

### **President's Message - September 14, 2017**

Dear AC-119 Associates: Greetings from NJ. September flying by and we are 2 weeks away from our Dayton, OH Reunion XVIII. This is a SHORT FLASH, focused on some Web site/reunion registration issues, and the latest "Who's Coming" list of attendees. At this time, we may exceed 250 participants at the Saturday evening banquet! I have been working closely with Ron Julian (Lead Reunion Coordinator) in order to verify SO MANY details for this five day event. I'm pleased to report that again this year, we have a good number of "first timers". Further, with some consideration of time/scheduling, the Reunion Planning Team has extended the registration DEADLINE to Sept. 16 (added one week). Here are three specific reminders:

1. After some recent Facebook discussion as a reminder, you may now dress casual (neatly) at the Banquet, if you prefer. There will be lots of Party Suits, and I'm sure sharp troops in civvies.
2. For reunion returnees, to please BRING your AC-119 name tag lanyards with you.
3. Don't forget to pack and bring special items for the auction. This is an important part of our reunion, and helps keep our bank account healthy.

Be safe out there. Mike Drzyzga, Association President

### **President's Message - August, 2017**

Dear AC-119 Associates: Greetings from NJ. As I write this, we are only several weeks away from Reunion XVIII, in Dayton. Your AC-119 Board has been meeting by teleconference every month to keep a focus on reunion preparations, & other current or special events. I'm psyched; this upcoming reunion is going to be memorable. Hope to see so many of you there.

Many of our members do have, & use, an on-line bill payment service called PayPal. The Association has a PayPal account & we are now using it to help reunion attendees register. It is likely that this tool may be available to help our Annual Members renew their membership each year. More to come on this as we consider options. You all are very quiet out there!! Feedback from you to your Association's Board is rare. Does that mean we are doing a good job, or you find the Association's *Firing Circle* uninteresting. I sincerely trust it is the former. Nevertheless, if you have something to ask, something to share, something to talk about, please reach out to your POCs, or any Board Member. We are here for you.

Do you find this Firing Circle of value? My efforts here are diluted by a few other responsibilities, esp. that as Association Pres, & I hope it does not show here. Therefore, my plea returns with vigor. Your Association can benefit from a computer-experienced person to take on the **Newsletter (Firing Circle) Editor's** function. As I said before, most of the content comes from other Board members, so the basic task is pasting it together. Fortunately, the distribution is shared as it goes out via the POCs. Please step up if you can do it.

As we get closer to the Dayton, OH reunion, I am planning for the usual Sat. morning business meetings. Part of that agenda is elections of Board members for next year. So far, we all have been blessed with a dedicated & hardworking team to keep our Association moving forward effectively. If you want to be a part of this effort, let me know. We love to have some new blood (fresh ideas & insights) on the Board.

You all know where Reunion XIX (2018) is located, right? Tucson is correct. Do you know where Reunion XX (2019) will be? **UNKNOWN at this time**...it will be up to us all to find an energetic volunteer to form & lead a team to organize & coordinate Reunion XX.

One last item: The AC-119 Gunship Association has set clear goals, & we have set policy & procedures to guide the Board. Nevertheless, with political items going volatile on all the social media outlets, we must be cautious, not to allow the Association to appear involved in politically controversial matters.

Be well my brothers - enjoy the remainder of summer 2017. Mike Drzyzga, Association President

### **President's Message - July, 2017**

Dear AC-119 Associates: It has been more than a month since we launched the AC-119 Gunship Association's new web site. Other than a few "back-end" tweaks, it is up & running as expected. If you have not yet spent time exploring all the content, by all means, on a rainy day, let your fingers do the Browsing. Register for the reunion, find info' on the two tour events, order new items from our on-line store (What? We have a store?) – Yup, the Quartermaster's page.

