

## MARCH 2020 MEETING

*As we sit and wonder when we will be able to have our next in-person car club gathering or any other group gathering, here's a summary of what happened at our last monthly meeting at the Hampton. Stay separate (well, from others) and stay safe.*

About 80 members and guests were on hand at the Hampton on March 11 for our regularly scheduled monthly meeting. The meeting guests included people from several of the charities that we support with car show proceeds:

American Legion

Honor Flight Austin

Restoration Ranch

VFW Post 1503

Lost Pine Leathernecks

Red White and Blue / Bastrop Honor Guard

Bastrop Emergency Food Pantry

ITS HUH Ministry & Soup Kitchen

In a show of our support for veterans through our car club activities, the March meeting was full of patriot-related features.

Bo started us off with a brief summary of what was on the agenda, then we were treated to the presentation of the colors by the Elgin NJROTC. Members then recited the Pledge of Allegiance and then in what may have been a first for cruisers club meetings, two club members, Robin Peshak and Jeff Kirk sang the national anthem as many members joined in to accompany them. We then enjoyed a buffet dinner from Casa Chapala restaurant.

As dinner started to settle in with most in attendance, Bo again got us moving by asking Jeff Kirk to introduce our featured speaker for the night. Jeff started with a request to everyone in attendance for veterans to please stand to be recognized. Our club is fortunate to have a large number of veterans, quite a number of those being in attendance. All in attendance were eager to recognize the veterans' group with their applause. Then as we approached our speaker introduction, Jeff asked that the veterans in attendance that were in the Air Force to please stay standing, and it was apparent that we are very well represented by the Air Force in our club member veterans' group. Lastly, Jeff requested that any pilots or aviators in any of the armed forces in attendance to please remain standing. At this point Bill Whittaker and Bill Heslep were the last members standing. Bill Heslep spent much of his career as a helicopter pilot while Bill Whitaker flew various aircraft for the Air Force including the F-4 Phantom, which was an interesting coincidence for the evening because our featured speaker also spent

most of his flying time in the phantom in Vietnam. Jeff reminded the meeting attendees that we are fortunate to have an example of the F-4 Phantom here in Bastrop on display in front of the American Legion Hall. And in an incredible coincidence with this aircraft, Bill Whitaker actually flew this specific airplane on occasion in his career in the Air Force.

The focus of this exercise was to recognize the service of these individuals but also to focus our attention to the featured speaker of the night, who was an Air Force pilot primarily in the Vietnam era . Retired Lieutenant Colonel Ray Dudley was then introduced. Ray is a Bastrop resident, has been for some 25 years, but is originally from Orange, Texas. He is a car guy also, with a 1966 Jaguar that he has had since 1972 and a C-5 Corvette convertible that he acquired just a few years ago. He signed up with the Air Force as the Vietnam conflict expanded. Ray's storied career in the Air Force started with navigator duties on the B-29, the aircraft that helped us finish the war in the Pacific in 1945. Then it was on to F-86 saber jets for his first fighter supersonic experiences, then Ray moved on to the F-4 Phantom fighter jet that was a main stay for aerial action over Vietnam. As Ray took the microphone, you could see that he was built for fighter planes, a short, wiry, confident fella, and after a lot of years still has a way to describe his activities in the Air Force in a very interesting and riveting way, while remembering every detail to this day. He definitely kept everyone on the edges of their seats as he was describing his experiences. The most interesting and noteworthy event of his career, and the focus of his presentation was a mission in 1966 when he was part of a fighter group charged with protecting a bomber that was on a mission over North Vietnam. At a key point in this protection assignment, enemy MIG fighters appeared and turned their sights to this bomber as well as to the accompanying fighter planes. Ray continued to escort this bomber while under attack by these MIGs, and pursued more than one to attempt to defend the squadron, and was able to destroy one of the MIG fighters using a sidewinder missile. This was quite an accomplishment as it was the first MIG fighter to be brought down by anyone in Ray's squadron at the time. It was one of the earliest MIGs to be downed in all of the Vietnam conflict at that time, and brought national attention to the Air Force and to Ray for this accomplishment. It brought national attention from the government of China as they claimed that this MIG was shot down across the Chinese border and not in Vietnam, which was against official rules of engagement at the time. The US government denied that this was the case but this argument went back-and-forth in the press. Ray's presentation included a number of news articles that discussed this issue.

Ray was decorated with a number of medals and awards throughout his career, but the most prominent one was the silver star for this action in support of this bomber squadron and shooting down this MIG. After Ray's presentation and after the standing ovation, Bill Heslep stood to say that the silver star is the third highest medal awarded to US military personnel, so it's just two levels below the medal of honor.

