

The Firing Circle

Dedicated to all AC-119 & AC-47 Gunship Aircrew, Maintenance, & Support Personnel

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I had the great opportunity to visit the Vietnam moving wall while it was in Fort Walton Beach. I left a Gunship Association Coin at the Wall for our lost Gunshippers as well as a Soft Cover History Book at the Heritage Museum.

Pass-It-On

Do You Want to Donate a History Book to a Library? Here are some of the places that the Association and individuals have donated books:

- 17th SOS active duty squadron, Kadena AB, Japan – John Morrow contacted, & sent a History Book
- 18th FLT active duty squadron, Hurlburt Field, FL – presented by Gus Sininger
- 71st SOS active duty squadron, Kirtland AFB, NM - from our Association & presented by Al Heuss
- Atterbury/Bakalar Museum (original home of the 71st) - donated & presented by Jim Alvis
- Lake St Charles Senior Living Community Library, MO - donated & presented by Ralph Lefarth
- Magnolia Township Library, NJ - donated & presented by Wayne Laessig
- Missouri Historical Society, MO - donated & presented by Ralph Lefarth
- National Museum of the Air Force, Dayton, OH - presented by Ron Julian & Al Heuss
- Solano County Libraries in Fairfield and Vacaville, CA - donated & presented by Wayne Laessig
- St Louis County Library History section, MO - donated & presented by Ralph Lefarth
- St Louis City Library, History Reference Section, MO - donated & presented by Ralph Lefarth
- Travis AFB Library, CA - donated & presented by Wayne Laessig
- Vietnam Center at Vietnam Archive, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX 79409 - sent by Gus Sininger
- Air Force Operations Command – from the Association, presented to Lieutenant General Wurster by Gus Sininger and Lt. Col Jim Landreth
- Hurlburt Field AFB Library – donated and presented by Gus Sininger
- Missouri State Library, Jefferson City, MO - donated and presented by Larry Fletcher
- Viet Nam Memorial Moving Wall, Fort Walton Beach, FL - donated and presented by Gus Sininger

Mark your calendar now, **September 17-21, 2010**, for Reunion XI. To guarantee a hotel room at our reunion rate, you must make your Hotel Reservation **NLT August 14th**! You will “likely” still be able to get a room after that, but there is no guarantee, since the hotel will start selling excess rooms after that date. So, please register now (you can always cancel up to 24 hours prior to your arrival without any cancellation fees). Plan to reunite with fellow warriors, buddies both old, new, ground, and flight crews who share the common bonds of the Gunship Brotherhood. **I look forward to seeing you all in September.**

Gus Sininger,
AC-119 Gunship Association, President



71st SOS



17th SOS

AC-119 Gunship Heritage Circle

Shadow Gunships at Saigon and Distant Places
April 1970 to April 1971

By Colonel Tom A. Teal
C Flight Commander



18th SOS

The Base's scheduled bus routes and timing would be used on and off base to transport our personnel to and from flights. This would not call attention to our increase in sortie and maintenance activity and would not call for extensive negotiations with base over a new plan. Since we were going to be airborne around the clock every day, it was a simple thing to schedule our sortie takeoff times to utilize the existing bus schedule and to set the flying and support schedule.

Next I built a system into our plan to insure an aircraft would takeoff as scheduled by having the crew scheduled to takeoff make every safe effort to make an on-time takeoff. The crew that was scheduled to take off three hours later, was required to be in their aircraft, engines running if necessary, to back up and/or take off if the primary aircraft could not meet his scheduled time. If the backup crew had to fly early, then the old primary crew became the primary crew for the next launch.

Communications, call signs and clearance to fire were to be included in the Rules of Engagement and came next. These were to come from 7th AF later, but we needed to have a hand in the planning. Our top priority was the need to find and reserve appropriate housing for the incoming personnel. Captain Jose Cachuela in C Flight had been doing this for us as an extra duty already with monthly rotations in and out of the unit and he received this task also. As usual, he got the room assignments in a very short time and sent us a copy of those assignments. He did lots of things well.

We also needed five/eight more assigned; close parking spots for five/eight additional AC-119 Gunships. Since we were the only shooting outfit at Tan Son Nhut and with our lonesome location near the runway, additional parking was no problem. We were lucky to already have a large air conditioned multipurpose room that could accommodate a large increase in parachutes, survival vests, life preservers, guns, etc. Wing personnel attended to that part of our requirements.

Start time for around the clock flying would depend on crew and aircraft arrival with maintenance personnel and appropriate spare parts. Also we needed the necessary operations orders from 7th AF with the number of daily sorties required and rules of engagement, etc. I do not remember how long it was before we headed for Cambodia; but I remember very well that, once started, it continued for the rest of my tour of duty with Fighting C Flight. Do not know who attached the Fighting in front of C Flight but we owe him or them a great deal for the pride it generated in being a part of this outstanding unit.

With Seventh Air Force's operations order in hand and flight, maintenance crew and aircraft in place, we began the treadmill of flying around the clock over Cambodia sometime in early July 1970 with six sorties a day. The sorties were increased to eight sorties daily sometime in August. We were given call signs and frequencies of several different locations in country which put us in contact with each location commander. Example: Hotel 303 was the call sign for the commander at Kompong Thom (KPT) who had the authority of Troops in Contact Commander, and who could direct us to any part of his territory and fire at his designated targets.

Most of our first few months were spent working for Hotel 303 and preventing his town from being overrun by the bad guys. We shot up the old saw mill area on almost every mission there, as well as other locations. We definitely save KPT from being taken. I remember heading out the 310 degree radial from takeoff, flying past Black Virgin Mountain and Tay Ninh, and then avoiding Phnom Penh, heading to KPT. Major Phin Oom, a very capable Cambodian officer, thanked us for our gunship defense of his city. He told us that food supplies became so scarce that they had eaten all the animals in the zoo, including a tough old tiger.

