

## Here are the 2020 Mail Calls:

**December 23, 2020.** It's been a rough 2020 and challenging to find joy in our lives. But even in the face of losses to our Gunship family, we press on. Chris Schnell, 18th SOS Stinger KIA Tom Hamman's sister sent this: *I'm writing to tell you that my mom passed away Sunday morning at the age of 99. I pray Tom was there to greet her. But incredibly, Tom's wife, Susan, passed away this morning, 24 hours after my mom.*

*I hope you are well, and wish you a much improved new year! I really hope I can get to the reunion this year. Chris Hamman Schnell"*

Wayne Laessig remembers Tom, his Aircraft Commander and told Chris: *"My heart and prayers go out to you and the rest of the family. Even after almost 50 years I still have great memories of Tom and I'm betting he met both Sue and Susan with his lopsided grin and a huge hug."*

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**December 23, 2020** Ev Sprous found 18th SOS, Stinger FE Allen "Yogi" Bare's headstone. Yogi passed January 2, 2000. R.I.P. Brother.

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**December 22, 2020** Jennifer Barkalow, Stinger 41 Copilot Jimmy Barkalow's daughter, informed Craig Corbett that her Dad passed away last night, December 21<sup>st</sup>. Jennifer thanked Craig and told him, "If you want to have a glass of wine for him that would be great. He will be cremated. He did not want a service or celebration of life, but a toast to him and a glass lifted would be great. If you could let the organization know that a hero in many levels has left, that would be greatly appreciated." Jennifer was able to attend the 2015 St Louis Reunion with her Dad. Please keep Jimmy's family in your hearts and prayers. R.I.P. Hero and Brother.

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**December 15, 2020** Sue Knight Fletcher shared Larry's Obituary with all: <https://www.windmillridgefuneralservice.com/obituaries/Larry-Fletcher-4/> A visitation will be held on Thursday, December 17, from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Windmill Ridge Funeral Service, California, MO. Funeral Services will be held for immediate family at Harper Chapel United Methodist Church in Osage Beach. A link to a recording of the service will be posted by the funeral home on Dr. Fletcher's obituary page for those who wish to view. Interment at the California City Cemetery, with full military honors, is open to the public following the service at 1:00 p.m. Friday, December 18, 2020 with Reverend Jim Day officiating. In lieu of flowers, memorials are suggested to the Harper Chapel United Methodist Church or the Dr. Larry E. Fletcher Memorial Scholarship for California R1 School District.

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**December 13, 2020** Our Association President Mike Drzyzga writes: This is a difficult post for me to write. Today, Larry Fletcher lost the battle against a very aggressive cancer. My heartfelt sympathies to Sue and the family. Larry was a major contributor to the success of our Association. He was past president for five terms, helped with the creation of our history book, lead an effort to make our memorial bench on display at the WPAFB Museum, and more. He became my mentor since we met in Dayton 2004, which lead to a close friendship. I'll miss him. I'll post the Obit tomorrow when it becomes available. Rest in Peace Shadow 27 our dear friend you will be missed.

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**November 27, 2020** 17th SOS Shadow FE Antoine "Tony" Chaloux passed away November 11, 2020. Tony will be laid to rest at the Sacramento Valley National Cemetery in Dixon, CA on Monday, November 30, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. with full military honors. Please keep Tony's family in your prayers. R.I.P. Brother. <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/thereporter/obituary.aspx?n=antoine-chaloux-tony&pid=197170485&f=portal>

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**November 26, 2020** Our 18th SOS Gunner Steve Steinfeldt notified Ev Sprous that his lifelong friend Jack "Mac" McCarthy, 17th SOS Shadow Gunner, passed away September 24, 2020. Mac joined the Marines in 1962, transferring later to the Air Force, from which he retired in 1986. He served two tours of combat duty in Vietnam and earned the Distinguished Flying Cross. <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/reporterherald/obituary.aspx?n=john-justin-mccarthy&pid=196927971>

