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Rustic News

www.rustic.org



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This issue of the Rustic News and our annual Rustic Roster is being sent via email to every Rustic and Rustic Next-of-Kin who have a current email address on file. Be sure to keep us posted of any changes to your address or email by contacting Lendy Edwards at lendy@cox.net or 850-651-6766.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS: What a crazy 2020! Laura and I hope all are faring well and remaining healthy. We are praying this "stuff" all will soon pass so that we can see all of you at our planned Rustic Reunion next fall.

There is not much new on my end to report since last June's Newsletter except the Rustic Board of Directors recently conducted the bi-annual Board Meeting via Zoom! I guess it is a sign of the current times. But we found that some of us old guys who once thought that following the ADF (Automatic Direction Finder) needle to approximate our location in Cambodia was the height of automation certainly struggled with this new "Zoom" technology.

As we approach the end of 2020, Laura and I look forward to a new year. We wish each of our Rustic family members and families a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year. Please keep your emails, Facebook inputs, etc., coming to **Claude Newland** and myself so everyone can keep up with how you're doing.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

NEXT RUSTIC REUNION. Oct 20-24, 2021. Make plans now to join us in sunny Tucson, Arizona for a great Rustic reunion. The reunion hotel is the Desert Diamond Hotel and Casino. The final Reunion plans, hotel information, and registration form will be posted in our June 2021 Newsletter and on our Rustic website, www.rustic.org. There is lots to see and do in and around Tucson. A tentative reunion Schedule of Events is posted at the end of this newsletter. If you have any suggestions or inputs, contact our reunion point man, **Claude Newland**, at rustic19@cox.net. See you there!



Johnny Drury and P-38



Desert Diamond Hotel and Casino Tucson

TREASURER's REPORT. Jim Nuber. Our association is in good shape financially with almost 10K in our general fund. We have very few annual expenses now that our newsletters and Rustic Rosters are sent out via email. As a result, we no longer charge annual dues nor solicit life memberships. Thanks goes to all who have contributed dues and life memberships in the past to make this possible. Any Rustic who has email and is NOT an official member of the Association (i.e. never paid dues) now receives our newsletters free of charge. We want to keep everyone informed of our Rustic happenings, reunions, and Rustic brothers.

RUSTIC'S FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY. On 20 June **Roger Hamman** posted a notice on the Rustic's Facebook page, "Did anyone realize the Rustics 50th anniversary just went by on June 19, 2020?"

June 19, 1970 was the night **Jerry Auth** was tapped by 7th Air Force to fly his O-2 aircraft to Kompong Thom to defend Lt Colonel Lieou Phin Oum's beleaguered garrison from being overrun. We consider this to be the first Rustic mission flown into Cambodia. Rustic OV-10 flights operations started the very next day on 20 June. The Rustics continued to fly in support of Cambodian ground forces until Aug 15, 1973, the last day of the Southeast Asia conflict. Rustic and Nail FACs were the last FACs to depart the Cambodian theater on that fateful day. A four-ship of OV-10 aircraft returned to Ubon Air Base for a final flyby, pitch-out, and landing. A wild party ensued that night as the war for the Rustics was finally over.



The last four-ship of Rustic and Nail FACs to land at Ubon AB, Thailand, 15 Aug 1973

Unfortunately, the United States abandoned her allies that day. It was a bitter pill to swallow. Despite the political turmoil of the times, the Rustics answered their nation's call and performed their duties honorably. They fought the good fight. During those tumultuous three years and two months they protected their allies and stemmed the tide of enemy aggression. In so doing, we formed bonds of friendship and brotherhood that are evidenced today by the sheer joy and camaraderie we continue to share when we reunite at their unit reunions.

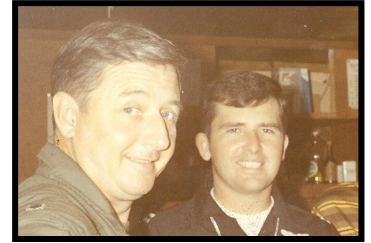
The complete story of the Rustics is chronicled in their 468-page hardbound book, "The Rustic - A Top Secret Air War in Cambodia." (Available at: [lulu.com](https://www.lulu.com). Search title: "The Rustics".)

