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Rustic News

www.rustic.org



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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE.

Laura and I hope everyone in the Rustic Family is enjoying a healthy and productive first half of 2018! We would love to hear from you at any time at Rustic04@aol.com.

The Rustic Board of Directors just completed our bi-annual meeting last month with no major issues arising. However, there was a healthy discussion on how best to continue telling the Rustic story to future generations. Our multi-year efforts writing and publishing *"The Rustics: A Top Secret Air War in Cambodia"* was indeed a monumental feat to get our story out to the public. But perhaps there are other ways to continue that

effort. (We are not getting any younger.) All of us have many stories of our own experiences which we often consider insignificant, but often prove to be valuable to future historical researches. And many of us have attempted to capture some of these stories with taped interview videos through an Atlanta non-profit organization called "Witness to War.org." The interviews are already in the public domain and most are also now in the United States Library of Congress. However, to make these interviews more accessible to the general public, the Board discussed providing links to these videos via our Rustic web site and Rustic FaceBook Page. As a result, **John Charlton** and **Rog Hamann** are looking into providing these links into these locations. As a note, the most recently completed "Witness to War" interviews conducted at our last reunion are still being edited by "Witness to War" and are not yet available. However, many Rustics have completed interviews over the last many years at other venues and those might now be available. One last personal comment: If you have not provided your personal video story to "Witness to War" please do so when able. This organization is often available at veteran reunions across the country, so please find your opportunity to preserve history.

As an avid historical researcher and author, I wish my ancestors had captured more of the "insignificant" parts of their lives, and especially those pertaining to the military history of our Great Country. Perhaps we can contribute to our families' legacies by doing so.

On one final subject, I thank **Jim Seibold** for his recent Herculean efforts in designing, producing, and distributing the Rustic Reunions CD which covered our 25+ years of Rustic get-to-gathers. This CD indeed captured the camaraderie of many years. In addition to his hundreds of hours of sweat, many technical difficulties, and often long-awaited email responses (often including mine), he had much difficulty with finding the correct addresses of many of our Rustic Family. So, I encourage all to please update any of us of your new phone number, mail or email address. As we all increasingly change our location, it is getting difficult to keep in touch with this Family.

NEXT REUNION. Fall, 2019 Las Vegas Nevada

Shad Kimbell is heading up reunion planning for our Fall 2019 reunion in Las Vegas, Nevada. Dates TBA. He is currently investigating possible hotels and developing a schedule of events. He is coordinating his planning with the Nellis 19 Weapons Squadron "Rustics" who attended our 2017 reunion in Ft Walton Beach, FL. The 19 WPS would like to host us for a visit to Nellis AFB. Expect an update in our December 2018 newsletter. Start making plans now to attend.



TREASURER'S REPORT. Jim Nuber. The association is in great financial shape. In addition, with your specific donations, we continue to support our Cambodia charities in Kompong Cham, Cambodia. Please mail your tax-deductible contributions (*payable to "Rustic FACs" and earmarked for "Cambodian Charity"*) to me at: 1429 Evening Shade, Prescott, AZ 86305-6432. Thanks to all who continue to support this effort!

In case you are wondering...we have received royalty income of \$1,407.67 since publishing our revised Rustic book on lulu.com.

ROSTER UPDATES.

Gloria Auth	(C) 512-483-1443
Dr. Donald S. Dorr	8327 118th Avenue, Largo FL 33773-5050. (H) 727-223-3789, (C) 727-4207059
Roland Deshaies	24 Chestnut Ave, Lincoln, RI 02865, 401-302-0929, roland.deshaies@yahoo.com
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Stanley J. Richie	708 Ridgely Ave, Apt A, Fairmont, WV 26554, 304-367-1112

HISTORIAN REPORT. Jon Safley. My efforts to sort and catalogue the remaining Rustic historical artifacts continues...slowly. My plan is to send our complete list of remaining artifacts to the powers-that-be at the Ft Worth Aviation Museum (which includes the FAC museum) to see which they're interested in, then ship those they want, to be include in their archives. *Note: Over the past year Jon has attempted to contact those Rustics who had any personal items donated to the Rustic history archives, to see if they would like them returned. He is now resolving what to do with any unwanted/leftover items.*

KOMPONG CHAM CHARITIES. Lendy Edwards. In accordance with the executive board's approval at our Oct 2017 reunion, the Rustics have made two \$2,000 payments to Sunrise InnerCHANGE to assist them in their ongoing charity efforts in Kompong Cham. Payments were mailed 12/2017 and 1/2018. This is the same organization we have been supporting since our original group visit to Cambodia in November 2000. We'd like to thank all the Rustics who continue to support this charitable effort. We're happy to report Sunrise now has a Facebook page and it looks pretty good. It is found at: Sunrise InnerCHANGE Cambodia.

WITNESS TO WAR INTERVIEWS. During our 2017 Rustic reunion a number of Rustics recorded their personal stories via video interviews with Witness to War.org. Each of these interviews will be made available on their web site once they have been edited. (*Roger Hamann reports they are still in the process of editing the Rustic interviews and will advise him once they are posted.*) Our Rustic Webmaster, **John Charlton**, is investigating whether we can post a link on our Rustic website that will take us to each interview. **Roger Hamann** suggests the interviews also be linked to the Rustic FAC Family Facebook group. Standby for future news on these two projects.

RUSTIC STORE. Lendy Edwards. A few 2017 Reunion baseball caps are available and can be ordered online on the Rustic website. All of the old original hardbound Rustic (black) books and all of Dick Wood's commercially printed Rustic hardbound (red) books have been sold. There are none in inventory.

CALENDAR.

1. **2018 All-FAC Reunion**, Seattle, WA, 17-22 Sep 2018, Red Lion Hotel, 11211 Main St., Bellevue, WA 98004; ph# 1-800-733-733-5466 for reservations. Additional Information and registration at: fac-assoc.org.
2. **2019 NKP Reunion**, June 2019. Contact Arnie Harmon (Ohio) for details, 614-563-1114
3. **2019 Rustic FAC Reunion**, Las Vegas, Nevada. Fall 2019, Dates TBA

AUSSIES CONTINUE TO RESTORE RUSTIC OV-10 67-14639.

In 2007 the Australian War Memorial in Canberra obtained OV-10, 67-14639, for restoration and display. They specifically wanted an OV-10 which was flown by Aussie FACs in Vietnam. A number of Aussie's flew 639 at Cu Chi Air Base in III Corps as an Issue FAC in 1970. Several future Rustics (*Nuber, Newland and Freix*) also flew 639 as Issue FACs prior to becoming Rustics. 639 eventually became a Rustic bird flown at both Bien Hoa and Ubon. **Greg Freix** says it was "my" airplane at Bien Hoa and later at Shaw AFB. He flew his last Air Force flight in 639 at Shaw. Many of you may have also flown 639. Check your log books. 639 was found in the Philippines when it was obtained by the AWM Museum. The Bronco's wing is now on and the tail booms will be following in a few weeks. The horizontal stabiliser has received its first coat of USAF grey.

Here's where you can help. **Shane Casey** of the museum staff requests that if you had ties with the RAAF FACs, flew 639, or have 639 photos, please contact him at:

Shane.Casey@awm.gov.au. He has posted a

very interesting and the detailed history of 639 at: <https://www.awm.gov.au/about/our-work/projects/asteedreborn>. This is interesting reading and includes a number of photos. Shane hopes you will take the time to contact him with your stories of photos.



Rustics Lendy Edwards (L) and Nancy Sleigh (R) inspect the fuselage of 639 in the restoration hanger at Canberra, Australia, Apr 2008. They were attending an All-FAC reunion being hosted by the Aussies.

SKYMASTER 962 RELIVES GLORY DAYS AT SHAW AFB, SC. *By Airman 1st Class Benjamin Ingold, 20th Fighter Wing Public Affairs, May 08, 2018.* Far from the jungles of Vietnam where it served in the war effort from 1969 to 1970, an O-2 Skymaster sits perched above Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina.

The Skymaster 962 static display at Shaw was rededicated May 4, to honor the service and sacrifice of the Red Marker Forward Air Controller Detachment members and to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War.

"This is an exciting day for our society," said retired Army Lt. Col. Ray Rhodes, Society of the Vietnamese Airborne president. "It feels like we're inviting a long-lost friend back into our ranks. And, indeed, for those of us 'Red Hats' from Team 162 who were on the ground in the jungles, rice paddies and mountains of Vietnam, O-2 Skymaster 962 was an angel who kept watch over us when our enemies sought to do us harm."

The pilots of the Skymaster and its predecessor, the O-1 Bird Dog, coordinated close air support and artillery adjustment, and provided real-time intelligence to American and allied ground forces by flying quiet, slow moving aircraft low over the jungle.

"The South Vietnamese Airborne was an elite unit known for its courage and ferocity in combat," said Gary Willis, Society of the Vietnamese Airborne director. "They were recognized off the battlefield by their distinctive red berets. The American Army advisors in Team 162 and the Air Force detachment that supported the airborne adopted their uniform, including the red beret."

