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Rustic News



www.rustic.org



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ANNUAL RUSTIC NEWSLETTER AND ROSTER. This newsletter is being sent to ALL Rustics for whom we have a contact address (association members and non-members alike.)

If you receive this newsletter via Email you will also receive an updated Rustic roster via Email. Please save the roster for future reference.

If you receive this newsletter via regular mail it is because we do not have a good Email address for you. If you have Email, please send us your address to: lendy@cox.net. If you are a member of the Rustic FAC Association you will also receive a copy of the revised roster.

If you view this newsletter on-line (Rustic website) and did not receive a personal copy of the newsletter, please notify our Database Keeper, **Lendy Edwards**, at lendy@cox.net, 850-651-6676, and give him your correct contact information.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP. The Rustics no longer collect annual membership dues. If you would like to become an association member, we offer lifetime memberships for \$100. Make check payable to "Rustics" and mail to our treasurer, **Jim Nuber**, at 1439 Evening Shade, Prescott, AZ 86305-6432. *Please provide your mailing address, email address, phone number, spouse's name, callsign/duty section, and dates you served with the Rustics. If you have any questions, call Jim at: 929-776-0835.*

NEXT RUSTIC REUNION. Ft Walton Beach, Florida, 19-22 Oct 2017. Save the date! This reunion will be the Rustics 20th year anniversary reunion. Our first reunion was in 1997. You don't want to miss this one. Start saving your nickels now. **Claude & Tona Newland, Lendy & Sue Edwards, and Tom & Teresa Wolford** will be the reunion coordinators.

REPORT FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT. Doug Aitken, (Rustic 16, Bien Hoa/ Ubon, 1972-73.) Fellow Rustics: As reported elsewhere in this issue, we had a wonderful reunion in Ft Worth, and tons of thanks to **Cathy and Bill McAdams**, and **Anne and Jack Thompson** for their efforts to make this gathering such a great success. At our business meeting, I was elected your new President. Like everyone there, I did not volunteer, but was "drafted." Following **Claude Newland** will be difficult, but he has been appointed to the Board as the "President Emeritus" so he will be there to give sage advice over the next two years.

I look forward to working with Claude and the rest of the Board as we start preparing for our **20th Anniversary Reunion** which will be 19-22 Oct 2017 in Ft. Walton Beach, Florida! Block those dates now on your calendar.



Claude mentioned to me that the A-37 Association has a “Letters Home” section in their newsletter, and I think that is a great idea. I urge you to go into those dusty boxes and find those letters or tapes, (those that are not “X” rated) and share them with us after all these years. Who knows, maybe another book will be the result of this effort! Send your “Letters Home” direct to Claude who is continuing as our Newsletter Editor. If possible, type your letter and send it to him via email at: rustic19@cox.net or mail a copy to 4033 Indian Trail, Destin, FL 32541.

As an example, here is what I wrote to my brother and sister-in-law on 8 Feb 1972 (two-thirds of the way through my tour):

“Nothing much new at this end. I’ve been pretty busy—attending conferences at Korat, Thailand and Phan Rang. Then last week off to Saigon to fly General Brown, Commander of AFSC and prior 7th AF Commander. Wayne Wood flew his two star assistant. They really enjoyed the tour of Cambodia and took our picture afterwards. I think these guys go back to Washington and pass the word to their buddies—if you want a good deal, go fly with the Rustics in Cambodia when you visit Saigon. So far, we have flown General Lavelle (current 7thAF/CC), General Slay (7th AF DO), Gen Momeyer (TAC/CC), General Ryan, USAF Chief of Staff, and the two mentioned above. Fun and games!”

Get the idea? Looking forward to 2017 already! Doug

2015 REUNION DISUM. The Rustic’s ninth reunion is now history. What a great reunion it was! Ft Worth, Texas is a great town to visit and **John and Anne Thompson** and **Bill and Cathy McAdams** did a superb job of organizing a full schedule of events.

Approximately 25 early arrivals gathered at the beautiful country home of **Bill and Cathy McAdams** for a pre-party on Wednesday evening. The reunion officially kicked off on Thursday with registration and tours of the F-35 Lockheed-Martin plant. Hugs, warm embraces, and rowdy greetings were the order of the day as many old friends reunited and new friendships were formed as several new Rustics were attending for the first time.