We must have done a good job there because we were soon sent to various other locations all over Cambodia either for TICs, or for interdiction of hostile supplies entering Kompong Som on the Gulf of Siam, road routes over most of Cambodia or locations on the Mekong River such as Kompong Cham. We, at times, flew missions patrolling the Mekong from Phnom Penh to Saigon, and beyond towards the headwaters of that great river. One of the most interesting missions I flew was the long flight to northwest Cambodia to the beautiful city of Siem Reap. This was close to Angkor, the capital of the Khmer empire from the 9th to the 15th century and collocated were two ancient Hindu temple areas, Angkor Wat, and Angkor Thom. These two world treasures were in bad condition both from the jungle and the ground war being fought to push the bad guys from the temples. The ground commander at Siem Reap used us around the temples, the jungle areas and the roads near the temples. We were not allowed to shoot at the temples even though we took ground fire from them.

We got so busy in Cambodia on different targets that we needed at times more fire power and five Stinger Gunships became part of our operations. I remember going on one of the first Stinger missions sent to Kompong Cham. It was a daylight mission with the target/s of big ships tied up at the wharfs. What a sight to see the twenty mm Gatlin guns pouring rounds into the troop carriers and supply ships. We never saw the big one sink but it did show a decided list when we left.

The Stinger pilot looked like an old west gunfighter with dark eyes spaced wide apart and a thin mustache above his lip. I know this! He was the best shooter I had seen in Shadow, Stinger, or Spectre Gunships. I was an amateur shooter compared to this young captain. I am sorry that I don't remember his name. There was a less gung ho Stinger crew who took off and was back on the ground in about 45 minutes. I met the aircraft. The A/C said he could not get through the storm clouds to get to Cambodia. I told him to get his crew onboard, take off and try again to get safely through the clouds. You were expected to keep trying until your sortie time is up or you have to return to base because of fuel.

The communications and other security precautions were so well observed by the Shadow and Stinger crews, and the few higher headquarters personnel who knew, that the news media never got a whiff of the operations in Cambodia. I know that as a Shadow commander I was required to get up at 4 a.m. each morning, review the Flight's combat report for the previous day, then hand carry that report to a Colonel in 7th AF operations. That went on for over 40 consecutive days and I became ill with a cold.

When I got to Shadow Ops the next morning there was a message to call Colonel Bruce K. Brown, DCO of the 14th SOW. I called at a reasonable hour and he told me; Tom, you have been working too hard and you need a change in scenery. I have a C-47 going to Hong Kong tomorrow and I want you on it as purchasing officer for supplies we can't get in country. By the way, 7th AF has agreed to your operations officer bringing them the daily report from now on. I will send a FAC aircraft down to pick you up this afternoon. Bring civilian clothes for an overnight stay in Hong Kong. I, of course, said thank you sir for a truly thoughtful idea. I'll be there and ready to fly. I hesitate to say that the C-47 developed engine problems after landing in Hong Kong and it took us five days to return to Phan Rang. Colonel Brown met the aircraft, ignored the flight crew and said with a smile That is the last time I am sending you on a mercy mission.

Several months later, I got a call from my contact at 7th AF. He told me that he was sending a mixed group of officers from Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) for a briefing on our mission. I was to brief them completely and to answer any questions they asked. To put it mildly, they were astounded that we were running the type and number of missions daily and that we had been over Cambodia for months and they did not know about it. Obviously, we had held our cards close to our chest, and that's a big well done, Shadows and Stingers. Major General Hardin of 7th AF flew as an observer almost monthly on Shadow missions over Cambodia. The pilots and crews that the General flew with had nothing but respect for him. I would meet the aircraft after it had parked in our area and asked how the mission went. He would say fine and climb into his car and drive off.

We had been flying for several months but the only Battle Damage Assessment (BDA) we received was of course from the crew reports. We really wondered how effective we were in our role as a gunship unit and higher headquarters must have had questions also. All of a sudden, the Cambodian ground commanders started including a preliminary number of enemy killed by that sortie as well as targets fired on. Later, their final report to 7th AF would reflect the actual number of enemy verified killed. At commander's call, I mentioned that we now knew that the gunships sorties had been and were becoming more effective. I quoted from a recent BDA report that a single sortie had a body count of over 240 attackers killed by air (KBA).

At the end of that meeting after we had discussed flying safety and the record rate of on-time takeoffs, I stated again that our primary job was to professionally perform the job assigned to us by 7th AF and to do it safely. I knew from past wars that a lot of wonderful people, due to accidents, did not go home alive or in the same physical condition as they arrived in their units. My primary job as commander was to see that you had the knowledge, equipment, and desire to excel in performing that mission and that you did not run out of gas on the way home. Then I closed the call with a challenge to Make Shadow Proud. Shortly one night afterwards, I heard Don Fraker and cronies pass my door in the Q singing Make Shadow Proud to the tune of Bringing In The Sheaves. You know, the words fitted almost perfectly with the tune of that great old hymn.

After that Commander's Call, I overheard some officer crew members talking to each other and saying that the unit was doing a great job but who knew about it? I knew that we could not call in the reporters but there was a way to let the crews know that very important people knew about them and their missions. I came up with the idea to have a dining-in at the officers club if Major General Hardin would be our guest of honor and pin medals on crew members who had them ready to be presented. I asked my 7th AF contact to inquire if the General would attend, etc. This fine General sent back he would be glad to be our guest.

We had to reserve the upstairs room at the club, get Shadow party suits made (Jose got this assignment too with all the work of designing, individual tailoring with Shadow insignia, rank, wings, white silk scarf and at a decent price delivered yesterday). As usual, Jose did the impossible extremely well. When the black party suits were delivered, each one was beautiful with white insignia, a superb fit (back then) and at a reasonable price. While we were waiting on the party suites, I thought it would be a good idea to present a nice Shadow plaque to certain people outside the organization who had helped us achieve our success as a unit.

It became the Shadow 1 Award with the AC-119 Shadow gunship flying across the large 1. Down below the Shadow 1 Award was a smaller area to give the person receiving the award a form of citation explaining the ways that individual had helped Shadow in an uncommon way to succeed. Back to 7th AF to see if the General had any objections to receiving the award. Word came back that he would receive the award. We were now in business and ready for a party. We also invited our 7th AF contact, Colonel ?, I can see him in my mind but can't remember his name, and Lt. Col. Oom, he had been promoted, both of whom showed up and both received Shadow 1 awards along with General Hardin.