RUSTIC COMMANDERS – We Salute you!

As we celebrate our 50th Rustic Anniversary, our thanks go to the men who provided indispensable leadership for the Rustic organization!

OV-10 Rustic Commanders, in order:

(1) Original 19th Task Force Commander, Lt Col James W. Lester, with Doug Hellwig, Rustic 14, Bien Hoa AB



(2) Lt Col Thomas B. Adams and his Assistant ALO, Maj Robert R. Clifford, with some Rustic interpreters, Bien Hoa AB



(3) Lt Col Walter F. Arrellano, Bien Hoa AB (photo not available)

(4) Maj Lester R. Gibson, Bien Hoa AB and Ubon RTAB



(5) Lt Col Raymond E. Stratton, Ubon RTAB



(6) Maj Simend E. Dahle, Ubon RTAB



O-2A Rustic Commanders, in order:

(1) Maj James R. Hetherington, Bien Hoa AB



Maj Heatherington



**Asst. Night Rustic ALO
Jack Koppin and Wife**

(2) Maj Richard M Roberds, Bien Hoa AB



**Major Dick Roberds
Rustic 21, January 1971**

2020 RUSTIC ROSTER. Database Keeper **Lendy Edwards**. A revised Dec 2020 Rustic roster was emailed to you in late November via email. If you have any corrections or changes in the coming year, please advise me at lendy@cox.net. Thanks. The 2020 Roster has changes posted for the following: **Zot Barrazotto, Gil Bellefeuille, Stephen Brownlee, John Charlton, Bob Clifford, Dave Dekoker, Roger Hamann, Tom Jamrosy, Roger Lanoue, Bill Leydorf, Dave Parsons, Dick Roberds, Jon Safley and Robert Thomas.**

The following changes to Dec 2020 Roster have been reported:

- Mike Gagne** 00 33 6 65 40 73 72
- Jim Heatherington** ngtfire@gmail.com
- Bob Ryals** (719) 265-3051
- Jin Siebold** 313 E Vesper Trail, Queen Creek, AZ 85140
- Frank Sovich** (660) 909-4070

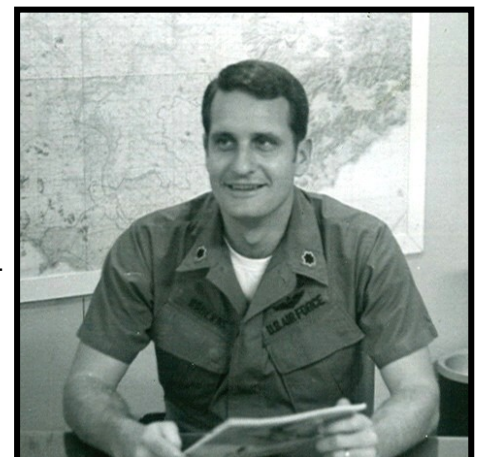
IN MEMORIUM--2020:

Richard M. Roberds, Rustic 21, took his final flight Sep 11, 2020. Dick assumed command of the Sleepytime and Rustic 0-2A FACs at Bien Hoa AB in early December 1970. He had two callsigns, Sleepytime 01 and Rustic 21. As the Rustic mission continued to grow, by New Year's Day 1971 he had 34 0-2 pilots under his command. He served as the Night Rustic ALO until the 0-2 Rustic mission was discontinued September 22, 1971.

Dick coordinated the efforts to record the history of the 0-2A Night Rustics published in Chapter 4 of our book, "The Rustics – A Top Secret Air War in Cambodia."

Slow hand salute for a friend, brother-in-arms, and American patriot.

Please note: Marcy Roberds may be contacted at (863) 430-5289, marcyroberds@icloud.com or 105 Stagecoach Pass, Tullahoma, TN 37388.



Pierre M Ligonde, Rustic J, Bien Hoa AB, c Sep 1970. Final Flight taken May 7, 2020. (See June 2020 Rustic newsletter for details.)