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**November 16, 2020 President's Message.** Greetings fellow Gunshippers, family, and friends  
This very peculiar year is slipping away into history, for what I hope and pray will become a brighter future. All the uncertainty we had about cancelling this year's reunion, seems now to have led to a good decision. I know that those of us using Facebook, posted some sadness of not being able to reunite this year in Ft. Walton Beach. The good news is that the details for our 21<sup>st</sup> reunion in FWB next Oct. have been finalized, and will be (or is now) posted on the Association's Web Site, and in the November *Firing Circle*. With a safe and effective vaccine on its way from the super virologist in our pharmaceutical companies, the pandemic should wind down as the earth slowly makes another trip around the sun. A side thought, as I mentioned in the Aug. *Firing Circle*, Andrea and I did NOT venture to visit friends and family in FL in Oct., and sat in NJ avoiding the TV news as much as possible. As I often report, the Association's Board of Directors is very active keeping the Association focused on the future. With many organizations using video conferencing (i.e. ZOOM) to have "virtual" meetings, your BOD tried a video conference for our Board Meeting on Nov.10. What a hoot!. We did have some technical glitches, even after some good testing, but the consensus is: it is enjoyable to see one another, not just listen to our voices on the phone. **NEWS:** With the passing of Shadow Pilot **Don Craig**, we lost our "legacy unit" Point-of-Contact (POC) for the 17<sup>th</sup> SOS, who were flying MC-130Js from Kadena AFB. I have been communicating with the 17<sup>th</sup> Past Cmdr., and learned that the 17<sup>th</sup> STOOD DOWN. The 130's stayed at Kadena with the 1<sup>st</sup> SOS. Now, what is intriguing RUMOR has it that USAF wants another AC-130J squadron, probably at Cannon AFB, and they may become the **17<sup>th</sup> SOS** (with gunships this time). That would be so cool. I'll keep an ear-to-the-ground. With the passing of Stinger Gunner **Bruce Byrd**, we lost our "tracker" of the last remaining AC-119 Gunship that is Stinger 850, at TSN. A Google Earth search shows that our 850 was fully reassembled by March 2020, and out of the hangar, now sitting in line with other VN era former USAF A/C. The Association's goal is to see that OUR HISTORY of 850 is well presented if/when the Stinger is put on public display at a TSN museum. **Association Web Site.** Our Web Site has become a full-feature place for news, our history, and purchasing of AC-119 memorabilia. Quartermaster Gus Sininger has added new items to "our store". Also, Roy Davis, Wayne Laessig, and our Web Master Liz Buss, built a super "our stories" page where all of our Oral Video interviews, Biographies and Stories are readily available. Superb effort! The best thing our members can do is read the bios and stories and watch the videos of their fellow 119ers. You all must take a look, [www.ac119gunships.com](http://www.ac119gunships.com). **Kimber Classic Pistol Raffle** The Association is fortunate to have for raffle a highly customized Kimber Stainless Steel .45 ACP pistol provided by Cherokee Firearms master gunsmith Ron Soderquist. This is a beautiful tribute to our AC-119s, and everyone involved with our success in Vietnam. See the *Firing Circle* for details on the beautiful customization and obtaining raffle tickets. Secretary Andrea and I wish everyone a safe and peaceful Thanksgiving and Christmas time. Have faith that this pandemic will pass into history and we will again traveling freely. Mike Drzyzga, President

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**November 15, 2020** Gary Trobeck tells Ev Sprous his story of Tom Lubbers (Shadow 78 AC, KIA April 28, 1970): *Everett Sprous, here you go! I am going to start with how I met Tom. We met in basic training in September 1967, he was from Florissant, Missouri not far from St. Louis; I was from Litchfield, Illinois, a total of roughly 60 miles from one another. We became close friends in basic and he was my squad*

*leader. After we graduated basic in November 67, I am assuming Tom went to OCS and then flight school or maybe direct to flight school not sure as we lost contact. I went direct duty to Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota, as a Security Policeman. I was at Ellsworth 11 months and volunteered for Vietnam. I arrived at Tan Son Nhut AFB., on November 17, 1968 and left on June 17 1970. I was in the 377th SPS Charlie Flt., Bravo Sector. We guarded the perimeter from 7:00pm until 7:00am and also guarded some of the flight line area. On that fateful morning of 4/28/70, I happened to be guarding Tom's aircraft. I was talking to a couple of maintenance guys, when they said here comes Lieutenant Lubbers we have to go. I said is that Thomas Lubbers, red head and about 6' 3"? They said tall and red head yes not sure first name. As he was approaching, I hollered out a nickname our TI had for him in basic, which I can't put on here. I heard him laugh and say that must be Gary Trobeck. I saluted we shook hands and he let me follow him around on his flight check. We talked for a few minutes. He said when do you get off and I told him. He said we are going out and shoot some bad guys and then will be back. He said when you get off, do what ever you do, get chow or whatever and then come over to the officers billets and I will leave your name at the gate and we can catch up. I was so looking forward to it! I was so happy I got to chat with him for a few minutes it was nice. I watched them taxi and take off and the next thing I knew, the worst thing happened. I had the utmost respect for Tom and he was such a humble person. He had a great sense of humor and a great smile. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't think about that day and the crew. My biggest regret, is I never contacted his parents after I got home to talk to them about my last few minutes with Tom. I will cherish that time forever. Feel free to post this if you like and edit if you like. God Bless, Gary Trobeck*