A lot of work had gone into preparing for the dining-in and it turned out to well worth it. After some short introductory remarks, I gave the background to this special event, introduced the people at the head table, and enjoyed the Club's dinner, which was served by two waitresses in tailored Shadow party suits that fit oh so well. After dinner General Hardin gave a short address about the importance of our mission and then pinned medals on flight crew members who had already earned them. What a distinct honor for these crew members. I forget who read the citation for each medal, but after the citation, the General pinned on the medal with individual remarks for each recipient. We had some high ranking officers from the 14th SOW present but I don't remember who made the presentation to General Hardin, maybe I did it, I don't know. I do know that I presented the plaques to both the 7th AF Colonel and to Lt. Col. Oom. What a night it turned out to be. These events had indeed made Shadow Proud.

Now let us get back to the real everyday world of flying, fighting and aircraft maintenance, the unsung and under appreciated men who kept us in the air and over Cambodia. It is hard to imagine how difficult it is to prepare, get parts for and keep flying for months on end old propeller driven aircraft. To add to the luster of our C Flight maintenance were a lot of on time takeoffs. Of course our backup system of standby or launch was a big help, but the maintenance task of readying 6 or 8 combat ready sorties, fueled, armed, preflighted and discrepancy free per day was a gargantuan task that to steel nerves, an eye on the clock, and the dedication to work in rain, heat, night and tiring circumstances.

Maintenance production started to slip when the maintenance officer, a senior sergeant rotated home and we received an unmotivated senior master sergeant as replacement. Rotation of people home after 12 months was a problem in all career fields but none more than in senior maintenance staffing. I started bypassing the new man and put in unofficial charge a Staff Sergeant named Mac to run the flight line. It worked. I then called the senior master sergeant in and told him that is how our maintenance would work. I told the senior that I wanted him to bust his back getting parts, talking to higher headquarters, taking care of paper work and work with wing maintenance to rotate aircraft for 100 hours inspections without a disruption in our flying schedule. I also asked him to monitor the number and specialties of people we had on hand versus the ones we actually needed. In other words, run the office and help willingly the staff sergeant that was producing the sorties on time for flight. This arrangement worked.

Our sortie production went back to normal and peace came again to the maintenance part of Fighting C Flight. Just a note here. We were blessed to be co-located with a VNAF C-119 Wing on base that was willing to share their aircraft parts with us. Propeller regulators were a big problem from time to time as well as spare engines. Our Air Force supply line would dry up at times on these as well as other parts due to excessive demand for them. The VNAF seldom turned us down. It was a sort of reverse Lend-Lease. Thinking back, we should have handed out a handful of Shadow 1 Awards to the VNAF supply personnel. If any organization deserved that award, the VNAF wing did.

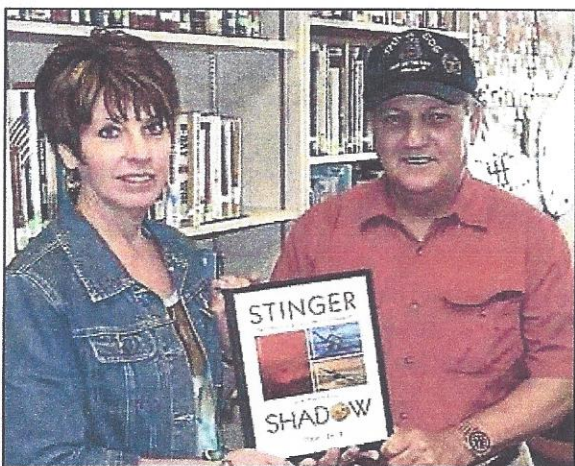
To Be Continued in the next issue of "The Firing Circle".

AC-119 Gunship Association donates book to Wood Place Public Library

"During the Vietnam War two squadrons, the 17th and 18th Special Operations Units, flew and operated a special type of plane".

Known as the AC-119 Shadow and Stinger respectively, the plane was a modified cargo (C) plane designed to be an attacking (A) gunship. The 17th Special Operations Squadron flew Shadow Gunships and would fly day and night in Cambodia in support of the government against the Khmer Rouge.

The 18th Special Operations Squadron flew Stinger Gunships along the Ho Chi Minh Trail only at night and were truck hunters. Larry Fletcher, who was born between McGirk and Centertown, enlisted in the Air Force and was assigned to the 17th Special Operations Unit. He has written two novels about the experience, *Shadows of Saigon* and *The Shadow Spirit*.



Wood Place Public Library Director Connie Walker, left, accepts a copy of *Stinger/Shadow*, a history book on the AC-119 Gunships and their crews, from Larry Fletcher, from the AC-119 Gunship Association who donated the book. Democrat Photo / John L. Inman III.

Recently, as part of the AC-119 Gunship Association, Fletcher spearheaded a project to create a history book about the Stinger and Shadow Gunships and their crew who flew during the Vietnam War. The association donated one of their books to the Wood Place Public Library. Fletcher had previously donated both *Shadows of Saigon* and *The Shadow Spirit* to the library.

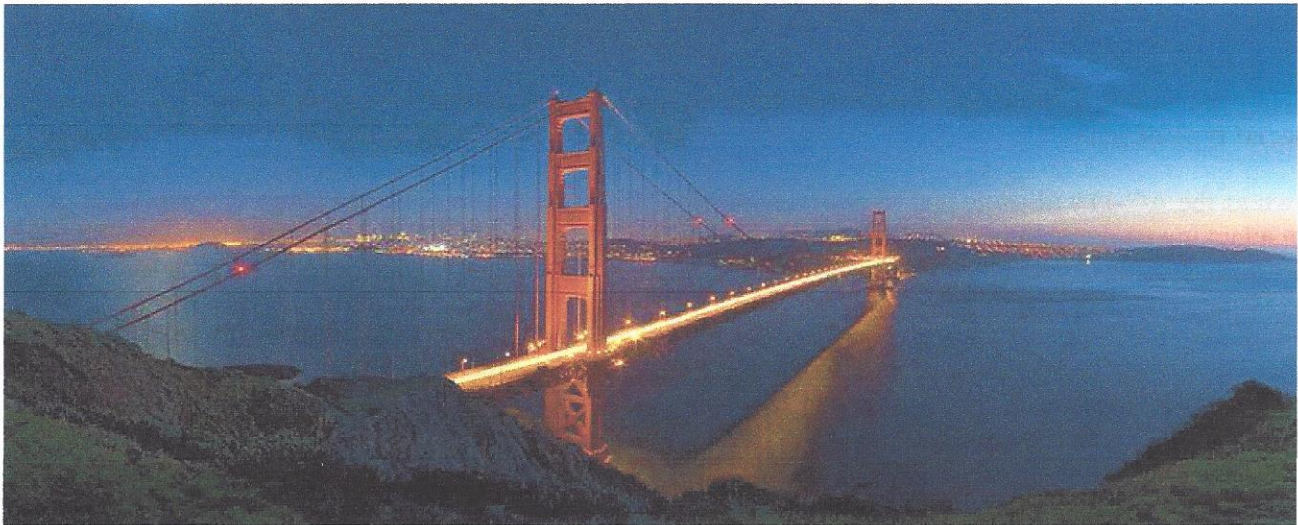
"The importance of writing the book was just like our mission says," Fletcher said, "to record and preserve the history and details of the Shadow and Stinger gunship crews who contributed in support of our nation during the Vietnam War. When we were flying it was secret missions. Nobody knew what we were doing there. They knew we took off, but they didn't know where we went or what we did."

