

2018 Mail Call Archives

December 13, 2018 Ron Julian notified us that Elton Ray Newsome, 18th SOS Stinger Maintenance, passed away on Thursday, July 14, 2016 in Colmesneil, Texas Elton. Military honors and graveside service were held Saturday July 16 2016 at Colmesneil Cemetery in Colmesneil Texas, officiated by Brother Jack Lewellen. Donations in Elton's name may be made to Fisher House (<https://fisherhouse.org>), Vietnam Veterans of America (<https://vva.org>) or Lone Survivor Foundation (<https://lonesurvivorfoundation.org>)

December 12, 2018 Ev Sprouss recently learned that 18th SOS FE Lance A. Blanchard passed away in February, 2012. He was buried in Resurrection Memorial Park, Mathews Louisiana. If anyone has further info, please contact Wayne Laessig using the Contact Form on the Mail Call page.

November 19 2018 Our Webmaster & Wayne Laessig went over the Tucson online reunion registrations yesterday & found out that we hadn't completed the actions to close out the individual online registrations. They were all still showing as "In progress" versus Completed actions, & we needed to clear out the old Registrations in order to prepare for our Salt lake City Reunion. The message the Registrants are receiving are generated automatically as confirmation emails that the Tucson online registration was complete. **Big Lesson Learned:** we'll complete the close out actions once we process each individual's payment, and Registrants will get their confirmation email right away. Bottom lines: there's no impact on the Registrants' credit cards. We're just (very belatedly) confirming that we did process their payments - we're just several months late in telling them that. We won't make that mistake again. See Wayne at the Hootch & he'll buy you a beer :>)

November 12, 2018 We just learned that 18th SOS Maintainer from 1970-72, David L. Pfannenstiel, passed away unexpectedly September 25, 2018. Dave served three tours in Vietnam. Dave's family said he would often remind them "*It will feel better when it stops hurting.*" Veterans' Day becomes even more poignant for all of us as we remember Dave's commitment to his country, his Longmont VFW Chapter, In Colorado, and his family. Memorials can be made in Dave's name to [Wounded Warriors](#) or your local Toys for Tots program.

September 25, 2018 Rose Newbold tells us: *Tom has completed the open heart surgery. So far so good. On to recovery.* Great News!!

September 20, 2018 Tom Newbold, 71st & 17th Shadow Gunner, told us he's having open heart surgery Monday, Sept 24. Please pray for Tom & his wife Rose as he goes through this delicate procedure.

September 20, 2018 Bill Reigle's wife, Erika, notified us that Bill passed away recently. Bill, Life Member 390, was a 17th SOS Maintainer in Fire Control. Always in our hearts, always remembered.

September 17, 2018 The Boneyard Tours at our upcoming Tucson Reunion will close out SOON. Sign up now on the Upcoming Reunion page now if you want to attend!!

September 17, 2018 Ev Sprouss just got a call from Stinger Gunner Sam Gallo. He has been diagnosed with Prostrate Cancer and is going through chemo. He says he should make the reunion, unless things really go south. He is driving his RV from North Versailles, PA, which is on the South East part of the state. Please include him in your prayers.

September 4, 2018 Hans Wurfel's Brother-In-Law notified us that Stinger Gunner Hans is in a Phoenix hospital. CT showed inflammation in kidney, with kidney stones. Asking for prayers to help him get through this.

September 3, 2018 From Jim Ray: *Talked briefly with Jim Short this morning, he's home & resting probably in pain but said he's happy to be home. Nothing on his knee yet, they're going to look at it again on Monday. The bike is pretty much totaled if I haven't told you that before. From Sept 2: He is up & talking; they're still evaluating his injuries; the road rash is pretty bad; the knee they are not sure of right now, they think it might be broken but they're being cautioned until swelling goes down & get a better picture of it. I'll let you know on any more updates.*

