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# Rustic News

[www.rustic.org](http://www.rustic.org)



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## PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS:

Rustics and Rustic Family, Laura and I wish all of you a very merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. Recent months have been especially full of FAC news, events, and updates as you will see in the Rustic Newsletter. **Claude Newland** has done an exceptional job (as usual) of presenting the Rustic story.

As mentioned below, our Rustic "fini" Reunion is now planned for autumn of 2025 where we will officially close the doors of this great organization and hand over our legacy of service to the Nation's long military history. I encourage all to start making plans for this event in Ft. Walton Beach, FL. This will be a fitting location since most of us started our Rustic experience there and the fact that our very first organized reunion was held there in 1997. Just like the memories we have of those days in the early 1970's, this "Fini" Reunion will surely be a memorable capstone to our history and comradery. Laura and I hope to see all of you Rustics and Rustic Family there. "Hit My Smoke." **Johnny**



**Johnny and Laura Drury & Bailey**

**OUR 2025 RUSTIC REUNION WILL BE HISTORIC.** This will be our last reunion. Dates have not yet been set, but may be in late October 2025. If you have any inputs or suggestions as to what other months should be considered, or any reunion suggestions, please contact **Claude Newland** who is chairing the reunion effort ([rustic19@cox.net](mailto:rustic19@cox.net) or 850-582-1074).

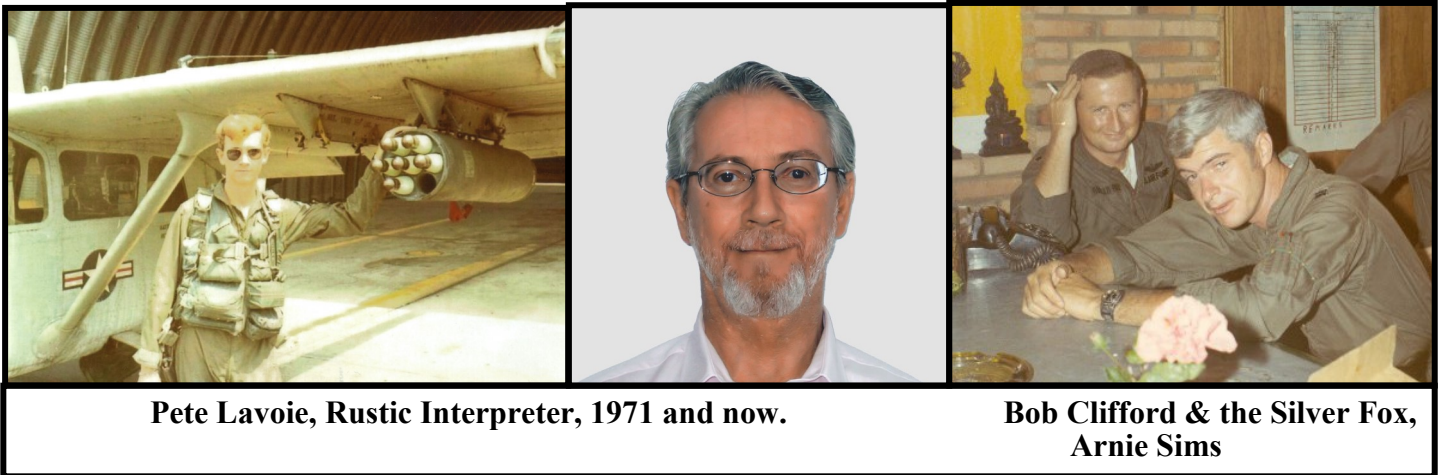
Start making plans now to attend. We will gather again in Ft Walton Beach, Florida to enjoy the beautiful beaches of the Emerald Coast, visit Hurlburt Field, reminisce and celebrate the many accomplishments of our Association, and enjoy the brotherhood and family camaraderie that has bound us together all these years...and just maybe...eat a little seafood.

You don't want to miss this one. This will be our 13th reunion since 1997. Remember that first one? Over 165 Rustics and guests attended. We have come a long way since then. We have published our unit history and shared some great camaraderie and wonderful times together at a number of cities around the country. The 2025 gathering will surely be a trip down memory lane as we solidify our Rustic legacy. This may also be the last time you will be able to see some of your Rustic buds, so come join us on the beach!