There are 240 biographies of individuals who were part of the crews who flew the Gunships. Of those 240, 15 were from Missouri. Seventeen crew members who were killed in action are also honored in the book. Finding each other after the war was difficult for soldiers such as Fletcher as they went over to Vietnam two at a time and came back separately as well. It was only recently with the advent of the internet that brought together crew members who had not seen or heard from each other in over 25 years. In 2000, the crews had their first reunion and this year will have their 11th reunion at Travis Air Force Base, California, where many were shipped out to Vietnam.

In the book were stories including a Stinger gunship that destroyed eight tanks, another crew who destroyed 24 trucks along the Ho Chi Minh Trail and a pilot who brought back a Stinger after its right wing was blown-off.

To get a copy of the book, you can go to <http://www.AC-119Gunships.com> or to check them out, visit Wood Place Public Library. **By John L. Inman III - Democrat Staff**

AC-119 Gunship Association Reunion XI



"Next Stop, Vietnam - Gateway to SEA" Fairfield California - September 17-19, 2010 Reunion XI Information

Greetings from your Reunion Coordinator Team! Everything is coming together and we already have over a hundred folks coming. The guys who have already committed to coming include the following, along with many of their spouse or a guest; so if you want to see these guys this September, the time to sign up is now!

Hank Alau, Joe Alvarez, Robert Andrews, Jeff Baker, Frank Bartlett, Fred Blum, Mike Brown (Ken Brown's son), Bruce Byrd, Chuck Cline, Ernie Cole, Bob Connolly, Stan Cooper, Craig Corbett, Cleo Downs, Mike Drzyzga, Bobby Dydo, Fred Eggert, Ron Faison, Bill Feezor, Paul Feuz, Larry Fletcher, Bob Frederick, Claire Gilstad, Karen Graves, Gill Gravitt, Rosie Gravitte, Jerry Green, Bob Hamorsky, Bill Hanson, George Hardy, Dave Hinken, Ron Hinton, Kjell Hoelstad, Baby Huey Hunter, Jon Jacobson, Chuck James, Dan Jensen, Bob Johnson, Mike Krauss, Lee Kyser, Wayne Laessig, Ralph LeFarth, Don Lyles, Mac MacIsaac, Don Main, Jim Mattison, Bobby McLeod, Mike Mullen, Marshall Mullins, Bill Petrie, Bill Posey, Butch Poehler, Vern Raveling, Bill Reffner Jr, Catherine Reffner-MacFarland, Bob Safreno, Wayne Scott, Tony Simon, Gus Sininger, Bernie Smith, Ron Soderquist, Ev Sprous, Ken Stearn, Joe Sugg, Don Swanson, Gloria Terry, Dave Voisey, Doug Wohlgamuth, Chuck Williams, Virgil Zins, and Bill Zito.

If you are on the west coast, were ever stationed at Travis, or just want to meet some old friends, this is the Reunion to attend; not certain when we might be out here again. There will be a number of folks coming who have not been able to come to a reunion before now! We're also expecting a WWII veteran, and a Tuskegee Airman veteran there! Our **newly added Winery Tours** are a great opportunity to get a true flavor for some of the best parts of California. Our Tour Guide is totally jazzed about our group, bought his own History Book, and has these tours set up beautifully! There will be a Tour Guide on each bus.

Thursday: 16 September 2010 - We've scheduled our fantastic San Francisco Tour day. We've scheduled a reunion group San Francisco tour for those who want to see as much of the "city by the bay" as they can in a day, without the hassle of driving, parking, bridge tolls, etc. For 35 bucks we transport you in a super deluxe touring coach with a tour guide telling you about the sights along the way! We'll load up and leave Fairfield at 9:00 am on Thursday, September 16th, cross the Carquinez Straits, go past Berkeley, and over the Bay Bridge with a great view of the San Francisco skyline. In the city, you'll see Chinatown, Union Square, Twin Peaks (the highest point in the city with great views), old Victorian houses and hilly streets, get a chance to walk down the crookedest street in the world (yep, the bus picks you up at the bottom of the 1 block downhill walk), and get to spend a couple hours at Fisherman's Wharf and Ghirardelli Square including lunch on your own (but with lots of suggestions and a map to find your way). then more San Francisco sights including a stop at Crissy Field or Fort Meyers for Golden Gate Bridge and San Francisco Bay photo ops from under the bridge, and a last stop once we cross the bridge for photo ops and views of the bridge, city, and bay (usually with lots of sailboats in it). Finally, relax and ride home in comfort past Sausalito, San Quentin Prison, the North Bay salt marshes, Mare Island, and you'll be back at the hotel about 6:00 pm. No better deal and fun day than this!