September 1, 2018 Jim Ray sent the following: *Ev, Engineer by the name of Jim Short early 70's Shadow gunships went down on his motorcycle this morning on a PGR mission. He's also the deputy State captain for East Texas PGR. He's currently in Pittsburg, Texas East Texas Medical Center ICU. Lots of road rash and possible fractures. We're sure that Jim, who was a 71st & 17th SOS Shadow Flight Engineer in 1969, can use your prayers; and remember to include your appreciation for what he does with the Patriot Guard Riders!*

August 27, 2018 **HOT!!!** *The Good but Bad News: We have so many coming to the Tucson Reunion that we maxed out the DoubleTree's room numbers we contracted for & they are full!* BUT, they helped us find another hotel for overflow rooms. The Hampton Inn Tucson Airport blocked 20 rooms for us at \$92 a night with free Breakfast & parking. It is located at 6971 S. Tucson Blvd; within walking distance of the Double Tree. The Hampton's Direct line is 520-918-9000. Please don't wait to call – 20 rooms won't last long! Tell them you're with the overflow from the DoubleTree's AC-119 Gunship Reunion.

August 2, 2018. Ron Julian received a voice mail from Jason Hughes informing us that his Dad, Justin "Dan" Hughes, 18th SOS Gunner, passed on March 25, 2018. Please keep Jason & family in your prayers.

August 1, 2018 Bob Jones posted on Facebook: *I'm sad to report that my Dad Maj. Jerry Jones passed away peacefully in hospice yesterday at 85 years old. He flew AC-119 Stingers out of Da Nang in 1969 and 1970. I know that Jimmy Grant flew with Dad. My Dad and my Mom Jean Jones had attended at least a couple of the AC-119 Gunship Association's reunions several years ago. I know that he (and me and my Mom and my sister Terry L Jones) were extremely honored that he had served with you guys during very tough times. He led a very good honorable long life and he loved his family very much. He and my Mom were married for 64 years. Sadly I'm seeing*

all too many of these reports on this page over the last few years. Our heroes are slowly being called home. Much love and utmost respect to all of you. Please keep Jean, Bob, Terry, & family in your prayers.

July 20, 2018 Ev Sprous found one of our guys in an older Obituary, & we sadly announce the passing of Johnnie Louderback on Dec 2, 2015. Johnnie was a NAV on 18th SOS Stingers. Please include the Louderback family in your prayers.

July 20, 2018 Linda Rennels contacted Ev Sprous, telling us her husband David Rennels, 18th SOS Electrical Maintenance 1969-70, passed away March 26, 2017. Please include Linda & family in your prayers.

July 10, 2018 Ev Sprous was talking to Windell Bunton, who learned from Jimmy Lee Ward's wife that Jimmy had passed away, Wednesday, March 7, 2018. Jimmy was in the 18th SOS Jet Shop. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the [ALS Association](#). Arrangements were entrusted to McAlister-Smith Funeral Home, Goose Creek Chapel, 869 St. James Avenue Goose Creek, South Carolina, 29445, 843-553-1511.

July 5, 2018 Ron Julian sent out postal mails on Lost Contacts. As a result of those, he received a voice message from Larry Cobb's wife, Karen, that Larry passed away nearly five years ago (Nov 27, 2013). Larry was an 18th SOS Stinger Gunner.

July 5, 2018 Ev Sprous received the following letter from Robert Rice Sr's wife Myreta Smith, *"Dear Mr. Sprous, I'm writing to you regarding my husband who passed away on May 24, 2018. He always enjoyed your Newsletter. After a stroke that left him paralyzed for three long years, I am sad that he won't be in my life but I couldn't wish him one more day in his condition. He was 89 & would have been 90 next December. Thanks in advance for your concerns, Sincerely, Myreta"*

July 5, 2018 18th SOS Pilot Robert Meal Jr's son sent Mike Drzyzga the following: *Mike, It is with a heavy heart that I tell you that my father, Robert W. Meals Jr, passed away nearly a year ago on July 22, 2017 after fighting cancer for more than a year. My father occasionally would talk about his year in Vietnam flying the Ho Chi Minh Trail shooting transport vehicles carrying ammunition. Please let your organization know of my father's passing. Sincerely, Robert W. Meals III.* Please keep the Meals' family in your prayers.

