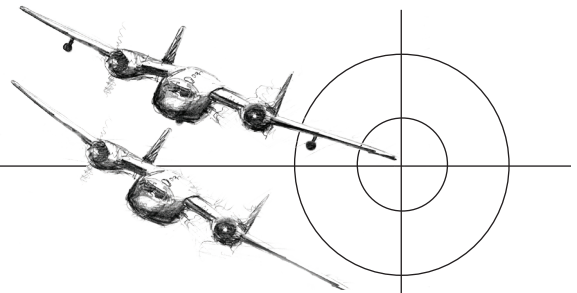


Firing Circle



Summer 2012

A Newsletter of the AC-119 Gunship Association

AC-119 Will Fly Again At Reunion 2012

by Lee Kyser

On July 18, 1972 at Nakhon Phanom (NKP), Thailand, a hand-built, six foot wingspan AC-119K Stinger model was flown. The owner, Capt John Hupe (Navigator), built it from scratch using tech data for all the details. It was ready to fly 2 weeks before the end of his tour. A gathering of 60, or so, fellow crewmembers were on hand to watch the maiden flight. It flew, an engine failed, it rolled over and crashed, and became a forgotten story for 39 years.

Then, something happened! Someone found a phone number for John Hupe and a phone call was made. The result of that call is now an effort to fly it, again. After making contact with John Hupe by phone during the 2011 reunion, newsletter editor Bill Petrie published a story about that phone call in the Winter 2011/2012 edition of our newsletter. The final paragraph Bill wrote read, "And now you know the rest of the story! But do we? Will the AC-119K "Stinger" fly again?"

(More on page 3)



Captain John Hupe, former 18th SOS navigator, holds up his model after crashing it at Nakhon Phanom, Thailand.

Mark Your Calendars

Reunion 2012


Ft. Walton Beach, FL

September 26 - 30th

Sheraton Four Points

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WELCOME Back to Ft. Walton Beach

and our Reunion Hotel the Sheraton Four Points.

Reunion Registration & hotel room reservation / registration are separate. You can download the "reunion registration form" from our website. Please Note there is a reunion registration fee of \$25 per person. More reunion registration information can be found at www.ac-119gunships.com/association/reunion/reunioninfo2012.htm

Also, a gentle reminder about Cancellation Policies

- Reunion Registration cancellations on or before September 1st we'll give you a refund or you can donate as requested.
- Reunion Registration cancellations after September 1st means 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.

Hotel Reservation

This year's reunion Hotel is the Four Points by Sheraton Destin-Fort Walton Beach. The hotel is located at 1325 Miracle Strip Parkway, Highway 98 East Fort Walton Beach, Florida 32548

A web site for the AC 119 Gunship Association has been created by the hotel for you. The AC 119 Gunship Association Hotel reunion / room reservation site is: <http://www.starwoodmeeting.com/StarGroupsWeb/res?id=1112145956&key=15D59>

Reunion Agenda

WEDNESDAY SEP 26

• **Hootch opens & stays open till 1800 Sunday** in Sunshine Palm Room & Deck. Soda, Beer & Snacks are FREE to Reunion attendees, except "during" Meet & Greet, Banquet, & Farewell events.

THURSDAY SEP 27

All Day Hootch or time on your own

1700 – 1800 Dinner available at Bangkok House in Fort Walton; \$15; pay when you get there.

Handy Links

Need a Ft. Walton Beach /Destin Weather forecast? View one at www.underground.com

Want news about the Northwest Florida area? Read the Northwest Florida Daily News at www.nwfdailynews.com

For general information on Ft. Walton Beach and Destin check out www.destin-fwb.com

Need a car rental or airline tickets? Visit www.travelocity.com

Driving to Ft. Walton Beach? See www.mapquest.com for directions

Need info on Eglin AFB click on www.eglin.af.mil

How about info on Hurlburt Field? Go to www.hurlburt.af.mil

FRIDAY SEP 28

0645 – 0745 Breakfast and Hootch

0815 – 0845 Car Pools from Hotel to Hurlburt Air Field (Park in the lot across from the Front Gate)

0845 – 0900 AF Bus to 18th FLTS; pickup at Sound Side Lodging across from Hurlburt Front Gate of Hurlburt.

0900 – 0945 Squadron Tour & Special Ops Briefing

0945 – 1050 AF Bus to Flight line for AC/MC-130s & CV-22 Static Displays; depends on availability & weather.

1050 – 1100 AF Bus from Flight Line to 18th FLTS

1100 – 1115 18th Nav John Hupe will brief the story of his Stinger Model & its rebuild for Saturday's Airshow.

1115 – 1240 Lunch & Social with 18th – burgers, dogs, beer, chips – meet some of today's AF Warriors.

