

Association President's Message - November 2018

Hi, it is me again. One of the many important tasks accomplished during Reunion XIX in Tucson, AZ, was the election of Association Board Members, which allows the AC-119 Gunship Association to continue strongly for another year. We elected a new Vice President, Jerry Hester, to take the position vacated by Bob LaRosa. And we elected John Wolff as Board-Member-at-Large, to hold the position vacated by Terry Sarul. We all thank Bob and Terry for providing dedication and valuable service, and wish Jerry and John success helping the Board continue. The other Board Members happily will continue for another year. I feel privileged and honored to continue as Association President for one more year. Also, TWO more items of good news: (1) Life Member and Tucson resident Donald Luke volunteered to take on the Newsletter Editor's position. THANK YOU, Don! Don has both technical and practical experience for this important function. We are working on a *Firing Circle* for distribution this month, and (2) The Association has a new Web Master – Liz Buss, an Information Technology professional who understands website maintenance, and will help the Board keep the Association's website fresh and current. Please browse to www.ac119gunships.com and check it out. Welcome, Don and Liz, to a great team!

The Tucson reunion was a great success. The Association's Facebook page exploded with pictures and stories for at least ten days afterwards. We had about 230 attendees, and there would have been more except that Hurricane Michael dampened the travel plans of many northern Floridians. Coordinator Everett Sprous, with assistance from Lee Jordan, Craig Corbett, and Don Luke, really worked energetically to pull this together. The Hootch was huge, and resupplied with our always-there volunteer support. We had many "first timers" who appeared to be whole-heartily thrilled to attend. Thursday evening, over 100 of us car pooled to the well-known Pinnacle Peak restaurant for dinner. Although Friday morning started off with rain showers, the USAF "Bone Yard"/ Pima Air Museum—and the Mini-Museum—tours were enjoyed by all attending, as the weather cleared. The Saturday morning Business Meeting was very successful. Among other items, the membership accepted updated Association By-Laws; voted on the Reunion XXI location for 2020; received updated info regarding membership numbers; reviewed our financial report from Treasurer Doug Wohlgamuth; and heard updates on the website from Wayne Laessig and updates on "our store" from Quartermaster Gus Sininger. The Awards Banquet on Saturday night went quite smoothly, with the exception of under-staffed hotel servers delaying dinner for some. Our Mystery Guest Speaker, Howard Reid, entertained us with his USAF anecdotes for 20 minutes. Gus Sininger and Andrea Drzyzga successfully held our traditional silent and live auctions. Sunday was a beautiful, fun day for those who went on the buses to visit Old Tucson. A lot of pictures were taken as we engaged in entertaining events, learned local history, and enjoyed places to eat. We did experience a number of other disappointing hiccups with the Double-Tree Hilton, where they clearly over extended the capabilities of the facility, which affected our Friday Meet and Greet buffet and the operation of the Hootch on Sunday. The Board addressed these with hotel management the best we could. Going forward, our tough lessons learned from Reunion XIX will not be forgotten.

Speaking of pictures, I must thank Jim Alvis, Dan Thompson, Ev Sprous, and others, who picked up the task of capturing images of the week's events while I was busy. The November *Firing Circle* will contain a great review of the week with many images. Of course, I want to thank Larry "Baby Huey" Hunter, our Chaplain, for continuing to provide his service. And we are thankful that Sam and Debbie Gallo ran our 50/50 at the Banquet.

On a personal note there are FOUR things on my frontal brain. (1) Upon arriving in Tucson, Andrea and I learned that Sam Gallo had a minor heart attack in Alamogordo, NM, on his way across country from Pittsburg. Sam spent four days in the Tucson VA Medical Center (very nice facility) and they fixed him good enough for Sam to join us on Thursday for the remainder of the reunion. "Love You, Man!" (2) I have been to the Pima Air Museum twice already, but this visit was very special. As I roamed about the Air Park and joined a few different small groups of former airmen, I saw some who became clearly emotional while being up close and personal with an aircraft they loved to work on or fly. I just listened as they told some

wonderful personal stories of their experiences, and I learned some interesting details about the aircraft. (3) It was wonderful to see the real joy on the first-timers faces as they were welcomed by other attendees. We were all “first-timers” at some point, and this brotherhood really shows the spirit of us gunshippers! (4) It was super to have so many family members join us for this reunion. I pray that this trend continues and our family members continue to gather with us. We can make our reunions a “Family Reunion.”