The day concluded with a private group dinner at the La Playa Maya Mexican restaurant near the Stockyards. During the Reunion Welcome **Claude Newland** introduced our guest of honor, **Kohn Om**, who has attended every Rustic reunion. Several Rustic ladies were also introduced: **Sally Gabel**, **Nancy Sleigh**, and a Rustic friend, **Marcia Seibert**. Rustics who were attending their first reunion included three Rustic Alpha members: **David and Chris Kurau**, **Greg Lachon**, and **Tom and Teresa Wolford**.

Claude shared some Texas Trivia with the group since Texas is known for being BIG at everything. Here’s a few of the Texas facts mentioned:

- The King Ranch is larger than Rhode Island.
- El Paso is closer to California than to Dallas.
- Texas is the only state to enter the U.S. by TREATY, instead of annexation. This allows the Texas flag to fly at the same height as the U.S. flag.
- The world’s first rodeo was in Pecos July 4, 1883.
- Dr Pepper was invented in Waco in 1885. There is no period after Dr in Dr Pepper.
- The Texas state animal is...(most seem to know)...the Armadillo.

Jack Thompson concluded the dinner by going over the reunion schedule and answering any question about the up-coming events. **Claude** reminded everyone about the longhorn cattle drive held daily in the historic Stockyards and to be sure to visit the one-of-a-kind Stockyard Hotel and western bar. When Claude inquired if there was anyone who had never been to a rodeo, **Doug Aitken** was the only person to raise his hand...but then he quickly added...”Well, maybe one in the bedroom.”

Friday morning was free to take optional self-guided tours of the city or to go on a Ft Worth Aviation Heritage Tour. The Rustic business meeting and association elections were held in the afternoon (*More on*

this in separate reports to follow.) Following the business meeting everyone carpoled to the Stockyards for an evening of revelry and cowboying. Everyone wore their best western wear as we gathered for dinner in the large outdoor covered patio at Riskey's BBQ restaurant. The place was packed! Afterwards, we attended a rodeo in the Stockyard's famous Cowtown Coliseum where the world's first indoor rodeo was held in 1918. (**Doug Aitken** can now say he's been to a real rodeo!) After the rodeo everyone was free to mosey about. Hmm...wonder if anyone made it over to Billy Bob's?

The reunion's main events took place on Saturday. The Bronco Assoc. held their annual BroncoFest at the Ft Worth Aviation and FAC Museum at Meacham Field specifically on this date so it would coincide with our reunion. The event included self-guided tours of the airpark which now contains over 20 aircraft, tours of the Aviation and FAC Museum, and a buffet lunch. A brief program by **Jim Hodgson**, President of the OV-10 Bronco Assoc., included the re-dedication of OV-10 #825 which had been recently repainted, and recognition and awards for the many volunteers who help keep the air park and museum operational.



You may recall that the names of **Col. Howie Pierson**, Nail 01 (Nail/Rustic commander on the last day of the war in Aug 1973), and **Sgt. Jerry Dufresne**, Rustic India, were inscribed on the left canopy rails of #825 at the 2006 BroncoFest. This year two more names were added to the right-side canopy rails as follows:

Front Cockpit: "**Capt Steve Bennett**" (Medal of Honor FAC, received posthumously, KIA)

Rear Cockpit: "**Capt Mike Brown**" (Steve's backseater. Mike's chute was damaged by the SAM that hit their OV-10 so Steve elected to ditch their aircraft. Mike survived the ditching but Steve did not.)

Steve Bennett's daughter, **Angela Bennett-Engle**, was in attendance to unveil her father's name on the right-side canopy rail.