The Red Markers, the call sign of the forward air controller detachment, began as a single officer in 1962 without an aircraft, advising from the ground. The detachment grew to maximum strength in 1969 with a crew of 36 forward air controllers, crew chiefs, radio operators and maintenance personnel.

"In early 1971, the South Vietnamese Air Force assumed the direct air support mission for the airborne and the Red Markers' combat role ended," said Willis. "The Red Marker O-1s were all transferred to the South Vietnamese Air Force and allies. Most of the O-2s were withdrawn from Southeast Asia and assigned to units in Korea, Hawaii and the continental United States, including Shaw Air Force Base."

Over the course of the 20-year conflict, five men who served with the Red Markers died in combat, 34 Red Hat advisors were killed and 20,000 Vietnamese Red Berets were lost in battle.

"We hope this aircraft, number 962, now wearing its combat colors, reminds all who see it of the mission and sacrifice of the Red Markers, Red Hats and Red Berets," said Willis. "I'll close with the radio call every forward air controller loved to make, 'Lead, this is red marker one-eight. You are cleared in hot, hit my smoke!' " *It appears 962 was reassigned in 1970. Did any Rustics fly her?*

WITNESS TO WAR TO PROVIDE NEW EDUCATION RESOURCES. Tom Beaty, Founder, May 2018.

We recently released a new section on our www.witnesstowar.org website centered around the educational use of Witness to War veteran interviews. This establishes the final pillar of our 3-part mission, which is: **Preserve.**

Honor. Educate.

We're excited to offer this **FREE** resource for teachers and administrators for use in the classroom, in order to bring the firsthand, human aspect of war to life for students. It is our hope that this content will supplement and enhance the lesson plans that teachers are already using, in an easily-integrated format.

We have hand-selected modules around WWII, Korea, & Vietnam War battles and experiences that we feel provide interesting and informative content around particular themes.

If you would like to learn more, please visit the **EDUCATORS** section of our website or email us for additional guidance. (Please note: We will be expanding content to include other wars, conflicts, battles, and experiences in the near future.)

On this Memorial Day, we reflect on our servicemen and women who lost their lives serving this great nation, and those who have never been recovered. We thank them and their families for their ultimate sacrifice, so that we may live our lives in freedom and peace. We hope that our mission, and the sharing of stories from those who served alongside them, will honor their memories and preserve their legacies for current and future generations.

A continued and heartfelt thanks to all of those who have entrusted us with their stories, and all of you who have provided so much support and friendship to the Witness to War Foundation throughout the years.

Regards, **Tom Beaty, Founder, Emily Carley, Director, and Martin Madert, Interviewer**

SHORT BURSTS.

1. Never Forget. Roger Hamann posted a timely reminder on the Rustic FACEbook page: Memorial Day 2018...**Never Forget...** **Garret Eddy, Mike Vrablick, and Joe Gambono.** Let us also remember our many Rustic brothers and Cambodian friends who have taken their final flight.

2. Medical. Don "Rice Ranger" Ellis had some gall stones removed in April. He reports he is doing well and he and **Helene** are looking forward to doing some traveling this summer. Next year when the Rustics have their reunion in Las Vegas, they will be in attendance and celebrating their 50th Anniversary.

3. Rustic FACEBOOK. Roger Hamann reports we currently have 62 members in our Facebook group comprised mostly of a silent majority.

4. Travels. Doug and Kim Caywood recently made a trip to Florence, Italy.

5. Anniversary. Jim and Marcia Reese are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary 23 June. *Congratulations!*

6. Significant Events. If you have any significant events coming up or anything you'd like to share with the Rustics, let me hear from you. (Send to **Claude Newland**, rustic19@cox.net, or 850-654-2955).

WHAT THE RUSTIC FAMILY (OR BEING A RUSTIC) HAS MEANT TO ME. Prior to our 2017 reunion we asked everyone to submit comments on what being a Rustic has meant to them, or what it has meant to be part of the Rustic family. Below is a second installment of some of the responses. Future newsletters will contain others.

Steve Peffer (Rustic O-2 Crew Chief, Dec 70-Feb 71).

I joined the Rustics in Nov. 2012. The 2017 reunion will be my very first Rustic Reunion. I wanted to be involved over these past few years, however, it didn't go that way at all. I guess God had another plan.

I've truly only felt like a Rustic when I've e-mailed, phoned, or Skype **Bob Blair** in the last 5 years, as we were part of the proud "**Aunt Tilly's Boys**" at Binh Thuy AB Vietnam, there was always comradery and support. After 46+ years of not seeing my old friend I'm finally going to see him once again on Oct. 19th, 2017 at approximately 10:30 pm, God willing. I know myself pretty good and I'm sure emotions will be of great joy as **Bob Blair** is a true friend.

When I first returned from my tour in Vietnam my family had welcome arms, however, in hindsight it was short lived. I had a strong sense of being underappreciated. I didn't say anything to anybody as I didn't want to offend people in general. In my mind I truly just had some of the greatest experiences of my life in Vietnam. I felt no one really cared less what I had been through. It was a strange time, and one I needed to get through and work out by myself internally.

It never crossed my mind for some reason to try and seek out buddies that I hung out with in Vietnam. No doubt the number one group of airmen that came into my mind on several occasions happened to be the Rustics. This is where I had the best memories, the most fun, and the most liquor I've ever drank in my life. This could be a book in itself, enough said.

Moving on to my final words about how I felt being a Rustic. I'm still in Binh Thuy, it's late May – early June 1971 and I was lucky enough to get picked to fly one mission on a Cessna A-37 Dragonfly. I can remember most of my drinking buddies were crying their beer about me getting to be the chosen one. It was unbelievable; it will always be the flight of my life and one I'll never forget. The anticipation, the take-off, the views, the G-force, and of course, the stars I saw before almost passing out before leveling off after a low pass drop of our ordinance. Do you think I trusted the Pilot with my life? Then he asked if I want to take the stick. Well, I didn't stutter and said of course! At that instant I knew this was a pivotal moment in my life, and it was. I've never held a stick of a moving Jet aircraft since that day. The flight back to Binh Thuy AB was nothing less than spectacular. The pilot's name is a mystery to this day... I'd sure like to meet him once again, talk, and shake his hand.

Unfortunately, and without much notice, the next month I found myself abruptly transferred to the 19th Tass Da Nang AB 0-2 flight line for several weeks, then on to Phan Rang AB. It was a while before I found out that our Rustic Binh Thuy Group had been scattered all over several Bases in Vietnam. I caught my "Freedom Bird" at Phan Rang and came home to California.

On a side note: There is a tribute to my father **George E. Pfeffer**, a Flying Tiger with the 69th D.R.S. 14th Air Force, "The Greatest Generation is available at: <http://www.flyingtigers69thdrs.com/>.

From Don Brooks (Rustic 02, Jul-Dec 70).

Being a member of the Rustic Family has been the main connection to my SEA experience. The first part of my combat tour was spent with the First Air Cav and with the Special Forces. While I have a lot of memories from those early days, I have only a few friends that I stay in touch with. The memories of my time as a Rustic are the things I cherish most from my SEA tour. We did, in fact, really become a family. We lived together, worked together, and played together. We shared truly unique experiences that few others have ever had, or will ever have, the opportunity to do.

The friends I made there among the other pilots, interpreters, and our allies are like no other, because we bonded into a team, dedicated to a mission that really meant something. We made a difference and shared a great pride in what we accomplished every day. I especially relish my memories of working as a team with our interpreters. They trusted us and we trusted them. We depended on each other. How great it was to see the true joy of those troopers as they realized that they were really making a meaningful contribution to helping keep a nation alive. The years are beginning to take its toll on us, but I will always remember and be proud of being one of the Rustics.



Kohn Om and Don Brooks, Rustic reunion, Colorado Springs, 2013.

From Ron Dandeneau (Rustic F, Jun-Dec 70).

Being a Rustic was the partial accomplishment of a life-long goal. My goal in my Senior Yearbook was to be a Pilot. Although I never fully accomplished that goal, flying with the Rustics as a French Interpreter brought me very close to it and I am deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in a flying mission.

During my Senior Year of High School, I applied to my Senator for a slot to the Air Force Academy and unfortunately was not selected by him. I then applied for the Air Force Academy Prep School a couple of years later as an enlisted man. I had my Commander's support and felt I had a good chance of being selected. All applicants had to pass a Flying Physical. Had no problems with my physical when I enlisted so expected no problems with this. However, was in for a surprise when I failed something called a "Red Lens Test". I am not color blind but apparently have a color deficiency.

When the Rustics came calling in June of 1970, all they could tell me before I volunteered, was that I would be speaking French and flying. I told them that I would be glad to help out but that unfortunately I could not pass a flying physical because of the "Red Lens Test". Then I heard the great words "Don't Worry About It". I was elated and quickly volunteered. I was accepted and spent my next six months (I had already been in Vietnam in my normal specialty for six months) with the Rustics doing a job I really loved.



