

RTFV-35 Sqn Reunion.

Over the 4 days, 26th February to 29th February, 2012, a lot of ex RTFV-35 Sqn blokes, along with their wives/partners, got together in Brisbane to celebrate the departure of the Squadron from Vietnam. RAAF Transport Flight Vietnam, (RTFV), which operated the Caribou aircraft, was formed in Vung Tau in 1964 and on the 1st June 1966, RTFV was re-titled No 35 Squadron. On the 19th February 1972, 40 years ago, the last of the RAAF's Caribou aircraft left Vung Tau for their return flight to Richmond. This made it the first of the RAAF's squadrons committed to Vietnam and the last one to leave.



The idea for this recent re-union germinated in [Townsville in November 2009](#) when past members of RTFV-35 Sqn and 38 Sqn, gathered to farewell the Caribou aircraft which was honourably retired after 45 years of service. John Sambrooks, who likes a cold beer on a hot day, and on a Thursday, and a Saturday – in fact on any day ending in “Y”, and who is the secretary of the RTFV-35 Sqn association, thought it would be a great idea to get together again to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Squadron's departure from Vietnam – an idea that was readily accepted and agreed to by most. John and his lovely partner, Andrea, then spent the better part of the ensuing 2 years cajoling Governments, Government Departments, organisations and individuals to part with some of their money and/or products to subsidise costs.



Venues and events were considered, investigated, some disregarded, some just made it too hard, others were accepted and finally a program was put together and broadcast to all. Accommodation costs and facilities in Brisbane were considered, proprietors were cajoled and badgered to provide “deals” and finally the “Oaks Apartments” was accepted as the favoured venue for those attending.

The wonderfully-well put together program which was organised by Sambo and Andrea (who was “Shanghaied” into the effort), included:

Sunday 26th Feb

- A “Meet and Greet” at the Kedron Wavell Services Club.
- Sausage sizzle bar-b-q at the Oaks.



Monday 27th Feb

- Bus trip to the [Queensland Air Museum](#) at Caloundra.
- Lunch at the Caloundra RSL Club.
- Pizzas at the Oaks.

Tuesday 28th Feb

- Bus trip to [Aeospace Australia](#) at Brisbane Airport to see how the MRH90 and the ARH Tiger helicopters are built.
- Ceremonial Dinner at the Kedron Wavell Services Club.

Wednesday 29th Feb

- A Dedication Ceremony where the RTFV/35Sqn plaques were mounted at the ANZAC Shrine in Brisbane.
- Tour of Castlemain-Perkins brewery to see how XXXX beer is made followed by a few samples of the brew at a Beer-b-q in the Ale House.



If you missed it – you missed an excellent event. Stu Bonett is planning another which will be held at Coffs Harbour in 2014, put it in your diary. Dates etc will be notified in due course.

Seen at the Meet and Greet:



Back Row L-R: Don Payne, Allan Rogers, Kath Rogers.
Front Row L-R: Pat Kimberley, Gary Kimberley, Lyn Payne.



L-R: Wendy Bebbington, Brenda Williamson, Dianne Kirby, Pat Piggott.



L-R: Dennis Window, John Sambrooks, Allan Shaw, Geoff Brand, Jim Williamson, Nigel Murray, Ted Strugnell, Laurie Rappo, Bob Hodgson, Norm Bruce.



L-R: Susan Bothman, Peter Franks, Bob Williams, Cathy Williams, Jeff Pedrina, John Griffiths, Robyn Pedrina.



L-R: Hugh McCormack, Wayne Oldfield, Des Pryce, Ted McEvoy, Jim Cameron, John Webster, Dick Salter.



**Back Row, L-R: Jim Maguire, Nev Rogers, Doug Angus, Bill DeBoer,
Front, L-R: Colleen Rogers, Sandra DeBoer**

These two girls, Andrea Butler on the left and Sheryl Benneworth, manned the gate and made sure no one snuck in, they kept all the money safe and sound, answered a ton of questions, sold a heap of merchandise and handed out about a million “show-bags”.



Sambo had arranged to have a photographer at the Meet and Greet as he wanted to divide everyone into groups for photos. People were assembled into crews corresponding with when they served in Vung Tau. Starting with those that were there for Christmas 1964, photos were taken of groups that spent their Christmas in Vung Tau - right up to 1971.