Banquet. The culmination of the reunion was the banquet on Saturday evening. Fifty-two Rustics and quests were in attendance. **Doug Aitken** served as Master-of-Ceremonies and regaled the audience with his charm and jokes throughout the evening. **Those in attendance included:**

Doug & Carol Aitken, Jim & Sue Blackwood (gusts of Tom Wolford), Don Brooks, Tom & Peggy Capps, David and Heather Capps (Tom's son and daughter-in-law), John & Sally Charlton, Bill & Jan Decabooter, Johnny Drury, Lendy & Sue Edwards, Don & Helene Ellis, Greg Freix, Sally Gabel and daughter Karla, Richard Goddard and son Rick, Bob & Cheryl Harris, David* & Chris Kurau, Greg Lachon, Bill & Cathy McAdams, Matthew Mills, Claude & Tona Newland, Jim & Lynne Nuber, Kohn Om, Doug & Bobbie Robertson, Jon & Kathy Safley, Jim & Diane Seibold, Nancy Sleigh, Marcia Seibert, Jack & Anne Thompson, Ron & Janette Van Kirk, Mike & Sherry Wilson, and Tom & Theresa Wolford.

*Newfound Rustic – Rustic Alpha Radio operator at Nui Ba Den

Tom Capps gave the invocation. **Doug Robertson** explained the symbolism of the POW/MIA Table and **Doug Aitken** read the names of our Rustics Departed as we remembered our KIAs and those who have taken their final flight.

After a great dinner and short intermission, **Doug Robertson** was formally presented the Air Force Commendation Medal. The orders were dated 3 October 1972; however, there is a bit of a story here. Doug never received the award from the Air Force. He took an early out from the Air Force and was discharged at Altus AFB in Feb 1973. Unfortunately, the award was never forwarded to him. When **Don Mercer** learned of this oversight in 2002 he got in touch with his connections at Air Force Records. The result...Doug received his long overdue award package in January 2003, almost 30 years to the day from the date of his separation. Since that date the AFCM has been in Doug's drawer at home. When the Rustics learned of this, they agreed a formal presentation was in order! After the presentation, Doug expressed his appreciation and thanks to the Rustics. He noted, "Forty-two years had gone by but it was important to him to have the award presented. I now have plans to put all my awards in a shadow box. Thank you again for making this a special evening."



Claude presenting Doug his Air Force Commendation Medal

Doug Aitken is reading the citation for Doug Robinson's Air Force Commendation Medal. Claude Newland, (right) made the presentation.

The banquet guest speaker was **Col. Glenn Hoppe**, USMC. He led the F-35 Program Test and Verification Operations Center for four years...managing the planning and engineering activity for all three F-35 variants at two primary test sites. He is currently a Lockheed Martin Principal Test Pilot. His in-depth presentation updated us on the development status of the F-35 and it's many operational capabilities. *Now...if we could only get our hands on the control stick of one of these beauties!* Following his presentation, Col Hoppe was presented with a Rustic challenge coin and an inscribed copy of the Rustics' revised history book. He was also made an honorary member of the Rustics.

The banquet concluded with out-going president **Claude Newland** thanking **Jack and Anne Thompson** and **Bill and Cathy McAdams** for hosting a great 2015 Rustic reunion. Each couple received a plaque of recognition (post reunion) for their above-and-beyond efforts. In closing, Claude thanked the Rustics for allowing him to serve as their president these past years. He then introduced the association's new president and members of the Board who will serve for the next two years:

President	Doug Aitken (new)	Director	Jim Reese
Vice-president	Johnny Drury	Director	Tom Capps
Sec//Treasurer	Jim Nuber	Director	Don Ellis (new)
Historian	John Safely (new)		

We also want to thank **Don Mercer** who is an outgoing Director. Don has served on the Rustic Board for a number of years and has had a great impact on our membership. He did some heavy lifting in getting 25 long overdue awards approved for the Rustics. Additionally, Don was directly responsible for getting **Bill Sleigh's** memoir book "Vietnam and Cambodia Recalled- - It Still Hurts" published. "Thanks" Don for all you've done for your Rustic buds!

Final remarks were reserved for our new president, **Doug Aitken**. On behalf of all the Rustics, Doug thanked **Claude Newland** for his many years of service as Rustic president. He then encouraged everyone to attend the next Rustic reunion which will be in Ft Walton Beach, Florida in October 2017. To conclude the evening, Doug announced a new Rustic tradition. In the future every Rustic reunion banquet will begin by ringing the Rustic bell (presented to the Rustics in 1972 as a gift from Raja, the tailor in Ubon). **Lendy Edwards** did the honors this year. He rang the bell to signal the start of this year's banquet and again at the end of the festivities. All agreed, this was a fitting end to another wonderful gathering of Rustics and friends.