Lannie Trapp presenting Ron Dandeneau his DFC, Rustic Reunion 2002, San Antonio, TX. Our thanks go to Don Mercer who made this belated award (and many others) possible.

From Don Mercer (Rustic 41, Sep 70-Sep 71)

I am going to pass on providing detailed input, as to what it means to me to have been a Rustic. I simply cannot give all my thoughts, emotions, experiences, and resultant opinions their rightful due in a one-page constraint. Additionally, I doubt that many want to hear some of my opinions on our involvement in SEA, and our national policies that have prompted the US, our beloved nation, to remain at war throughout much of my lifetime.

Suffice it to say, my combat missions flown as a Night Rustic forever changed my life, some for the better with wonderful bonds formed and far too much for the worse, on which I will not elaborate other than for one sentence. On that count, I certainly hold my service in far higher regard than do most of the folks whom I have encountered at the Veterans Administration.

However, I have no regrets about having volunteered for duty in SEA, having selected FAC as my first operational assignment, and having volunteered for the operation in Cambodia as a French interpreter, as Clint Murphy had flown up to Cam Ranh Bay AB to interview me when I was in the 3-day Theater Indoctrination School there. I never knew that any organization, let alone the Air Force, had such low standards to become an interpreter. But then, those were desperate times; and my five years of French in high school and college apparently qualified.

I did my duty in SEA, as I was raised and schooled to perform it. And I am proud to count among my friends, men who did likewise, not only as Rustics but in many other capacities during the war given that I graduated from Virginia Military Institute. With this said, I am disappointed in the extreme that our nation's so-called leaders have not learned much, in my qualified opinion, from all that occurred in Southeast Asia. As has been said, if we do not learn from history, we are doomed to repeat it.



Rustic reunion 2009 Henderson, VA.

Thus, in the final analysis, my service as a Rustic is much of a mixed bag. I do my best to keep the good times at the forefront and to keep the bad in the rear. Some days I am more successful than on others.

From Ron Van Kirk (Rustic 08, Jul 71-Jun 72).

I have always been a quiet, unassuming individual. In a crowd, you usually do not know I am there (*who is this guy kidding?!).* When I graduated from pilot training, the OV-10 was my first choice. One of the best decisions I have made in my life. I was in the first UPT class to have 4 weeks cut off of the program, expediting pilots through training. As a result, we lost almost 50% of our starting class, so I was a survivor. I was expedited through Fairchild (winter survival), then Florida (water survival), then OV-10 training at Hurlburt. 10 days later I departed for SEA from Travis AFB. I was going to possibly die with a 45 day leave balance...but no time to relax.

Arriving at Cam Rahn Bay, some commander took a look at my data and explained that since I had taken French in high school, I was now qualified to be an interpreter. Since they needed French speaking pilots for Cambodia in the Rustics, I was off to Bien Hoa in June. Experienced my first "Hail and Farewell" party and learned how long 346 days sounded. I was quickly qualified/combat certified and on my very first solo mission was called into a TIC with French speakers. I managed to pull it off. They lived and I was again a survivor. On landing, I wrote and requested Mom send me a petite Larousse dictionary and a verb wheel – you never know. Turned out most of the words I needed were not in a civilian dictionary....



**Janette and Ron Van Kirk
Rustic Reunion 2005
Ft Walton Beach, FL.**

In September, I had barely 90 days in-country, was still a lowly 2nd Lt., and Major Clifford visited late one evening and suggested I be one of the 3 single volunteers he needed – to go ground FAC. I did not know at the time that 2 of the 3 were not expected to come back – but all 3 did. One got dropped into a mine field after dark as a final hurdle – that was me. But I made it – walked out. I was again a survivor. The day to day missions to help save the Cambodians was varied – sometimes dull, sometimes fraught with challenge. But for the first time I was with a like-minded team of diverse individuals that functioned with a single purpose and would willingly risk their life to save one another. The opportunity to work for a noble goal with brave and valiant aviators is something you do not experience very often. The officers and enlisted worked and lived together with dedication and respect, and functioned like a well-oiled machine. It was exceptional. It would never happen again.

We had a mixture of fun and fear, victory and defeat, but became a band of brothers. Once I DEROS'd back to my IP position, and thru my following 8 years in the service I did not see any of those guys again. Then after I was married to a woman who did not know me when I was in the Air Force, and some 20 years had passed, I got an unexpected call from Doug Aitken, asking for my extensive collection of pictures and movies from SEA. There was a plan to write a book and they needed some pictures – off went the collection.

Then there was the invite to the first Rustic Reunion – in Ft. Walton Beach. Had to go! My wife, Janette got a full exposure, basically overnight, to the mission in Cambodia and the players that were involved, although some of their rough edges had been worn off a bit over time. That led to the return trip to Cambodia in 2000. The band of brothers and extended family picked up where they had left off – interfacing as if time had not passed. Testament to the past, and the bond. The stories, the personalities – the friendships that were added or amplified. Never happened previously – and has not since. Once in a lifetime, a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away – the force was strong, and we were all survivors.

Still cannot speak French, but I still have the verb wheel, petite Larousse and the memories. Can no longer fit in the OV-10, but if I close my eyes I am still there any time. Being a Rustic.....invaluable, worth every minute!

FROM A RESIDENT OF A MILITARY TOWN, FT. WALTON BEACH, FL. (*Letter to the Editor, FWB Daily News, May 2017.*)

Eglin Joint Base Command located near Ft. Walton, Florida is presently the largest Military Complex in the world and encompasses a large contingent of Air Force units, Naval Warfare units, the 7th Army Special Forces, and 6th Army Rangers.

My home is exactly 5 miles outside the main gate of Eglin AFB. Most folks in the USA don't live in a Military Town, with lots of guys in uniform walking the streets and jets overhead daily. They go on with their lives unaware of what a Military Town is all about. And that's OK... but I want to share with you what it's like to live in a Military Town.

We see guys in uniform all the time. We have state of the art, high-performance aircraft in the air nearby all day long. We hear the SOUND OF FREEDOM when an F-22 or F-35 streaks over the house... and we read in the local paper, sometimes daily, but at least weekly, of the loss of one of our own in combat in the Middle East.

And that is what brings me to the reason for this email.

Staff Sergeant **Mark DeAlencar** was 37 years old, had a family and was a Green Beret with the 7th Army Special Forces stationed here in the Fort Walton area. He was killed on April 8, 2017, while fighting Islamic State in eastern Afghanistan. In January of 2017, he was deployed for the second time to Afghanistan. He promised his adopted daughter, Octavia, that he would be home for her High School Graduation. He didn't make it. But she went to graduation anyway. And in the audience were eighty (80) US Army, 7th Special Forces soldiers from her dad's unit in full Parade Dress Uniform. Additionally, they brought THEIR FAMILIES to be with them, as well.

And as Octavia ascended the steps to the stage to receive her diploma THEY ALL SILENTLY STOOD UP. And when she was presented her diploma they ALL CHEERED, CLAPPED, WHISTLED... and YES, CRIED. Everyone in attendance then stood up and cried and cheered. Octavia had graduated and yes she had lost her Dad... but she had 80 other DADS to stand there with her and take his place. I just wanted to share this moment with you... and remind you that THIS IS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO LIVE IN A MILITARY TOWN. This is the real America we all love... and I'm proud to be part of it. May God bless our men in uniform and their families who give so much.

RETREAT AT THE AIR FORCE ACADEMY. **Roger Hamann** shares an old Rustic FACEbook post by **Mark Berent**, AKA Papa Wolf at Phnom Penh.

I was caught in the rain as I returned from a hike to my RV parked in site 8 at the Air Force Academy Fam Camp. As I approached my home on wheels, I heard a crackle as a loudspeaker was switched on. Then I heard a bugle playing a melody I had not heard in 42 years. I glanced at my watch. It was 1700 hrs. and I recognized Retreat, the call to attention for the Star-Spangled Banner to be played as the American flag was lowered. I wasn't sure where the flagpole was located so I faced the loudspeaker situated somewhere in the pine trees. Though I was only a few feet from the door, I was actually thrilled to be able to come to attention and, under the new regs, salute.

Then I was really surprised as a huge wave of emotion swept over me as the rain pelted down. My God, the thoughts; the stream of consciousness; the rapid freeze frames of pictures just behind my eyes. Since it was such current news the first picture was of that wretched football player seated while the national anthem was played. But it was instantly obscured by dozens of rapid-fire images that appeared in split-seconds: the flagpoles I had seen on so many air bases where we would stop our cars if driving and get out and salute; the midnight sign-off of TV stations of yore wherein they overlaid the American flag with the Thunderbirds looping while Magee's High Flight was read; the tiny flag POW Mike Christian fashioned in the Hanoi Hilton; the flags held by so many people as I followed the funeral cortege for Robin Olds to his final resting place here at the Academy; and finally, the folded flags I never saw held by the survivors of lost comrades.