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**November 11, 2020** From Jim Alvis: It is with sadness I report the passing of yet another 71st SOS member. Sergeant Warren E. Hinton passed on Monday, November 9, 2020. Warren assisted in the ferrying of AC-119G #53-3189 to South Vietnam and was Crew Chief at Nha Trang AB. Sincere condolences are extended to the Hinton family and friends.

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**November 9, 2020** We sadly notify all that 18th SOS Stinger Gunner Larry Hunter's wife Soncy passed away early today after emergency surgery the day prior. Please keep Larry and family in your hearts and prayers to help them through this difficult time.

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**November 6, 2020** Ron Dorazio informed Ev Sproust that Bobby Ray New, 14th SOW Prop Mechanic, passed away peacefully in his sleep on November 5, 2020, and was joined moments later by his wife Janet New. Bobby enlisted in the Air Force in 1963, where he served honorably for 22 years, and retired in June of 1984 as a Master Sergeant. Celebration of Life Services were held 1:00 p.m., on Saturday, November 14th at Melby Mortuary in Mankato, Kansas. Burial followed in the Burr Oak Cemetery in Burr Oak, Kansas. Military honors will be conducted by the US Air Force and Emory Clemons Post #263. The family suggests memorials to <http://www.afas.org> (ASSA) HEADQUARTERS AIR FORCE AID SOCIETY, 1550 Crystal Drive, Suite 809, Arlington, VA 22202. For online condolences, please visit [www.melbymortuary.com](http://www.melbymortuary.com)

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**November 2, 2020** Jeanette Martin contacted us to request your assistance for Dale (18th SOS Stinger Gunner): Dale's Parkinson's disease (PD) medicine has made a huge difference. Dale is scheduled to have another back Surgery in January. He is having Anterior Lumbar Interbody Fusion. I have filed a claim for PD related to AO but the VA is wanting medical journals or something that shows a connection between the two. Is there someone within the association that has PD or would be able to help me with getting some info. I have a VSO but not able to meet in person due to Covid so all is done through E-mail. I have researched on line and there is so much out there that I cannot believe the VA is asking for this. It sounds like there must be something

specific they are looking for.