Friday: 17 September 2010 - We've added a special Sebastiani Winery and Sonoma Town Plaza Tour right smack in the middle of the winemaking "crush", with a bus pick-up at the hotel at 9:30 am and a return to the hotel at 1500. **(September is the middle of what they call the "crush" when the wineries harvest grapes and take the initial steps in making their wine. It's a peak time to visit a winery and a great opportunity to gain a little insight into the process. The Sebastiani folks put us on their schedule despite the peak demand. Price is \$40 and includes a deluxe touring bus pick-up and drive through wine country to Sebastiani Winery for a Tour plus wine-tasting).** The Sonoma Valley is right next to the Napa Valley. It encompasses a patchwork of vineyards planted as early as 1824 by the Sonoma Mission's Franciscan Fathers. During prohibition, only Sebastiani Winery continued making wines (sacramental and "medicinal") and is one of the oldest continuously operating winemaking operations around. Sebastiani crafts small lots of premium wines and you can even taste their "reserve" wines for a small extra fee. {**Note: You can definitely do self-guided; on-your-own wine tours (see the info later in the Newsletter).**}

Then the bus will take us to the Sonoma Town Plaza for a couple of hours on your own to sample local cheeses, olive oils, vinegars, and gelato in the Sonoma Plaza cheese factory; visit the Sonoma Mission Inn (the northernmost of 21 missions created by the Spanish in the 1800s); stop in two wine-tasting centers featuring multiple local wineries' (tasting fee), browse in 50 quaint shops and stores, quilting and rare books stores, a Basque Bakery, and lots of other local food! The bus will return everyone to the hotel by 3:00 pm to give you a chance to clean up, stop in the Hootch, or *cage your eyeballs* for an hour before the Meet & Greet. *If you've already sent in your reunion registration and want to do this tour, send the revised registration form with the Winery Tour marked plus your check and we'll add you to that tour. Even if you already put down that you were interested in a wine tour on the original registration form, you'll need to actually register now.* If you have any questions on how to sign up, call or e-mail Wayne at 707-592-4492 or Qadvocate@sbcglobal.net

Friday night Meet & Greet is to introduce new reunion attendees, meet old friends, and make some new ones, with enough heavy hors d'oeuvres to fill your belly. **Pay as You go Bar is Available.**

Saturday, 18 September 2010 - Saturday morning is our Association Membership Meeting with a simultaneous Ladies Session. Saturday night is our sit-down Banquet with the **Air Force Band of the Golden West** for our entertainment, then lots of fun raffles plus a few awards. Two bottles of wine are at every table.

Sunday, 19 September 2010 - Sunday Morning is our Golf Tournament, then a Sunday night BBQ wraps up the Reunion activities.

If you haven't signed up for anything yet, get your butt in gear and send the revised registration form and your check to Doug! We rely on accurate numbers to get the hotel room and food rates we negotiated! Remember, the hotel Hootch is (as always) the central gathering place for friends to meet and visit. Hootch open from Wednesday afternoon until Sunday night with free beverages (beer, soda, wine, water), lots a munchies, reunion T-shirts, lithos, History Books, Challenge Coins, Pins, and scrapbooks, pictures, and memorabilia you bring. **NOTE: The Hootch, Friday Meet & Greet, Saturday meetings and Banquet, and Sunday BBQ are all in the hotel!**

"Do-It-Yourself Options"

First, scenic San Francisco is definitely worth a visit! Take the Reunion Tour on Thursday, or if you want the adventure of a do-it-yourselfer instead, tailor a day-trip to include whatever you want.

Eat fresh clam chowder served in a freshly baked San Francisco Sourdough bread bowl; relax and watch locals flying kites on the bay front while you munch on a Dungeness Crab cocktail at Fisherman's Wharf; walk around Ghirardelli Square's shops and sample their outstanding chocolate; take a San Francisco cable car to China Town and Union Square; check out the Golden Gate from several viewing opportunities; and much more!

You can take a two hour double Decker tour bus ride in the City, include a side trip to Muir Woods and walk through an ancient Redwoods grove. The City is 45 miles (but travel time varies due to commuters) from Fairfield, and we'll have maps and links posted on the web site for anything you might want to include, such as the double Decker tours and Muir Woods at www.SanFranciscoSightseeing.com or 888-428-6937.

Another fun way to visit San Francisco is to take the passenger Ferry; the terminal is located in Vallejo, about 15 miles from Fairfield, with parking for your car at the terminal. The trip takes you through San Pablo Bay, San Rafael Bay, and finally San Francisco Bay. The ferries are modern, with both inside and outside seating, snack bars and rest rooms. The view of the City, the bridges, and even a lighthouse, is a different and quite beautiful perspective from the water. The ferry terminal in San Francisco is about 1½ miles from Pier 39 and Fisherman's Wharf. It's about another ½ mile to Ghirardelli Square. Or, you can board one of the fabled San Francisco cable cars near the Ferry building, which can take you to the Ghirardelli Square/Fisherman's Wharf area, or even on to Chinatown and Union Square. Cable car and ferry info and schedule links are posted at www.sfcablecar.com (No phone #), and the web site at www.baylinkferry.com or 877-643-3779 has links to related web links for everything San Francisco; site has schedule and fare information, and a description of the postcard views of popular bay attractions. If you want a tour from the "bayside" (i.e. from a boat) go to www.blueandgoldfleet.com 415-773-1188 to reserve a 1 hour narrated cruise tour (\$24 adult, \$20 Seniors 62+, save \$2 by buying tickets online) or www.redandwhite.com 415-673-2900 for a 1 or 2 hour cruise (\$24 adult). Just dying to get into Alcatraz? Visit www.alcatrazcruises.com or 415-581-7625. (\$26 Adult)

Wineries!

There are literally hundreds within 75 miles of the hotel. If you prefer, you can take a "Do-It-Yourself" wine tour, driving your own vehicle. There are many options. For example, Napa is one of the premier wine producing areas in the United States, and if you do a tour (commercial or do-it-yourself), most of the Napa major wineries are located on Route 29, approximately 30 miles (45-60 minutes or more, depending on traffic) from Fairfield. Grapes will be nearing harvest, or "crush" – a beautiful time to be in the Napa Valley. There are many fine restaurants located in the area. Be prepared for the possibility of large crowds. Many wineries in the Napa area charge a tasting fee. Commercial Napa Wine tours are mostly out of San Francisco: www.SanFranciscoSightseeing.com or 415-434-8687 (\$60 Adult), or www.GuideYou.com 415-775-1200 for a ½ day tour of several Sonoma and Napa wineries for about \$45 or a full day tour of three Napa wineries for about \$60; or www.winecountrylimos.com or 800-578-0115 for a full day tour for \$89. You can also ride the Napa Valley Wine Train, which takes you on a 3 hour journey through the Napa Valley and features winery tours and a gourmet lunch. Reservations are required at www.winetrain.com/winery-tours, or 800-427-4124.