OK, I dropped the news above, about the upcoming reunions. The Board is fully engaged with Chuck Williams as we plan important details with the “pipper” centered on Salt Lake City for next September. What about 2020? Gus Sininger and Larry Hunter volunteered to host us at Ft. Walton Beach once again. I know FOR SURE that our two legacy special ops units at Hurlburt (the 18th FLTS and the 73rd SOS Shadows) will welcome us warmly again. Keep scanning the mailbox for registration details for SLC in the upcoming *Firing Circles*. The membership voted in a large majority for FWB; therefore, John (and Laura) Wolff will keep the proposal for Omaha, NB, (in 2021) on the back burner for us. Thank you, John and Laura!

Have a safe and happy holiday season ahead.

Respectfully,
Mike Drzyzga, President 2016–2019



AC119 Association Membership Updates

We give a warm welcome to our new Life Members:

Richard Davis, Life #472, 18th SOS, Gunner
Cleopas Mason, Life #476, 4413th CCTS, Maintenance
Thomas Novak, Life # 477, 18th SOS, Gunner, Converted from Annual
James Shope, Life #478, 18th SOS, Pilot, Converted from Annual

We also give a warm welcome to new Associate Members:

Steve Bachmann, Associate Life #474, Son-In-Law of William Tyler (71st SOS Maint)
Pamela Bachmann, Associate Life #475, Daughter of William Tyler (71st SOS Maint)
Barbara Williams Mills, Associate Life 3476, Friend of James Yanacsek (18th SOS FE)

The Association appreciates very much those “annual” members who respond promptly to the regular request to renewal your membership.

Final Flight

We remember our human frailty, and the strength of our brotherhood, in the loss of these who joined our Final Flight. Please remember their families in your prayers. R.I.P., Brothers all:

William (Bill) Herbert Reigle, Sr., 83, SSgt, 17th SOS Maintenance, passed on Sept 4, 2018 after a long battle with Parkinson’s disease. Bill served two tours at Tan Son Nhut

David Pfannenstiel, 18th SOS Maintenance, 1970-1972 passed on Sept 25, 2018

Additional details are on our Association Mail Call site <https://www.ac119gunships.com/mail-call/> & our Facebook site <https://www.facebook.com/groups/195912423919726>

Administrative Updates & Reminders

1. PLEASE remember to contact your group POC, the Membership Coordinator (Ev Sprous), or the Association Secretary (Ralph Lefarth) when you **change contact information, especially your email address.** We do very much want to keep in contact with you.
2. If you receive the *Firing Circle* by walking to the mail box after its postal delivery, AND you do have and use an EMAIL ADDRESS, TELL Mike Drzyzga, your unit POC, or our Secretary NOW if you want future Newsletters & FLASHES sent via email. You can \$SAVE us a lot by avoiding postage, printer paper, envelopes, ink cartridges, etc. Contact Association Secretary Ralph Lefarth ralph-l@sbcglobal.net or call (314) 846-1009.
3. Are you interested in some AC-119 Gunship historical facts, current events, interesting dialogue, photos & stories about AC-119s? If you have Internet access on your computer, then you have to join the Association's **Facebook page**. It now has **over 520 members** – not just directly related AC119ers, but also history buffs, AC-130 folk (including some new 73rd SOS Shadows), model makers, etc. Just browse to: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/195912423919726/>
4. Also, there are Facebook Pages dedicated to “Air Force Gunners”, “Air Force 462 Weapons”, “Happy Valley – Phan Rang” (almost 1400 members), & “U.S. Military Veterans - News you can use” – very interesting pictures & history, current news, & other valuable information.
5. **Awards & Decorations** coordinator Steve “Col” Mac Isaac continues to aid us in fixing incorrect DD214s. He has helped many get on the trail to receiving decorations they earned through research of documentation and orders shared by association members. Questions and comments: Contact Col Mac at email: colmacmac@mac.com, or (MST) Cell phone: (302) 249-1499.