July 3, 2018 Services will be held for Randy Poarch on Thursday, July 5, 2018, 2:00pm, at The Chapel, 1500 Thornton, Clovis, NM. Burial will follow at Lawn Haven Memorial Gardens, Clovis, NM. Honors will be presented by CAFB Honor Guard. Randy served as an Illuminator Operator in the AC-119 in NKP, Bien Hoa, & DaNang. At the cease fire of the Vietnam War, he continued on with Special Ops to wrap things up in Vietnam. Randy was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. In lieu of flowers the family requests that memorial contributions be made to the Wounded Warriors Project, www.woundedwarriorsproject.org. Arrangements have been entrusted to Muffley Funeral Home, 575-762-4435, www.muffleyfuneralhome.com

July 2, 2018 Our spouses are a huge part of who we are & why - individually & collectively. Today, Stinger Nav Cash McCall informed us of his wife's passing; *"Mary passed peacefully this morning with the family gathered around. Your prayers and affection have been a real bulwark through all of this. Thank you, Cash"*. Please keep Cash & family in your prayers.

June 30, 2018 Patricia Poarch sent us this: *PRAYER WARRIORS Thank you again for your prayers. God has answered and His Will is perfect. "Man's days are determined; You (God) have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed". Job 14:5 Randy went to be with the Lord this morning and he's also with Bronson. Thank you for your continued prayers. Love, Patti and Alex and Blake and Benjamin Poarch. Randy (Bobby) Poarch was an IO with the 18th SOS Stingers, 1971-1972.*

June 5, 2018 We sadly announce the passing of 18th SOS Stinger IO Robert C Fretz, Sr. on June 5, 2018. Bob succumbed to Pancreatic Cancer at the age of 79. A small service will be held at Ft. Barrancas National Cemetery near Pensacola on June 29, at 11:30. Donations to the [Shriner's Hospital for Children](#) are recommended in lieu of flowers. Full Obituary is at [Robert C. Fretz Sr. & #039;s Obituary on South Bend Tribune](#)

May 17, 2018 Guy Macey, 18th SOS Stinger IO/FE passed away. His son Randy tells us: *It is with a very sad & heavy heart to advise my dad, Guy Macey, passed away at 5:00 pm from respiratory failure due to complications from a recent surgery. This world lost a great man & father & I lost my best friend! Heaven gained a new Angel & he can now breathe deep & look down on us & smile. I will miss you so much dad & I love you with all my heart!!* Randy followed with: *First of all, I want to thank everyone who posted messages of Well Wishes & Condolences regarding the passing of our dad, Guy Macey. They are all greatly appreciated & it just goes to show what wonderful family & friends we have in our lives. We received several requests asking when his services will be. Please be advised, my dad did NOT want any flowers sent regarding his passing. Instead he is asking that donations be made to Save Our Cats & Kittens (SOCKS) Shelter, a no kill cat shelter, 498 Carmel Dr, Fort Walton Beach, Florida 32547, 850-863-5756, www.saveourcatsandkittens.com. For those of you who knew how attached my dad had become to his "therapy Cat" Jacob, the stray cat running his neighborhood over the last 8 months, you will understand this request. Another of my dad's wishes was to "not make a fuss" & hold a formal funeral service for his passing. Instead he requested a simple graveside gathering to send him off to the great unknown. To honor this wish, we arranged his service for June 8th at 11:30 am at Barrancas National Cemetery, located on Pensacola Naval Air Station, 1 Cemetery Rd, Pensacola, FL 32508. Following the graveside service, the Macey family will host a Celebration of Life reception at Fort Walton Beach VFW, 213 Carol St, FWB, FL 32548 from 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm. Food is already arranged for the reception & a cash bar option will be available for anyone wanting to purchase an alcoholic beverage. The Macey Family would like to invite anyone wanting to share a memory of Guy or wishing to express condolences to the family, to visit Guy's Electronic Tribute Book online at www.mclaughlinmortuary.com. Click on Guy's name on the "tribute" page, then click the "Guestbook" tab on the left side. Again, I would like to thank everyone for your wonderful messages & prayers!*