TREASURER'S REPORT Jim Nuber, (Apr 2015-Oct 2015). The association is in great financial shape. Here's the details:

Checking account balance	\$1,158.67
Savings account balance	<u>\$24,214.24*</u>
Total cash	\$25,372.91

Treasurer's Report Summary of Activities Fund Balances:

Cambodian Charities	\$1,435.00
Cambodian Reunion Support	\$ 135.00
Lifetime Dues	\$3,425.00
Book Fund	\$ 100.00
Lulu Press income	\$1,278.55
Expenses	<u>(\$2,910.63)</u>
Total:	\$ 3,462.92

*Not currently invested

CAMBODIAN CHARITIES. Lendy Edwards. We currently have \$ 2,157 in our Cambodian Charity account. (Thanks to all who recently contributed \$722 in conjunction with our 2015 reunion.) In the next newsletter your Board members should be able to announce how we have used these funds.

We have been in contact with the folks at Sunrise Ministries in Kompong Cham to see how the Rustics might be able to help. Our contacts there suggest we help the kids at the orphanage by supporting efforts to get additional tutoring which prepares the students to pass the national exam. They have explained what this money is used for: "In Cambodia, teachers are significantly underpaid, and so they make up their salary by collecting a small fee from each student each day if they are able to pay. Unfortunately, many do not have the money. In upper grades, they teach material necessary to pass the national exam during special tutoring sessions outside of class hours." Standby for more news in our next newsletter.

KOHN OM reported Cambodia's politics is still very dynamic as is their economy. It's slow in getting help to those that need it, particularly the farmers and the poor. Buddhism in the U.S. is helping Cambodian hospitals. The U.S. government is providing some funds for farming. In discussing how to help, Kohn says we should only trust what the monks tell us about 60 percent. One of the best ways to help is by providing school supplies and backpacks to the children.



JOHNNY DRURY TRIES ON AN OLD FRIEND FOR SIZE. Johnny Drury. I had a great time at this year's Rustic FAC reunion in Fort Worth. One of our events was at the Fort Worth Aviation Museum and FAC (Forward Air Control) Museum. The primary event that day was to dedicate a recently reconstructed OV-10 Bronco, specifically #825 in which I spent many hours flying combat over Cambodia. Of course, I thought the pinnacle of the experience might be to climb back into the cockpit of my old friend for old time's sake. (Easier said than done.) Instead of using the retractable foothold on the fuselage side like we used to do 45 year ago, they provided me with a large boarding ramp with stairs (how embarrassing). But I graciously ignored the seeming insult and climbed up the steps and began my entrance into the old familiar cockpit. That is where the problems began. My legs didn't fold up properly during the entrance as they did 45

years ago. After a long period of time of excruciating contortions, I finally was in the seat with my legs straddling the control stick.

I could almost see Cambodia's green jungles and rice paddies passing below me again. But somehow all felt a little different than the good old days. First of all, I swear this aircraft had set



out in the rain for too many years because the cockpit had surely shrunk. The control stick was much closer to my stomach than I remembered in 1970. The radio control panels which lined the sides of the cockpit on each side of my seat were once easily accessible by a quick reach for them at my either side. This day, however, my ass seemed to hang over the sides of the seat and partially obscured the radio control panels. Again, another proof that the cockpit had shrunk over the years.

Then it was sadly time for me to exit the aircraft so someone else could have their moment of ancient glory. Again, PROBLEMS. I began to squirm about trying to find a dignified way to fold up my body so that I could climb out. After a few seconds, it appeared to me I might have to summon the Fort Worth Fire Department so that they could extract me with the "Jaws of Life," But fortunately, I was able to crawl out shoulders first onto the metal step stand. Thank goodness they had used it for me or I would have dropped head first to the tarmac five feet below. Combat was MUCH easier!!!!!!!

