

## AC-119 Gunship Association

### Annual Meeting Minutes, October 1, 2011, North Charleston, SC

1. Association President Gus Sininger called the annual meeting to order at 0830 hours, with Larry Hunter offering the Invocation followed by Gus leading the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Mike Drzyzga presented the Secretary's report.
  - a. Membership remains flat with 412 members. We did gain a few new members, yet "Annual" Membership dropped primarily from the increase in Life Membership (now at 340).
  - b. Tony Pakutinski published **five** Newsletters, and the postal cost increased from \$0.61 to \$0.64 per 6x9 envelope, therefore mailing cost rose significantly; the Association intends to distribute three Newsletters for the upcoming year. Stressing the point again this year -- updating your e-mail addresses, and accepting the Newsletter by email will reduce distribution cost.
  - c. The Board policy was discussed re: delinquent annual renewals. The Secretary will try contacting members two additional times, and the third letter will indicate that the lack-of-response will result in lost membership.
3. Doug Wohlgamuth presented the Treasurer's report:
  - a. Expected account balance after this Reunion will to be close to \$12,000. Gus made a strong point that with a flat membership, the only thing that supports us financially is the merchandise sold during the reunions.
  - b. History books continuing to sell at 20 per yr, this year mostly the soft covers. The Association did make its return on the project. Members should continue to look for libraries and museums to offer donations.
  - c. Litho sales are slow, six sold this year, but two were actually donated. Members are encouraged to seek out opportunities for donations. Donated Lithos will cost \$20. We need to make deals to get out of the "red". Wayne commented on our young airman visitors from the 14<sup>th</sup> Training Squadron – they are part of our heritage, and they did receive some of the Association merchandise.
  - d. Reunion costs continue to rise, due to increase in airfare and upward pressure on room rate. We may lose free breakfast in the future, except that Gus's extra efforts assured us that we will have it at FWB 2012.
4. Website & Newsletter:
  - a. Bill Petrie's website maintenance is commended again. He is now retired, and wants to rejuvenate the look, feel, and functionality of the web site. He showed a new site appearance. A new web site name is forth-coming, and will be hosted by GoDaddy, and use the .org suffix. Bill can use help from a volunteer(s) that knows the newer web-site developer's technology, but he may ask for "outside help". He intends to use the web-site for membership recruiting.
  - b. Bill will also be the Newsletter editor to produced 3 this year, replacing Tony who was seriously injured from a fall out of tree. Doug encouraged everyone to sign "Tony's Tree Service" Cane.
  - c. POC: Gray Riddick was replaced by Steve Breese for the 71<sup>st</sup> SOS.  
Every new commander becomes an Honorary Member.  
Col Zimmerman of the 17<sup>th</sup> SOS has also received Association items.
  - d. Videos -- 140 are completed. We now offer to video spouses and children. Wayne made a motion that the Board would decide to whom the Video' DVDs may be distributed to (in order to protect our stuff from getting inappropriately used). Motion passed. There continues the idea of doing a "video book" (which is a living history for us).
  - e. E-Books. Ralph L, indicated that the entire History Book is in an Acrobat pdf file, and therefore can be sold as a pdf file for \$10. Therefore, there is less effort to pursue distribution as an e-book. Although, we still need hardcopies for library donations. The

History Book is certified by the Library of Congress. There may be a concern that a pdf file can be altered with a higher level of Acrobat, thus the Association loses control of our work. Not necessarily so -- you can imbed author and Copyright into the pdf file, and make it locked, preventing others from altering it. Secretary and Treasurer have copies of the Certificate. If you donate a book – you should provide the Certificate to the recipient. Wayne suggests we each donate a book to our home town’s library. Make sure it is donated to the reference section (so not to be checked out).