Quite a number of photos of news articles, photos, and awards are included in the PowerPoint presentation that was shown at the meeting and is attached. Some of these slides were edited out to reduce the file size for distribution in this email. But all the photos including a few that are not in the presentation are available for viewing in the Google Photo link in addition to other photos taken at the meeting. The official meeting minutes are also attached.

Many thanks to Ray for his service career and his time and effort to share his military experience and accomplishments with the club. Many of our heroes did not make it home or are gone since their service, and we are blessed to have some around that can remind us of the sacrifice and service.

Ray enjoyed the meeting and even mentioned that maybe he should join the club since he has a lot of things in common with our members, such as car interests and our veterans support mission.

[March 2020 BAC Mtg Pictures](#)

## B.A.C. Monthly Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2020

Meeting came to order at 6:00p.m.

The meeting opened with Presentation of the Colors by NJROTC Elgin Stars Spangled Banner was sung by Jeff Kirk & Robin Peshak with help from all of the Cruisers singing along.

Pledge of Allegiance

A Motion made by Bill to accept the March Board Meeting Minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Bill.

Veteran Support Organizations with Representation here at tonight's meeting are:

American Legion

Honor Flight Austin

Restoration Ranch

VFW Post 1503

Lost Pine Leathernecks

Red White and Blue / Bastrop Honor Guard

## Non-Profit Local Charities

Bastrop Emergency Food Pantry

ITS HUH Ministry & Soup Kitchen

A better sound system is being quoted by David Bond for The Hampton Inn.

Food Tonight was provided by Casa Chapala. Entrée of Chicken Fajitas and Enchiladas, an excellent meal it was. Cruisers collected a well-rewarded tip of \$150.00 for the servers!

50/50 drawing tonight was won by Pam W. A nice prize of \$77

Birthdays this month are Lisa Smith, Tom Jackson, and Andre Betit.

Appreciation Dinner last month showed 110 members showed up to a BBQ dinner provided by club members Greg & Susie Blume

Jon reported that the Austin Art Institute is working on the video of the Car Club shot last month should be completed by the end of March.

Harry reported there is a car show with several members going on March 14<sup>th</sup> in Belleville Texas. Anyone wanting to go they are meeting at The Rock Shop on Hwy 71 in Smithville.

Member Norm Jones was awarded Bastrop Man of the Year.

Neil reported on the car show, concerns with the upgrading of Main Street, working on Fliers, also 1<sup>st</sup> meeting will take place in April with date to be announced.

Craig announced the March 25<sup>th</sup> Social will be at Bassanos Restaurant.

Cheryl Green announced she has a new car! It is a 2012 Corvette, Centennial Addition - Congratulations!!

James has a new to him OKY truck with a great history that he purchased from Gary Baker. It is parked outside of his Rock Shop on Hwy 71 in Smithville.

Bo will do the April My Life with Cars and Gary Baker stepped up to do his car version in 7 min in May, this should be interesting.

The Cruisers had a very special guest speaker this evening,

Lt. Colonel Ray Dudley. He told the audience his story of his life in the military, Korean Conflict and Vietnam. The first pilot to shoot down a MIG in Vietnam, this F4 Aircraft is on a pedestal in New York. A 3-time Silver Star Recipient. What a story from a well decorated Veteran. Thank you Ray for your service and telling us your story. The cruisers finished with a well-deserved standing ovation!!

Bo showed the group a very touching story he called an Attitude Adjustment. It was about a Veteran in Desert Storm who became a quadriplegic when a mine went off next to him, he told his story about his wife, child and what they faced. A very touching story, a few tears were shed in the crowd including myself. We all think we have everyday issues till you hear his story, then you realize we don't have any problems at all. God Bless you Travis and the Veterans.

If you would like to have a garage tour of your shop please contact Harry Green

Upcoming events:

Friday March 13<sup>th</sup> Canyon Lake Hot Rod and Classic Car Cruise in

Sat March 14<sup>th</sup> Classic Car Stampede in Belleville

Sat March 21<sup>st</sup> Pistons on the Square - Georgetown

Sat Apr 4<sup>th</sup> @ B&B Auto Open House 9am – 1pm

Wed Apr 8<sup>th</sup> – BAC Regular meeting

Sat May 2<sup>nd</sup> – Texas Bowties 10th Annual Car Show San Antonio

Rodney gave his Financial Statement:

Rodney reminded the Cruisers that the meal at the monthly meetings are ordered through the count provided by the Evite system which is calculated

through the Cruisers selecting if they prefer to eat a meal. That number is given to the Caterer and the Car Club pays for that amount of meals. If you order a meal and you are not able to attend the meeting you are still responsible to pay for that meal unless you notify the Evite Director.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00p.m.