The last strains of our national anthem echoed through the trees and I found I had more than rain streaming down.

It's interesting that now, as we are so much older, we can let our emotions have free reign, something we



could not do in combat.

MIKE GAGNE, RUSTIC K, ADDRESSES FRENCH STUDENTS. *Mike Gagne.* For the past five years I've spoken about the Rustics at a local French high school which is a half hour outside of Chateauroux, where I live. My presentation is to graduating students who have been studying history. They have also been studying English, so my initial presentation is in English. I arrive with all my stuff: medals, uniform, Rustic books and a USB key with pictures of Bien Hoa and some of our pilots and interpreters. I also include a few short videos of the OV-10 in action that I scrounged on the web.

During the presentation I pass around my memorabilia and afterwards the kids bombard me with questions. The boys usually ask technical questions, "How long were the missions? Did the airplane have armament? Did you get a chance to pilot the aircraft? Did you get shot at? Were you wounded? Why did you volunteer?", etc. The girls are more prone to sentimental questions such as, "Did you leave a girlfriend back home? Did you get to go and see your family when you were there? Were you afraid?" etc.

Basically, they can't understand why a 19 or 20 year would volunteer for something like this. The majority of fathers or grandfathers of most French kids today have not seen war, so it is not a common subject at home.

At the end of the presentation I bring out my French which, of course, surprises everyone. Then they ask me how I ended up in France?

This generates other questions about my dad, Normandy and D-Day, the Nato base at Chateauroux, and how Dad opened an American style snack bar in Chateauroux in 1952. Most likely these were the first hamburger cooked in France. I also explain that my mom worked for an underground newspaper in Paris with Albert Camus in 1945, and so on.

It's always a great experience for me to talk about my fellow Rustics.

Some of you may be wondering how it is that I live in France. Dad was on the beaches on the third day of D-day with the 79th. Infantry Division. He met Mom in Paris. He kind of kidnapped her and married her in Maine after his discharge from the Army. He was discharged in Paris.

In 1951 and after a few kids, my sister and I, we all came back to France to meet my French grandparents, I was one year old. Dad got wind of the huge NATO base being built at Chateauroux and tried to get a job on the base as a civilian worker...which he didn't get! That's when he decided to open the first snack bar in France in 1952 ("Joe From Maine"). It was closed by my sister in 2014.

At the time, when I was a kid, Dad would put a manager in the business every four years, that's when we would go back to Maine. At Chateauroux I went to school on the Base. When it closed in 1967 I was in high school so, I went back to the States to finish school.

I had managed "Joe's" from 1981 to 1986 but opened my own place in the Burgundy region after 1986.

MEMEORIAL DAY REMEMBRANCE. Bill Ernst, Rustic 04. I went to Oahu's "Punchbowl" Natl Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific on Sunday, 27 May, and cleaned the stone FAC memorial placard that was dedicated in 2002. I then placed an American flag next to it and a flower lei. The flag is on a wooden stick about three feet long. Trudi gave me the lei, which is colorful and pretty.

I laughed when I arrived at the cemetery's entrance because I had planned to be by myself. Instead, this was the day the Boy Scouts, and several other groups and families, arrived to begin their distribution of flowers and flags on all of the graves. The Scouts were in uniform and their leaders were marching their groups up the hill on the access road and finally into the main gate.

I hope all of you had a wonderful Memorial Day. Thank you for serving your country in combat.



French high school students who heard Mike Gagne's presentation on the Rustics.

NEXT REUNION
FALL, 2019
LAS VEGAS, NV

Rustic FAC Association
4033 Indian Trail Drive
Destin, FL 32541

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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Rustic News

www.rustic.org



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PRESIDENT'S REMARKS.

I can't believe it has already been a year+ since we gathered in Fort Walton Beach for our 2017 Rustic Reunion. And time will surely fly toward our next reunion in Las Vegas in October 2019. Laura and I hope to see all of you then. Please start making your preliminary plans if you can meet us there. Our June 2019 newsletter will have the final details and registration information. **Shad Kimbell** is putting together a very interesting and fun agenda for all. See you there!!!

Your Rustic Board of Directors just completed the scheduled bi-annual Board meeting. The usual array of routine issues and discussions took place. Several "Open" items, such as our standardized tagging of historical Rustic photographs (discussed in this newsletter), etc., continue to be worked.

However, the Board addressed a time-sensitive issue before the Board's adjournment and sent it to every Rustic on 25 Sep for voluntary action. That issue is to continue Rustic support to Sunrise Ministries' efforts in Kompong Cham, Cambodia, in a time of need. Each of you should have received earlier my letter explaining the circumstances and challenging you for your support. The Rustics FAC Association was originally organized with one of its main purposes being to support appropriate charities in Cambodia. Here is a chance to continue that honored tradition.

In short, our goal is to raise \$10,000 by this year's end and the Rustic FAC Association will match the amount donated by its members. If you have not yet participated, please strongly consider it. Any amount is not too small. The original letter (below) explains the circumstances and provides our treasurer's address for your contributions (all of which are eligible as tax-deductible). Our treasurer, **Jim Nuber**, reports, \$6,600 has been donated in the past two months since our initial appeal on 25 September 2018. That's a great start!



Johnny & Laura Drury and Bailey

Fellow Rustics and Friends,

Sep 25, 2018

Your Rustic Board would like to make you aware of the dire financial needs of Sunrise Ministries in Kompong Cham, Cambodia and how we might continue to help this important outreach.

THE NEED

Tom Capps, Rustic 12, recently learned of the financial situation at Sunrise Ministries when **Susan Smith** of Innerchange and her adopted eighteen-year old Cambodian daughter spent two nights with Tom and Peggy. The Sunrise budget for ten staff members has been \$115,000 in recent years. Most of this amount had been provided by two foundations, but both foundations have terminated support. One of these supporters ran out of funds; the other one decided to support a different entity. Sunrise is operating solely on savings accumulated by the director, **Darany Hang**, who has faithfully managed the entire ministry every year she has been in charge. These resources will run out in about six months. We don't know what the final solution for Sunrise may be, but the Rustics would like to help now where we can, and your support is needed.

THE REQUEST

If you are prone to pray for Sunrise, start with that. Pray that Darany and her staff will find a way to continue to serve the community while they wait for the lost income to be replaced and that the financial needs of Sunrise will be fully met.

If you have an interest in making a difference in the lives of Cambodians served by Sunrise, consider a large one-time gift or a recurring monthly gift, or both. You can make donations through the Rustics by sending them to our Rustic Treasurer, **Jim Nuber** (1439 Evening Shade, Prescott, AZ 86305-6432), earmarked for "Sunrise".

THE RUSTIC GOAL IS FOR THE MEMBERSHIP TO RAISE \$10,000 BY THE END OF THIS YEAR AND THE ASSOCIATION WILL PROVIDE MATCHING FUNDS. YOUR CONTRIBUTION WILL BE TAX DEDUCTIBLE. ALL CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE CONFIDENTIAL, AND YOU WILL RECEIVE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE RECEIPT FROM OUR TREASURER.

Additionally, if you know how to request grants or recurring gifts from charitable trusts or know anyone who can help us find replacement income for Sunrise, please contact **Tom Capps** at cappstom@gmail.com or 919-812-4848 and let us know what assistance is available.

The Rustic Board hopes you will take this opportunity to make a difference in the lives of many Cambodians by supporting Sunrise. **Johnny Drury**, Rustic 12, President, Rustic FAC Assoc.

SUNRISE MINISTRY HISTORY

When the Rustics first connected with our friends in Cambodian ministries, we primarily supported two activities—House of Hope for young girls coming out of prostitution who were taught a sewing skill in hopes of keeping them out of the sex trade and secondly, the government run orphanage in KPC. When House of Hope was not able to keep the girls out of prostitution, this ministry shut down. Then, there were accountability problems in transferring money to state orphanage as well as difficulties in maintaining viable contact with the children. But, Sunrise Ministries, under **Darany Hang**'s leadership has been able to keep a viable ministry operating as the needs of the people change.

Initially, Sunrise served as a hospice for HIV/AIDS patients. The success of this service is borne out as follows: 90% of HIV/AIDS patients in the local hospital died whereas 90% of HIV/AIDS patients in the Sunrise hospice were able to return home to their families. Sunrise provided the same medications and nutrition offered to hospital patients, but the tender care supplied by Sunrise created a vast difference in outcomes. When the government began offering free HIV/AIDS medication to the population, the need for the Sunrise hospice diminished. So, Sunrise found another way to help Cambodians with HIV/AIDS; they shifted into a community outreach mode. In this way, they not only help HIV/AIDS patients at home and in prison, they also render assistance to families, especially to children by providing school uniforms and tuition to pay teachers so children can attend.

