

President's Message Spring 2012

Hi everyone, I'd like to welcome all of you back to Ft. Walton Beach (FWB) and our Reunion Hotel the Sheraton Four Points.

The Four Points by Sheraton Destin-Fort Walton Beach has become our ideal place to get away from it all. Many of us started out as young, and some old, Air Commandos here. Reunions in Fort Walton Beach bring many of us full circle and fortify our brotherhood.

This year's theme... ***Duty, Honor, Country, Fortifying the Brotherhood.*** Vietnam, Laos, *Cambodia, Thailand.*, reminds me that many years have come and gone since our days in Southeast Asia. Memory fades and brothers are lost along the way. What doesn't change, and can never fade, is the special bond that we as combat veterans share with one another.

Especially close to our hearts are those who crewed the AC-119 Gunships flying through heavy anti aircraft fire over the infamous Ho Chi Minh Trail, and other areas of operation, as well as our maintenance men and support teams tending and repairing our old and sometimes wounded war birds while enduring murderous rocket and mortar attacks.

This year we gather again in Ft. Walton Beach to remember those no longer with us, to rekindle the flame of a great and special friendship, and above all...to **Fortify the Brotherhood.**

In addition to the sugar-white beaches along the lovely Gulf of Mexico, many area attractions are within, squeaking-sand walking distance, including the *Gulfarium* and the *Island Golf Center*. The Four Points also offers you a range of amenities, including a poolside bar, and of course our gathering spot the "Hootch Bar." Speaking of the Hootch Bar we will have a guest selling jewelry on the deck of the Hootch Bar on Saturday. Thank you to Cindy Posey for setting that up.

We also hope to have a Veterans Administration member present to give us a rundown on VA benefits, changes, and other information that might affect us. In addition, a possible trip to the Navy Museum is in the works, as well as a Thursday night dinner at the Bangkok House. So stay tuned.

I'd also like to remind the Association ladies that, per their request, there is now a **Face Book page** set up for spouse use. The administrator of the page is Tony Pakutinski and you can find the page by searching for **StingerandShadow SpouseGroup**. You can also email stingerandshadowspouse@hotmail.com if you know of any spouse or friend that should be invited to join the group. *You asked for it ladies... now it's up to you to use it.*

If you haven't registered for this year's reunion now is the time to do it. Remember, registering for the reunion and reserving your hotel room are two separate items so check the Reunion Information page and the newsletter for more information.

Finally, for those of you still skittish about coming to FWB,

Florida's Emerald Coast has 24 miles of pristine white-sand beaches. This sand, made up of pure Appalachian quartz, remains remarkably cool even in the heat of summer, and gives the waters here their trademark emerald-green color by reflecting sunlight back up through the surf. I invite you to join us on the spectacular beaches, and also in our Hootch Bar, as we discover new friends, visit with old friends, and just have a great and relaxing time.

Coming back to Fort Walton Beach is always a special treat. But the ultimate treat is seeing one another again at an AC-119 Gunship Reunion.

I look forward to seeing you at the 2012 reunion!

Gus Sininger, President, AC-119 Gunship Association