May 11, 2018 Funeral services for Larry Wright will be held at First Baptist Church of Macclenny on Tuesday, May 15 at 11:00 am, followed by interment at Brandy Branch Cemetery. Visitation is at the Prestwood Funeral Home from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM on May 14, 2018. Donations in his name can be sent to Doug Wohlgamuth with a note.

May 10, 2018 We were notified that Stinger Gunner, Jesse "Larry" Wright has passed. Larry was struggling with health issues & succumbed to a heart attack today. Please pray for Margie and their family. Margie told us Larry loved the AC-119 Gunship Association and she has asked in lieu of flowers, to please donate to the AC-119 Gunship Association. We'll provide additional info as we receive it.

April 24, 2018 Wayne Laessig received this message from Ginny Galbraith: *Hello, It is with a heavy heart that I inform you of the passing of Arthur W. Galbraith on April 23rd at his home in Fairfield, California. Arthur flew AC-119K Gunships in Vietnam and Thailand. He had been battling stage 4 colon cancer for the past 4 years and put up one hell of a fight. He is survived by his wife, son, and daughter. His legacy will be continued on by his children, who were both inspired to join the Air Force and are both currently Captains. A committal Service will be conducted at Sacramento Valley National Cemetery on Wednesday, May 2, 2018 at 2:30 pm with full military honors. Thank you, Virginia Galbraith.* NOTE: Art was an 18th SOS Stinger Pilot 1971-72.

April 10, 2018 Wayne Laessig received this from Julie Carver, Virgil Zins' (71st & 17th SOS Shadow FE) daughter: *It is with a very heavy heart that I am writing to inform you that my father, Virgil M Zins, passed away April 6, 2018 while at Madigan Army Medical Center in Joint Base Lewis/McCord in WA. Viewing is at 9:00 am with Funeral Service at 10:00 on Wednesday April 18, 2018, at Fir Lane Memorial Park, 924 East 176th Street, Spanaway, WA 98387, Phone # 253-531-6600. He will then be moved to Tahoma National Cemetery in Kent WA for burial with full military honors at 2:00 pm. Please let his military brothers know that he loved every one of them and was proud to be a part of the association.*

March 21, 2018 Jim Alvis reports: It is with sadness I report the passing of yet another 71st SOS member. SSgt Thomas Jump passed on this date. Tom worked in the engine shop at Nha Trang AB, South Vietnam. Sincere condolences are extended to the Jump family and friends.

March 20, 2018 Jim Alvis reports: It is with sadness we recently learned of the passing of yet another 71st SOS member. SSgt Albert W. Hall Sr. passed in 1998. Albert worked in the prop shop at Nha Trang AB, South Vietnam. Sincere condolences are extended to the Hall family and friends.

March 9, 2018: We learned that Arthur (Art) R. Perry, 18th SOS Stinger FE & early Association Treasurer, died peacefully in his sleep on March 3, 2018 in Simpsonville, SC after battling cancer. Our condolences & prayers go to Art's family.

March 10, 2018: Carla Main notified us her father, 18th SOS Stinger Pilot Don R Main, passed away March 7, 2018 after battling cancer. He was surrounded by his family. Please keep Patty, Don's wife of 54 years, & family in your prayers. A Graveside Service with Military Honors is

scheduled for 1:00 p.m. Monday, March 12, 2018 at the Montana State Veterans Cemetery at Fort Harrison. In lieu of flowers please make donations in his honor to St Joseph's Indian School, PO Box 326, Chamberlain, SD 57326. Rest in Peace Papa! Please visit <http://helenafuneralhome.com/obituaries/don-r-main-age-80/> to offer a condolence to the family or to share a memory of Don.