**RUSTIC ROSTER AND NEXT-OF-KIN ROSTER TO ARRIVE SOON.** Our annual updated Rustic Roster and Next-of-Kin Roster will be sent to you via email within the next few days.

**HURLBURT FIELD AIR PARK BEING RENOVATED.** Hurlburt’s beautiful air park is being expanded and reconfigured so the public can visit the Air Park in the future without having to formally enter the base. This will make the air park much more user-friendly. The front gate is being relocated northward and a number of aircraft will be relocated southward within the expanded air park. Public parking will also be added. In Phase One of the reconstruction project, the FAC aircraft on display and the FAC Memorial will remain where they are currently located and will not be in the public’s viewing area. They will eventually be moved into the expanded air park and configured similar to their current layout. The final phase of the project will be to build a Special Operations Heritage Center within the Air Park. Local FACs are birddogging this reconfiguration project, and the base leadership has been very attentive to our inputs and recommendations.

**FRENCH INTEPRETER PIERRE ‘PETE” LAVOIE—SECOND YOUNGEST RUSTIC?** It looks like **Leon Cardiff** may still be our youngest Rustic. Leon was born on April 30, 1951. **Pete Lavoie** may be our second youngest Rustic. He was born about seven months earlier on September 29, 1950, which makes Pete 73 years young. Both served as Rustic Alpha radio operators on Nui Ba Den Mountain. *(Anyone any younger than Leon?)*



Here’s a bit of Pete’s history. He was raised in Grand Isle, a small town in northern Maine. French was his first language. He was in Okinawa when he was recruited to be a French-speaking interpreter for the Rustic, Tilly, and Sundog FACs.

Pete arrived at Bien Hoa in 1971 and flew only a few missions with the Rustics. His first mission was in the OV-10 with the “Silver Fox”, **Captain Arnie Sims**. Arnie was known for making his backseaters fly the aircraft on their very first mission. Pete was apprehensive, but said he didn’t have to make the takeoff, as he feared. He did have to do an aileron roll on their return home flight leg, which he said was a scary enough for a rookie aviator.

After about a month, Pete was transferred to Bien Thuy for about a month and flew in the 0-2 aircraft. He said he does not recall either his Rustic or Tilly callsign. He finally wound up at Than Son Nut Air Base until late November, flying with the Sundog FACs as Sundog “Charlie”.

After his Southeast Asia tour ended, Pete was posted to Eglin AFB, FL. He was still only a three-striper then when he was called out for a Wing awards ceremony which included mostly officers. During the awards ceremony he was awarded a DFC and several air medals for his distinguished service as a combat interpreter in Vietnam. That really turned heads and got everyone’s attention.

After separating from the Air Force, Pete worked 23 years for Boeing Aircraft as a technician and Customer Service Representative, of which 20 years were spent overseas. His first assignment was 3 years in Paris, followed by an assignment in Madagascar, then 6 years in Casablanca, and 7 years in China. He retired in 2009 and now resides in Rancho, New Mexico with his wife Nadia.

**2023 RUSTIC REMEMBERED.** Our condolences go out to families of the following Rustics who took their Final Flight in 2023.

**Carol Kimbell, Rustic 10-B,** Jan 11, 2023

**Steve Peffer, O-2 Aircraft Maintenance,** Feb 24, 2023.

**Sally Gabel, Rustic Intel-B,** Interred Mar 15, 2023, next to Jim at the Arlington National Cemetery.

**Stanley Ritchie, Crew Chief,** May 13, 2023

**Cheryl Harris, Rustic 33-B** Jun 21, 2023

**Tim Eby, Rustic 40,** Oct 15, 20/23

**Joe Garand, Rustic Echo,** Oct 20, 2023

## SHORT BURSTS:

**1. Need a place for your kids to send your Rustic memorabilia?** **Doug Aitken** recently finished a full interview with **Dr. Kelly Crager** over a period of several days. Dr. Crager runs the Texas Tech Vietnam Archives Program. Not only does he do these interviews of Vietnam veterans, but the Archives Program will gladly accept all that Rustic memorabilia stuff your family will not know what to do with once you take that flight west. They will digitize photos and videos and return them (or you can tell them to keep them and just send you the digitized material.)