Oh...and one more combat story. We also spent one night of our reunion visiting the Fort Worth Stock Yard Rodeo. Well, during an intermission the Rodeo Clowns began firing souvenir T-shirts into the crowd with large rubber sling shots (like they do at professional basketball game halftimes). As I saw the small, compact T-shirt packages arch into the crowd of thousands, I thought back to the days when I could watch incoming enemy rocket and mortar rounds. However, I did not see one incoming T-shirt round when it hit me in the chest and bounced to the ground. How embarrassing! But, I did get my souvenir T-shirt.

RUSTIC ALPHA MEMBERS SHOW UP IN FORCE IN FT WORTH.

Remember the voices of the guys at Rustic Alpha on top of Nui Ba Den mountain who provided the Rustics critical radio link to 7th Air Force in Saigon? Well, four Rustic Alpha radio operators were in attendance at this year's reunion. What a surprise! See photo at right. The first three (left to right), **David Kurau**, **Tom Wolford**, and **Greg Lachon**, were first-time reunion attendees: All three found us through our Rustic website. It was great to meet each one of these guys and hear their "Rustic" stories. **Doug Robertson**, (right) has attended several Rustic reunions. It was obvious these four are kindred spirits for they have shared experiences on the mountain that few will ever fully appreciate.



THANKS TO OUR OUTGOING PRESIDENT AND REUNION COORDINATORS. Our "Appreciation" plaques missed their TOT for the reunion banquet so we forwarded them to their recipients. Here **Lendy Edwards** presents **Claude Newland** a plaque on behalf of the Rustics for Claude's service as President. Similar plaques were sent to **Jack and Ann Thompson** and **Bill and Cathy McAdams** thanking them for hosting a great Ft Worth reunion.

STATUS OF RUSTIC MEMORABILIA AND HISTORICAL ITEMS. The Rustic Board took advantage of the fact that the FAC Museum is located at Meachem Field in Ft Worth. They directed **Johnny Drury**,

our vice-president and temporary Historian, to bring all of our historical items to the reunion so they could be reviewed. (You may recall that Johnny went to South Dakota this past summer and gathered up all the Rustic history and memorabilia items that **Jim Gabel**, our former Rustic Historian, had been storing for us.) The question now was, "What to do with these items?"

Everything was carefully sifted through, reviewed, and the items were divided into three categories:

- **Items to discard.** These were items which were deemed no longer of any historical value. This included a quantity of items such as old papers and coordination publishing notes from our original Rustic book which has been superseded by our revised book published in 2011.
- **Items to donate to the FAC Museum.** This included miscellaneous items such as flags, artwork, maps, extra copies of our first Rustic book, copies of **Dick Wood's** commercial book version of "The Rustics," and other historical items that were deemed worthy of preservation. Should the FAC museum ever fold its tent, we directed these items to go to the Vietnam Project at Texas Tech University.



- **Personal Rustic Photos, Audio tapes, Stories, and Biographies.** Quite a few Rustic photos, 35 mm slides, and audio tapes of Rustic interviews were saved. The photos are being sent to **Ned Helm** for preservation in our Rustic SEA photo album. **John Safley**, our newly elected Historian, is going to review all of the audio tapes and individual Rustic folders which contained personal Rustic biographies and stories. He will attempt to contact each individual Rustic (or their surviving family member) and return these items to their owner. The goal is to have this completed prior to our next reunion in 2017. If you have any questions in this regard, Jon can be reached at: rdlead-er77@verizon.com or 703-690-0034.

These actions mean your association is now pretty much out of the “history collecting” business. However, if you have anything that you think should be preserved, please advise **Jon Safley**.