Tom Capps visited House of Hope and Sunrise Ministries in 2005, 2007 and 2009. Initially, **Darany Hang** was an employee but then was put in charge of Sunrise. He reports "I have never seen a more capable ministry leader in all of my experience. Even though she is a single mother, she has demonstrated remarkable leadership and managerial skills in every responsibility. She is absolutely trustworthy, and she always gets the most benefit from the resources she manages. There are no credibility problems with Sunrise Ministries."

*Our thanks go to **Tom Capps** who prepared the above background information and history of Sunrise.*

NEXT RUSTIC REUNION. Las Vegas, NV, 1-4 Oct. 2019. Start making plans now to attend. **Shad Kimbell** is putting together a great line-up of events. A visit to Nellis AFB will include the Thunderbird museum, a visit at the 19th Weapon Squadron "Rustics", a luncheon, and briefings on the Nellis AFB mission(s). Several local dinners and a Las Vegas show are on tap. Time for local sight-seeing is also available. The culminating event will be a Thursday evening banquet at the Tuscany.

Unlike past reunions, the 2019 reunion will be held during the week (Tues-Fri.) and not on a weekend. This allows us to take advantage of room rates that are about 50% of weekend prices.

The reunion hotel is the Tuscany Casino & Suites located at 255 E Flamingo Rd, Las Vegas, NV 89169. Room rates will be \$79.00 per night plus tax (13.38%) for single or double occupancy. The normal nightly \$28.00 resort fee is being waved and parking will be free. If you elect to stay through the weekend (Fri or Sat. night), the room rate is \$ 139.00 per night, plus tax, single or double occupancy. Additional persons in the room over two (2) will be at twenty dollars per person, per night, plus room tax. Children twelve and under may share the same room with parents at no additional charge.

Attendees must call the Tuscany Room Reservations desk (877-887-2261) to make their own reservations. Ask for the "Rustic Reunion" rate or give them our Group Code "15C9PY."



Reservations must be made no later than 9/15/2019 to get the Rustic reunion rate. Requests received after 9/15/2019 will be confirmed *on a space available basis at the prevailing rate.*

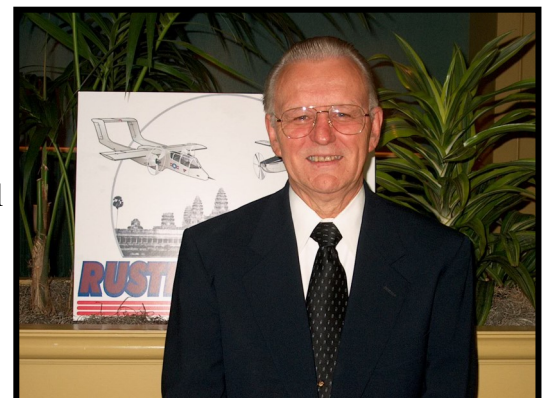
ANNUAL RUSTIC ROSTER. Everyone should have received a copy of our updated 2018 Rustic Roster with this newsletter. Added to this year's roster is our Rustic Next-of-Kin roster. Please review both rosters. Any discrepancies should be passed along to our Database Keeper, **Lendy Edwards**, at lendy@cox.net or 850-651-6766. *Thanks for taking the time to review your entry.*

Those who have new addresses include: **Gary Ball, Roland Deshaies, Donald Dorr, Sharon Friedhofen, Mick Gibbar, Robert Jessup, Pierre Lavoie, Susan Van Dyke, Stanley J. Richie, and Lanny Trapp.** Some new additions have also been made to the Next-of-Kin roster.

RUSTIC INTERPRETER FOUND--Actually, he found us. Please welcome another new Rustic member, **Pierre Lavoie**. He spent a short time as a Rustic. He arrived in mid-February 1971. He flew with the Silver Fox, Rustic Arnie Sims, in the OV-10. Pierre recalls, "When flying with Arnie Sims on my first flight he demoed an aileron roll and then had me do one. I had never flown an aircraft before. I was scared S.....! Norman Cimon and I arrived Bien Hoa together. I stayed less than a week or so and was transferred to Ben Thuy to work with the Tilly FACs and later to Tan Son Nhut where I was a Sundog. I cannot remember my Rustic call sign. My Sundog callsign was C." Pierre and his wife, Nadia, live at 1201 Havasu Falls Ct., Rio Rancho, NM 987144, 505-414-5424, pierre_pl@hotmail.com. *Welcome Aboard.*

RON DANDENEAU TAKES FINAL FLIGHT. As reported earlier via email, **Ron Dandeneau**, Rustic Foxtrot, passed away 28 Sep following complications of open-heart surgery. A viewing was held Saturday, Oct 6, 2018 at the Advent Funeral Home in Falls Church, VA. An obituary is available at the funeral home's website. Ron's son, "Joe," reported the funeral and burial will be at the Arlington National Cemetery at a date TBD. It might take a couple of months to get the burial date established and another several months for the actual burial. The family will keep us advised of the final dates.

Ron was one of the original eight Rustic interpreters recruited for the Rustic mission in June 1970. He served as the interpreter's



NCOIC and oversaw the development of the interpreters' initial training program. The high standard he set for training our interpreters is part of his enduring Rustic legacy. Ron, two of his daughters and one son attended our 2017 reunion in Ft Walton Beach, FL. Slow hand salute for a gentleman and patriot!



Pam Dandeneau Spires: "Our dad was SO proud to be a Rustic! Even his license plate reflected his pride."



Ron Dandeneau (L) at the Rustic's 2017 reunion, along with **Jerry Dufresne** (first interpreter to fly a Rustic OV-10 combat mission.)

HISTORIAN REPORT (Jon Safley). The project to return the Rustic books' source material and donated Rustic Memorabilia to their "rightful" Rustic owners is now complete. The source materials included transcripts and/or cassette tapes/CDs of the various Rustics' inputs that were used in developing the Rustic books. Their options were for me to: (1) return their source materials to them, (2) forward them to the Ft Worth Aviation Museum (FWAM, which includes the FAC Museum), or (3) destroy them.

In all, I dealt with 37 inputs and contacted the vast majority of the Rustics "rightful" owners. The majority of those contacted opted to have their inputs forwarded to the FWAM. For the inputs of those Rustics I could not contact, I forwarded their inputs to the FWAM.

In addition, I contacted the FWAM to determine what of our remaining memorabilia they would like to incorporate into their files. Their answer, "Send it all." Accordingly, I forwarded the remaining Rustic historical memorabilia to the FWAM this spring. Bottomline: all the memorabilia held by this historian is now in the archives at FWAM.

SHORT BURSTS:

Reunion CD Photo Project. Our thanks go to **Jim Seibold** who has mailed out a Photo CD to every Rustic. The CD contains photos of all our past reunions and each Rustic has the photos of themselves in their own separate photo folder. *Job well done, Jim!*

Mike Gagne, Rustic K, is planning a trip from his home in Chateauroux, France to New Orleans next year, 8-16 Oct 2019. If all goes well, the week prior, he will be at the Rustic reunion in Las Vegas.

Next A-37 Reunion, 28 April - 1 May 2019, Wichita, Kansas at the Historic Drury Plaza Broadview Hotel 400 W Douglas Avenue Wichita, KS 67202 Reservations: (800) 325-0720 Online: www.druryhotels.com, Group Code: 2348715. To register contact **Jerry Sailors** at jdsailors@charter.net. Our president plans to attend, contact Johnny Drury at 719-282-9100 or rustic04@aol.com. Can any other Rustics join him?

"Good Times, Bad Times." **Hank Keese**, Rustic 16, recently had one of his A-37 stories published in the A-37 Assoc.'s April 2018 newsletter, page 5. The article can be found at www.A-37.org. Hank flew with Bien Hoa's A-37 8th Attack Squadron before volunteering for the Rustics.

It's a Hard Life, but Somebody's Gotta do it. **Doc Thomas** reported on June 13. "Suffering on the Kenai River in AK through mid-August. Then to Oahu until November. It's hard."

Other World Travelers. **Don and Jin Hee Brooks** returned from a visit to the Baltic Region in mid-June. They flew to Stockholm where they boarded a cruise ship with stops in Helsinki, St. Petersburg, Tallinn, Riga, Gdansk, and Copenhagen. Quite a trip.

O-2A tail # 962 on static display at Shaw AFB. Two Rustics **Steve Hopkins**, and Rustic 34, **Mike Thrower**, flew 962 as a Rustic. Steve flew 11 missions in her and Mike flew seven. As reported in our June 2018 newsletter, 962 was rededicated May 4 to honor the service and sacrifice of the Red Marker Forward Air Controller Detachment members and to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. *Any others have time in this bird?*

Additional Rustic War Stories. If you have any additional war stories or remembrances of SEA that you would like to share, send them to our editor, **Claude Newland**, at: rustic19@cox.net.

Laura Drury retired November 17 from a long career as an RN. She says she will now have more time for her grandchildren and making "Honey-Do" lists for Johnny."

