

Minutes of 8th AC-119 Gunship Association Meeting October 6, 2007

After the Opening Invocation by Chaplain Larry Hunter and Pledge of Allegiance, the minutes of the 2006 Association meeting were approved as published on the website and in the Newsletter. Secretary Jim Alvis then reviewed our membership trends with Life Members ↑ 15% and Annual Members ↓ 7% and an overall 6% growth in members to 419.

Jim queried the members present to determine the effectiveness of our Point of Contact (POC) efforts to communicate with their respective members (71st, 17th, 18th, and Maintenance/Support) this year. Almost 100% of the members present reported receiving at least one contact from their POC during the past year; either a POC e-mail or letter. The 18th SOS has the largest number of members, and Ev Sprous may need some help.

Jim also reported that 87% of our members receive e-mail, 13% require Snail Mail, and 10% of our e-mails return as undeliverable, which costs mailing or phone contacts to get updated e-mail info. PLEASE, send Jim any e-mail changes to help us keep our (your) costs down.

1. Treasurer Doug Wohlgamuth next reviewed the Association's finances with about \$10,390 account balance after the last reunion, annual operating costs (web, merchandise, reunion advertising and contacts, Branson deposit, History Book Project) of about \$10,200. We took in donations, dues, and merchandise that brought us \$15,500. With the Reunion costing about \$2,500 net, we should have \$12-13,000 to start the next year. NOTE: our Non-Profit category's IRS limit is \$25,000 gross at the end of year.

2. Next, Association "Past Board Member" Wayne Laessig summarized your Board's recommended By-Law changes and Reunion Host Criteria. The members present voted to change By-Laws to reflect the following:

- We are about AC-119s, not just three Squadrons
- Family members are eligible for Associate Membership (annual or life)
- Elected Board Terms of Office were approved for 3 year cycles with rotating elections to assure several Board Members will always have prior year experience.
- Those desiring to propose Reunion locations must provide 1) volunteer Coordinator who can do everything on the Reunion Coordinator's checklist, 2) a hotel that agrees to accommodate our Hootch Needs, and 3) proposed lodging and meal costs.

3. The membership then voted to accept AC-47 air and ground crew into our Association. The AC-47 men have never had an Association and requested they be allowed to become members of our Association. The membership voted unanimously to approve the request with the caveat that others who already have a specific aircraft association (Spectre, Misty, etc) are not eligible as members unless they flew, worked directly on, or directly supported AC-119s.

4. Dr Larry Fletcher presented an overview of the Pre-Reunion Cruise, declared a resounding success by all who participated, with recommendations to do more in the future. Anyone desiring to Project Manage future cruises can initiate proposals to the Board.

5. Larry then summarized the History Book Project which began in 2005. Larry & Ralph Lefarth are now prepared to self-publish a Volume I titled *United States Air Force AC-119 Shadow and Stinger Gunships and Special Operations Squadrons. Deny Him the Dark – Vengeance by Night* for \$8,000, and \$29.50 cost per Book. The proposed Volume I includes sections on Lineages and Chronological Histories of Shadow and Stinger Squadrons and the 14th Special Operations Wing (SOW); the AC-119G Shadow and AC-119K Stinger Gunships with photos, statistics, and interior layout diagram; and a section on Shadow and Stinger Personnel Biographies with photos, if provided. Larry stated a future Volume II could include sections of additional Shadow and Stinger Personnel Biographies, Memoirs, War Stories w/photos including stories on Gunship losses/photos of crashes; AC-119 Squadron and flight documents; and a section with crew pictures, snap shots, poems, and cartoons that have not been previously used in Volume I. The members agreed the Board will meet with Larry and Ralph to determine next steps.

6. Dr Steve Maxner of the Texas Tech University's Vietnam Center in Lubbock Texas presented an overview of the Center's birth, growth, capability, and future plans for becoming "the" archive for Vietnam history. The center began in 1989 by Vietnam veterans and is now funded by the State of Texas. It is a unit of the College of Arts & Sciences. It has the largest collection of Vietnam history other than the National Archives. The

center has received over 2,100 collection donations, nearly 3 million pages of documents, and thousands of photographs. The Center has 5 Vietnam era aircraft. Visit www.vietnam.ttu.edu for more info. After the presentation, the membership voted to endorse the Vietnam Center as the AC-119 Association's archive or repository of choice. This does not constrain "anyone from donating memorabilia, historical documents, etc to other Museums or archives. The vote simply endorsed the Center for anyone desiring to donate archive materials.

7. Branson, MO Reunion IX Coordinator Jerry McDonald provide an update on next year's reunion plans, which was heartily endorsed as "super" by all present. The 2008 Reunion will be held in the Radisson Hotel, September 11-14, at a cost of \$97 per room that includes full breakfast. We'll have a Hootch, and on Thursday afternoon there's a 2 hour cruise, dinner, and show on the Showboat Branson Belle. The regular Friday Social, Saturday Association meeting and evening Banquet; Sunday morning golf tournament and afternoon tours of local attractions will wrap-up with the evening BBQ. Make your hotel reservations early. Booking info will be on the website shortly.

8. 2009 Reunion X Proposals: Gus proposed the reunion return back to Ft. Walton Beach @ Sheraton Four Points. Second proposal was a three-member team who live near Travis AFB, California. The membership discussed the two locations and approved the return to Fort Walton Beach Sheraton Four Points in 2009 on Oct 2-4, 2009.

9. Webmaster Bill Petrie reports 430,000 hits to website since we started, with website hosting fees paid by donations 1998-2003. The Association now funds, with normal yearly expenses of \$250 for website host and domain registration. Bill will take on the Newsletter Editor role as well. We published 1 newsletter this year, saving \$\$ by sending them electronically and we plan 4 Newsletters (Quarterly) and a Reunion edition. Deadlines: 15th of month prior to issue

10. Nit Noys

Stinger Monument Update – Gus Sininger discussed the condition of the 18th SOS monument at Hurlburt Air Park. It has deteriorated and he would like members to look at it and provide comments. The memorial was dedicated at the 2005 reunion.

Master Contact Roster: Update YOUR info and add anyone else's contact info you know. We will post "basic" info on the web in two lists: 1) "Have" contact info; 2) "Do Not Have" contact info; and the POCs will be listed (your "access" to contact someone or add someone's contact info).

11. Chuck Williams discussed the possibility of trying to locate and possibly recover an AC-119. He has DoD and Vietnam contacts. If ANYONE has any info about one, please contact anyone on the Board.

12. Nominations and Election of '08 Association Officers were solicited and the following Board members voted in unanimously: President Vern Hansen, Vice-President Bill Petrie, Secretary Jim Alvis, Treasurer Doug Wohlgamuth, and Past Board Member Wayne Laessig

13. Items For the Good of the Association

Do a Joint reunion again? Pat Carpenter, Spectre President, suggested another joint reunion in the future. Many members were disappointed by the size/dilution of the 'joint' reunion, and prefer to keep it separate from the ACA or Spectre Reunion. The membership agreed to *consider* another joint reunion in 5 years. A motion was carried reaffirming that the Association is and will be about the AC-119 Gunships.

We discussed finances, noting that annual membership \$\$ keeps getting smaller as more become Life members. Get out there and let's find some of our buddies who we haven't contacted yet! The Board also told everyone to expect Reunion Fees to continue.

14. The meeting adjourned at 1030 hours.

James R. Alvis
Secretary, AC-119 Gunship Association
October 6, 2007