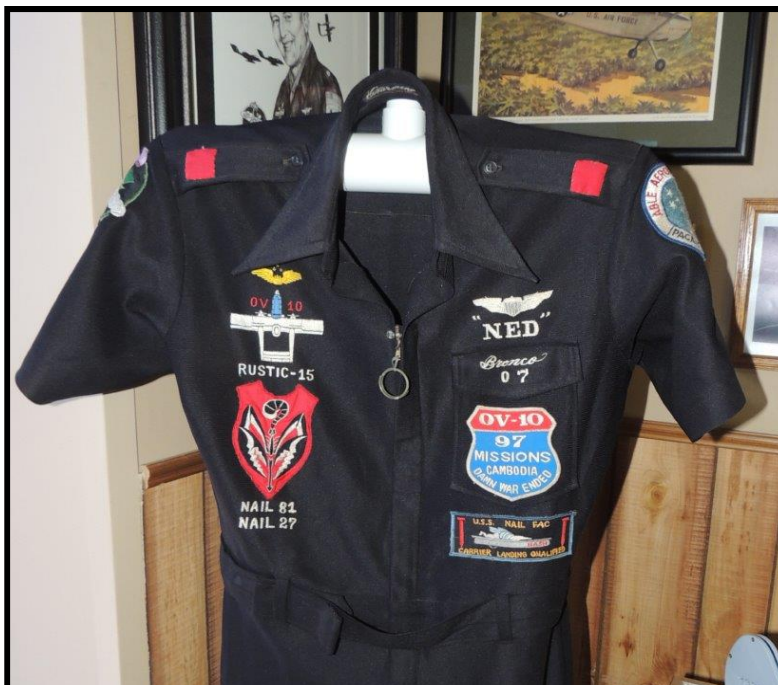
Dick Goddard, Rustic 20, and OV-10 # 825. *Note the name on the rear canopy, **Sgt Jerry Dufresne, Rustic India.** Below is a portion of the Rustic letter (August 2006) sent to the OV-10 Bronco Association nominating Jerry for this honor:*

“Background: When the Rustic mission was first formed--literally overnight--PACAF sent out an emergency message calling for French-speaking Air Force volunteers to fly as Rustic FAC interpreters. Amazingly, within hours of the time they signed up, the initial cadre of Rustic interpreters were briefed, outfitted in flying gear and stuffed into the backseat of our aircraft for their first mission. They were former radio operators, clerks, traffic managers, engineers, and cooks; but they were quick learners. Clearly, they became the heart and soul of our mission. The critical role they played as interpreters was a major factor in our unit’s ability to combat the Khmer Rouge and North Vietnamese army in Cambodia. To their credit, not one interpreter ever quit his job. Many actually extended their tour of duty to remain with the Rustics and they all served with distinction. Their full “story” is chronicled in an entire chapter dedicated to them in the Rustic book, “The Rustics, A Top Secret Air War in Cambodia.”



“Sgt R. G. “Jerry” Dufresne was chosen by his fellow Rustic interpreters to be the Rustic nominee because Jerry made history on the night of June 20, 1970 when he flew the very first interpreter mission in the back seat of a Rustic OV-10 aircraft. The mission was over the city of Kompong Thom which was the center of a fire storm of enemy tracers and mortar fire. With minimal training and no prior experience, Sgt Dufresne located the positions of the NVA and aided a Shadow gunship which unleashed a torrent of fire that broke the enemy’s assault and saved Kompong Thom.

“The Rustic FAC Association proudly nominates **Sgt R.G. “Jerry” Dufresne** to have his name inscribed on the rear canopy rail of OV-10 # 68-3825 to honor and represent all those who performed combat duties in the rear cockpit of the OV-10.”



Ned Helms Rustic party suit on display in the FAC Museum, Meacham Field, Ft Worth.



O-2A tail # 21430 at the Ft Worth Aviation Museum. Did any Rustics fly this bird?

THE RUSTICS NOW HAVE THEIR OWN FACEBOOK PAGE. The Rustics have a great new way to communicate, thanks to **Roger Hamann**, Rustic Yankee. Roger set up a Facebook site called: **“Rustic FAC Family.”** It is a closed group (Anyone on Facebook can find the group and see who's in it but **only members** can see the posts). Also, for the time being, any member of the group can add/approve members.

Group description: This group is comprised of Rustic pilots, interpreters, maintenance and any other support personnel who were involved in the daily operation of the Rustic mission at Bien Hoa AB and Ubon RTAFB from 1970-1973. Family members are also allowed to join. We currently have 41 members and could surely use some new blood.

Here's the link. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/702300539793648/>

You can easily post photos, videos, and messages to the Rustic buds on this website. It's a good way to communicate with fellow Rustics and those who have an interest in our mission.