- 5 “850” at Ho Chi Minh Airport (TSN): Bruce Byrd made another excellent presentation about the status of the only known AC-119 gunship, #53-7850, a K-Model. 850 was moved to make room for airport expansion – and 850 moved intact! From informal on-the-ground sources, “850” is still not available – the USA has no air attaché for communications. There is NO Association money spent. Since all the Vietnam-era a/c at Ho Chi Minh City Airport are neatly parked and on display – it appears they may not get scrapped. Bruce is still trying to get better pictures – but the airport is as secure as USA airports (fences and Guards). The Vietnamese may not want to give away the only AC-119 remaining. Nevertheless, because they offered a counter proposal (to give us a C-130) – we still have a foot in the door. Bruce believes that 850 could go to a VN museum. Going forward (the plan): The VN Ministry of Defense is led by Gen. Quang Tang, an honored warrior who was injured during LamSon 719. Tang has met former Sec. of Defense Robert Gates (currently on public speaking tour). Mr. Gates may have ideas regarding communications with Tang. Bruce will in VN next year. Notes: VN owns “850” as a spoil of the war. There is a CA aviation museum that will host 850 for free, if it did (somehow) come home. Also, Association member Dudley from St Augustine has tooling and plans for the AC-119.
- 6 Col. Mac – Awards/Decorations: The procedure for dealing with award problems is still on our web site our home page – lower right corner. There is a three step process to correct errors. If you try it and have problems – seek assistance from the advisory board. Step two is an appeal process. After a failed appeal, step three is a Congressional pitch – which is last and final step. IMPORTANT: “no end runs”, that is do not skip step two. So far, we have been 100% successful when proceeding with step three in Congress. Is your DD214 current – probably not - if you left USAF within 1 yr. of return from SEA. You can submit, through an Internet site, via AF9000 rules, and obtain a corrected DD214. Norm Evans added that there is a one time offer to reissue of all your decorations – but first assure you have a current and correct DD214. Mac discussed details of security and access procedures to the AFB base for those playing golf Sunday Morning.
7. Joann Byrd spoke on behalf of the spouses. At the concurrent meeting “the ladies” voted for the 2013 reunion: San Antonio / ABQ was 50/50. Gus indicated that 2012 is FIRM in FWB – even though historically, attendance will drop. Norm and Gus are the Reunion coordinators, the \$119 is for regular rooms, and \$145 for Beach Front rooms. Gus did obtain breakfast included (although it is not the hotel policy). Banquet is in Elks Club, across the street from the hotel. Other reunion events are in the hotel.
8. Future Reunions:
  - a. For 2013, Jerry Hester discussed San Antonio, TX - lots to see/do (Bill Petrie story at the Lackland AFB museum, the River Walk, remember the Alamo). The former consideration for Dallas, TX is scratched, although the coordinators may help with San Antonio.
  - b. Col Mac proposed ABQ, but only for 2013, NOT 2014. ABQ would be the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week in Sept not to conflict with Balloon Festival, Room rates are wonderful at \$85/night
  - c. Also discussed was using Professional Banquet Support, although elevated price is assumed – current quotes for “packages” are becoming more reasonable, but still may be too expensive.

- d. THE VOTE (took two tries to count hands due to an unplanned gymnastic move by Gus relative to the video projector's power cord in the center isle): **San Antonio: 32, ABQ: 29**
9. MCL: Wayne reiterated the policy and keeping the names on the MCL from being distributed widely, protecting email spamming and individual privacy, while still allowing for specific requests for contact info from folks interested in 119ers. Such requests will be handled via the POCs. **In order to make this Association Policy formal, and consider what will be presented on future Association web sites, Wayne motioned that the members present vote to agree that limited distribution on sincere request for info may be handled by the Board and POCs. All present agreed.**

Also, the group discussed the need to search out for details on people on the MCL who we have not yet contacted. The spouses will spear-head an effort, where volunteers will take 20 names and try internet searches and other database searches. Wayne found 62 out of 127 last year with such an effort. The goal is to increase membership.

We discussed Chuck Williams seeking political support from fellow 119'ers – he did a large area mailing – AND he did NOT use the Association list. He did find fellow Association contact info from attending our reunions.

Also discussed was Bill Gregory's passing. It is very important to pass information to all Board members. Therefore, prompt and proper follow up action can be implemented.

Norman discussed the increased scope of the Agent Orange program – where Thailand and certain ranges at Eglin AFB may be included.

10. Ev Sprou: eBay and PayPal -- used for Association Memorabilia sales. Vendor fees is a concern (overhead 3 – 7%). Alternatively, we will add enhanced merchandise page to the Web site. Selling on eBay is a lot of work – shipping/handling of packages – the general feeling is that eBay and PayPal are not viable for our Association at this time. It will be up to the Board to do further review.
11. AC47 membership: Norm Evans is a member of both groups. He proposed that we should cease a joint contact list, and that further business issues do not include the AC47 folks. Nevertheless, we can and should share in opportunities to attend each other's functions. The membership present voted to remove them from the AC119 Association business. In order to make this policy clear and official, Bill P should publish a small newsletter item and web site item (drafted by Norm).
12. Election of officers for 2011-2012:
- President: Association members nominated and voted for Gus. Gus accepted another consecutive term. Gus requests quicker communications between Board members – i.e. flash message, and reply emails, and "away messages". Gus' process utilizes the Board for decision making.
  - Vice-President: Association members nominated **Norm Evans**, and members voted him in.
  - Secretary: **Mike Drzyzga, remains Sec, no vote needed.**
  - Treasurer: **Doug Wohlgamuth offered to continue for another year,**
  - Past Board Member: Association members nominated **Wayne Laessig; who accepted and was voted in.**
13. Bruce Byrd Read an appropriate poem provided by Veronika Stearn.
- 14 We closed the annual meeting at 1030 hours, and proceeded to have an array of group "pictures" taken.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Michael J. Drzyzga, Secretary  
10/18/2011