The “Other Wine Country” out here includes **many very fine** wineries located outside of the Napa Valley, with hundreds of award winning wineries in Yolo, Sacramento, El Dorado, and Amador counties to the North-Northeast; Sonoma County (next to Napa) to the Southwest; San Joaquin and Calaveras counties to the South, and Solano County right in the Fairfield area. Many of these wineries are like Napa Valley wineries used to be “back in the day!” Most don’t charge for tasting, and often provide entertainment and snacks for their visitors. Wayne and Lynette visit Solano, Amador, and El Dorado wineries regularly. Solano County wineries are within 10 miles of the hotel, and well worth the visit. Lodi (Remember Credence Clearwater) has some great wines about an hour east. Sonoma is just below Napa, has great wines, and is a little less pricey than Napa. Amador and El Dorado wineries are 80 miles (1½ hours) from Fairfield, to the West of Sacramento. We’ll have maps handy for those who wish to go wine tasting in these areas.

There are also several locations where you can taste wines from multiple regions. In San Francisco, the Winery Collective has 50 wines from Napa, Sonoma, & other areas. More info at www.winerycollective.com or 415-929-9463. For a more laid back tasting, the Suisun Valley Wine Collective is about 10 minutes from our hotel, with 15 wines from 4 local wineries at www.suisunvalleywines.com or 707-864-3135.

Shopping: our Reunion Hotel is the Hilton Garden Inn in Fairfield; located about a block from the Westfield Mall. Anchor stores include J. C. Penney, Macy’s, and Sears. The Mall includes many smaller stores, shops, restaurants and a cinema. There is also a “strip mall” that surrounds two sides of the Mall that has various shops and restaurants. Approximately 10 miles east on I-80, the Vacaville Premium Outlet stores include several of the same outlet stores many of us visited in San Destin, Florida. And for those who have never been, there is an IKEA store in West Sacramento, about a 45 minute drive east on I-80. Also, just about every one of the sights you can visit has shopping opportunities.

Restaurants: The Hilton Garden Inn features a restaurant with a delicious luncheon menu, and you automatically get the free “full-breakfast” with your room registration. There are many other well-known eateries within a few blocks: Chevy’s and Chipotle (Mexican food), Mimi’s Café, Red Lobster, Marie Calendar’s, Fresh Choice (salads plus), and others. There are also quick stops like Chick-fil-A, Taco Bell, Red Robin in the Mall, and in the strip mall area. There are very good Mexican, Thai, Chinese, and Italian restaurants on Texas and N. Texas Street in Fairfield, and in Vacaville. We’ll have a list of those posted in the Hootch.

Aircraft, Railway, and Auto Museums:

- **Jimmy Doolittle Air and Space Museum**, Travis AFB – Home of a C-119 aircraft and many more vintage and historical aircraft. The museum contains memorabilia from several wars, including some of our AC-119 stuff, many indoor and outdoor exhibits, and a small gift shop. The museum is open from 0900 to 1600, Tuesday – Saturday; check www.travisairmuseum.org or 707-424-5605.
- **McClellan AFB’s Aerospace Museum** of California is about an hour north of Fairfield; check www.aerospacemuseumofcalifornia.org or 916-643-0389
- **The Western Railway Museum** is located less than a ½ hour from the hotel on Highway 12 between Fairfield and Rio Vista. Take a 10-mile train ride through the peaceful, picturesque Montezuma Hills. Admission fee: Adults \$10, Seniors (65+) \$9 at www.wrm.org or 707-374-2978.
- **The California State Railroad Museum**, Sacramento is America’s most popular railroad museum; just under an hour north of our hotel in the Old Sacramento State Historic Park. You can ride trains, and enjoy a complex of historic facilities and unique attractions. Admission fee is Adults \$9 at www.csrnf.org or 916-445-6645 for 24-hour information.
- **The California Automobile Museum**, Sacramento is located near Old Town Sacramento. An exciting collection of over 150 classic, race, and muscle cars, plus hot rods. Admission fee is Adult \$8, Seniors \$7 at www.toweautomuseum.org or 916-442- 6802.

Golf Courses:

- In Fairfield, Rancho Solano (707-429-4653) and Paradise Valley (707-426-1600)
- In Vacaville, Green Tree Golf Club (9 holes) – (707-448-1420)
- **Cypress Lakes Golf Course (Travis AFB) – (707-448-7186) - Sunday Morning Golf Tournament**

Casinos:

Cache Creek Casino Resort is located near Brooks, approximately 46 miles (1 hour) from Fairfield. Partly freeway driving. Visit www.cachecreek.com or 530-796-3118.

Thunder Valley Casino Resort is located in Lincoln, approximately 58 miles (1¼ hours) from Fairfield on I-80, just north of Sacramento. www.thundervalleyresort.com or 877-468-8777.

Colusa Casino Resort is located near Colusa, approximately 82 miles (1½ hours) from Fairfield. Mostly freeway driving. Visit www.colusacasino.com or 530-458-8844.

Reno, Nevada is located approximately 150 miles (3 hours) from Fairfield via I-80. You'll travel through the Sacramento Valley and the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Gaming, shows, shopping and many fine restaurants await you in the "Biggest Little City" in the West.

Suisun City Waterfront District: Lovely waterfront area feature unique restaurants, shops, and a Public Promenade. Suisun City "adjoins" Fairfield, and is walking distance from downtown Fairfield.

Airports: Sacramento, San Francisco and Oakland (check out the info on the web).

Rail Service: Amtrak goes right to the Suisun City Station which is 5 minutes from our reunion hotel in Fairfield. Visit www.Amtrak.com or 800-872-7245.

Other Optional Adventures:

Old Sacramento is actually a State Historic Park that allows you to experience a lot of California History packed into a couple of blocks! Noteworthy Gold Rush sites, including the western terminus of the Pony Express! Many fine restaurants are located nearby, including Joe's Crab Shack. Also, several museums are in Old Sacramento, including the California State Railroad Museum, Sacramento History Museum, Old Sacramento State Historic Park, Schoolhouse Museum, Wells Fargo History Museum, and the California Military Museum. This park is located approximately 40 miles (45 minutes) from Fairfield on I-80. Visit www.oldsacramento.com or 916-442-7644.