Doug says he would like to see us invite Dr. Crager to our Fini reunion. “I am very impressed with his interview skills and love the fact that Texas Tech is doing this work. He may also be able to give us a presentation on his big picture view of the Vietnam conflict.”

**2. Khmer Nickname for the OV-10.** Did you know some of the Cambodian allies had a nickname for the OV-10? According to Hotel KPC, **Lawn Lima Young**, the OV-10 was often referred to as “Chan Srak” because its tail resembled the “handle” of the Chan Srak stacked bowls which are common in Cambodia.



## 3. Rocket Pods Arrive at Hurlburt Field

**Sgt Ryan Gladu** at Hurlburt Field drove to Moody AFB, GA in July and picked up 14 rocket pods which were declared excess and no longer operational by the A-10's 23rd Fighter Wing. We have been looking for rocket pods for our FAC aircraft on display for quite a few years and finally found them at Moody AFB during our March 2023 Rustic reunion. Our thanks go to the Hurlburt personnel who moved quickly to obtain these much sought-after pods which will be restored and mounted on the OV-10, A-37, and A-26A aircraft.



**WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE YOUR HISTORY RECORDED?** **Dr. Kelly Crager, Texas Tech Univ., Vietnam Archives Project**, explains how you can be interviewed and what's involved.

I don't really work from a set list of questions, just kind of start at the beginning and see where the interview takes us. We do full-life interviews, beginning with early life, family, growing up, school, etc., and then we get into your time in the military. We start with various levels of training, types of airplanes flown and preparing to go to Southeast Asia. We will spend the bulk of the interview discussing your Vietnam experiences, combat, important missions, but also daily life, people you remember, specific events, and the like.

Once we have exhausted the in-country topics we will discuss life after the war, your career, family, etc., before wrapping up with a few questions about your experiences, your thoughts on the war, it's influences on you. So, it can be a pretty lengthy and involved interview, but certainly worth the effort. Most interviews last between 3 and 6 hours, some more, some less.

I conduct interviews over the phone or via Zoom and keep sessions to 1 ½ to 2 hours, holding multiple sessions as necessary. Once the interview is complete, I will post the interview audio online at [www.vietnam.ttu.edu](http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu). I encourage you to visit our website and take a look at the work we do preserving the history of the Vietnam War.

No preparation is necessary for an interview. I ask questions about your life, and you answer in as much or as little detail as you like. Some veterans prefer to dust off their logbooks, letters home, photos, etc., to remind them of different things and I certainly encourage them to do so. But it is certainly not a requirement.

I can be reached via email at [kelly.cramer@ttu.edu](mailto:kelly.cramer@ttu.edu), or by phone at 806-834-4834.

**GEORGE LARSON'S (RUSTIC "U") INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT TO BE DIGITIZED AND MADE AVAILABLE.** **Chuck Manuel** (Rustic Interpreter) recently went through some storage boxes and discovered a 34-page transcript of an interview of **SSgt George Larson** by **Capt. Clinton Murphy** (Interpreter OIC) in July 1971. The transcript contains quite a few astute observations about the Rustic mission, the important role of our interpreters, and what makes a good interpreter. I think you'll be impressed with George's knack for discerning enemy movements and his ability to give detailed intel reports after every mission. A number of the pilots who George flew with are named. He also mentions the accounts of several Rustic shootdowns, and some key troops-in-contact missions that he supported--most notably, the Battle for Prey Totung.

*If you would like a digitized copy of the interview, contact **Doug Aitken** at [dbaitken@icloud.com](mailto:dbaitken@icloud.com) or 919-601-4651.*

**SUNRISE MINISTRY REPORT FROM KOMPONG CHAM, CAMBODIA. Susan Smith, Nov 2023.** News flash from the Cambodian government! Pink eye is everywhere, wash your hands. The Kampong Cham prison officials have asked Sunrise to deal with this threat, which has infected about 1 in 6 of the prison population. So far, we have distributed 249 bottles of antibiotic eye drops and provided education on the details of prevention and treatment of this illness.

