

Association President's Message – August 2020

**Greetings from New Jersey fellow AC-119 Gunship Brothers and families!!**

I hope and pray that this message finds you all well and safe. It is an unusual and stressful time, dealing with social distancing and facemasks in public. Still, time seems to be passing by quickly. Although this year's reunion has been postponed, I was hoping to take a trip to the FL panhandle in October, visit with my AC-119 brothers and families, but I now worry a bit about a COVID-19 resurgence in the autumn. It is likely I'll be sitting in NJ this October. Uncertainty is awful.

I'm happy to report that your Association Board continues to work on routine matters, and dealing with some special projects that enhance our Association. We are now teleconferencing every other month (instead of monthly). I do hope you found our May *Firing Circle* and June FLASH message interesting. As you read through these, you can see how engaged we are with our Outreach Program, and special history capturing activities.

**Organization Update:** Many large associations have a position named Sergeant-at-Arms. There had been and will be a few situations where the AC-119 Gunship Association needed "security" oversight. Therefore, to make things official, we created a new Appointed Position name Sgt-at-Arms. I asked our long-time member, Larry "Baby Huey" Hunter if he would accept the appointment. He gladly did. Larry has helped us in the past and I am thrilled to officially help us moving forward. **Thank you, Baby Huey.**

**Some News** (for more detail, see Aug. *Firing Circle*):

1. For those who served at Phan Rang and are using social media Facebook, there is a FB page for "Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB. That FB site's managers publish a "Happy Valley" Newsletter, which includes a wide variety of Phan Rang history. In a recent issue, they published our V.P Roy Davis' story of ferrying an AC-119 from Ohio to Phan Rang. This put the AC-119 into a highlight for those Happy Valley FB members. Thank You Roy.
2. Association T-Shirts: For those who purchased T-Shirts for this year's reunion, you all now have a rare one, the T-Shirt for the reunion that wasn't!! But wait, there is now an updated version of Shirts for next year's reunion at Ft. Walton Beach, 2021. The back has listed the past reunions, and 2020 is referred to COVID-19. Quartermaster Gus Sininger will be announcing opportunities to purchase in the future
3. Good News: Master Gunsmith Ron Soderquist **has completed** a stainless Kimber Classic 1911 .45 ACP pistol, which is currently being raffled with the drawing to be done at the 2021 FWB reunion. Ron is dealing with many of the supply chain issues that we see every day, but is working through the issues.  
Good job Ron.

Enjoy the remainder of the summer! I trust that if we all do the correct get past this global crisis and stay All the best,  
Mike Drzyzga



will miss seeing many of you this year. things to practice safe behavior, we will healthy.

**2021 AC-119 GUNSHIP REUNION XXI**  
**OCTOBER 6 – OCTOBER 10, 2021 AT FORT WALTON BEACH, FLORIDA**  
***“BACK HOME AGAIN AT FOUR POINTS”***

Our AC-119 Association's Founding Fathers got us together in 2000 to celebrate who we are, the friendships and bonds we'd formed, and to affirm our place in military and SEA History. 400 of us met at the Fort Walton Four Points Hotel. Since then, we've held Reunions every year at locations all over our great country, doing exactly what our Founding Fathers set out to do. We've added reasons to get together, like NEW friends, and including family members of our honored KIAs who Gave All. Help us show family, friends, and history our pride in being part of this AC-119 Gunship family. Unfortunately, the 2020 Reunion had to be cancelled but 2021 Reunion Coordinator Gus Slinger went into action and made the arrangements for the 2021 Reunion, STILL in Ft. Walton Beach, STILL at the same hotel, the Four Points **BUT** on different dates, October 6 – 10, 2021. Join us, while you can, where we started, at the Four Points Hotel in Fort Walton Beach!! We look forward to reuniting in Fort Walton Beach in 2021.

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**AC119 Association Membership Updates**

We give a warm welcome to our new Life Members:

- Jeffrey Linn, Life #547, Sensor Repair, Lockbourne and NKP, 1970-1971
- Brent Hider, Life #548, Stinger Gunner, 1971-1972
- Jeanette Martin, Associate Life #549, Wife of Stinger Gunner Dale Martin
- William Forbes, Life #550, Stinger Gunner, 1969-1970

We give a warm welcome to our new and renewing Annual Members:

- Gary Ingram, 18th SOS, Propeller Mechanic
  - John Flood, 7ACCS/Alley Cat, 1969-1970
  - Rodney Olson, Stinger, Gunner
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**Final Flight**

We remember our human frailty, and the strength of our brotherhood, in the loss of these who joined our Final Flight. Please remember their families in your prayers. R.I.P., Brothers all:

- Frank Bianco, 18<sup>th</sup> SOS Nav, passed on April 21, 2020.
- Bruce Byrd, 18<sup>th</sup> SOS Gunner, passed June 11, 2020
- Ruben D. Chandler, 18<sup>th</sup> SOS, passed on December 5, 2014
- Ron Dean, 18<sup>th</sup> SOS Pilot, passed on July 6, 2015
- Alfred Flynn, 18<sup>th</sup> SOS, passed on December 29, 2000
- Nelson L. Horner, 17<sup>th</sup> SOS Maintenance, passed (date unknown), per PeopleFinder
- Steven C. Jarnagin, 18<sup>th</sup> SOS, passed (date unknown), per PeopleFinder
- Danny G. Kinker, 17<sup>th</sup> SOS, passed (date unknown), per PeopleFinder
- Truman W. McDonald, December 26, 2008 AC-119s, passed (date unknown), per PeopleFinder
- Oakley D. See, 18<sup>th</sup> SOS, passed September 6, 1992

We also note with sadness, the passing of Jeanette Morgan, wife of 71<sup>st</sup> SOS Maintainer, Harold Morgan, on August 9, 2020

Additional details are on our Association Mail Call site <https://www.ac119gunships.com/mail-call/mail-call/> and our Facebook site <https://www.facebook.com/groups/195912423919726>.

You might also notice that some who took their Final Flight did so long ago. Ev Sprous and his Outreach Team do a super job locating, contacting, and reconnecting with our remaining living crewmates. They also find many who are already deceased. They can only reconnect us with our remaining living Brothers if they know who to look for! **PLEASE** visit <https://www.ac119gunships.com/membership-contact-information/alpha-roster> and add any missing names or contacts you have.

## AC-119 Commemorative Pistol Raffle



**NOTE:** Photos show the actual Kimber pistol as crafter by Cherokee Firearms gunsmith Ron Soderquist. The actual pistol will be on display at the 2021 Ft. Walton Beach reunion.

- Kimber Classic Stainless Steel 1911 Style Pistol
- 45 ACP Caliber with 5-inch barrel
- Combat Trigger and Beavertail Grip Safety
- Ambidextrous Extended Thumb Safety
- Tactical Hammer and Sear
- Flat Checkered Main Spring Housing
- Open Mag Well
- Fitted Barrel Bushing with Guide Rod
- Fiber Optics Sights Installed
- Original Rosewood Grip Panels Will Be Included when sent.
- Custom Engraved Grips Have Been Fitted: AC-119 Association Patch on one grip panel, the Brothers image on the other grip panel
- Custom Box for Storage.
- Slide has "Vietnam 68 – 73" and the 71st, 17th and 18th SOS engraved
- **Tickets Are:**
- 1 For \$10.00
- 6 For \$55.00
- 13 For \$120.00
- **LIMIT 100 Tickets per person.**

Pay by Paypal to [dawohlgamuth@gmail.com](mailto:dawohlgamuth@gmail.com). Put "Pistol Bids" in the Paypal subject line.

You can also send Doug a check or money order. TO; Doug Wohlgamuth, 504 Shea Place, Sun City Center, FL 33573-5726. Be sure to indicate that the payment is for the Pistol raffle.

Winning ticket will be drawn at the 2021 Ft Walton Beach reunion.

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### Bios and Videos

- We have completed the AC-119 GUNSHIP BIOGRAPHIES-VOL ONE book. It is in the process of being proofed and published, and will be available on Amazon through our Quartermaster Store soon. See link below.

- We are starting to collect new bios, and as soon as we get enough, we will publish Volume Two. In the meantime, your bio will be placed on our Association's website. Information on the format of the bio can be found on our website at the link below. If you have any questions, or want to submit a bio, contact Roy Davis at (253)549-2044 or [roy@island-escape.com](mailto:roy@island-escape.com). Try to encourage other Association members to submit bios. The more we get, the quicker Volume Two will be published.

- [Bio and Video Info and Samples](#)
- [Quartermaster Store- Books](#)

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### **From the Association Quartermaster Store - ASSOCIATION SPONSORED BOOKS**

These are the books we have recently published on Amazon. You can access and purchase them from Amazon through the Quartermaster Store (<https://www.ac119gunships.com/product-category/books/>).

- **AC-119 GUNSHIP HISTORY BOOK**
- **THE GUNSHIP CHRONICLES-STINGER 41**
  - Written by Larry Barbee. About the only gunship to be shot down (1972)
- **THE HISTORY OF THE FAIRCHILD C-119 FLYING BOXCAR**
  - Probably the best source of info about the 119;took Cosner (member) 15 years to put together
- **SPOOKY, SPECTRE AND THE MAN**
  - Written by Mike Friel. About Ron Terry.
- **STINGER GUNSHIP CARTOONS**
- **AC-119 GUNSHIP BIOS (not published yet)**
- **AC-119 GUNSHIP STORIES**

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### **Have you been holding off to get one or both of the AC-119 Lithographs?**

Now's your chance! The Quartermaster Store is having a clearance sale on our Lithos. Regular price is \$45. We are listing them for \$20 now. These are beautiful paintings and will look great in your man cave. Go to our store to order: <https://www.ac119gunships.com/product-category/prints/>



### **From the Desk of Andrea Drzyzga**

Hello AC-119er's. I need your help. I'm working on a little project and I am looking for pictures from past reunions. Table Pictures at the Saturday night Banquets are especially sought after, candid pictures and fond memories of those who are no longer with us. We will accept photographs or digital pictures. Each picture MUST have the NAMES OF INDIVIDUALS in that picture, and please include the REUNION YEAR.