Lake Tahoe – Located approximately 120 miles (2 ½ hours) from Fairfield. Take I-80 to Route 89S out of Truckee, which passes the world-class ski areas of Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley. Lake Tahoe can be seen from Tahoe City. You can make a driving loop by continuing on Route 89S, which winds around the west side of the lake, affording stunning views of the lake and Sierra Nevada Mountains. Once you reach South Lake Tahoe, you can visit the casinos in Stateline, NV, or return to Fairfield via Route 50 to Sacramento, which connects with I-80 to take you back to Fairfield. Check out www.visitinglaketahoe.com.

Yosemite is located approximately 200 miles (4 hours) from Fairfield; the way there takes you through the San Joaquin Valley to this Grand National Park with giant Sequoias, and beautiful waterfalls. If you have time while you're here or can stop enroute, we highly recommend this adventure opportunity, with 2 hour to full day tours available at www.YosemitePark.com or 209-372-4386. You can also use www.nps.gov/Yose/planyourvisit, or 209-372-0200, press 3, press 5.

How Far Away is Everything? To help with your planning, we created a map showing some of the places you can visit, with relative distances and travel times from Fairfield. The circles on the map give you a perspective on what to include in your travels, with the first circle being “within a ½ hour of Fairfield” (one way travel time), the 2nd circle about 1 hour one way, the 3rd circle 1½ hours, etc. This map will only be on the web (or we can mail you one - contact Wayne). Many of the following places to visit will be marked on the map to help you plan a day on your own or with a smaller group of friends!

Within a ½ hour (one way)

- Jelly Belly Factory offers free tours daily 9:00 am to 4:00 pm at Jelly Belly Candy Company, home of the more than 150 flavors of “designer” jelly beans. Located about 3½ miles from the hotel, not far from the brewery. www.JellyBelly.com or 1-800-522-3267.
- Sepay Groves Olive Oil – California produced olive oil, olives, and balsamic vinegar at their finest. It is located 3½ miles from the hotel, not far from Jelly Belly and the brewery. www.sepayoliveoil.com or 707-434-8222.
- The Anheuser-Busch Fairfield Brewery, located 3 miles from the hotel, offers tours Tuesday–Saturday. In addition to their complimentary tour, which includes beer tasting, you can enjoy the Beermaster Tour, a unique opportunity to experience a behind-the-scenes look at the brewing of Budweiser with a visit to the Brew House and Finishing Cellar, plus sampling directly from a Finishing Tank, Lager Cellar, and Packaging Facility. Beermaster Tour reservations must be made in advance. Tour fee is \$25.00. www.budweisertours.com or 707-429-7595.
- Solano County wineries (over ½ a dozen) www.suisunvalleywines.com or 707-864-3135.
- Travis AFB RV Park, BX, Commissary, and Museum
- Western Railroad Museum, Rio Vista

Within 1 hour (one way)

- San Francisco City, Bridge, and Bay and Alcatraz Island
- Muir Woods National Monument is a majestic Redwood tree grove near San Francisco at www.nps.gov/muwo/planyourvisit/directions.htm or 415-388-2596.
- Napa, Lodi, and Sonoma Wineries (see the local area map)
- Thunder Valley and Cache Creek Casinos

Within 1½ hours (one way)

- Amador and El Dorado Wineries)
- North Coast: Pt. Reyes National Seashore (Tomaes Bay) at www.tomaesbay.net
- Bodega Bay at www.bodegabay.com

Overnight trips or enroute to Fairfield

- About 2½ to 3 hours south: Big Sur, Carmel, and Monterey Bay (wharf, Aquarium) at www.bigsurcalifornia.org, www.carmelcalifornia.com, www.monterey.org
- About 2½ to 3 hours north: Lake Tahoe and the Sierra Nevada Mountains are beautiful, with casinos and shows at South and North shores! Reno Nevada is the Biggest Little City in the USA with casinos and shows galore. See the Reno info in paragraph 8 and Tahoe info in paragraph 10.
- About 3½ hours southeast: Yosemite National Park is Mother Nature at her grandest

So how do I register for the Reunion?

Fill in the Registration Form on the next page and send it in!!

2010 AC-119 GUNSHIP REUNION REGISTRATION

AC-119 GUNSHIP REUNION XI

SEPTEMBER 17-19, 2010, FAIRFIELD, CA

This is Not your Hotel Registration (this is your Reunion Registration Only!)

Name: (First, Middle Initial, Last) _____

Are you an AC-119 Gunship Association member? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Years Served with Gunships: 19__ to 19__ ; 19__ to 19__

Squadron: __ 71st; __ 17th; __ 18th; __ 3rd or 4th ACS; __ other (____); Crew Position/Role: _____

Address: (include Zip 4) _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Spouse/Guest Name: (First, Middle Initial, Last) _____

Additional Guests: (#) _____ Name(s) _____

REUNION FEE.....# attending ____ X \$20 = \$ ____

YES! I / We will attend:

• Thursday San Francisco Tour.....# attending ____ X \$35 = \$ ____

• Friday Sebastiani Winery and Sonoma Town Plaza Tour.....# attending ____ X \$40 = \$ ____

• Friday Night Meet & Greet (See web or Newsletter for menu).....# attending ____ X \$28 = \$ ____

• Saturday Night Banquet

▶ Sliced Filet w/Jack Daniels peppercorn sauce.....# of meals ____ X \$35 = \$ ____

▶ Chicken Picatta w/lemon & wine sauce.....# of meals ____ X \$35 = \$ ____

▶ Grilled Salmon w/orange soy sauce.....# of meals ____ X \$35 = \$ ____

• Sunday Morning Golf Tournament (Green Fees separate).....# playing ____ X \$10 = \$ ____

• Sunday Afternoon BBQ (See web or Newsletter for menu).....# attending ____ X \$30 = \$ ____

Check # ____ Total Payment \$ ____

NOTE: For special meal needs, contact Wayne Laessig at 707-592-4492 or Qadvocate@sbcglobal.net

After filling-in this page mail it (if you use the web version, print it first since it will not save your info) with your payment (**make check payable to AC-119 Gunship Association**) to:

Doug Wohlgamuth (AC-119)