March 8, 2018: we were notified by Bill Brow that his father Albert W. Brow, 18th SOS Stinger Pilot & Commander, passed away peacefully in his home on 26 February, 2018, living independently until the end. Bill would appreciate any comments from those who served with him on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/195912423919726/>. His commemoration of life & wake was this weekend.

March 5, 2018: Laura Lodge notified Bob Dydo that AC-119K 18th SOS Stinger Ops Officer Bill Lodge passed away March 3rd. Her note: *Dear Bob & Janet, It's with a heavy heart that I am writing to tell you that Bill passed away yesterday morning. He went on hospice care 2 weeks ago, and I really thought, selfishly hoping, we had several more weeks, if not months, to have Bill with us, but not to be. His son was here mid-February, and his daughter last week, leaving Thursday morning. Bill fought a brave fight with Parkinson's, he was so strong and tough, but it got to be too much this winter. Your visit meant so much to us both, Bill wasn't in good shape when you were here, but he talked about your visit to others well after you were here. Being able to attend some of the reunions with Bill, and seeing him with you guys are some of the best memories I have with Bill. I would appreciate if you would share this with Bill's friends in the squadron and AC119K reunion group. I hope you and Janet are well, again thanks so much for taking the time to visit when you were in Colorado. Laura* Bill was one of our best; a true gentleman, highly respected officer, and a great pilot & person. Please keep Laura & family in your prayers. We will post more as we receive it.

February 28, 2018: Sue Kallaus notified Ev Sprous her husband, Eugene (Gene) Kallaus, died 28 July 2016. Gene was an 18th SOS Stinger Gunner from 1971 to 1973. Sue also sent Ev a letter I am posting here [Sue Kallaus Letter](#) because I believe it helps us understand the brotherhood of AC-119 Gunshippers & our SEA service. Please keep Sue & family in your prayers.

February 22, 2018: Ellen & Jerry Hester just informed us a Memorial services for Paul ("Uncle Sam") Campbell will be held at Desert Memorial, 1111 Las Vegas Blvd North, Las Vegas, Nevada on Tuesday, 27 February 2018 from 2:00-4:00. The memorial will include traditional & Buddhist services, as well as military honors. Jerry & Ellen plan to attend, & encourage any AC-119 Gunship Brothers who live in or near Las Vegas (or anyone visiting the area) to join them.

February 22, 2018: Lyle Sproul sent us the Obituary notice for Fred W. Sternenberg Jr, who died peacefully Monday, February 5, 2018. Fred was an 18th SOS Stinger Pilot & was awarded the Bronze Star, Distinguished Flying Cross with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Medal with ten Oak Leaf Clusters, & Meritorious Service Medal. Please keep Fred's wife Jan & family in your prayers.

February 20, 2018: One of my (Wayne Laessig) roles is as the Family POC, which includes our KIA Families as well as the loved ones of those we lose as the years go by. It is my honor to be their POC. Too often, it includes notifying you when we lose one of our Brothers. It always saddens me, until I realize how fortunate I was to know them & celebrate their lives. They touched many. Jerry & Ellen Hester just notified me of the sad passing of Paul Campbell, known by many from our first dozen or so Reunions for his fantastic Reunion outfit, patriotic Singing Bears, & representation as "Uncle Sam". We celebrate the joy he gave us in that. Paul was an AC-119K Stinger Gunner as well as an AC-130 Gunner. Please pray for his wife Pinn & the rest of Paul's family. He will be missed. But, please also celebrate his life.

February 8, 2018: 71st POC Jim Alvis tells us that sometimes it is years before we learn of the passing of one of our 71st members. It is with sadness we recently learned of the passing of yet another. Leonard Swallow Jr informed Jim that his father Leonard had passed in December 2006. Leonard Sr was an IO on Col Long's crew #7 at Phan Rang AB, South Vietnam. Sincere condolences are extended to the Swallow family & friends. Leonard Jr sent an email to Jim informing him of his father's passing. Jim had been mailing the newsletter to the son thinking it was Leonard Sr. Leonard Jr furnished his email address & wants to remain in the loop, & we will do that for him.