This site is much more user-friendly than our current RUSTICNET email site so we encourage everyone to get onboard. Here's a recent posting from **Ron Dandeneau**, Rustic Foxtrot, on the “Rustic FAC Family” facebook site:

*“How many of you ran into Rustic members at other duty stations after leaving the Rustics? I was fortunate to have that happen to me on four occasions. First in 1975 when I was recruited as a driver for the Paris Air Show and ended up working with Maj **Lou Currier** at the Paris Embassy. Then again in 1977 when I again was recruited to go work as the supervisor of the DOD Protocol Office for the Paris Air Show and again worked with Maj Lou Currier. During the 1977 Air Show, **Jim Gable** and some of his coworkers walked into our office in the Sheraton Hotel. On a TDY to Osan Korea ran into **Lt Col Don Brooks**. Later as a civilian employee at the Pentagon worked with the General Officers Group and a then **Col Lannie Trapp** came in as the Chief of the Group.”*

WINGMAN SUPPORT. From Walt Friedhofen, Rustic Romeo. Some of you may have noticed my absence in communicating for the past few months. Some may not have and most probably don't care. At any rate, I had a small heart attack and fell, causing a fracture in a vertebrae in my lower back. So now I'm wearing a front and back brace that makes me look like a cyborg. This is first opportunity to get down the stairs (carefully) to my office and computer. Just wanted you to know I'll be back on the computer on a limited basis so keep those emails coming. Missed y'all. **Walt** *Walt, you are in our thoughts a prayers. Keep your mach up!*

BRONCO AT UNIVERSAL STUDIO, HOLLYWOOD. From **Jerry Dufresne**, 8/21/15. Hope you guys are well! My son Jason and family just moved up here (Washington state) and on the way they went to the Universal Studio Calif. Water World show. Lo and behold the sea plane they use is an OV-10 Bronco with pylons. Do you think its worthy of our newsletter? Go to their Studio tour website and click on sea plane portion! Take Care. **Jerry**

Experience a tidal wave of explosive action at WaterWorld – Universal Studios #1 rated show. Join an adventure that surges to life with jumping jet-skiers, perilous plunges, firefights, massive explosions, and an in-your-face plane crash you need to see to believe.



“RUSTIC” CALLSIGN BEING USED BY THE 19 WEAPONS SQUADRON, LAS VEGAS, NV. Just before our recent Ft Worth reunion the Rustics were contacted by a member of the 19th WPS, **Capt Billy Tompkins**. He located us through our Rustic website. If possible, the 19 WPS would like to meet some Rustics at the 2016 ALL-FAC reunion in Williamsburg, VA. Here is portions of his letter:

“Thanks for the information about the “Cleared Hot” FAC books. I am defiantly going to purchase at least two copies; one for myself and the other for our squadron bar. We have recently remodeled our office and are trying to assemble a collection of 19th TASS history in our bar. I'm sure you already know that the 19 TASS forged it's legacy over the skies of Vietnam and Cambodia and was then transferred to Osan AB, Korea. It remained there until after the Gulf War when it was deactivated in 1993. It was reactivated as the 19 Weapons Squadron at the USAF Weapons School in 2003. This is where I am currently an instructor. We have a deeper affiliation for the Rustics and the Rustic call sign because that is now our squadron motto. We use “Rustic” as both a toast and our operational call sign when operating on the Nellis range.

The 19 WPS current mission is to build graduate level students that will go out into the Air Force and be Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance experts that can integrate all the capabilities from F-35 to Cyber. The 19th has 2 classes annually which run about 6 months each. Every class consists of about 12 students. We are just a small part of the USAF Weapons School though; there are 18 Squadrons supporting every aircraft and capability that the Air Force can bring to bear. All of the squadrons have deeply rooted history such as ours. For example, the F-22/F-15 squadron (433 WPS) traces its roots back to Gen Robin Olds and the Wolf Pack in Ubon, Thailand.