Pierre M Ligonde

RUSTIC ASSOCIATION SUNSET. Johnny Drury. The subject of how to plan for an eventual “Sunset” of the Rustic organization has been discussed in almost every BOD meeting and reunion. Our last discussions pointed toward continuing our efforts as long as feasible while searching for alternative solutions to keep our reunions (in some manner) and maintaining our communications. We agreed to keep this an “Open Item” for continued discussions. If you have any thoughts or inputs on this subject, your board members would like to hear from you.

ASSOCIATION WEB SITE. Lendy Edwards. The rustic board plans to insure our Rustic web site is hosted for the next 11 years. This is a long-term commitment to keeping and maintaining our web site active for the foreseeable future.

REMEMBERING LANNY TRAPP’S SHOOTDOWN. The following is a post from the FACNET, Sep 2020.

TODAY IN COAST GUARD AVIATION HISTORY - 26 SEPTEMBER 1971: A U.S. Air Force Sikorsky HH-53C Super Jolly Green Giant of the 37th ARRS, crewed by Coast Guard Lieutenant Commander Joseph Lawrence (“Jay”) Crowe, Jr., CGA ‘62 (Pilot), Xxxxxx (FNU) Hampton (Copilot), William Simm (Flight Engineer), Daniel G. Manion (Pararescue Jumper) and Richard L. Steed (Pararescue Jumper), rescued the crew of a North American Aviation OV-10A Bronco (call sign “RUSTIC 07”), Lieutenant Lansford Elmer Trapp, Jr., and Cambodian observer, Sergeant Chap Khorn, after they ejected from their 12.7mm-damaged aircraft, about 10 miles (16 kilometers) northwest of Kampong Cham, Cambodia.

LCDR Crowe, knowing that hostile locations and at least four large 12.7 mm anti-aircraft guns were within two miles, executed a spiraling autorotative descent from 8,000 feet to a landing, keeping his helicopter over friendly territory at all times. ROTORS RULE!!!



Lanny Trapp, Rustic 07, and Sgt Khorn at the Rustic bar debriefing their shootdown and rescue. Ron Van Kirk collection.



Trapp and Khorn getting the Rustic Chicken award from Putt Richards at the Rustic hooch.

O-1 BIRD DOG HITS THE ROAD. From the Ft Worth Aviation Museum, home of the FAC Museum and much of our Rustic memorabilia.

Last summer our Bird Dog restoration efforts were interrupted by the Father's Day storms that ripped through North Texas. All activity stopped while our insurance claim was processed. Now, it's time to move forward. Due to the nature of the repairs, we called in the services of our good friends and restoration experts at Cowtown Aerocrafters.

Earlier this week, we packed up our O-1 and sent it to Justin, Texas, so Lanny Parcell and his crew can make it airworthy again.

The aircraft will be restored in Vietnam Era livery. One side will depict Red Marker FACs and the other side will have the markings of the aircraft flown by Capt. Hilliard Willbanks, during the mission he flew for which he was awarded the Medal of Honor (posthumously).

Once the aircraft is returned to the museum, we plan to make it a flying memorial to all Forward Air Controllers (FACs) of all eras.



NEXT All-FAC REUNION. Fall 2022, Colorado Springs, CO. Due to the Corona Virus, the September 2020 All-FAC reunion scheduled for Colorado Springs was postponed until 2022. The FAC Board decided to delay the reunion until 2022 due to several FAC groups, including the Rustics, holding their own reunions in the off years.

AIRCRAFT VARIANT RESEMBLES VIETNAM-ERA OV-10 BRONCO.

Icarus Aerospace, a relatively new Canadian company, recently unveiled a clean-sheet aircraft called TAV (Tactical Air Vehicle), which they advertise as an “highly customizable, twin-turboprop multi-role capable aircraft, with a rugged, versatile, and technologically advanced design”. The aircraft is highly resemblant of the OV-10 Bronco, with the only differences being a more streamlined profile and the addition of an air-to-air refueling probe.