Any assistance would be greatly appreciated. Thank you. Jeanette

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**October 6, 2020** OV-10 FAC Ray Janes, Call sign Rash 41, sent Gus Sininger his story of working with a Shadow Gunship; maybe it was you. "I was a FAC in Vietnam flying the OV-10 with the 1/9<sup>th</sup> Air Cav and one of my most significant missions involved an AC-119 Shadow. It was rare for me as a FAC to hear how my missions turned out and I suspect the same is true for the Shadows too. Here's the story I title **An Unusual Mission 13 May 1969**: I started the day by taking my crew chief for a flight. After that I flew again and was asked by the 1/9<sup>th</sup> to help a LRRP team that was surrounded by the VC and was under such heavy fire that the Army had given up on them. It was so severe that they called for an airstrike on their position. There was supposed to be no strikes available that day but by black mailing the DASC I got a preplanned strike diverted to me and got them out OK. I never heard how they were except that they were all evacuated to Japan. That's why I thought you might be interested in this story. After I landed and before I shut down the crew chief climbed up to the cockpit and told me to contact the 1/9<sup>th</sup> TOC. I did so and they told me the Last Light mission (this was mission flown a the end of the day to try to locate rocket firing positions and prevent them from firing at the base) had found an antiaircraft position and had destroyed one .50 caliber position but they were out of ammunition and low on fuel so could I take over. I said yes if they could hang one long enough for me to get some fuel. The crew chief told me if I would taxi to the fuel bladders they could refuel me faster and I agreed. I taxied to the bladder and shut down with the nose toward the bladder while they refueled me and I took time to relieve myself and wipe off some of the sweat. When they finished I got in and started up but couldn't turn the bird to taxi away from the bladders. The crew chief told me if I could back up they would push me far enough to turn the nose wheel so I could turn the bird away from the bladders. The Dash 1 said you couldn't back the bird up using the reverse props bur with the crewmen pushing we backed enough to turn and I was on my way. The Army crew briefed me as I flew toward them and it was easy to identify the two remaining positions because they were in the usual triangle. I knew there were no airstrikes available so I called the artillery. I directed their fire and destroyed a second position. Then they told me they had been given another mission and I would have to find another way to get the third one. I begged them to keep one round for me because it was getting dark and I wasn't sure whatever I could find would be able to see my smoke marks. They agreed to keep one round for me. I contacted the DASC for help and they assigned me a Shadow. I didn't know what that was and they told me it was an AC-119 gunship. That was OK for me and I contacted them as they flew toward me. I explained the situation to them and when they were on station I called the artillery and they fired the round. I told the Shadow the mark was away and the gun was nearby. When the round went off the pilot said "WOW if you have that kind of firepower what do you need us for". I laughed and said "It's artillery, since its getting dark they marked the target for me". I turned away toward the base and they began firing, I could see the rounds hitting the ground and other rounds came up from the last position. The pilot said, "Hey, he's really down there isn't he". I said, "Yes, he really is". The pilot answered, " Well he's dead meat now". I called, "Good Luck", as I flew toward the base and landed. That night six heavily armed guys were killed in the wire and it was assumed they were to try to seem as if a heavy attack was occurring so the helicopters would take off to defend the base and be shot down by the antiaircraft fire. That didn't happen because three different fires wiped them out before the plan was executed. A very unusual mission with a great outcome. Please let me know if anybody recognizes it. Ray"

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**October 3, 2020** From Don Craig's Obituary

at [https://www.lechnerfuneralhome.com/obituary/Donald-A.-Craig/Lumberton-NJ/1879356?fbclid=IwAR3ZhWeZv6vQfZF00yExZjiCmmbNaZqtn4UmkspoyvOZXbcjHpTELE0yfM4\\_](https://www.lechnerfuneralhome.com/obituary/Donald-A.-Craig/Lumberton-NJ/1879356?fbclid=IwAR3ZhWeZv6vQfZF00yExZjiCmmbNaZqtn4UmkspoyvOZXbcjHpTELE0yfM4_) After retiring from the Air Force, he was a pilot for Pan American World Airways, U.S. Airways and American Trans Air. He was a member of Red River Valley Fighter Pilot's Assoc, AC119 Gun Ship Assoc, and 32nd Air Mobility Squadron Group. A true Patriot, Don loved this country to the core. He would have given his life for it. He would have wanted you to love her too. A viewing will be held

Monday, October 5, 2020 from 4-7 PM at the Lechner Funeral Home, 24 N. Main St., Medford. Funeral Services will be Tuesday, October 6, 2020 beginning at 1 PM at St. Martin in the Fields Episcopal Church, 489 Main St., Lumberton. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Don's memory may be made to Air Warriors' Courage Foundation, PO Box 877, Silver Spring, MD 20918, [www.airwarriorcourage.com](http://www.airwarriorcourage.com).

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**October 1, 2020** Larry Hunter called Gus Sininger about his wife Soncy's health challenges due to diverticulitis and infection. Once stabilized, Soncy may need surgery for her condition. Please keep Soncy and Larry in your prayers to give them strength.

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**September 27, 2020** Peggy Craig notified Andrea Drzyzga that her husband, Don Craig, 17th SOS Shadow Pilot, passed away last night. Mike Dryzyzga posted this: It saddens me to report another loss of one of our AC-119 gunship family. Don Craig, 17th SOS Shadow Pilot, passed on early this morning, Sept. 27, 2020. Don was a resident of South NJ. He was member of Fighting C flight in TSN, but did fly for a while out of Phan Rang and Phu Cat in 1970-71. Don attended almost all reunions when he learned of our Associations existence. Peggy Craig requests that for a while, we do not inundate her with phone calls. She is working on details, and we will post more as it become available. R.I.P. Don... you will be missed.