504 Shea Place

Sun City Center, FL 33573-5726

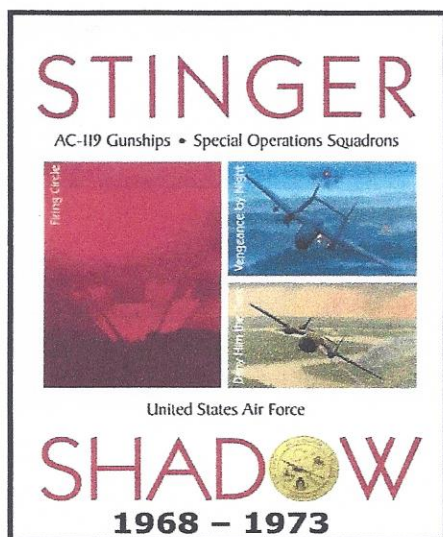
Mailing this page with your payment completes your Reunion Registration, you still need to contact the hotel direct for your Hotel Registration! See the Newsletter or web for details.

Questions? Check the web at <http://www.ac-119gunships.com>; call Doug at 813-938-1886 or 813-781-5728 e-mail Busch791@tampabay.rr.com; or Wayne at 707-592-4492 e-mail Qadvocate@sbcglobal.net

See You in California!

PLEASE NOTE: Cancellation Policies

- Reunion Registration cancellations on or before September 1st = refund or donation as requested
- Reunion Registration cancellations after September 1st = we have to pay hotel "guarantees", so no refunds (but talk to us if there are special circumstances like family emergencies or losses)
- Hotel Registration: if you cancel after their minimum 24 hour notification, you may still be charged.



AC-119 Gunship History Book Order Form

"Our book seems to cover every aspect of the AC-119 Vietnam experience. Personal accounts of guys, who flew gunship missions, and including those of maintenance and other support people, highlight the good, the bad and the ugly of operating has-been aircraft in less than desirable conditions while flying highly important missions. The little known history of AC-119 gunship operations, missions that provided an important tactical piece to the Vietnam puzzle, is fully exposed in our History Book. Our book will be immediately valued by those who served and will become more valued by those who inherit the book down through the ages". "Needless to say, I treasure my copy of our History Book".

Chuck James - 17th SOS  'A/C'

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone #: Land Line _____ Cell Phone _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Ship To: Name & Address if Different from Above

AC-119 Gunship History Book - Number of Copies x Price per Copy = Total _____

Hard Cover		\$50.00	= \$ _____
Soft Cover / Spiral Bound	REDUCED	\$25.00	= \$ _____
Shipping & Handling per copy:	_____	\$ 5.00	= \$ _____

(No Credit Cards Accepted)

GRAND TOTAL = \$ _____

Check Number: _____ Amount: _____ Cash or Money Order Amount: _____

Make checks or money orders payable to "AC-119 Gunship Association History Book Fund"

Gus Sininger
1300 Arial Court
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32547-1191
stinger7172@cox.net
Phone (850) 863-9649



Last Flight



Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Harry C. "Heinie" Aderholt passed away May 20, 2010, at his home, surrounded by family, loyal friends and his devoted caregiver, Jamie Newman. He was born on Jan. 6, 1920, in Birmingham, Ala., to Forest Aderholt and Katie Banholzer and was preceded in death by his loving wife of 56 years, Jessie; brothers, Roy Aderholt and Robert Aderholt; and sister, Cornelia Akin. He is survived by his wife, Anne; daughter, Janet Lynn Elliott and husband Chaplin Col. (Ret.) Richard G. Elliott Jr. of Panama City, Fla.; son, George Aderholt and wife Pat of Navarre, Fla.; one sister, Katherine McDaniel of Trussville, Ala.; two brothers, Warren

Aderholt and his wife Bunny of Marietta, Ga., and Louis Aderholt of Huntsville, Ala.; grandchildren, Kevin Richard Elliott and wife Kathy Anderson Elliott, Stacie Lynn Elliott, Kellie Marie Elliott and Mark Randall Elliott; great-granddaughter, Annie Lynn Elliott; and several nieces and nephews. Heinie was one of seven children raised by his widowed mother (his father died, as a result of an accident, when Heinie was just a boy of nine), and he learned very early in life many lessons that would shape his future. Undoubtedly, his mother's influence from her strength, courage, love and strict discipline, provided him with the solid foundation that helped him to grow and develop into the remarkable man he became. Heinie's love of people was obvious and his sincerity and straight forward, up-front approach encouraged the development of many life-long friendships. His innumerable friends will remember him as a man of integrity with a loving heart who inspired and touched so many lives. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations in memory of Gen. Aderholt be made to the McCoskrie Threshold Foundation, P.O. Box 67, Mary Esther, FL 32569, to support projects in Thailand and Laos.



Robert Hartley Spencer

17th SOS Flight Engineer 1969-1970

Bob, as he was known to everyone, died peacefully on March 30 with his daughter Cheryl at his side. He was diagnosed with cancer in early February.

Bob was born in Boston, Mass., and grew up there. He enlisted in the Air Force at an early age and retired in 1975 after 22 years as a flight engineer who accumulated more than 5,000 hours of flying time including 140 combat missions over Vietnam in the AC-119G *Shadow*. He flew with the 17th Special Operations while in Vietnam from 1969-1970, and was awarded 10 air medals as well as the Distinguished Flying Cross.

After retirement from the Air Force, Bob worked in real estate with the Hoffman Company and the National Real Estate Franchise. Bob became very involved in the local community as a parent and as a member of the Fairfield Rotary, Kiwanis Club, where he was president of the Suisun Chapter and Fairfield Chamber of Commerce. He was a longtime member of the Solano Yacht Club. He was a huge supporter of the Fairfield Sea Horses Swim Club and the Solano Swim Club as his daughters swam competitively. He was also a member of the Knights of Columbus at Holy Spirit where his daughters attended school.

Bob is survived by his daughter, Cheryl Spencer Burke of Berkeley, CA, and her mother Patricia Spencer of Davis, CA; brothers, Richard Spencer of East Freetown, MA, Bruce Spencer of New Salem, MA, and Hartley Spencer of Fairfield, IA. In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to the American Cancer Society, P.O. Box 22718, Oklahoma City, OK 73123-1718.