ROCKET POD SEARCH FOR HURLBURT OV-10. **Claude Newland** and **Lendy Edwards** have contacted the Hurlburt Field Air Park Committee in an attempt to get two rocket pods installed on OV-10 #626 which is on display at Hurlburt Field. Both the O-1 and O-2 on display have rocket pods on them. This is a joint project with the FAC Association. To simplify matters, we have requested two pods that hold 7 rockets each, either LAU-59s (rocket heads extend out of pod's front) or Navy LAU-68s (rocket heads barely visible). The LAU-59 was in common usage at Bien Hoa. The LAU-68 became prevalent at Ubon.

A LOT OF DOWNSIZING IS GOING ON. Remember to update us on your new addresses when you move.

In July, **Susan Van Dyke** (gredepath@hotmail.com. (C) 913-207-9047) moved to 1902 West 139th St., Leawood, KS 66224. She "down-sized", just down the street from her previous home. She is doing well after last year's hip surgery and was disappointed the surgery prevented her from attending the 2017 Rustic reunion. She continues to work at the same job she has had for many years and plans to stay at least another year.

Sharon Friedhofen (C) 417-860-2246) reported she has moved to 305 East Peachtree Drive, Apt. 301, Nixa, MO 65714. Sharon says she is doing well but recently down-sized to a retirement community apartment.

Don Mercer, Rustic 41, is in the process of downsizing. He plans to stay in the general Tidewater area of Virginia. He says, "The cost of maintaining our house, landscaping, and keeping up with the yard has now far exceeded my tolerance level. Also, I have found that my hands no longer fit most yard implements! The money to be saved from such costs could easily cover a cruise or two."

Jon Safley reports he is also planning to make a move in the near future. (*Keep us updated.*)

FAC MEMORABILIA PRESERVATION. The Rustic FAC Assoc. and the FAC Assoc. are both "Last Man Standing" organizations. When we go ten-toes-up, our family members are going to have to decide what to do with all our Rustic/Air Force/FAC Memorabilia. Unfortunately, much of it may get trashed if specific guidance is not left with our family members. This is something we should all be thinking about.

Our Rustic historian, **Jon Safley**, is going to work in conjunction of a FAC Assoc. rep to develop a basic letter to be sent to each Rustic FAC and All-FAC member that allows them to instruct what needs to be done. This letter could be included in your Trust, Will, or final Instructions to your family. A cover letter to the basic instructional letter could list suggestions on how to fill out the "Instructional" letter and list several options for places to send memorabilia such as the FAC Museum, Texas Tech Vietnam Archives, Air Force Museum, etc. The truth is most items sent to large museums will never see the light of day, but they will be saved and archived.

A space could be provided in the "Instructional" letter for FACs to list specific items that should go to specific family member, etc.

If you have any suggestions as to what should/could be included in the "Instruction" letter, please contact **Jon Safley** at rdleader@77@verizon.com or 703-690-0034. Cleared Hot!

SAVING YOUR MEMORABILIA--HOW THE FAC MUSEUM CAN HELP. **Jim Hodgson**, txavi8or@gmail.com. Just for the sake of information, we, the Bronco Association, FAC Museum, et al, are in the process of proposing a partnership between our local college and Alliance Airport for a museum expansion. We are proposing a combination museum and aviation science center that has the potential to be the only academic aviation museum combination in the world. We are discussing a phased approach to a 50,000 to 80,000 sq ft facility over the next ten years; Cost \$30 - \$50,000,000. Tentative endorsement has been received from Congresswoman Kay Granger and from Gordon England. Gordon was the President of General Dynamics Fort Worth Aircraft Company. He was also Secretary of the Navy and Deputy Secretary of Defense, as well as the first Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security. He is a friend of the museum and is one of our advisors

The FAC Museum will be a part of this institution. More details as they develop.

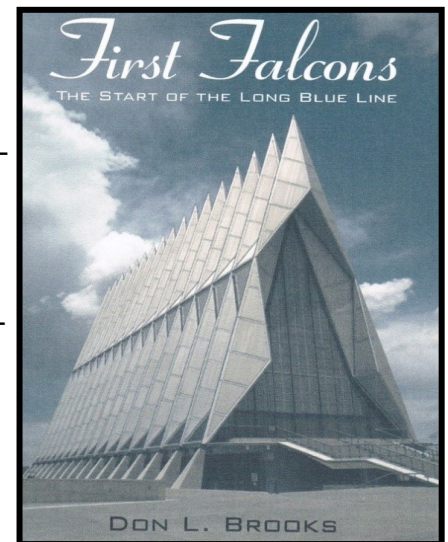
Note: *The A-37 Association as already addressed this issue. Their president, **Lon Holtz**, recently reported the A-37 Assoc. plans to send their memorabilia to the Robins AFB Museum of Aviation near Macon, Georgia. It is the second-largest aerospace museum of the United States Air Force and the fourth most visited museum in the Department of Defense. Additionally, it has one hangar dedicated to aircraft that served in Vietnam and has one of their A-37As (Tail #: CK 525) already on display. "This opportunity is like winning the lottery because we have been searching for a suitable location to exhibit our memorabilia for years without success."*

MARINE OV-10s BEING RESTORED. A group of folks at California's Chino Airport (KCNO) are committed to the restoration and continued support of flying the Bronco. The organization has received seven Marine OV-10 Broncos. The aircraft are being inspected for structural integrity and repaired to the highest standards of restoration. The fleet arrived from Fort Worth, Texas in January 2018. The OV-10 Squadron loaded six decommissioned aircraft onto a convoy of trucks. The aircraft made an epic 1,300-mile road trip from the National Vietnam War Museum in Mineral Wells, TX to meet up with the 7th OV-10D in the fleet at California's Chino Airport. The restoration specialists in Chino are the best-of-the-best in the warbird business and are some of the industry's last remaining experts in hand formed aluminum sheet metal, fabricating Plexiglas canopies, and rebuilding engines long out of service.

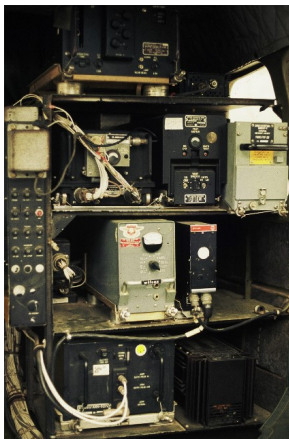
Please join us in this exciting project to build a small squadron of OV-10 Broncos for general aviation flying. The aircraft will be used in conjunction with the Mangic Foundation as well as commercial and airshow operations. Sign up and stay up to date with all the latest restoration news. And be sure to follow us on your favorite social platform.

DON BROOKS PUBLISHES THIRD BOOK. Many of you are aware of Don Brook's first published book, "Fly to the Sound of Battle," which was published in 2010. Well, Don is becoming a prolific writer. He recently published a second book titled "Flying in the BUFF" which recounts his years flying the B-52 in the Strategic Air Command. His third and most recent book, "First Falcons: Start of the Long Blue Line" is a compilation of memories of the U.S. Air Force Academy's first graduating class. Don is a member of that Class of 1959. Don explains, "I completed the book just in time for the recent Fifty-Ninth Reunion of my Air Force Academy Class of '59 and thought maybe some of you might like to have a copy as well. This isn't a historical book, but rather a collection of memories, both mine and those of some of my classmates, of events that took place during those first four years. Some are sad, some funny, and some ironic, but hopefully all are interesting."

All three books are available at www.lulu.com in both hardcover and electronic formats. Just logon and "search" author's name, "Don L. Brooks."



0-2A RESTORATION INFORMATION NEEDED. The Wings Over the Rockies Air Museum at the old Lowry AFB in Denver needs some advice/intel on a 0-2A restoration project they are doing. The museum is well on the way to having a completely restored 0-2A, tail # 86877, ready for dedicated at the upcoming 2020 FAC reunion in Denver, CO.



The restoration team, headed by Nolan Hargrave, is not sure what exact radios and equipment go in each slot in the radio rack in the back of the aircraft. Do you have any advice on what goes in the radio rack? They recently received a copy of the T.O that covers what goes where, but things are still being figured out. Any help would be appreciated.

The team has a starlight scope to display with the plane, but they are still looking for a set of gyro-stabilized binoculars. Do any of you know where Nolan can acquire gyro-stabilized binoculars?

If you can help, please contact Nolan at: nolan1947@hotmail.com or 303-717-9494.



THUNDER FROM DOWNUNDER--OV-10 # 639 RESTORATION. Aussie **Ken Semmler** Issue 28.

Ah, 'tis with thanks and delight that we're able to report that the work on 639 by the Australian War Memorial is proceeding apace. It's 18 months since Mrs. Laura Kennedy the AWM Conservation Manager and Kim Wood the ace bender and mender, visited the ever-supportive OBA team at Fort Worth, CAL FIRE and Marsh Aviation at Mesa. Early this year Woody, armed with a shopping list, returned to the US with the focus on Marsh Aviation. Our late friend Floyd Stilwell had accumulated a host of OV-10 components and Woody was able to tick most of the boxes on the shopping list. The next slice of good news relates to the RAAF cooperating 'above and beyond' in that one of our C-17s collected the precious container and brought it back to 'Oz'. Woody and his team have been busy!