This *Firing Circle* returns to what you may call our routine format. Since I'm still the Newsletter Editor, (hopefully this too will change), I'll stay on the familiar path & assemble what I have, & in the most effective way. If YOU have any new hot news, please let me know (always looking for cool info). I certainly need help NOW, therefore, the Association is still looking for a Newsletter Editor – if you have basic computer skills, are good using MS Word or a basic publishing software, we welcome a volunteer to take over the Editor's position & assemble the

*Firing Circle*. Most of the content comes from other Board Members – the “editor” just patches it together. Contact me if you (or a close family member) are/is interested [drzyzga513@hotmail.com](mailto:drzyzga513@hotmail.com) or (201-310-2943). I have been working with the 2017 Reunion Team detailing a very interesting event for us in Sept., Dayton, OH. My first AC-119 reunion was the Association’s 5<sup>th</sup>, in 2004, also in Dayton. Those of you that know me understand what attending that one has done for me over the past 13 years. It is, & continues to be, a heart-warming experience: re-making friendships that for sure will be life-long experiences, making new friends, learning more about what/why we did-what-we-did in SEA, & visiting Special Operation units to meet today’s gunship warriors. Looking forward to seeing you all in Dayton. Until the next *Firing Circle*, I wish you & yours a happy & safe summer-time. Mike Drzyzga, President

### **President’s Message: Postal Mail - June 2017**

This *Firing Circle* is intended to reach all AC-119ers who do not have computer technology, such as *email* and *internet access*. Please know that The AC-119 Gunship Association’s IT Committee has been working with extreme energy to enable the new Web Site and associated database for a smooth and successful launch.

**And that time has arrived.** If you, or your friends, nearby relatives, kids, grandkids, or close neighbors have computer access, you would be able to easily gain so much more information – and not risk missing out on hot news. I’ll do my best keep everyone well informed. If you have questions, please telephone your POCs. If you do obtain an email address, PLEASE let your POCs know that!

71<sup>st</sup> -- Jim Alvis, 317-846-4130

17<sup>th</sup> -- Dave Voisey, 281-280-0319

18<sup>th</sup> -- Ev Sprous, 480-277-8414

Maintainers -- Andy Bright, 704-788-7790

Family Members & Honorees -- Wayne Laessig, 707-592-4492

If you do gain internet access, there are well-documented tutorials there that will help you navigate the web site, and do on-line reunion registration. Here is the site address: [www.ac-119gunships.com](http://www.ac-119gunships.com)

I said this previously, but it is of value to repeat: The new Web site is a well-crafted, and comprehensive. It is way more than a great place to get current news and information; it is becoming The Place to find an ever-increasing amount of history about our Association. Further, it will simplify and automate: Reunion registrations (event module); buying Association paraphernalia from the Quartermaster’s site (eCommerce); and communicating within the Association’s membership. The result reduces a lot of background labor, paperwork, and Board member’s keyboard time.

Thank you again to the very hard working teams:

**Information Technology (IT) Committee:** Wayne Laessig, Ron Julian, Jim Mattison

**Dayton Reunion XVIII:** Ron Julian, Rogers Stevens, Al Heuss, Jim Alvis, Vern Hansen

Have a safe and enjoyable start to summer-time. Mike Drzyzga

### **President’s Message FLASH - June 2017**

This message is happily the lead to a very meaningful *Firing Circle*. The AC-119 Gunship Association’s IT Committee has been working with extreme energy to enable the new Web Site and associated database for a smooth and successful launch. **And that time has arrived.** Also, all the elements to make for a successful Reunion XVIII in Dayton, OH, have been forged into a solid, and yet diverse, event. Therefore, we are using this June 2017 *Firing Circle* as the tool to provide you:

- 1) all you need to know to access and use the new Web Site, and (at the same time),
- 2) learn all about the upcoming Reunion and **register on-line** to attend.

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## **President's Message** - December 2016 11-17-2016

Greetings from NJ: The challenge to keep the AC-119 Gunship Association vibrant and progressive will be faced with continued gunshipper's spirit. I am honored to step-up to this position and continue the great work done by all my predecessors. Uh Oh? You ask, who will publish the *Firing Circle*, who is our Secretary now, and who will handle all the Membership Tasks. Here is your 2016-17 Board of Directors:

President: Michael Drzyzga, V.P.: Robert La Rosa, Secretary: Ralph Lefarth (and Asst. Treasurer)

Treasurer: Doug Wohlgamuth Past Pres. Larry Fletcher Membership Coordinator: Ev Sprou

Members-at-Large: Cash McCall, Jim Dunn and (new) Terry Sarul.