In other news, in the past month we've helped a child get a tooth extraction, helped an adult client see a doctor about swollen legs & blood pressure medication, provided medication to a child with a two-inch diameter ulcer on his leg, bought shoes for a student who was wearing his mother's shoes to school, taught HIV clients about domestic violence, and tutored on subtraction.

We are planning a newsletter in late November which will have a printed photo included. If you would like to get this and haven't gotten any printed letters from us in the past couple of years, contact me at [susan.smith@novo.org](mailto:susan.smith@novo.org) and make sure we have your postal address or email address. Thanks Love, **Susan** for Sunrise



**Pink Eye antibiotic being delivered to the Kompong Cham prison and pink eye education with the inmates**

*The Rustics have been supporting the efforts of our Cambodia friends in Kompong Cham (first, the House of Hope and now Sunrise Ministries) since Nov 2000 when a group of 26 Rustics and wives made a return visit to Cambodia. If you'd like to make a tax-deductible contribution to Sunrise, please send a check to our treasurer, **Jim Nuber** made out to "The Rustics" and earmarked for Sunrise Ministries. Jim's address: 1439 Evening Shade, Prescott, AZ 86305-6432. He will provide you with a receipt for your tax records.*

**RUSTIC OV-10 TAIL NUMBER 67-14639 DEDICATED “DOWNUNDER.”** Aussie FAC **Ken Semmler** provided the following information on 639 in June 2019:

“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 fini-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.”



**639 in the Philippines when obtained by the Aussies in 2007 from the Phillipine Air Force**



**In 2002 a group of American FACs attended an Aussie sponsored FAC reunion in Canberra, Australia. Rustics Lendy Edwards (L) and Nancy Sleight (R) were among the group the day they viewed 639 during its initial reconstruction.**





**Fully restored 639. Isn't she a beauty?! After sixteen years of diligent effort, 639 was formally dedicated in Canberra on 18 Aug 2023. Rustics Dick Green, Roger Dodd and Margaret Hakun attended the dedication and represented the Rustics. Several members of the Bronco Association were also in attendance.**

**DID YOU FLY OV-10 TAIL NUMBER 67-14639?** When the Rustics compiled a history of which Rustics flew 639, the following sent in their mission data confirming they flew this proud warbird: **Aitken, Brunelle, Dufresne, Edwards, Engleman, Ernst, R. Dodd, Freix, Hamann, Harshaw, Larson, McClellan, Newland, Nuber, Spencer and Van Dyke.** Surely, many more Rustic names should be on this list.

**Roger Hamann**, Rustic Yankee, reported "My very first look...and ride...in an OV-10 was in "639" on Nov. 10, 1971, from Phan Rang AB to Ubon RTAFB with **Maj. Benny Atkins** (Chico 04/Rustic 02)."

Below is Roger's record of his first month's flights as a Rustic. He flew his first combat mission on 13 November 1971, four days after arriving at Ubon. Clearly, the Rustic kept him and our other Ubon interpreters busy. In only eighteen days, from 13 Nov to 31 Nov, he flew 13 combat sorties and garnered 60.1 hours of combat flying time. Look closely and many of you will see that you flew with Roger that month.