Marko Ivankovic, Senior Product Development Manager and Flight Test Engineer for the company, said, “We’ve developed TAV™ to be in alignment with latest international military armed overwatch and persistent presence requirements and challenges. The aircraft platform defines a niche of its own and excels in addressing all existing and future daily threats facing our troops, security forces and our world”.



Icarus Aerospace’s Tactical Air Vehicle.

Like the Bronco, the aircraft is configured with a tandem cockpit for two crew members that features the “latest avionics configuration with sensor fusion and network centric capabilities”. Performance-wise, TAV can take an 8,000 lbs. payload on 11 hardpoints up to 36,000 ft and 360 KTAS, with an endurance of six and half hours that can be extended by air-to-air refueling.

The aircraft also has a forward firing fixed cannon, which in the renderings is a three-barreled Gatling gun, and can be equipped with a belly mounted gun turret, much like the YOY-10D Night Observation Gunship System (NOGS) that were modified with the addition of the M197 gun turret from the AH-1 Cobra. As for the sensors, TAV can mount up to two EO/IR turrets (Electro-Optical/InfraRed) and an optional 360-degree Leonardo Osprey AESA radar, the same that is currently being tested aboard the U.S. Navy MQ-8C Fire Scout.

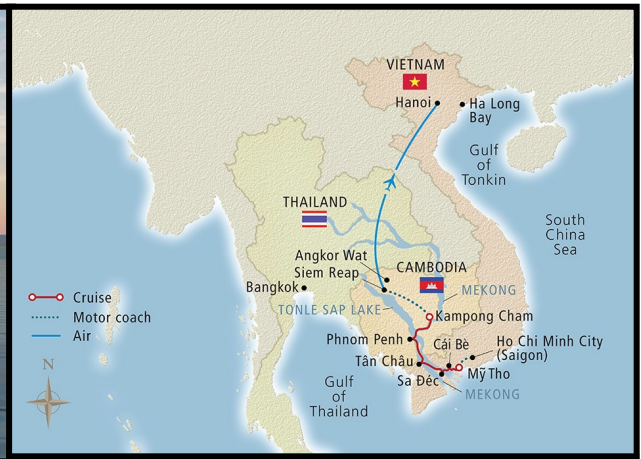
TAV is being designed to be optionally piloted, with the unmanned flights being remotely piloted or fully autonomous.

“We are now moving TAV into its next stage of development, to ensure that Icarus Aerospace has the financial resources to bring our exciting new program to fruition,” said Ivankovic.



Rustic Interpreters, Bien Hoa AB, c. Sep 1971. L-R: Joe Garand, (Unk), Roy Eklund, Doug Norman, (Unk), Wally Friedhofen, Pierre Li-gonde, and (Unk).

L-R: 0-2A Night Rustics, Mike Davenport, Frank Sovich, and Wayne Baker.



Viking Saigon, River Cruise Boat

Tour Itinerary

WANT TO TOUR VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA? My, how times have changed. Below is information recently posted on the internet. The Mekong River is no longer a Category A LOC (line of communication, which allowed FACs to destroy any enemy vessels).

Book a fall 2021 sailing on our brand-new ship, Viking Saigon, today! 15 days, 16 tours, and 2 countries. Call Viking at 1-800-255-9145. Starting at \$4999.

LETTERS TO THE RUSTICS:

From Bill Leydorf, Rustic 10

Hello to all. I apologize for sending out a mass email! First, I hope everyone is in good spirits and weathering these hard times as well as possible. With Donna retiring from her law practice this year, we have decided to do away with our land line and hopefully some of the many spam calls we receive. We can now be reached on our cells: Bill is 865.207.0830 and Donna is 865.776.2564. There, I have finished my task for the day... ain't retirement great! Bill



Vila Chau, 2014



Vila Chau (on the right), c. 1972, while serving with the U.S. Special Forces in Vietnam.

From Vila Chau, Hotel Airborne 04, chau.a432@gmail.com

Dear Claude Newland,

My name is Vila Chau. I contacted you several years ago. I don't know if you still remember me. I just want you to know that I was a former radio operator during the war in Cambodia. I talked to Rustic and Nail pilots when they supported our frontline troops. I really want to hear from former pilots who flew their missions in Cambodia.

