a lot more regarding the Pretzel operation and my Rustic experience, but this is long enough. Don came by a few years back to interview me in California about everything that occurred, but now I realize he may not have gotten everything.

Good hearing from you. And yes, as you can see, I'm still working for a living, over 50 years flying for the feds. Well, sometimes you just need to eat. **John Litton**, Supervisor Pilot-Air Unit manager, Forest Service, john.litton@usda.gov.

"Aviation 101"

If God meant man to fly, He'd have given him more money.

A fool and his money are soon flying more airplane than he can handle.

It's easy to make a small fortune in aviation. You start with a large fortune.

Flying is not dangerous - crashing is dangerous.

The probability of survival is equal to the angle of arrival.

Gravity never loses! The best you can hope for is a draw!

Takeoff's are optional. Landings are mandatory.

Try to keep the number of your landings equal to the number of your takeoffs.

Everyone knows the definition of a 'good' landing is one from which you can walk away. But very few know the definition of a 'great landing.'

It's one after which you can use the airplane another time.

There are three simple rules for making a smooth landing:

Unfortunately, no one knows what they are.

You can never break the "Low Altitude" record....you can only tie it!

Good judgment comes from experience and experience comes from bad judgment.

Learn from the mistakes of others.

You won't live long enough to make all of them yourself.

LETTERS TO THE RUSTICS

From Pierre Ligonde, Rustic J

Hi Claude. I'm doing fine. I retired after 17 years of service from HOMELAND SECURITY as an Immigration Service Officer. I am going to send you a picture of the OV-10 when we get two hits from the ground at the other side while flying reconnaissance over the other side of (CAMBODIA). You will receive it via my wife e-mail. 'Hope to be there at the next Rustic reunion.

From Jim Reese, Rustic 57

Rustics, Marcia and I attended the funeral today (4/3/19) for **Ron Dandenau, Rustic Foxtrot**, at Arlington National Cemetery. The event began with a service at the Old Chapel at Fort Myer. There were about 50 family and friends (including wife, brothers, sons and daughters, grandchildren and great grandchildren) and one Rustic. The all-Air Force honor guard escorted the flag-draped coffin into the sanctuary at precisely 1045. A retired chaplain and friend of the family officiated. Ron's elder son gave remarks followed by two scripture readings by grandchildren. The chaplain commented that in addition to all of Ron's other skills he could have been a master meteorologist given the sudden positive change in the weather. Ron's coffin was

then escorted out of the chapel and placed on a horse-drawn caisson for the 17-minute trip to the burial site. There the traditional formalities honored Ron's service: Taps, 21-gun salute, folding of the American flag and presentation to the widow. We then retired to the Residence Inn in Arlington for reception and social.

Ron's sister had prepared a slide show covering many important moments in his life, including a number from Bien Hoa and our reunions. I spoke with Ron's widow, his sons and some of the grandsons, offering condolences on behalf of the Rustics. Ron's wife, Rosemary, had assembled and had on display in the room a number of mementos from Ron's life and career. There was also a glass case containing an OV-10 model and his DFC. I presented a Rustic coin to Rosemary. She told me she had a number of other mementos at home and would add this to that collection. She seemed genuinely appreciative of this small token and proud of Ron's service with the Rustics.

I'm sure many of you have watched one of the ANC ceremonies. This was my second. I must say it was very well done with spotless military decorum and professionalism. All military participants (honor guard, firing squad, band) were Air Force. Quite the experience for Marcia and me.

Slow hand salute and fond farewell to Rustic F.



Ron Dandeneau's internment

Photos of Ron's internment at Arlington National Cemetery are posted at: <https://www.pattyhunt.com>.

From Doug Robertson, Rustic Radio, 71-72

50 years ago today (6 May 2019) my father, a U.S. Navy Commander, swore me into the U.S. Air Force. I would say it was the start of my adult life because it shaped the direction of life. I did manage to beat out my draft notice which came while I was in Basic training. My fiancé at the time and I will celebrate 50 years in November, another milestone in my life. So here I sit with 2 adult children and 5 beautiful granddaughters. Life is good so far. *Congratulations Doug and Bobbi!*

From Tom Capps, Rustic 12

I would like to offer a hearty thank you to all the Rustics who generously contributed a total of \$29,850 to Sunrise Ministries. I cannot think of a more deserving or more beneficial outreach to needy Cambodian families and children.

MIKE THROWER SURVIVES THREE SAMs. Mike Thrower, Rustic 34. I finally got around to checking on whether or not I ever flew O-2A tail number 353. In fact, I did, one time on 2 March 1971. I was deployed from Bien Hoa to Quang Tri, flying as a Barkey FAC in support of Lam Son 719.

The mission was night training. I was in the right seat flying as the instructor for Capt. **Al Duty** who was not qualified to conduct night airstrikes. We were looking for targets of opportunity just south of the DMZ near the Tri-Border area. Altitude was around 10,000 feet MSL. We spotted approximately 50 trucks in the DMZ about to enter South Viet Nam. On secure UHF radio, I ordered a C-130 Specter gunship. This was denied within two minutes, but I was told that F4s on alert at Da Nang would be launched.

Very shortly, thereafter, I noticed a very bright flash to the east followed by a second and third bright flash. I could clearly see the exhaust plumes on all three. The plumes soon became bright spots moving randomly, but tightly, around a steady vector toward our aircraft.