The Class of 1964



L-R: Trevor Hill, Eric Evans, John McDougall, Ray Piggett.

The Class of 1965



Back Row L-R: Ron Glew, Ken White, Keith McDowell, John McDougall, Bob St John, Charlie Downs, Luigi Hanlon.

Front Row L-R: Stuart Bradley, Jack Bennett, Reg “Rocky” Rockliff, Gary Kimberley, John Hartigan, Terry Topping.

The Class of 1966



Back Row L-R: Fred Olsen, Brian Peck, Jeff Pedrina, Graham Johnson, Max Turner, Ken Davies

Front Row L-R: Keith Kinch, Jim Cameron, Gordon Nichols, Stew Bonett, Dirk Van Kessel (Peter Forster), Geoff Hall

The Class of 1967



Back Row L-R: Brian Dwyer, Ken Erwin, Jim Maguire, Graham Palmer, Robert “Eckles” Eley, Wally Little, Bob Williams, John McDougal
Front Row L-R: Peter St John, Jack Bennett, Hugh McCormick, Doug Angus, John Webster, Ted McEvoy

The Class of 1968



Back Row L-R: Keith McDowall, Len Bebbington, John Griffiths, Nev Rogers
Front Row L-R: Wayne Frew, Des Pryce, Wayne Oldfield, Dick Salter

The Class of 1969 – The A Team.



Back Row, L-R: Bill DeBoer, Nidge Murray, Ken Matthews, Allan Shaw, Trev Benneworth, Stuart Bradley, Col Duffield, Peter Franks
Front Row, L-R: Don Payne, John Barry, John Sambrooks, Barry Kirby, Jim Williamson, Trevor Wallace.

"The problems we face today are there because the people who work for a living are outnumbered by those who vote for a living"

The Class of 1970.



Back Row, L-R: Frank Robinson, Geoff Brand, Dennis Window, Rob “Chuck” Connor, Rob Collins.
Front Row, L-R: Nev Young, Tom Mills, Allan Rogers, Don Henny.

The Class of 1971.



Back Row, L-R: Barry “Sluggo” Patrick, Ted Strugnell, Lyndon Johnson, Wally Little, Laurie Rappo.

Front Row, L-R: Brian Patten, Terry Daly, Ted Barnard, Tony Sommer.

It was then time to get all the blokes together for a group photo.



And to bring a touch of colour and glamour to the scene, it was time to get all the lovely girls together.





Back at the Oaks Apartments, the 3 Amigos got together to share past and present experiences. John Sambrooks (left) is the current Secretary/Treasurer of the Association, John Webster (middle) is the immediate past Secretary/Treasurer and Geoff Hall (right) was the first.

A man is driving down a deserted stretch of highway when he notices a sign out of the corner of his eye...It reads:

SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS HOUSE OF PROSTITUTION 10 MILES

He thinks this is a figment of his imagination and drives on without second thought. Soon he sees another sign which reads:

SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS HOUSE OF PROSTITUTION 5 MILES

Suddenly he begins to realize that these signs are for real and drives past a third sign saying:

SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS HOUSE OF PROSTITUTION NEXT RIGHT

His curiosity gets the better of him and he pulls into the drive. On the far side of the parking lot is a stone building with a small sign next to the door reading:

SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

He climbs the steps and rings the bell. The door is answered by a nun in a long black habit who asks, 'What may we do for you! my son?' He answers, 'I saw your signs along the highway and was interested in possibly doing business....' 'Very well my son. Please follow me.' He is led through many winding passages and is soon quite disoriented. The nun stops at a closed door and tells the man, 'Please knock on this door.' He does so and another nun in a long habit, holding a tin cup answers the door. This nun instructs, 'Please place \$100 in the cup then go through the large wooden door at the end of the hallway.' He puts \$100 in the cup, eagerly trots down the hall and slips through the door pulling it shut behind him. The door locks, and he finds himself back in the parking lot facing another sign:

**GO IN PEACE. YOU HAVE JUST BEEN SCREWED BY
THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS.
SERVES YOU RIGHT, YOU SINNER**