You can send photographs or digital pictures to me, Andrea Drzyzga 37 Pecan Lane, Oak Ridge, NJ 0438 or email [secretaryAC119@optonline.net](mailto:secretaryAC119@optonline.net). I will return your photographs!! Please only send 1-3 of your best photos. We are looking for good representation of our 20 years of reunions! We will sort through as many as we can, we may not be able to use all that we receive during one particular year.

## From the Desk of Ev Sprous

### How to Locate Missing and Lost Military Records

Need to find lost or missing records from your time in the military services, a good place to get started is at the National Archives website. To get started go to website <https://www.vetrechs.archives.gov/> or click on the following link: [Vetrechs.archives.gov](https://www.vetrechs.archives.gov/) The following are some of the research items one can pursue.

- Research our organizational records
- Search for Veterans Service records
- Request Military Service Records

Military Service Records options:

- Request DD 214/ Separation Documents
- Request Official Military Personnel File (OMPF)
- Request Replacement Medals
- Request Medical and Health Records

When you finish your request, you will get a signature page you must print out and mail to the address on the instructions. If you need help of any type, call Ev at 520-528-9444

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On behalf of the AC-119 Gunship Association, Col Mac and Ev Sprous, we would like to thank everyone that sent us copies of special orders, TDY/PCS Orders, DD-214, etc.

We have close to 3500 entries on the Special-Order Spreadsheet.

If you are missing any records, let us know.

If you need help with a claim, contact Col Mac [colmacmac@mac.com](mailto:colmacmac@mac.com) 302-373-7269

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### MODIFIED POLICIES

DECEASED MEMBERS: If you think one of our members has passed away, please notify Everett Sprous (529.528.9444). This will stop all correspondence until we verify the death.

MILITARY ORDERS: Everett is interested in collecting any orders you may have. From this point on the orders should be snail mailed to him with the social security numbers visible (they provide valuable information to the Association). If emailing them is your only option, black out the social security numbers.

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### Administrative Updates and Reminders

1. PLEASE remember to contact your group POC, the Membership Coordinator (Ev Sprous), or the Association Secretary (Andrea Drzyzga) when you **change contact information, especially your email address**. We do very much want to keep in contact with you.
2. If you receive the *Firing Circle* by walking to the mail box after its postal delivery, AND you do have and use an EMAIL ADDRESS, TELL Mike Drzyzga, Roy Davis, your unit POC, or our Membership Coordinator NOW if you want future Newsletters and FLASHES sent via email. You can **SAVE** us a lot by reducing the cost of postage, printer paper, envelopes, ink cartridges, etc. Contact Association Membership Coordinator Ev Sprous, via email at [ac119kstingergunner@gmail.com](mailto:ac119kstingergunner@gmail.com) or call(520) 528-9444.
3. Are you interested in some AC-119 Gunship historical facts, current events, interesting dialogue, photos and stories about AC-119s? If you have Internet access on your computer, tablet or cell phone, then you have to join the Association's **Facebook page**. It now has **over 668 members** – not just directly related AC119ers, but also history buffs, AC-130 folk (including some new 73<sup>rd</sup> SOS Shadows), model makers, etc. Just browse to: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/195912423919726/>
4. Also, there are Facebook Pages dedicated to "Air Force Gunners", "Air Force 462 Weapons", "Happy Valley – Phan Rang" (almost 1400 members), and "U.S. Military Veterans - News you can use" – very interesting pictures and history, current news, and other valuable information.

5. **Awards and Decorations** coordinator Steve “Col” Mac Isaac continues to aid us in fixing incorrect DD214s. He has helped many get on the trail to receiving decorations they earned through research of documentation and orders shared by association members. Questions and comments: Contact Col Mac at email: colmacmac@mac.com, or (MST) Cell phone: (302) 249-1499.
  6. **WE NEED YOU TO SEND US YOUR SPECIAL ORDERS.** Please send Col Mac copies of your special orders. These are needed to help our comrades with claims and family members after their loved one passes. Send them to Everett Sprous at [ac119kstingergunner@gmail.com](mailto:ac119kstingergunner@gmail.com) or 2615 N. Columbus Blvd, Tucson, AZ 85712-1937 or call Ev at (520)528-9444. Please do this as soon as possible.
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### **Future Reunions**

#### **2021 *Back Home Again* AC-119 Gunship Association Reunion XXI**

Look for detailed information on the 2021 Fort Walton Beach in future ***Firing Circles*** and the AC-119 Association Website

#### **2022 AC-119 Gunship Association Reunion XXII**

Reunion XXII was approved by vote for Branson, Missouri. Due to the COVID-19 disruptions, that reunion has been moved to August 2022. Jerry MacDonald is the coordinator, and we will be at the Radisson Hotel again. All the hotels there are already booked solid for Sept and Oct.