Before I volunteered to help the Cambodian government. I served in South Vietnam for a couple years training Cambodian troops (Mike Forces) near Vung Tau. I worked with the U.S. 5th Special Forces at Camp B-51 Dong Ba Thin in Vietnam.

I arrived in Cambodia on January 29, 1973 after the Paris Accord on January 27, 1973. I served with the Cambodian Airborne units. My first radio call sign was Hotel Airborne 04, but I also used the call sign Hotel Airborne Headquarters after another fellow soldier replaced me. The call sign Hotel Airborne 04 was killed later. Again, thank you for any help from you or the Rustics!

Editor's Note: Below is Vila Chau's account of how he survived the Killing Fields of Cambodia.

On the first day I stepped back into South Vietnam from Cambodia (*April 1975*), a South Vietnamese Army pilot dropped bombs on the President's Palace in Saigon. I returned to my home village the next day and felt so happy after I met with my family and friends. I was hoping I wouldn't have to deal with any problems to my life because I was able to get out from the situation in Cambodia. I thought the South Vietnamese government was able to deal with the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army.

On April 17, 1975, the Khmer Rouge troops took over Phnom Penh, so the government troops had to surrender. They weren't able to fight without the help from the United States to provide ammunition, etc. A couple days later, there were some refugees who reached the border of Vietnam. They said the Khmer Rouge troops killed all the former soldiers who served with the Khmer Republic Army. At that point, I felt sad to hear the news. I wondered if I was still in Phnom Penh if they would have killed me too?

I was so lucky because I got help from a best friend who paid for the plane ticket to get me out, but my luck wasn't very long. The North Vietnamese Army took over the South Vietnamese government on April 30, 1975. The South Vietnamese Army surrendered.

A couple days later, the new government required all former South Vietnamese Army soldiers to turn themselves in and to bring some clothes and food with them for one week. The new government arrested them and sent them to prison as well as myself. They arrested me and confiscated most of my properties for participating with the Americans. While I was in prison in Vietnam, they needed my help and gave me a deal that I must return back after one week. I agreed with them but didn't return back after one week and just stayed home. No one came to say anything to me. I assumed that I was free after about six months in prison. I could say that I was lucky too.

Surviving in South Vietnam in early April 1975 was very hard for me because I was a disabled person. My right leg was paralyzed due to being wounded at a battlefield at Kampong Cham around September 1973. This wasn't long after the Americans ceased air support for the Cambodian Army on August 15, 1973. In Vietnam I learned how to fix bicycles and set up a shop, so I'd have money to buy food for my family.

We were able to escape to the border of Thailand in 1981. At a refugee camp in Thailand, I wrote a letter to the U.S. Embassy at Bangkok describing my background while I was in Vietnam during the war. In about two weeks a staff member from the American Embassy came to interview my family. They found out that what I told them was the truth. They accepted my family and flew us from Thailand to the United States on September 27, 1981.

I'm just trying to write as much as I can because I am not a writer or write very well in English. Again, thank you! **Vila Chau**



Vila Chau and his wife, visiting Phnom Penh, 2017. They live in Sacramento,

From Doug Robertson, Rustic Radio, '71-72

In 2018 a friend called to see if I wanted to go for a ride on a B-17 at the Salinas Air Show. Cal-Fire had an OV-10A, S2-T Air Tanker, and a Huey on display. I asked one of the ground crew if I could check out the ID plate.

The OV-10 pilot came over and we started talking about the role the OV-10 played in SEA. The young lady was a former F-16 driver that decided to fly for Cal Fire. When I told her of some of the functions Forward Air Controllers performed, she was amazed. I told her about the role this Bronco played in its earlier life as a War Bird. She offered to let me sit in the pilot's seat but my bad knees stopped me short of climbing in.