We intend to serve you well. I'm sure the transition for me will be just as easy as it is for Obama/Trump!! Also, until I find another, I'll continue as *Firing Circle* editor (any volunteers?).

**Reunion XVII, Ft, Walton Beach, FL, at the Ramada Resorts, "A Summary":** Our primary reunion coordinator, Gus Sininger was ill during this reunion. Yet, that tough fighter that he is would not sit down until he could not stand anymore. My personal admiration to Gus for what he did, and to everyone else who helped out to make the reunion very successful – with a special thanks to Larry Hunter, Association Chaplain (and policy enforcer), who was right there whenever a bump-in-the-process was looming. We welcome 13 "first-timers", but only 12 attended (Colorado wild-fire fighting took precedence for one!). Look at the pictures in the post-reunion *Firing Circle*.

Fri. Social Event: About 50 attendees went on a bus ride to Pensacola to visit historic old-town, then to McGuire's Irish Pub for lunch, then to Veteran's Memorial Park. The weather was beautiful, and everyone had an enjoyable time. I saw a few teared eyes as we found our fallen AC-119ers on "the WALL" at the Memorial. Thank you Carol Hinton (and Andrea Drzyzga) for pulling this tour together.

Fri. evening's Meet&Greet was excellent. No-one was unhappy with a bountiful buffet. The catering services at the Ramada were complimented. Saturday's early Business Meeting was well attended – we went through Pres. Fletcher's detailed agenda. We were actually finished by 1000 hrs, in time to arrange car-pooling to get to Hurlburt. A solemn memorial service was held at the Air Park, followed by pizza and drinks at the 18<sup>th</sup> FTS Operations Building. I'm still happy to see our AC-119 legacy proudly displayed in the Building. But the main-attraction was a tour of an AC-130J "Ghost Rider". Every crew position was staffed and they answered all our questions (well, "mostly" all). And, if you want to know, YES, they did refurb the 105mm that was pulled from the retired 130H's, and it sticks out the left rear, on a new articulated gun mount, to supplement the 30mm Bushmaster in front. Oh Yeah, a real Gunship she is! What touched my heart were the comments from a few 1<sup>st</sup> timers and spouses. Here's one: "the new respect they have for our current sophisticated airmen, and the planes they fight in." We did return for some Hootch time, but the Banquet was close. After the color guard posted the colors, and Cash McCall again officiated the POW/MIA Table, we ate, gathered for pictures and socializing with new friends and long-time friends, and told the best war stories ever(?). Our 18<sup>th</sup> FTS guests: Cmdr Lt.Col Dan Kobs, his DO, Lt Col Matt Winters, and their PO, Lt Col Leeds, were enjoying the evening with us. Col Kobs presented beautiful engraved clear glass mugs to L. Fletcher and G. Sininger. THANK YOU to Sam Gallo, and Maintainer POC Andy Bright for doing a successful 50/50. Another THANK YOU to Cindy Posey and her team for smoothly doing the largest Association "silent auctions" to date. WHO WON the raffled .45 ACP Custom Pistol? Our AC-130W Associate and Facebook page member TSgt. Hassan Ali (we met him in San Antonio, and he is now at Hurlburt). Sunday: Doug Wohlgamuth did a fun golf outing, or lot's of pool-time as some did, or more Hootch time for others (or a trip to the Naval Air Station Museum in Pensacola), and, of course, the Halloween Party Farewell BBQ. So many dressed in costumes – it was so much fun!! In closing, this one was a reunion that should stand-out in our historical records.

**Minor Reorganization** Some of you may know that I accepted the nomination, if and only if, we had qualified people to accept the responsibilities I had as Secretary and Newsletter Editor. The Secretary also handled ALL Membership tasks. Therefore, Secretary Ralph Lefarth will help handle business meetings, send out the agenda, host any Telecoms, and record minutes. Membership Coordinator Ev Sprou (along with being our Media Manager and 18<sup>th</sup> SOS POC) is now handling all Membership related task, such as annual member renewals, adding Life Members and sending out Life Certs and member ID Cards. (Thank you Ralph and Ev). Wishing you all, and your families, a happy, healthy, and safe Holiday Season.

God Bless. Mike Drzyzga, President