

From 2003 Newsletter:

### **Hello Fellow Gunshippers**

It is hard to believe REUNION V is six months away. We are going to have a "joint" reunion with our "sister squadron" the 71st SOS. While they have had many different aircraft assigned to their squadron at different times, it was during the mid 60's when the C-119s were assigned to them. It was also during this assignment when the aircraft were converted to the AC-119G. The 71st SOS was trained to operate the 119 in the gunship role. They then ferried the aircraft to South East Asia where they began operating in country until the aircraft were re-assigned to the 17<sup>th</sup> SOS. Their squadron reunion will coincide with ours at the Hope Hotel, and they will participate with us in the "AC-119 History Project", as well as the other Association gatherings they have registered to attend.

The "AC-119 History Project" is moving right along. I have asked the Association's Vice President Bob LaRosa and Board Member at Large Wayne Laessig to take the lead in the "History Gathering" project. You will note the recent change to the Reunion Registration Form to now include your unit of assignment (71st SOS, 17th SOS, or 18th SOS) and the year/s you were in SEA. They will be scheduling the videotape recording of your person experience story with the AC-119 based upon the time you were in SEA.

You will recall I have challenged EACH Association member to write about his most memorable, exciting, scary, etc. experience. This will be your special story that will give a personal reflection of what it was like during your time with the AC-119 in SEA. My personal stories will tell about the missions to the Barrel Roll where we were chased by a MIG, and when I almost shot myself out of the air with a bad lot of 20 MM ammo. (If you were on the MIG chasing Mission with me, please contact me.) Ron Julian and I have met with the AF Museum Staff concerning this project.

They are excited about having information about the "little known" gunships being made available to them. Everyone knows about "Puff the Magic Dragon (AC- 47)" and "Spectre (AC-130)", but the "Shadow" and "Stinger" are not well known. We want to CORRECT that problem, and YOUR personal experience story will bring the AC-119 into the records.

In addition, a progress report on the paintings the Association has commissioned of the "Shadow" and "Stinger". The "Shadow" is complete and is UNREAL in its presentation of the "Shadow" mission. We have shown a draft litho of the painting to the AF Museum Director, General Metcalf, and the Museum staff; and they are extremely pleased with it and that we are going to be donating the original painting to the Museum at the Saturday evening Banquet. The "Stinger" painting is a work in progress at this time, but should also be completed in time for the banquet. There will be 200 numbered and signed lithographic copies of each painting offered for sale to association members first, to help offset the cost of the commissioned artwork (I plan on purchasing a copy of each, they are that good). The artist, Darby Perrin, will attend the Reunion, and he will be involved with the dedication of the paintings to the Air Force Museum. He will also have other litho's of his aircraft artwork available for sale in the "hootch room" at the hotel, if you are so interested. He is a gifted artist, and you will be amazed at how well he has captured our mission in each of these paintings.

The United States Air Force Museum is a work in progress as well. The "Modern Flight Hanger (#2)" is where the Viet Nam War aircraft are displayed. The newest hanger (#3) is where the Cold War and Desert Storm aircraft (B-1, B-2, F-117, SR-71, AC-130, etc.) are displayed. The only gunship on display at the Museum is a Desert Storm AC-130. As I said, the museum is a work in progress; and while the aircraft are on display, the informational panels and dioramas about the events of the time where the displayed aircraft were used are still being completed. If you have not been to the Museum within the past three years, you will be amazed at the changes that have been made; and the increased number of aircraft now on display.

It is not too early to be making plans to attend Reunion V by sending in your Reunion Registration Form and making your hotel reservations. See you in October!!

Rogers Stevens  
AC-119 Gunship President