She then introduced me to the S2-T pilot who took me and my buddy up into the fuselage to check out the tanks and the cockpit. One thing I noticed is you could eat off everything in the plane, it was so clean inside and out. The pilot told me he washes it at least once a week himself. It was a real treat to get the VIP tour.

The B-17 ride was a real hoot but I soon discovered that B-17's don't have many windows so there was a lot of shuffling people around inside so we could all try out the different positions. The men that flew and fought in these machines are real heroes.

Best wishes to all for a safe Holiday season. 2020 has certainly been a trying time for all.

Editor's Note: According to Cal-Fire's website, the fleet's more than 50 planes and helicopters make it the largest department-owned fleet of aerial firefighting equipment in the world. Most of Cal Fire's tactical planes are North American Rockwell OV-10 aircraft. They are used in aerial command and control roles in fighting wildfires, providing tactical coordination with commanders on the ground and other aircraft in the sky.



Doug Robertson, Rustic Radio, and a Cal-Fire OV-10 pilot, Salinas Air Show, 2018.



2021 REUNION - SCHEDULE OF EVENTS
Desert Diamond Hotel and Casino, Tucson, AZ
Oct 20-24, 2021

DATE/TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION or NOTES
WEDNESDAY, 20 OCT		
1800-2200	PRE-PARTY—Dinner at Rustic Residence? TBD	1740-Meet in hotel lobby. Depart 1750
THURSDAY, 21 OCT		
0600-1030	BREAKFAST – on your own	Hotel/Casino Restaurant
0830-1500	PIMA AIR & SPACE MUSEUM Boneyard Tour at 1100 (1:45 minutes)	Meet in Hotel lobby at 0830 (Carpool)
0900–1100	HOOCH SET-UP	Hooch (4 th floor)
1100-1800	REGISTRATION/HOOCH OPEN	Hooch
1630-1730	EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING	Hooch/Location TBA
1740-2030	DINNER (Local restaurant-TBA) -Order from menu (Rustic seating area)	1740-Meet in hotel lobby; Depart 1750
2030-2100	OFFICIAL WELCOME	Hooch
2100-2130	BANQUET COORDINATION MEETING	Hooch/TBA
FRIDAY, 22 OCT		
0600-1030	BREAKFAST – on you own	Hotel/Casino Restaurant
0740-1100	SONORA DESERT MUSEUM Coffee, muffins & snacks available at cafe 1100-Depart museum for Old Tucson	Meet in hotel lobby at 0740; Depart 0750
1115-1530	OLD TUCSON 1130-30-minute tour 1230-Lunch at Rosa's Cantina	1530-Depart Old Tucson
1630-1800	FREE TIME	
1800-2000	DINNER (Hotel/casino Restaurant-TBA) -Order from menu (Rustic seating area)	Meet in hotel lobby at 1800
2000-TILL	HOOCH OPEN	
SATURDAY, 23 OCT		
0600-1030	BREAKFAST – on your own	Hotel/Casino/ Restaurant
0800-1000	HISTORIC MISSION SAN XAVIER de BAC 0820-Guided Tour & Video 1000-Depart Mission	Meet in hotel lobby at 0750. Depart at 0800
1020-1230	TITAN II MISSILE MUSEUM 1030-Briefing & Tour (1:15 min) 1230-Depart Museum	Green Valley, AZ
1245-1400	LUNCH-MANUEL'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT -Order from menu. Rustic seating area	Green Valley, AZ
1500-1630	RUSTIC BUSINESS MEETING/ELECTIONS	Hooch
1630-1700	BANQUET SET-UP	Hotel Banquet Rm
1800-1845	BANQUET HAPPY HOUR—CASH BAR --Individual & couple photos by Jim Seibold	Hotel Banquet Rm Dress: Business Casual, Tie Optional.
1845-1900	GROUP PHOTOS	Hotel Banquet Rm
1900-2130	DINNER BANQUET	Hotel Banquet Rm
2130-TILL	HOOCH OPEN	
SUNDAY, 24 OCT		
0600-1030	FAREWELL BREAKFAST - on your own	Hotel/Casino Restaurant
Noon	HOOCH CLOSES	