



WHO ARE THE RUSTICS?

The "Rustic" Forward Air Controllers (FACs) were USAF OV-10 and O-2A pilots who, along with their French-speaking USAF interpreters, flew FAC missions over Cambodia in support of Cambodian allied ground forces from June 1970 to 15 Aug 1973, the last day of the air war in Southeast Asia. Their callsign was Rustic and their mission was Top Secret.

The Rustic mission began on June 19, 1970, with an urgent request for the US to provide air support to beleaguered Cambodian troops who were under siege at the Cambodian provincial capital city of Kompong Thom. OV-10 and O-2A pilots, aircraft, and French-speaking interpreters, were thrust, literally overnight, into action in the Cambodian theater with no advanced warning. The first Rustic missions were flown from Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam.

Shortly thereafter in late June 1970, the Rustics moved to Bien Hoa Air Base, RVN where their operation continued to grow. Realizing effective support required 24 hour coverage in their area of operations, the Rustics recruited the 'Sleepytime' O-2 FACs to fly the 'Night' Rustic mission. Rustic operations continued from Bien Hoa AB until October 1971, when 'Vietnamization' and consolidation of US forces resulted in the OV-10 Rustics being reassigned to fly out of Ubon, Thailand. The Rustic O-2 mission was canceled and their personnel and aircraft were reassigned.

The Ubon OV-10 Rustics continued to conduct FAC operations over Cambodia until the end of the air war at noon on August 15, 1973. During this period, they were also intermittently required to augment US air operations in Vietnam.

The Rustics held their first reunion in September 1997 and formed the Rustic FAC Association. To date, over 250 Rustic personnel have been located--to include pilots, interpreters, radio operators, intelligence and maintenance personnel, and Cambodian allies.

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