										PILOT		CO-PILOT		Nov. 71				
						Sortie No.		HOURS		DAY		NIGHT						CALL SIGN
DATE	ACFT TYPE	ACFT NO	MSN SYM	SORTIES	LDGS	VFR	<del>W</del>	VFR	WX	SIM INST	PILOT VFR	WX	VFR	Mission #	A/S	TIME MONTH	TIME TOTAL	
10 Nov 71	OV-10	639	ZZ	1	1	✓		1	2.1		ATKINS			—	—	2.1	2.1	CHICO 04
13 Nov 71	OV-10	826	ZZ	1	1	✓		2	4.8		CLINCH		N	7659	4	6.9	6.9	Rustic 18
15 Nov 71	OV-10	826	ZZ	1	1	✓		3	4.5		DRURY		N	7659	2	11.4	11.4	Rustic 04
16 Nov 71	OV-10	829	ZZ	1	1	✓		4	4.5		CLINCH		SP	7666	1	15.9	15.9	Rustic 18
18 Nov 71	OV-10	806	ZZ	1	1	✓		5	4.7		DODD		S	7654	—	20.6	20.6	Rustic 19
19 Nov 71	OV-10	826	ZZ	1	1	✓		6	4.8		VANKIRK		N	7651	2	25.4	25.4	Rustic 08
20 Nov 71	OV-10	650	ZZ	1	1	✓		7	4.8		DODD		N	7652	1	30.2	30.2	Rustic 19
21 Nov 71	OV-10	805	ZZ	1	1	✓		8	4.3		BERRY		N	7665	2	34.5	34.5	Rustic 17
23 Nov 71	OV-10	687	ZZ	1	1	✓		9	4.9		SCHWEIN		N	7651	2	39.4	39.4	Rustic 20
24 Nov 71	OV-10	805	ZZ	1	1	✓		10	4.6		KIMBELL		SP	7666	—	44.0	44.0	Rustic 18
26 Nov 71	OV-10	621	ZZ	1	1	✓		11	4.3		BERRY		N	7656	—	48.3	48.3	Rustic 17
27 Nov 71	OV-10	686	ZZ	1	1	✓		12	4.8		CLINCH		S	7655	—	53.1	53.1	Rustic 18
29 Nov 71	OV-10	650	ZZ	1	1	✓		13	5.0		CAPPO		N	7652	3	58.1	58.1	Rustic 12
30 Nov 71	OV-10	648	ZZ	1	1	✓		14	4.3		KIMBELL		N	7652	2	62.4	62.4	Rustic 1

**RUSTIC ALPHA'S CRITICAL ROLL.** The Rustics could not have operated in Cambodia without the critical "Rustic Alpha" radio relay link to 7<sup>th</sup> Air Force on top of Nui Ba Den Mountain. Numerous Rustic radio operators served for short periods of time on Nui Ba Den. That distinguished list includes **Paul Lee, Leon Cardiff, Doug Roberson, Greg Lachon, and Dennis Lizdas.**

Here's **Paul Lee's** account of his Rustic Alpha duty: I was initially posted to Cu Chi Air Base in April 1970 and worked in support of the 3rd Brigade (Issue 30 callsign). I remember we got a couple of radio op guys in when they closed down the Issue 20 site at Tay Ninh, just below the Black Virgin Mountain. I think that was the 2nd Brigade. Being the new guy and low man on the totem pole I got volunteered to go to the top of the mountain in June for duty at the Rustic Alpha radio relay station supporting Cambodian operations. An interesting 10 days. I actually got a jeep ride from Cu Chi to the MACV compound in downtown Bien Hoa and then rode a Huey to Nui Ba Den.

I was only supposed to be up there a week but choppers were receiving ground fire while trying to land on top of the mountain so it was three days before I could get a chopper back to Cu Chi. We closed down the 3rd Brigade at Cu Chi sometime around Aug/Sep 70, I don't remember exactly



**Paul in his MK 108 radio jeep at Cu Chi.**



when, and then I went to Division and worked nights on the radio there. Definitely not much going on there except the occasional Shadow mission. We closed down Cu Chi in the Oct/Nov 1970 timeframe, near as I can remember, and I shipped out to Bearcat, with the Thai's, to complete my tour supporting the Rake FACs and all O-2's there.

In 1973 I had orders back to Vietnam to Tan Son Nhut's 3rd Aerospace Rescue & Recovery group as a radio operator. Of course, they were cancelled before I had to go but were quickly followed by orders to RAF Croughton in England for airways operations. By then I had been out of radio operations for two years, so I had no interest in getting back into it. I separated from the Air Force for 18 months and came back in when offered an opening in the computer field and did that until retirement.