Future Reunion Planning

2019 – Reunion XX, Salt Lake City, UT

Chuck Williams volunteered to obtain the necessary support, & coordinate our 20th reunion. Of course, there is a lot of planning to do & Chuck is studying his “take-off” checklist as you read this. Hill AFB is close by for support. All will be kept informed as this effort matures

2020 – Reunion XXI, Ft Walton Beach, FL

Gus Sininger and Larry Hunter volunteered to host and coordinate our 21st reunion at Ft Walton Beach, FL. Gus and Larry will be moving forward with the organization and planning for the reunion. Two legacy Special Operations units at Hurlburt (the 18th FLTS and the 73rd SOS Shadows) will surely welcome us again.

2018 TUCSON REUNION ATTENDEES

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alfaro, Mario | Gallo, Debby | Martin, Dale | Rubingh, Gary |
| Alfaro, Thelma | Gallo, Sam | Martin, Jeanette | Rubingh, Jonathan |
| Alvis, Jim | Gilbert, Ron | Mason, Cleo | Rubingh, Matt |
| Alvis, Judi | Goryl, Janis | Mason, Joyce | Rubingh, Sarah |
| Anderson, Dale, (Son of Meredith Anderson, KIA Shadow 78) | Goryl, Joe | Mattison, Jim | Sarul, Terry |
| Artis, Bruce, (Brother of Elaine Montgomery) | Gourly, Garry | McCain, Linda (Friend of Bastin's) | Sarul, Theresa |
| Artis, Marlene | Gourly, Wanda | McDaniel, Doug | Schumann, John |
| Barbee, Debbie | Graves, Karen | McDaniel, Janie | Shope, Christine |
| Barbee, Larry | Greenberg, Irv | McDonald, Jerry | Shope, Jim |
| Barnett, Chris, (Nephew of Steve Meleen) | Greenberg, Mary | McDonald, Karen | Sininger, Gus |
| Bartlett, Frank | Gregory, Dawn Cleary, (Friend of Corbett's) | Meleen, Steve | Sledzinski, Frank |
| Bartlett, Shirley | Gregory, Sheldon, (Friend of Corbett's) | Meleen, Todd, (Son of Steve) | Sledzinski, Yamile |
| Bastin, Carolyn | Greisamer, Melan | Mersek, Larry | Smith, Al |
| Bastin, Jack | Greisamer, Tom | Mersek, Susie Ryslingle | Smith, Carmel |
| Blum, Claude | Hall, Jeannie Siedzikowski | Middleton, Larry | Snyder, Jerry |
| Bright, Andy | Hall, Richard | Mills, Barbara | Sprous, Ev |
| Brow, Mary | Hansen, Becky | Montgomery, Elaine | Stearn, Ken |
| Bunton, Bernadette | Hansen, Vern | Montgomery, James | Stearn, Ronnie |
| Bunton, Windell | Hester, Ellen | Moore, Abbie, (Niece of Jan & Bob Dydo) | Stout, Landon |
| Buttrey, Maria, (Friend of Bunton's) | Hester, Jerry | Morrow, John | Tholl, Bernie |
| Caruso, Gene | Heuss, Al | Morrow, Lynn | Tholl, Rosie, (Niece of Meredith Anderson, KIA Shadow 78) |
| Caruso, Karen | Heuss, Helen | Mullen, Michael | Thompson, Dan |
| Chandler, Allen | Hinton, Carol | Mullen, Theresa | Totten, Gary |
| Chandler, Barbara | Hinton, Ron | Nelson, Larry | Totten, Kathy |
| Clark, John | Hoover, Bill | Nelson, Lorrie | Tyler, William |
| Conner, Don | Hoover, Theresa | New, Bobby | Tyler, Wilma |
| Conner, Susan Baily | Hunter, Larry | New, Janet | Vath, Ken |
| Connolly, Robert | Hunter, Soncy | Novak, Sherlyn | Vath, Nancy |
| Corbett, Craig | Jordan, Lee, (Daughter of Meredith Anderson, KIA Shadow 78) | Novak, Tom | Villarreal, Xavier "Cookie" |