1240 – 1355 AF Bus from 18th to Hurlburt Air Memorial Park for short Remembrance Ceremony & self-guided tour of Air Park (Shadow & other aircraft, AC-119 Gunship KIA Memorial, Stinger Monument)

1355 – 1405 AF Bus from Airpark to Sound side

1405 – 1430 Car Pools return to Hotel

1430 – 1700 Hootch or time on your own

1800 – 2200 Meet & Greet – Greet at the Paradise Cove & North Pool Deck, Buffet style. Dress: casual or Party suits.

SATURDAY SEP 29

0700 – 0830 Breakfast and Hootch

0830 – 1000 Association Membership Meeting - Queen Palm Ballroom. Bloody Marys/Coffee & Water

0900 – 1000 Spouses Breakfast Meeting on the North Pool Deck (use your Breakfast Vouchers)

1015 – TBD Cindy Posey has a lady setting up a table at the Hootch Bar Deck selling Home-made Jewelry.

1015 – 1100 VA Briefing: Headstone & Benefits info with Q&A

1100 – 1200 Lunch and Hootch

1200 – 1245 Car Pools to Holly Field (we'll provide directions)

1245 – 1400 Model Airshow with reflight of 18th Nav John Hupe's rebuilt Stinger Mode

1400 – 1445 Car Pools to return to Hotel

1445 – 1700 Hootch or time on your own

1800 – 1900 Car Pools to Banquet at Elk's Lodge Hwy 98 (we'll provide directions); Happy Hour begins 1800

1900 – 2000 Banquet Dinner, Elks Lodge Hwy 98

2000–2100 Short break followed by Association Awards & Raffles• Saturday Night Banquet (Elks Lodge # 1795)

SUNDAY SEP 30

0900 – 1500 Golf Tournament at local Golf Course.

0800 – 1800 Hootch or time on your own

1700 – 2100 Farewell Gulf Coast Shrimp Boil in Paradise Cove & North Pool Deck.

- See the Website and previous newsletter for more information -

Firing Circle 3

AC-119 (Continued from page 1)

Bill had written that because John Hupe had said he had no plans to repair the aircraft, nor to fly it. With Bill posing that question, it gave me the idea to see if John would change his mind.

I had learned from John that he had doubts about his Radio Controlled (RC) model-flying abilities. I felt that if that is the only reason, perhaps he might change his mind if a more qualified person could be found. But where will I find one within the association? The association won't be meeting again until the 2012 reunion in September.

Then I remembered a local friend, Ray Lischka, who once was a radio-controlled modeller. I called Ray to see how he felt a fellow modeller would react at the proposal of rebuilding John's Stinger and then flying it for him. His immediate thought was that most RC hobbyists would be all for it. Then he wanted to know where it is and how much damage. So I told him it was in Kansas and that it might be best that I check with an RC modeller club near John Hupe.

After talking with Ray, I gave it more thought. Since John lives in a relatively small town in Kansas, and John had plans to attend the reunion in September, maybe John would be receptive to shipping it to Fort Walton Beach (FWB) if I found someone there who would be willing to tackle the project. That way it could be ready to fly before the reunion.

(Continued on next page)

**Register for
Reunion
2012 Now!**

A search for "RC Modellers in FWB" on the internet revealed the e-mail address of the Eglin Aero Modellers Club president, Rob Campbell. I e-mailed Rob asking him for the phone number of anyone he knew who might be interested in taking on the project. He answered with his own phone number. I called him and he was ecstatic about the project and said he would get the approval to do it, themselves, at his upcoming club meeting. Rob went on to tell me that they would only charge for the necessary parts—nothing for the labor—and they would get their best "Ace" to fly it. "Hot Damn!", I thought. If this doesn't change

John's mind about rebuilding and flying it again, nothing will.

Armed with the aforementioned plan, I called John. I could almost hear the bells and whistles going off in his mind. He said he wanted to give me a go, but would have to wait until his family was told of the plan and agreed to let it find a new home in a suitable museum.

John contacted all of his heirs and approved the plan. Rather than endanger his Stinger to damage through shipping (keep in mind it is quite large), he elected to deliver it himself. On 14 July, 2012, just 4 days prior to the 40th anniversary of the maiden flight, John drove to FWB

(an 1100 mile trip) and delivered it to Rob Campbell.

Rob expects to have the Stinger repaired by mid-August. In the meantime, he is making contact with various media to cover the project through the repair and the various flights that will follow.

Be sure you're at **Reunion 2012**....because the "rest of the story" is yet to come.



Join Us!
AT Reunion
2012!

Help Save Association Resources

If you receive multiple copies, or wish to receive the newsletter via e-mail, contact Association secretary Mike Drzyzga at [drzyzga513@hotmail.com] so we can update our mailing list.

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