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**September 20, 2020** Ev Sprous found the Obituary for J.L. Chase, 18<sup>th</sup> SOS Maintenance, who passed June 12, 2012; <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/tampabaytimes/obituary.aspx?n=jay-chase-jl&pid=158172039>. R.I.P. Warrior.

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**September 19, 2020** Ev Sprous determined that Dewell Morgan Clemons, 18<sup>th</sup> SOS, died Monday May 15, 2000 from injuries sustained in an automobile accident.

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**September 19, 2020** Gene Mangin's son Michael informed us that his Dad, Howard Eugene "Gene" Mangin, 71<sup>st</sup> SOS Shadow Pilot, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, September 16, 2020; <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/indystar/obituary.aspx?n=colonel-howard-mangin&pid=196822371&fhid=41967> Michael told us, "The relationships he formed with the members of the 71st SOS were a great source of pride throughout his life. My Mom (Claire) is still as strong as she was during his tour in Vietnam. They were together for 68 years. Thank you to all the "Shadow" family for so enriching his life. Michael Mangin"

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**September 19, 2020** Ev Sprous We were notified by 18<sup>th</sup> SOS Stinger Nav "Jim" Green's son James that his Dad, James "Jim" Henry Green passed away peacefully at home on September 4, 2020. James provided this Obituary info: <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/valleystar/obituary.aspx?n=james-henry-green-jim&pid=196764040&fhid=8115>

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**September 4, 2020** Ev Sprous and Ron Julian found out that William J. McDowell, 18th SOS FE, passed June 10, 2010. R.I.P. Brother.

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**August 31, 2020** Don Luke notified us that Oakley See, 18<sup>th</sup> SOS, passed Sept 6, 1992.

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**August 27, 2020** We recently learned that Bobby D. McLeod, 18th SOS Avionics, passed February 4, 2014. His Obituary is at [https://www.merodriguez.com/memsol.cgi?user\\_id=1884568](https://www.merodriguez.com/memsol.cgi?user_id=1884568). Please remember Bobby's Family in your prayers.

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**August 14, 2020** Linda Bright informed us that Jeanette Morgan's Obituary is at <https://milwardfuneral.com/obituaries/801-jeanette-morgan>. If anyone is sending flowers, Linda recommends "Bella Blooms Florist" 859-272-0445 in Lexington, KY.

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**August 13, 2020** Andy Bright informed us that 71<sup>st</sup> SOS Harold Morgan's wife Jeanette passed away Aug 9<sup>th</sup> after a courageous battle with Alzheimer's Disease. Our prayers go to Harold and family. May Jeanette rest in eternal peace.

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**July 30, 2020** Lt Col (Ret) Frank Bianco passed away this past April. He was a navigator in the 18th SOS. Frank was part of the 18th SOS initial cadre and arrived at Phan Rang as part of the Stinger advanced party in October 1969. His obituary - <https://heafeyheafey.com/frank-a-bianco-lt-col-ret/>

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**June 27, 2020** Mike Friel was an IO on Stingers in 1971-72. He wrote a short book, or long story, about Col Ron Terry, the Father of the Gunships. Mike's book has been circulating around for a few years, but has never been published, until now. The name of the book is "Spooky, Spectre and the Man". It is available on Amazon as a paperback (\$6.95 plus shipping) or as a Kindle e-book (\$0.99). This book should almost be mandatory reading for all Association members. Thanks to Wayne Laessig for his help in editing this and Mike's son Michael, who has become a good friend. Here is the link to the book on Amazon: [Spooky, Spectre and the Man](#)

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**June 25, 2020** Roy Davis is in the process of gathering information on a flight that IO Mike Friel was on. The flight was on 18 August 1972. Mike was injured on that flight when a gun exploded (broke his tail bone). He was sent home to recover. After several months, he returned to flight duty in SEA. If you were on this flight, or are aware of the incident, please contact Roy Davis at [roy@island-escape.com](mailto:roy@island-escape.com). Mike received a DFC for his performance on that mission. Thanks!