2018 TUCSON REUNION ATTENDEES (CONTINUED)

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------|---|
| Corbett, Jan | Jordan, Tim | Perez, Jessica | Wall, Dixie |
| Craig, Don | Knight, Andrew, (Family of Col Al Brow) | Perez, Tony | Wall, Earl |
| Craig, Peggy | Knight, Barbara | Points, Roger | Weisenfluh, Marisa |
| Davis, Dennis | Knight, Christian | Radke, Don | Weisenfluh, Tom |
| Davis, Esther | Knight, James | Rash, Jim | Wheatley, Lourie |
| Davis, Judy | Knight, Julie | Raveling, Betty | Wheatley, Melissa |
| Davis, Richard | Knight, Liz | Raveling, Cathy | Whelan, Bruce |
| Day, Sandra | Knight, Talon | Raveling, Dan | Williams, Alex, (Chuck Williams Family) |
| Doll, Dale | Krauss, Mike | Raveling, Kenneth | Williams, Charles |
| Doll, Mary | Krueger, Bob | Raveling, Maria | Williams, Chuck |
| Drzyzga, Andrea | La Rosa, Bob | Raveling, Sterling | Williams, Hannah |
| Drzyzga, Mike | Laessig, Lynette | Raveling, Sandra Jo | Williams, James |
| Dydo, Bob | Laessig, Wayne | Raveling, Vern | Williams, John |
| Dydo, Jan | Laird, Alli | Reid, Doug | Williams, Kate |
| Farmer, Bob | Laird, Amber | Reid, Howard | Williams, Stefani |
| Farmer, Connie | Laird, Aubrey | Reid, Kristin | Wohlgamuth, Doug |
| Farrell, Jim | Laird, Jenna Laird | Renfroe, Becky | Wolff, John |
| Farrell, Tina | LeFarth, Joyce | Renfroe, George | Wolff, Laura Pribyl |
| Frahm, LeRoy | LeFarth, Ralph | Rider, Fred | Wood, Cyndi |
| Frahm, Rose | Luke, Don | Rider, Jean | Yanacek, Jim |
| Frederick, Robert | Lyall, Bob | Rosecrans, Karen | Zito, Bill |
| Friel, Amber | Mac Isaac, JP, (Son of Col Mac) | Rosecrans, Levi | Zito, Paula |
| Friel, Sean, (Son of IO Mike Friel) | Mac Isaac, Nancy | Rubingh, Becky | |
| Friel, Mike, (Son of IO Mike Friel) | Mac Isaac, Steve | Rubingh, Daisy | |

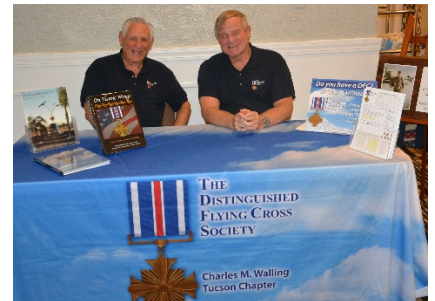
2018 TUCSON REUNION PHOTOS



Craig Corbett, Frank "Ski" Sledzinski, Larry Barbee (Stinger 41)



Bob Lyall, George Renfroe, and Dan Thompson



DFC Society

2018 TUCSON REUNION PHOTOS (CONTINUED)



Rosie Tholl , Mike Drzyzga



POW / MIA Table Ceremony



Chaplain "Baby Huey" Larry Hunter



Debbie Barbee, Cash McCall, Wayne and Lynette Laessig



71st SOS Group



The Awards Banquet



**Becky Renfroe, Lynette Laessig
Registration Desk**



**Dale Anderson, Lee Anderson Jordan, Ev
Sprous**



Mike Drzyzga



**Old Tucson Studios
John Wolff & Gus Sininger**



Old Tucson Studios Entry



Sam Gallo, Don Craig

2018 TUCSON REUNION PHOTOS (CONTINUED)



Pinnacle Peak Restaurant



Hungry Crowd at Pinnacle Peak



Earl and Dixie Wall – Pinnacle Peak



Pinnacle Peak Grill



Banquet Color Guard



Mike Drzyzga, Dan Thompson, Bill Zito



**Bob and Janet Dydo,
Abbie Moore, Family Friend**



**Garry Gourley, Bob Lyall,
John and Lynn Morrow**



Bob La Rosa, Chris Barnett



Andrea and Mike Drzyzga



Steve and Pamela Bachmann



Meet and Greet



**Security Checkpoint –
Davis Monthan AFB
Boneyard Tour**



**Bus On the Way to the Pima Air & Space
Museum and Boneyard Tour**



C-119G, Pima Air & Space Museum