It's well worth noting that recently there's been a burst of activity which is adding to the history and significance of 639.

Greg Freix, an Issue and Rustic FAC has, in addition to that mentioned in the 639 history as compiled and presented to the AWM by Darrel Whitcomb in 2008, supplied more detail and lays a fair claim to it being 'his' aircraft. Greg flew his last combat mission in 639 and his last flight as a USAF pilot was in, yes you guessed it, 639! Amazing stuff! This was in July 1991 and only a few months before it was transferred to the Philippines.

With restoration well underway, the AWM invited the 'Oz' FACs to Canberra to view progress. This was on 20 July and a great group made the pilgrimage, this including O-1, O-2 and OV-10 FACs as well as those who flew the F-4. Recently one of the latter attended a reunion in Tucson of those who had flown out of Phu Cat. In yarning, one thing led to another and he discovered some of his mates had subsequently flown OV-10s out of Sembach in Germany. Guess what? 639 was one of the aircraft flown!

It's just over 20 years since our quest for an OV-10 began and while we do not know a completion date, we trust that soon there'll be a target. In closing we again pay tribute to Jim Hodgson, Chuck Burin and many others who continue to contribute. The AWM staff have stated that the interest and support given has exceeded anything before experienced regarding a restoration project. On behalf of all in 'Oz', **Ken Semmler**



OV-10 #639 being restored in Australia

FRANK SOVICH, RUSTIC 36--WHO KNEW? Frank Sovich is perhaps the only Rustic who has flown both the O-2A and the OV-10 extensively. He flew the O-2A at Bien Hoa from June 70 to April 71. The attached OV-10 photo is the aircraft Frank flew at Hurlburt Field in 1972-73. He explains, "I had just checked out as an instructor pilot (IP) at the 547th TASTS [at Hurlburt] as the first O-2 IP to transition to the OV-10 to get turbo-prop time in order to qualify for a fighter assignment. I got my first student, then got a call from assignments to come and pick up my orders for an assignment to Minuteman Missiles!!! I drunk A LOT of beer that day!!

Frank had two more Air Force assignments that involved the OV-10. After completing Maintenance officer school and a two-year stint as MX officer for the 405 TFW at Luke AFB, he was the Chief of Maintenance for the 27th TASS at George AFB from 1986-1988. He explains, "I was chief of maintenance for a squadron of the 'ratiest' OV-10's on the planet. They had been stationed at Sembach, Germany and came back to the USA in mass in the summer of 1984. God knows the airplanes did not meet TAC standards for maintenance.

"TAC built one brand new squadron out of what had been three in Germany and called it the 27th TASS.

A full Col was in command with an ops guy who had over 100 pilots and ME -- Chief of Maintenance with around 100 airplanes. We had 'NO' personnel. Some came back with the airplanes. Most were 'scrounged' from the F-4 Weasel Wing at George where we built the 27 TASS. It was a 7day/12-hour environment -- at least for ME. Two years later, the first sentence on the IG report read---"BEST MAINTENANCE UNIT SEEN TO DATE"!!!



Frank Sovich's helmet is in front of the OV-10 he flew at Hurlburt Field. He was quick to point out the O-2As in the background.

“Every one of my shops got an “Excellent” or “Outstanding” -- to include the AMU! Col Syptak said to me, “Frank come back to TAC HQ with me and you will make Colonel. My response, “Naw, I think I’ll take the wife and four kids and go to Hawaii and be the 25th Infantry’s senior ALO. I was told, “Frank, if you do this you will NOT make Col,” but I said, “I’ll take my chances SIR, thanks anyway! Well, he was RIGHT---I was wrong.”

Departing George AFB, Frank served as the Senior Division Air Liaison Officer (ALO) of the 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks and Wheeler AFB in Hawaii. He goes on to say, “I had a class date for an OV-10 long course at Patrick AFB in the summer of 1986. The long course was needed because I had not flown since 1981 when I returned back to the states to attend Command and Staff school. I was really looking forward to some quality time with family after two ‘hard years.’ I knew I could fly the airplane and do the FAC stuff, so the course would have been fun!

“Well, things are never that simple. Next thing I know, I get a ‘panic’ call from the assistant 326 AD/CC on-scene in Hawaii begging me to come ‘immediately.’ The present senior ALO had been hired by American Airlines and was getting out immediately. There was no ALO, and an IG Inspection was due in 90 days. But, there was also the promise of a local checkout instead of my Patrick Long course. Like a fool, I agreed and left for Hawaii almost immediately.

“WELL, it was a BIG Mistake. They jacked me around, ‘forever’ before I threatened an IG visit. I finally got my checkout, flew around ‘Paradise,’ shot rockets at Kooalave (before they put it off limits), and flew approaches to Barking Sands -- IT WAS REALLY ‘NEAT’!

“Then the TASS started sending their OV’s permanently to Osan, Korea; as they began to ‘draw down.’ Flying opportunities got slim, so I pulled the plug. But, amongst the turmoil, the Army, the IG, etc., I did get to create one more great unit.

“My last assignment was perhaps not my smartest pick, but only God knows! After being passed over I officially retired at Whiteman AFB on 1 Jan 89 -- 30 years ago this Jan! BUT on 3 July 1989 I was sitting in Denver in a UAL new hire class, so I am a BIG believer in “Get the hell out of the way---only GOD knows!”

RUSTIC & ALL-FAC PHOTO RESERVATION PROJECT. The Rustic FAC Assoc., in conjunction with the FAC Assoc., is working to establish a standardized “tagging” system to label all our FAC photos. This will allow future researchers to search our archives for specific photos by subject, name, etc. The good news—**Rustic Ned Helm** has already preserved many of our Rustic photos in individual Rustic folders for each Rustic who submitted their photos to him for preservation. Most of these photos are already “tagged” but the tags do not contain all the information that will be sought in the new standardized tagging format.

Once the standardized “tag” format has been established, we will return each person’s photos to them and ask them to tag each of their photos in accordance with the standardized format. If you have photos that need to be added, you can add them. The new tagging system will be fairly simple, so don’t let this project scare you. Standby for more news.

Currently, we have photo folders for: **Aitken, Baker, Berent, Carruthers, Caywood, Cooper, Dahle, Dandeneau, Decabooter, Deshaise, W. Dodd, Echelberger, Edwards, Ernst, Freidhofen, Gabel, Garand, Gaskill, Green, Hamann, Harshaw, Hawker, Hellwig, Helm, Hopkins, Keese, Kilo, Kiraly, Larson, McClellan, Murphy, Newland, Robertson, Scaling, Seibold, Sims Spencer, Storer, Thomas, Trapp, Van Dyke, Van Kirk, Wilson and Yarborough.**

If you have Rustic photos that need to be preserved, please contact **Ned Helm** at rusticfac15@gmail.com or 931-752-8102. Ned can scan all your photos and will return them to you.

THE LAST DAY OF THE SEA WAR--AND THE DAY AFTER. **Darrel Whitcomb, Nail 70.** Yep, I do remember that day, 15 AUGUST 1973. After the last Rustic/Nail OV-10 four-ship pitched out and landed at Ubon, we fired up the BBQ and proceeded to burn and consume dead beef (I think). Anyway, some of the guys started to drink. Later that day, a serious whisky/tequila/gin/Sing Ha front rolled through, and well, some of the things that happened were disappointing.

There were rumors that select groups ‘visited’ some of the other squadrons and said unkind and certainly unprofessional things. I do remember that our commander, **Howie Pierson** was just shocked - SHOCKED at some of the reports and declared that he was going to look into those reports with stern letters to follow. I do remember that he was upset about the report that somebody wearing a 23rd TASS patch had urinated in an inappropriate area. He wanted us to discover who stole our squadron patches.

I had nothing to do with that truck and was just disgusted at what had apparently happened. **Randy Roberts** concurred. However, I do confess that I was there when some banana trees were uhhhhh - trimmed.

Then there was the guy who was taped to the pole. He was one of the AC-130 navigators and well, what can you say?

I was proud of the Rustics. They had a quiet evening of cookies and milk and somebody gave a neat lecture on proper military decorum followed by some nice singing. Such a wholesome lot, obviously the cream of the 23rd TASS. Perfect propriety (*Editor: I'll bet there is another side to this store.*) I do recall the next morning that many of us had just a little problem with breakfast.

Then we went down to our Ops building to see what was going on. The scheduling board which usually was full of names and take off times only had four sorties designated--all ferry flights back to NKP. And I remember, we looked at each other and said, "What do we do now?" ...Sweet youth.

