



## The AC-119 Gunship Association

**From:** Wayne Laessig  
**Subject:** Combat Related Special Compensation Denial  
**To:** Richard M. Castro, DAF  
Chief CSRC Branch, USAF Physical Disability Division  
AFPC/DPSDC 550 C Street, West Suite 6  
Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, TX 78150-4708

January 2, 2015

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A Non-Profit Association  
Of AC-119 Gunship  
Air and Ground crew  
Members.

Dear Mr Castro,

I reviewed the CSRC disapproval for Retired SMSgt Jay C Smith due to a lack of documentation confirming he was directly exposed to gunfire, mortar attacks, or any other combat related event that may have led to his PTSD.

I respectfully provide documents to demonstrate that ground duties while Sgt Smith was assigned to DaNang included regular rocket and mortar attacks, often with fatal effect.

1. SSgt John O'Neal Rucker; AC-119K Crew Chief killed by hostile fire on January 27, 1973. He died from a rocket attack at DaNang while he was supervised by SMSgt Smith. I have tons of articles from his hometown newspaper in Kilgore TX if needed.
2. Capt Thomas Hamman; AC-119 aircrew killed in a rocket attack at DaNang on June 15, 1972. Tom was my aircraft commander.
3. AC-119K Stinger Gunships flew perimeter defense at DaNang, specifically to destroy rockets as they were launched, reducing casualties and damage. Stars & Stripes article and awards for the night of July 12, 1972 document that. I was on one of the missions.

DaNang was often under rocket attack with sometimes fatal outcomes, and yes, some of the documentation is third party witness testimonial. We can provide testimonials and documents from several hundred air and ground crew in our AC-119 Gunship Association who flew and worked out of DaNang, to further validate that DaNang was often under rocket and mortar attack; the same for Bien Hoa and other in-country locations our ground troops worked out of.

Very Respectfully,

Wayne Laessig

Stinger Co-Pilot; Prior President, AC-119 Gunship Association  
Retired Lt Col, USAF

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