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**June 12, 2020** It is with great sadness, we post the following: *Bruce L. Byrd, Jr. passed away at age 73 on June 11, 2020 after a battle with pancreatic cancer. He was a scientist and an entrepreneur, a patriot, a teller of some good ghost stories, and a reasonably good cook. His office was sometimes messy but he always knew where to find things. Bruce was born in Detroit Michigan on a cold icy morning on January 16, 1947. In 1953 a family move took him to Richmond, Virginia where he was a 1965 graduate of Hermitage High School. Bruce was a US Air Force veteran and flew 141 combat missions on Special Operations gunships in Southeast Asia - he was awarded four Distinguished Flying Crosses, nine Air Medals, and the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry. He graduated with a BS degree in Geology from Virginia Tech in 1974 and worked as a Geophysicist and Geologist for several oil and gas companies in Texas, West Virginia, and Colorado. In 1981 he earned an MBA degree from the University of Denver and later opened his own petroleum exploration consulting company - Dune International. He was an Emeritus member of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists and the Society of Exploration Geophysicists, as well as several other professional petroleum organizations. Bruce played guitar since his teens and loved bluegrass music, salt water fishing out in the Gulf, hiking and camping in the Rockies, anything to do with Einstein and astronomy, and a cold beer or a good single malt Scotch whisky. Maybe not in that exact order... He*

loved to travel and his work often took him on trips to Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, and the Middle East. At last count he had set foot in some 66 countries - some exotic, some dangerous, but all interesting and full of new things to experience. Bruce worked on a number of US and worldwide exploration and development projects for public and private companies, and foreign government agencies. Bruce is survived by his wonderful loving wife Jo Anna, 3 daughters - (Rhonda - Columbus OH, Jennie - New Orleans, and Ashley - Houston) and 4 grandchildren (Michael, Conrad, Macallan, and Reese). Also surviving are his loving mother Mildred, sister Gail, brother Greg and niece Gina Cannella Romer. His father Bruce Byrd Sr. predeceased him in 1982. ***"I've had a really good and full life - so no flowers and no tears, please. Instead just have a sip of a nice cold beer on a warm sunny afternoon and think about the good times we shared", Bruce Byrd Jr.*** Please keep Jo Anna and family in your prayers. R.I.P. Brother and Stinger Gunner.

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**May 30, 2020** From Baby Huey: *"We lost Gordie tonight."* R.I.P. Brother.

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**May 29, 2020** Larry Hunter sent Ev this info: *MH-53 PaveLow, and Stinger Brother 70-71, Gunner Gordon "Gordie" Williams is in Hospice at Pensacola Sacred Heart hospital. I went with Ron Dorazio and Dale Blackwood today. He may have known we were there, but he never opened his eyes. We stayed about 2 hours with the family and I went in again with Ron and we said a pray for him. Please remember him and his family in your prays. Baby Huey*

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**May 19, 2020** Postponed Reunion info from the Four Points Hotel: *"We released all rooms that were not yet reserved. Guests who already booked their reservations can keep their reservations if they decide to still come down for a vacation. If they would like to cancel their reservation, they will just need to give us a call at 850-243-8116 (mention you're with the AC-119 Gunship Reunion) and we will get that processed for them."* The Hotel will also provide Gus Sininger with an updated 2021 Reunion contract soon.

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**May 16, 2020** Update from Shirley Bartlett on Frank: *Quick update on PET Scan. All clear, no indication of cancerous cells. Only question being, why the cancer indicators (CEA) are so up from 3.4 to 9.8. Have lab draw on 6 July and doctor follow-up on the 8th. We'll see and cross that bridge then. Thanks, Frank & Shirley*

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**May 13, 2020** President's message: Greetings from NJ. We are in a global situation unlike anything we have ever seen in our life-times. My everyday activities are extremely altered compared to what was previously a life of normal retired guy. Nonetheless, I have taken on again the responsibility to lead the Association moving forward. Thankfully, the members of the Board of Directors, appointed officers, and committees are still working, focused on continued success. We are fortunate to have dedicated and conscience folks participating. The Shadow and Stinger spirit is as strong as ever.