I took control of the aircraft and performed a split-S maneuver to get the nose pointed straight down. I cannot remember being concerned about my airspeed or altitude. When the first SA-2 seemed very, very close, I began a pull out at about 5 Gs. The first SAM exploded and was very, very loud and the concussion from the blast was very noticeable. The second one was even worse about three to five seconds later. The third exploded a good distance away.

When I checked our altitude after level-off, we were definitely below a safe altitude for hills and guns. As I recall, it was around 3,500 feet MSL. As we climbed to a safe altitude, the aircraft seemed to be flying okay, and we could not detect any damage to the aircraft.

We flew back to Quang Tri. As a precaution, I dumped our rockets and flares over the ocean and made an uneventful landing. I was shocked to find NO damage from the first two SAMs. I received a 13th Oak Leaf Cluster to my Air Medal for the incident.

Within days of the event, I was recalled to Bien Hoa with the personal effects of **Steve Scrivener**, O-2A's at Tuy Hoa, also deployed to Quang Tri for Lamson 719. He was shot down on a night mission over the trail.



Mike Thrower, Rustic 34

CALENDAR:

1. **NEXT RUSTIC FAC REUNION, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA, 1-4 Oct 2019**
2. **OV-10 #639 restoration Dedication Ceremony**, Australian War Memorial Museum, Canberra, Australia, date TBD, possibly Anzac Day, 25 April 2020.
3. **All FAC Association Reunion: Fall 2020, Colorado Springs, CO, Date TBD.** This reunion will be held in conjunction with a dedication of an O-2 that is currently being restored at one of the Denver museums.
4. **Publishing of Rustic 2019 Roster, 1 Dec 2019**



Note the images above. On the left, is the artwork that will be on the back of the Tee Shirts with 2019 in the place of 2017. The artwork on the right is the reunion logo that will be on the left front breast of the Tee Shirt. This is the artwork for the Blue Tees. The background will be white on the White Tees.

See you in Las Vegas!

1-4 Oct 2019

Cleared Hot!

REGISTRATION FORM

2019 RUSTIC REUNION, 1-4 October 2019

Please print all information and return with payment **NLT 1 Sep 2019.**

Name _____ Nickname (for name tag) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (____) _____ E Mail _____

Spouse/Guest Name _____ Nickname (for name tag) _____

What day do you plan to arrive at the reunion? Mon. _____ Tues. _____ Wed. _____ Thurs. _____

Approx. time of day: _____ Coming by: Car _____ Air _____ (Flight Number _____)

I'm arriving at Las Vegas McCarron Airport (LAS) Time: _____

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

Do you or your guest(s) require any special assistance while at the reunion? Please Specify: _____ only

I'm willing to help man the Rustic hooch for a couple of hours, if needed. Yes _____

I/we will be attending the early arrival pre-party on Mon, 30 Sep., 6 pm. Yes _____

I'm bringing memorabilia for display in the Rustic Hooch. Yes _____

I plan to attend the Rat Pack Show, Wed, 2 Oct. (optional entertainment). Yes _____

I won't be attending the reunion but would like the items ordered below mailed to me. Yes _____

REGISTRATION FEES

	<u>Cost:</u>	<u>Number:</u>	<u>Sub-total:</u>
Registration Fee: Rustic \$30.00; Guest \$25.00		x _____	= \$ _____
Nellis AFB Visit and Lunch, Wed 2 Oct	\$19.00	x _____	= \$ _____
Banquet, Thurs, 3 Oct	\$60.00	x _____	= \$ _____
Contribution to Cambodian Reunion Support Fund (Kohn Om)			\$ _____
Contribution to Cambodian Charity Fund (Tax deductible)			\$ _____

Reunion Memorabilia Items:

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

T-Shirts have the Rustic logo on the front and artwork on the back. Golf shirts have the Rustic logo on the front.

Men's Navy Blue Poly T-Shirt	Med _____ LG _____ XL _____ XXL _____	\$15.00	x _____	= \$ _____
Men's White Poly T-Shirt	Med _____ LG _____ XL _____ XXL _____	\$15.00	x _____	= \$ _____
Lady's Navy Blue Poly T-Shirt	Med _____ LG _____ XL _____ XXL _____	\$15.00	x _____	= \$ _____
Lady's White Poly T-Shirt	Med _____ LG _____ XL _____ XXL _____	\$15.00	x _____	= \$ _____
Men's White Poly Golf Shirt	Med _____ LG _____ XL _____ XXL _____	\$25.00	x _____	= \$ _____
Lady's White Poly Golf Shirt	Med _____ LG _____ XL _____ XXL _____	\$25.00	x _____	= \$ _____
Rustic Coin		\$10.00	x _____	= \$ _____
Rustic Maroon Cap with logo	S/M _____ M/L _____ L/XL _____	\$16.00	x _____	= \$ _____

Note: Hat sizes (S/M 7 1/8-7 3/8) (M/L 7 3/8-7 5/8) (L/XL 7 5/8-7 7/8)

Shipping costs if not attending reunion: Hat(s): \$4.00; hat(s) & shirt \$7.00 x _____ = \$ _____

TOTAL TO REMIT: \$ _____

Please make a file copy of this completed form for yourself.

Mail Registration Form and check (payable to "Rustics") NLT 1 Sep 2019 to:

Lendy Edwards, 11 Poplar Avenue, Shalimar, FL 32579 (Questions? Call 850-651-6766.)