*The reason there was not much going on for the Issue FACs at Cu Chi in the summer of 1970 was because the two-month Cambodia incursion in May and June 1970 had blunted the enemy's offensive abilities, plus a newly formed outfit (callsign "Rustic" at Bien Hoa AB) was now pinching some of the Issue FAC's OV-10 aircraft for operations over Cambodia. That's when a number of newly arrived Issue FACs (Newland, Nuber, and Freix) decided to volunteer to join the Rustics.*



**Nui Ba Den Black Virgin Mountain. We owned the top and the bottom. The VC owned the middle which meant duty on the mountain was hazardous to one's health.**



**Rustic Alpha at Nui Ba Den.**



**Rustic Alpha Radios**

**OSHKOSH REPORT. Leon Cardiff, III DASC, Rustic Alpha and Control.** I heard a rumor that the final day(s) of Warbirds in Review was coming to an end at Oshkosh. Since I had never attended, a friend convinced me I needed to experience what was there. It was well worth the trip from Maryland as I visited family

and friends on the way. Yes, the Oshkosh Experimental Aircraft Association showcased the latest, fastest and nosiest of aircraft and yet my visit was to see and talk to those who flew the OV-10 Bronco, O-2 Skymaster and the O-1 Birddog FAC missions. It would have been better than great for an OV-10, O-2, O-1, and an A-10 to fly separately and together for posterity.

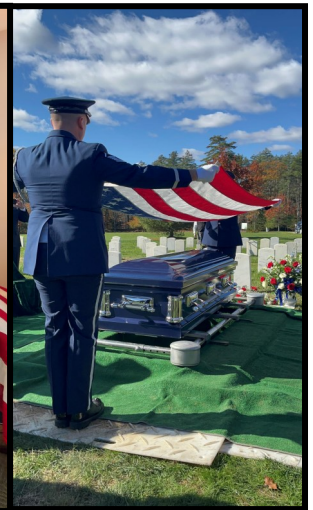
There were Huey Slicks and Huey Gunships that us Rustic Alpha Radio Operators had as transport up to and off of Nui Ba Den. There was also a C-47 “Puff” gunship on display, as well as some O-2’s, and O-1’s but not ONE OV-10. It was nice to talk to the non-SEA owners.

There were many highlights but by far the best was the Warbirds in Review presentations by former Kenny FAC, retired Air Force **LTC Ed Fairchild, Sneaky Pete**—an L-19 Army pilot, and the explanation of Laotian pilots learning to fly the T-28.

As a radio operator at Rustic Alpha, Rustic Control, and at Pawnee Target (III DASC) I experienced the processing time for airstrike approvals or clearances for gunships to expend on a target. And yes, from the bleachers I added during the Q & A the perspective of how long it took for those Airstrike approvals vice today’s instant communication capabilities. LTC Ed and I got together for a few minutes and have since talked a few times. I also wish to point out that Scotts Miracle Grow was the sponsor of Warbirds in Review.

I am looking forward to attending the Rustic 2025 reunion in Ft Walton Beach with those members who supported the Rustic, Sundog, Tilly or other FAC missions. **Pawnee Target out.**

**RUSTIC ROGER HAMANN ATTENDS JOE GARAND’S MEMORIAL** Our thanks go to **Roger and Joan Hamann** who flew to Maine to attend **Joe Garand’s** memorial service. Joe served as Rustic Echo (French Interpreter) at Bien Hoa Air Base, Vietnam and Ubon RTAFB, Thailand from August 1971 to May 1972. Joe took his final flight on Oct 20, 2023.



**Joe Garand, Rustic Echo.**

**Roger Hamann gives a final salute to a Rustic brother**

**RUSTIC CREW CHIEF STANLEY RITCHIE REMEMBERED.** The Rustics were blessed with some great crewchiefs and maintainers. **Bob Crothers** recalls some stories of his good friend, **Stanley Jarel Ritchie**, who took his final flight May 13, 2023.

“Hello Stan, this is crew chief Bob from the OV-10's, 23rd TASS/OL, Ubon Thailand. On behalf of myself and **George Harris**, we want to say farewell to a fine and wonderful OV-10 crew chief.

“Do you recall the three-room bungalow we rented downtown in Ubon, across from the only Burger King? How funny was that when we stumbled on it by accident. We thought it was so great living off the base, but what a hassle it was, especially those early mornings when we had to launch the first mission.

“Then you and George worked the late shift in recovering the OV's. You seemed to like that shift, fewer people around. You always took care of those planes to ensure that they were ready to go when **Bill Ready** or **Jimmy Crain** and I arrived to launch them. I never had to



worry when you and George recovered those late missions. Our time together was short, but wonderful, even when we had disagreements. And we had a few. But through it all, we managed to remain friends. You'll be missed in the memory of our past life, and I hope that someday we will be joined together again so that we can reminisce about those "Good Ole Times." Until we meet again, crew chief, I'll keep an eye on the sky for you should you pass by. **Bob Crothers** - June 30 at 12:54 PM.