*I look forward to meeting you one day and thanks again for your help. Rustic! **Capt Billy Tompkins***

O-2 AT EVERGREEN AVIATION MUSEUM. Walter Want, Nail 21. The 0-2 acquired by Evergreen Aviation Museum in McMinnville, Oregon, is now on the display floor. It was reconstructed by the museum staff and volunteers, repainted, and decked out in its day in-country color scheme. According to **Darrell**

Whitcomb, Nail, 25, this airplane was flown in the rescue of Bat 21 which was the largest SAR effort of the entire Southeast Asia war. **Stewart Bailey**, Curator of the Evergreen Aviation & Space Museum, offers an additional update:... “The aircraft is indeed on the display floor, but it has not finished its restoration. Sadly, the building that housed our restoration operation belonged to the late Evergreen founder, **Del Smith**, and over the past five years he (and his estate) failed to pay the mortgage. The bank foreclosed on the building and our restoration department, as a tenant, was kicked out. So... we've had to put everything into storage and several of the unfinished restorations had to go onto the floor. Luckily, the 0-2 is close to being finished, so we should be wrapping up by the end of the year. We appreciate the help of all the folks in the FAC community in making this restoration possible. From the photos, stories and the financial support that we've received, it has been a wonderful project to be involved with! I thank you all!”

LETTERS TO THE RUSTICS

From Jim Seibold, Rustic 63/13

Claude, I did not get a chance to thank you for your job as president for the Rustics for the past 18 years. If it had not been for you stepping forward and starting the Rustic organization, I know that it would never have happened. There was nobody else willing to tackle the tough job of starting a new group of warriors. My hat is off to you. Thank you very much for all the hard work you have done on behalf of the Rustics!!!!
Jim

From Hank Hoffman. A-37 pilot, Bien Hoa, 1970 (hankthird@aol.com).

I received a new copy of “The Rustics” from Lulu.com. In our new A-37 book we spend a lot of time talking about the A-37 accuracy and use some Rustics stories from your book as references. Below are some extra bits of information on two of the missions mentioned in your Rustic book (revised version).

Reference page 78 of “The Rustics”. The A-37 pilot who hit the trees while working with **Mike Wilson**, Rustic 08, was **Bob Chappellear**. Bob was in my flight and I had to give him a discipline of two weeks without flying. That punishment was not mine, but given to me by the squadron CO. Bob said he would have bailed out and claimed combat damage, but it was dark out.

Reference page 77. The A-37 pilot lost on downwind in the target area was **1LT Jim Harris** (James Clayton Harris), a classmate at A-37 school. He was, at the time, the shortest man in the unit, and with his demise I inherited that title. The whole thing sobered me up and instead of extending for 36 days, I just went home. I wanted to go over 400 missions, but it seemed it wasn't worth dying for. See page 78 in my book . “Better Lucky than Good...Memoirs of a Cold War Veteran” for the more detailed story. My book is available at Lulu.com.

....How did we get so old, we that were once so young?

From Larry Edmonson, Rustic 05

Claude: The Lord keeps blessing me with business opportunities in the energy industry and, even though I retired from the corporate world eleven years ago, I'm running my own small concern. Please note: anyone who was based at Bien Hoa and later had a bypass operation (caused by ischemic heart disease) is eligible for VA disability.

A reminder to all. If you haven't registered with the VA you should do it. It's very easy--only requiring a few minutes and your DD-214 (retirement/discharge papers.)

From Winnie Stearns:

Hi There. As I was Googling the Ravens newsletter came upon your information. I am widow of **Michael Stearns**. He was a Raven and Rustic. Did you possibly know him? Any interesting stories? Please feel free to contact me. **Winnie Stearns**, ND, RN, Broker/President, Stearns Property Co., Inc., 281-485-7204 or mstaxlaw@sbcglobal.net

From Doug Caywood, Rustic 17. His reply to Winnie Stearns

I was a brand new 1st Lieutenant in August when I arrived at Ubon. As I recall, Mike was a captain and one of the instructors who helped check us new guys out. I didn't know him for long, but we were all brothers in war. He was a great guy!!! He went to Ravens after Rustics...that was the normal progression. Since I was a bachelor, I was asked to volunteer for Ravens halfway into my tour, but I declined. It was a different and much more dangerous mission. He was a great guy and friend. Sorry for your loss...a Rustic death is a loss for all Rustics.

FAC CALENDER:

Next All-FAC Reunion, Williamsburg, VA, Oct 2016, dates TBA

Next Rustic Reunion, Ft Walton Beach, FL, 19-22 Oct 2017.

Rustic FAC Association
4033 Indian Trail Drive
Destin, FL 32541

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