AIRCRAFT LOSSES OF THE VIETNAM WAR. Wikipedia. All told, the U.S. Air Force flew 5.25 million sorties over South Vietnam, North Vietnam, northern and southern Laos, and Cambodia, losing 2,251 aircraft: 1,737 to hostile action, and 514 in accidents. 2,197 of the losses were fixed-wing, and the remainder rotary-wing. The USAF sustained approximately 0.4 losses per 1,000 sorties during the conflict, which compared favorably with a 2.0 rate in Korea and a 9.7 figure during World War II. Among fixed-wing aircraft, more F-4 Phantoms were lost than any other type in service with any nation, 445 total and 382 in combat. F-100 Super Sabre losses--243 total, 198 in combat; First loss: 1964, final loss: 1971. A-37 Dragonfly losses--22 total; First loss: 1967, final loss: 1972. The great majority of U.S. combat losses in all areas of Southeast Asia were to AAA.

FAC losses:

- O-1 Bird Dog—172 total, 122 in combat; First loss: 1963, Final loss: 1972
- O-2 Skymaster—104 total, 82 in combat; First loss: 1967, Final loss: 1972
- OV-10 Bronco—63 total, 47 in combat; First loss: 1968, Final loss: 1973

NADY TAN UPDATE.

Many of you know the story or how Cambodian Air Force commander **Nady Tan** saved his family after the fall of Cambodia. The complete story is in Chapter 8 of our Rustic book. Nady eventually returned to Cambodia and served as the country's chief civil servant until he retired several years ago. **Doug Aitken** reports: "I got this pic from **Sarady Tan**, Nady's son, whom you might recall is a USAF O-6 Flight Surgeon. After finishing National War College, Sarady was assigned to NSA, and sent me an e-mail wishing us Happy Thanksgiving along with the news that he has received orders back to Lackland AFB for 2019. You might recall that Lackland was where he and his family settled with Carol and I after Cambodia fell. I asked how Nady was doing and he sent this pic. Pretty good it looks like!" Doug



Nady Tan with two nieces next to him. His caretaker, Linda, is at the far left.

LETTERS TO THE RUSTICS

From John Dandeneau (son of Ron Dandeneau) john_dandeneau@hotmail.com

Hi Johnny [*Drury*], Thanks for the note you sent to my sister Patty. My dad was so proud of the two books he contributed to that covered the Rustics. You are all heroes. I remember not really understanding what he did until the missions were declassified many years later. Those books were a way for him to share with us the important role you all played and allowed him to be publicly proud of something that he had to keep quiet for so long.

From Doug Robertson, Rustic Radio, 71-72 (FACNET)

On July 31, 1971 I boarded a worn-out Boeing 707 bound for Viet Nam from Travis AFB. I have to say that my time spent as a radio operator for the Rustic's was definitely THE highlight of my military career and in

life in general. It was a pleasure talking to many in the skies of Nam, Cambodia, and Thailand. I wouldn't have missed it for anything. While I was on Nui Ba Den mountain, I got a Spectre diverted to us when we reported a convoy heading south out of Cambodia and could see lights flickering on the mound that was to the side of NBD. The Spectre was orbiting low to us when it expended its mini-guns which was one sight and sound I will never forget. If nothing else, it put on a good show for the troops and I'm sure it spoiled their party down the hill from us.

From Ned Helm, rusticfac15@gmail.com (FACNET)

Every time I look at an OV-10 I just smile. Even though I went to F-4s later in my somewhat truncated career, it never had the place in my heart that the OV has. I see sunrises over Nui Ba Den (way to the east on a seriously clear day when I was astro-facing my way down south well above 10K) and Sunsets over the Tonle Sap. In Europe I saw the Alps on the way to Aviano, Italy, the Pyrenees on the way to Zaragosa, Spain, and the English Channel on the way to a meeting at Bentwaters. I recall scenic rides down the Germany's Rhine river below the ridges, the South Korean Koon-ni Range and landing on the Seoul Pusan Highway, Cleared Hot, and watching the rescued Aardvark crew waving from a Red Eagle (Khmer Huey Gunship) door in Cambodia. And, of course, "The FAC is in to mark!"

As some Old Head FAC said to the new Lt, "Never in your Air Force career will you ever exercise such power and have such authority to you do now. From here, it is downhill all the way to retirement." How true. Thank you for restoring another veteran. (Does anyone have the exact quote that I paraphrased above?) Crash

From Gary Ball, Rustic 13, emailbag80@gmail.com

Hello Claude, thank you for your email. It's nice to hear from you. In July 2017, I followed God's call and moved from Trier, Germany, to Monument, CO and enrolled in Liberty University Online Divinity School. Since January, I'm on course for a bachelor's in religion to add to my BS and MS degrees in other disciplines. Also, I am regularly in contract with Embry-Riddle instructing aeronautics online and am connected with Springs Church, so, I have a full life. If I took on any other commitments, I'd have to give up something currently on my plate. Blessings, **Gary Ball**

From Jerry Dufresne, Rustic I

I recently attended a fund raiser for Outdoors for our military heroes. They take wounded GI's hunting and fishing. I donated some numbered prints that raised \$150.00 and Roselyn's afghan got an amazing bid of \$650.00 during the auction. It helped that the afghan was hand-made and was red white and blue We think it was bought by a large corporation group. Over the years, Roselyn has made and donated over 1,200 baby blankets for the Navy Marine Corp Relief Society Layette Program in San Diego. She was awarded a 50- thousand-hour volunteer recognition plaque from them. She has also donated over 500 handmade larger lap blankets to various VA hospitals and has given away many scarfs for the homeless. *Wow, Roselyn and Jerry, good on ya! Keep up the good work!*

From Joe Garand, Rustic E (*We heard Joe had broken his hip several months ago. Here's an update.*)

Hi Claude, Yes, I did have an episode of broken hips. I think the first time I fell was in June of 2016. I fell in my driveway and ended up in the hospital. The x-ray showed I had a broken left hip at the joint. Subsequent x-rays showed a fracture, so, we let it heal itself which took longer. In 2017 it was the right hip in...there you go. I fell and broke the leg bone completely off the joint. That said, I needed pins installed in the joint to connect to the leg bone. That last fall happened inside the house close to front door with easy access to making a 911 call.

The VA bought me an expensive walker for having Parkinson's, which I have been using. Best of all, I had the pleasure of having beautiful women (most of them married with children) come to our home as my therapist. I forget to tell you, I also had to go to rehab twice.

Today, Sunday, I attended church service with the family without my walker, a four-probe cane that stands on its own. **Roger Hamann**, bless his soul, he wants to take me to a Rustic reunion. I would have gone to a lot more when I think about it, but I can't walk strait or talk with a decent speech. Hey! I could have dropped over in North Vietnam or Cambodia and never have seen home again. All's well that ends well! I'm ever so grateful to God, country, family, and friends who I can see any time I wish. (*Joe, glad to hear you are on the mend!*)

From Doug Aitken, Rustic 16

Ron Barlow is an Aussie living in CA and a good friend of my brothers. He is an aviation enthusiast and he and I have shared many emails over the years. I gave him a copy of our book and he sent out a recent review to his friends (below). I also just ordered one for Sarady Tan, Nady Tan's son who an Air Force flight surgeon. Geez, I also sent copies to two relatives and an old AF buddy. Egads, I should get a commission! Cheers, Doug

Ron Barlow's review of Rustic book:

The OV-10 "Bronco" was specifically designed as a Light Armed Reconnaissance Aircraft for low altitude tactical support. It was built by North American Aviation and powered by two Garrett Air Research turboprop engines. A total of 305 were built. 157 went to the USAF. The balance went to the Marines and Navy. The aircraft served admirably over the skies of Cambodia and Vietnam, and was flown by very brave airmen.....and if you spoke any school boy French, you virtually got yourself a job as an OV-10 jockey or interpreter!

In June of this year **Doug Aitken** (Rustic 16) gifted me the book "The Rustics" (A Top Secret Air War in Cambodia) which he and fellow Rustics describe their history as Forward Air Controllers during the period 1970-1973. Without doubt...THE BEST BOOK I have ever read, of the virtually untold stories of this era.

On this eve of Thanksgiving, I would like to thank Doug, and all the men and women mentioned in this book for their outstanding bravery and dedication. This fabulous aircraft now does an incredible job of fighting California wildfires from the air! Long live the Bronco!!



CALENDAR:

1. **A-37 REUNION**, Wichita KA, 28 Apr-1 May 2019. All FACs invited.
2. **RUSTIC FAC REUNION**, Las Vegas, NV, 1 Oct- 4 Oct 2019
3. **OV-10 #639, DEDICATION CEREMONY**, Australian National Memorial Military Museum, Canberra, Australia, 2019, date TBD. This aircraft was flown by many Rustics.
4. **ALL FAC REUNION**, Denver, CO, Fall 2020, date TBD. This reunion will be held in conjunction with a FAC aircraft fly-in and dedication of an O-2 being restored at the Wings Over the Rockies Air Museum at the old Lowry AFB in Denver.



Wishing You All a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year