## LETTERS TO THE RUSTICS:

### From Ned "Crash" Helm, Rustic 15

Fantastic July 2023 newsletter and the pix were really wonderful...especially the Rustic Display on the wall of the 74th's Heritage Wall. The 1973 four-ship OV-10 Sat Wat Dee picture which was taken by Cinc Nail, **Howie Pierson**, is on my wall. Both **Tom Yarborough** and I are in the pix which was later titled "The Last Rustics". I really love the pix of Missue. I took that in Fall '73 at NKP with her in her (my) Papa san chair with **Mike Kiraly's** hat in our hooch.

It's really nice to see a Sq that gives a s... about its heritage and has gone to great length to preserve it. Again, a wonderful piece of journalism. **Crash**

### From Lawn Lima Young, Hotel KPC Bravo, Tango, and X-ray, Jul 2023, lima.young@cox.net

*Lendy Edwards, Rustic, 20, recently had a long-distance phone conversation with **Lima Young** who has an apartment in Kompong Thom, Cambodia. Young also has a home in California. Here is Lima Young's email response from Cambodia:*

Rustic 20, Thx a million. You have made my day. After all these years, I finally got a chance to FaceTime with you, one of the Rustics. I am honored and privileged to see you face-to-face. As promised, I'll be keeping the communication open with you when I get back there (U.S.) for maybe 10 months a year. Until next time, Happy Birthday20!!! The Rustics make me feel alive again!

I did not mean to get too emotional so far as to cry while speaking to you. The fact is that I lost my only son left over from this "sale guerre" of the Khmer race.



**Lawn Lima Young, Hotel KPC, visiting Battambang**



**Lima Young's American flag in Kompong Thom**

Rustic 19 has asked me to write more about the population and everything I can at KP Thom before I get back to the U.S. in March. I did not cuz they monitor my e-mails and have been keeping their eyes on me. Now that my life has been published in the Rustics newsletter, I don't care anymore. I'll write more as soon as I get back there and pretty soon.

I have a renovated little house back in my native village in Kompong Thom (National Route 6) ready to take you guys in if you'd like to come over with A/C and hot shower ok? Of the 160+ homes in our community, I have been the only one legally authorized to have my American flagpole in the front yard... Well, I have been also on the board of the directors of the HOA...lol!!!

Again, you guys have been always in my heart and soul for over 5 decades now. Still love you guys, Take care! Hotel KPC out for now, **Lima**

**From Robert Clifford, Rustic 03**

Great July 2023 newsletter, especially since it was focused on the reunion at Moody. I went through F-86 training there in 1960 when it was still in the segregation times. I had wanted day fighters, but there were only a few slots available, so I went with the interceptors. But, to no avail, because only two in our class got to stay in fighters (and they were National Guard types). The rest of us had a choice of KC-97's, KC-135's, B-47's or B-52's. I took the B-52 because if I was going multi engine I wanted lots of them.

Lots of memories, Cheers, **Rustic 03**

**From Zot Barazzotto, Rustic 55**

**Claude and Lendy**, great job on newsletter which I finally got to read. I'm still alive and kicking in the Dayton, OH area, having fun driving my Little Red Wagon to car shows and parades.

'Will officially sell my business 1 Aug, but I'm nowhere near retiring, just haven't found next thing to keep me off the streets and out of the bars. I just turned 80. My tag line is "Old age is mandatory, but maturity is optional, and I didn't take the option." (See Photos) A Guy in Alaska built one on a '76 Mazda pickup truck chassis. Looked like fun so I rolled my own. Actually, I had it built.

I'm a parade/car show hooker. Have Radio Flyer, will show up. The lady is a girl from the Pin Up Girl contest that was part of the car show. **Zot**



**Zot Barazzotto in the driver's seat parading about town**

**From Desirea Pepper, daughter of Steve Pepper (0-2 aircraft maintenance)**

Hi Claude, good morning. I am sorry for the late response as I am working two jobs, and my days are a little busy. Thank you so much for reaching out. I would love to be informed of the Rustic newsletters and have my dad mentioned! He loved being a Rustic and I would love to read about his fellow veterans. I appreciate you doing this, and I am extremely grateful to read about my dad's life as a veteran ☺. Have a wonderful day.