February 3, 2018: From the President's Desk, In the January, 2018 Firing Circle Newsletter, I reported that the 1st Special Operation Group at Hurlburt Field, FL is "standing-up" a new AC-130J squadron, the 73rd SOS --- and they are Shadows. I have been communicating via email with the DO, Captain Chris Zenk. They are still working of finalizing the squadron's official patch, and also something (else) for aircraft nose art. On Thursday morning (2/1), I received a telephone call from Capt. Zenk with some exciting news. They are having a ceremony to officially stand-up the 73rd SOS, and anyone associated with AC-119s IS INVITED to attend. Location: Hurlburt Field, Mary Ester, FL I have no details yet, like the exact time, duration of the ceremony, or the process to access the air base. When I learn the details, I'll communicate them to those who sign-up to attend. I'll be the Point-of-Contact for this special event. If you are able to attend, please let me know as soon as possible. I will make the sign-up list. The best way is via email to drzyzga513@hotmail.com. As an alternate, you may call me cell phone: 201-310-2943 at a reasonable Eastern Standard Time. GUNS HOT!! Mike Drzyzga [Click here to see the full Flash; FebFlash18](#)

January 30, 2018: From Rob Swain's daughter Karen: my father isn't going to be buried in the VA cemetery since he felt that would be too far for my mom. The celebration on Feb 3rd 10am celebration at the church is the funeral service. Right after the funeral we will go straight to Cherokee Memorial Park, 14165 N Beckman Rd, Lodi, CA 95240 where he will be buried with military honors. Anyone is welcome to join. Please share and thank you so much.

January 30, 2018: Butch Poehler, 18th SOS Nav, informed us that 18th SOS Nav Robert Finley passed away January 10, 2018. We will post additional info we receive.

January 30, 2018: Karen Hulsey informed us her father, 18th SOS Gunner Rob Swain, passed away January 24, 2018. The Swain family invites any who care to join them at his celebration

Saturday, February 3rd at 10am at the Church of Latter Day Saints, 1616 Pyrenees Ave, Stockton, CA 95210. We will post additional info as we receive it.

January 22, 2018: Al Heuss called Jim Alvis this afternoon to ask if he knew anything about Ben McPherson's passing. Jim began a search & found the unexpected sad news of the passing of yet another 71st SOS member. Major Ben R. McPherson passed on March 29, 2017. Ben was a Pilot on crew #5 at Nha Trang AB, South Vietnam. Sincere condolences are extended to the McPherson family and friends.

January 10, 2018: Randall Chisum notified us his father, Silver C. Chisum, passed away January 5, 2018, at the age of 90. Lt. Col. Chisum served in the US military for over 30 years, including the Navy, Marines, and Air Force. He was 18th SOS Squadron Commander at DaNang 1970-71, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross when he successfully piloted his AC-119K back to the base after heavy damage from anti-aircraft fire and loss of engine power. Upon later recalling the incident, Silver gave testimony that the astounding escape from a fiery crash was solely to be credited to a miracle of God, and not to his own skill. Silver retired from the US Air Force in 1978. Visitation will be held Friday, January 12, 2018, from 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm, at Weed-Corley-Fish Funeral Home, 3125 N. Lamar Blvd. Services are scheduled for Saturday, January 13, 2018, 11:00 am, at High Pointe Baptist Church, 12030 Dessau Rd. Burial with military honors will follow at Austin Memorial Park Cemetery. Additional info at <http://wcfish.tributes.com/obituary/show/Silver-C.-Chisum-105695139>

January 8, 2018: Bruce Ross notified us that Ken Nauman, 18th SOS Stinger Pilot, passed away a year ago on Jan 16, 2016. A Celebration of Life was held at the Veteran's Hall in Nevada City, CA. Additional info at <https://www.theunion.com/news/obituaries/obituary-of-kenneth-william-nauman-jr/>