**REUNION 2020 IS CANCELLED!** It saddens me to announce that the Board has decided that the Association will *postpone* the Fort Walton Beach Reunion *until* 2021. We considered all of the uncertainty associated with the October timeframe, we've had meaningful discussions with the Four Points Hotel staff (Thank You Gus Sininger), we discussed many of our member's health concerns, and then we envisioned a reunion requiring social distancing and face masks. No way will that work. Will there be another spike in "the curve?" Will a therapeutic or vaccine be widely available? No one knows if this is the perfect decision. Personally, I love FWB and will miss all the activities we would be doing. Thankfully, Reunion Coordinator Jerry McDonald for the Branson, MO reunion is willing and able to work on moving that Reunion from 2021 to 2022. Thank you to Association newsletter editor Don Luke, for pulling the May newsletter together. Please, thoroughly check it out. Beyond all the routine news, there is so much information regarding: the raffle for a highly customized semi-auto Kimber Classic .45 ACP pistol; new items in the Quartermaster's store; an ongoing request for

copies of your Special Orders from our Outreach Committee chairperson Ev Sprous; the Sponsorship Program, and more. I pray that if we all do the correct things to stay safe, we will get past this global crisis and stay healthy. All the best, Mike Drzyzga

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**May 9, 2020** Shirley Bartlett sent this: *"Hi guys, asking for prayer for your old gunner here. Guess I was a little naive about cancer. Thought we were home free except for healing. 29 Apr Frank had labs. His oncologist didn't call so I went on the premise of no news, good news. On the day of our phone consultation she said Frank's cancer marker was elevated. She said let's redo the test. We did and still elevated. We now are scheduled for a full body pet scan for this coming Friday 15th. Doing it locally. It seems obvious he has some kind of cancer but my prayer is it is something that can be dealt with. She did say the tumor in colon, which they got all out was the primary tumor. So, maybe this is still small enough to be manageable."* Prayers worked last time and we'll do it again! Please add Frank and Shirley to your prayers!! And stay safe.

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**April 12, 2020** Don Luke notified us that one of our AC-47 Brothers and AC-119 Gunship Association Life Member Larry P Anduss, 4th SOS Nav, passed away on June 13, 2019 in Pawhuska, Ok. Memorial services were held June 17, 2019 at the Tulsa Air and Space Museum Planetarium in Tulsa.

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**March 25, 2020 NEWSFLASH** Praying this FLASH message finds you all well -- dealing rationally with the crisis the world is facing, and taking all the necessary precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. **Change to Board of Directors:** We are sad to announce that President Jerry Hester had to resign from the President position due to health and other issues. During a teleconference Board meeting, the Board understandingly accepted his resignation. Jerry did an outstanding job dealing with Association business since the previous reunion in Salt Lake City, successfully tackling some tough challenges like improving our website management, rebuilding our treasury, re-energizing our Outreach, and creating a super online repository for all our Oral History Videos. We thank him for those! The Association is in great condition, and we will continue to move forward with our goals and objectives. Following Jerry's notification, the Board took action to fill the President's position. As a result, Mike Drzyzga will step back up into the position, and Wayne Laessig will fill the Prior President's position, which was vacated by Mike. Jerry and Ellen are doing well in TX and we look forward to seeing them at Reunion XXI in Ft. Walton Beach, FL in October. **Reunion XXI Planning for FWB: This year's reunion is still a GO!** By October, we are confident that the hard choices being made now will successfully win over the COVID-19 pandemic. Reunion XXI will be a very-much-needed fun time. Coordinator Gus Sininger has done a great job planning the Fort Walton Beach Reunion. The Association is working to publish a detailed **April Firing Circle** Newsletter, which will present specific information about special topics, such as: the raffle of a custom Kimber 1911 .45 ACP hand gun, the wide selection of reunion T-shirts that are available now, and several cool new items in the Association's Quartermaster web page. I encourage you to make your Reunion XXI plans now: first the on-line Reunion registration, and then book a room at the Four Points in FWB. Everything you need to know about the Reunion and to register is easily found on the Association's web-site at: <https://www.ac119gunships.com/reunion/upcoming-reunion/> All the best to you and your families, be smart, stay well!!! See you in October. Michael Drzyzga, Back as President

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**March 23, 2020** Ev Sprous and his Outreach Team keep finding guys but also learn of some who passed before we were able to make contact. Those include Seth B. Hodges, 18th SOS Stinger Nav who passed on Nov 19, 2019; and Jack K. Pilson, 18th SOS Stinger FE who passed May, 2002. R.I.P Brothers.

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**March 18, 2020** Just learned of the passing of Doug Blair, 18th SOS Gunner. Doug had been in a home for the last year. Here is the obit: <https://obits.nwfdailynews.com/obituaries/nwfdailynews/obituary.aspx?n=douglas-s-blair-doug&pid=195705897>. Please pray for his wife Helen and daughter Rose & other members of the family.