*Note: Desirea has been added to the Rustic Next-of-Kin Roster.*

### From Nancy Sleigh, Rustic 12B

Claude, I so enjoyed our Rustic Reunion at Moody AFB. In fact, I believe it was one of the most remarkable reunions we have had in all these years. Those young men we met took such good care of us. I was so impressed by their generosity and giving us such a terrific time.

I appreciate your driving me there and back home. I will long remember our stay there. **Nancy**

### From Bill McAdams, Rustic21, Subject: July 2023 newsletter, “Southeast Asia War Remembered - The Last Day--The Rustics were there.”

Thanks Claude!! Great recap of a lot of work over those years!! I am so glad I got to be a part of the efforts to help our Cambodian friends and for the friendships we forged over the years that followed!! Great work you, **Lenny Edwards, Doug Aitken**, and many others have done to preserve the Rustic name and mission down there at Rustic Control HQ (Destin/Ft Walton Beach)!! We have so enjoyed every reunion, especially returning to where each of us began our Rustic careers!! “Thanks for the Memories.” Bill and Cathy

### From Don Brooks, Rustic 02

‘Just wanted to tell you about a great trip I had in September. I was selected for an Honor Flight trip to DC. Outstanding!!! I flew with 29 other old vets (one from WW II, three from Korea, the rest from Vietnam, many in wheelchairs). It was a first-class VIP trip all the way!

We flew out on Thursday, 14 September, spent two nights in a great hotel, and returned Saturday evening. When our plane arrived at the airport, we were met by a fire truck which sprayed us. Going thru the concourse, we were met and welcomed by CROWDS of flag waving folks, thanking us... I even got a few kisses! It was hard to hold the tears back.

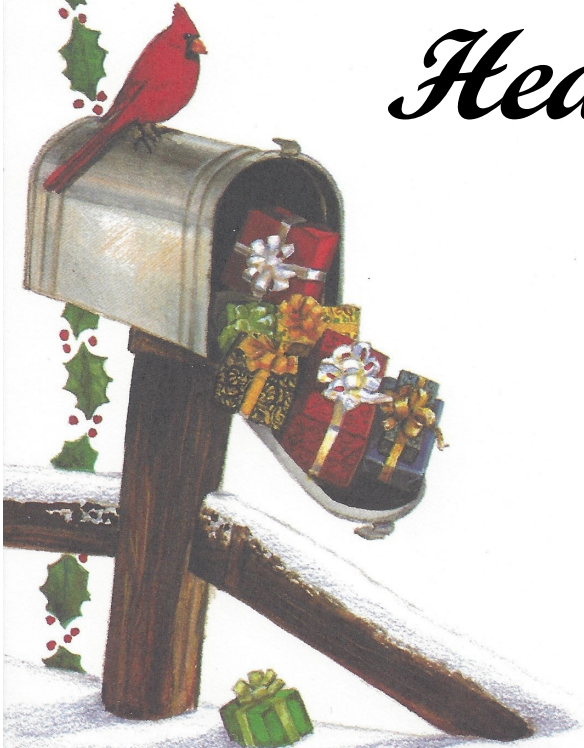
We were taken to almost all of the memorials plus the White House. Lots of good food and beverages. At the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, we were put in a special position right up near the guard and saw the changing of the guard and a wreath laying. Don’t know when I’ve had such a great experience. If you have a chance--GO!!! To get on a trip, just do a search for “Honor Flight.” You should see a listing of trips leaving from your area and how to apply for one.

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

1. **A-37 Reunion**, Galveston, TX, 7-11 April 2024.
2. **FAC Assoc.’s Final Reunion**, Ft Walton Beach, FL, 24-27 Oct 2024.
3. **Rustic FAC Final Reunion**, Ft Walton Beach, FL, 2025, Date TBD, (Possibly late Oct )



*Merry Christmas  
to All!  
Wishing You a  
Happy and  
Healthy New  
Year!*



Spence