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**March 2020 Update:** Ev Sprous and Don Luke found several of our brothers who passed away before we made contact: R.I.P all.

- Bob Jones daughter sent us: "This link is to a video of my Dad's funeral at Arlington National Cemetery last May **Bob Jones**. You have to scroll down to my Dad's video "Jones, Joe Jerry" and enter this password to be able to watch the video JJJ75\$. The most moving part starts at about the 17 minute mark where my sister Terry talks about my Dad and his life. I forgot to add for those that did not know my dad that he flew AC-119K Stingers out of DaNang in 1970 and 1971. God bless all of you heroes who served over there. You all have my utmost respect and appreciation.
- We recently learned of the passing of Richard Havens, 18th SOS Stinger Illuminator Operator. His niece, Linda Levine, sent the message by mail and included a \$100 check in honor of Richard. He passed on 26 April 2019. Please join us in prayer for the family.
- William Joseph Ubinger, 71st NAV/NOS passed away on 9/19/2011
- Eugene "Gino" Veltre – 9/27/2001 <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/125054477/eugene-r-veltire/photo>
- Info found in Find A Grave for Lance Weyrough, 17th SOS Maintenance. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/114155445> Lance Alan Weyrough Birth 1 Feb 1950 Death 24 Feb 2000 (aged 50)
- CMSgt Donald F. Zeorlin, 90, AC-119 Maintenance, passed away Sunday, September 11, 2011, in Abilene. <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/en-ca/obituaries/name/donald/zeorlin> Graveside services were held in the Santa Fe National Cemetery, He served his country in the United States Air Force for 32 years, with service in WWII, Korea and Vietnam.

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**March 4, 2020** Just got this from 18<sup>th</sup> SOS Stinger FE, CMSgt Pugh's daughter: "This is Robin Reichold, daughter of Chief Master Sergeant Retired USAF William G. Pugh He lost his battle with Parkinson's at 8:13 am today! He was the Best Son ..Brother..Soldier.. Husband..Dad..Uncle and Friend Ever!!! He was Really the Best and Greatest at a lot of things and will be Missed Dearly!! I can't talk anymore right now but you are the Best Pa!! I Love You."

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**March 4, 2020** Jerrilyn Derr contacted our website: "I am letting you know that Bob Derr, 17th SOS Shadow Pilot, passed away the end of December 2019."

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**February 6, 2020** We just learned of the passing of Jim E Sands II on Feb 6, 2020. Jim was Avionics with the 18th SOS Stingers at Phan Rang. Please pray for the Sands family & friends.

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**January 24, 2020** Duane Ferneau's son wanted to share his obituary with his old crew. He had a bunch of old slides and pictures. <https://kadminer.com/.../feb/15/obituary-duane-richard-ferneau/> Duane, 18th SOS Weapons Load, passed away Jan 24, 2020. His Memorial was held Feb 21, 2020 at Hualapai Mountain Park Campground, 6250 Hualapai Mountain Road, Kingman, Arizona. In lieu of flowers, please donate in Duane's honor to the Patrick Tillman Foundation at [www.patillmanfoundation.org](http://www.patillmanfoundation.org)

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**January 9, 2020** Bill Boyne regretfully and sadly announced that Col Walter James Boyne flew his last mission and passed at 3:10, Jan 9, 2020 in Silver Spring MD. "It is with a heavy heart that I speak to you today. Dad is to be interned at Arlington Cemetary, date unknown at this time. Many of our warriors are falling and God bless them all. It is a long and noble waiting list. I know that he was so very proud to be a crew member in the USAF, and was honored to serve and meet the very people I contact today. I will continue to post information about the service arrangements and I ask for your prayers. The Boyne family cherish your thoughts, memories and stories. Dear Dad, Above and Beyond!!"

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**January, 2020 Update** Ev Sprous "found" several members, and sadly learned of others who had passed away.

- Michael Douglas, 17<sup>th</sup> SOS Maint, passed March 2016.
  - Richard D. Hehman, 71<sup>st</sup> SOS Maint, passed on December 30, 2013.
  - Keith Underwood, 18<sup>th</sup> SOS Nav, passed on October 10, 2019.
  - Norman Wills, 71<sup>st</sup> SOS NCOIC of Admin, passed on November 9, 2004.
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