

June/July
2024

Greetings from the “Front Office” being shared from CA, IN and NJ!

All is well in the Association. Our monthly ZOOM videoconference keeps us focused and on track. Right now your Board of Directors is polishing-up the **reunion details** for Colorado Springs in Sept. It is getting close!

Many attendees are going on the Royal Gorge Train Excursion and the Air Force Academy/AC-130J Ghost rider gunship static display. We are already filling a second bus! Recommend you make your reunion and hotel reservations now and sign up for the tours because when the second bus is filled, that is it!

We are always happy to see 1st timers registered, and it is always great to meet old friends or make new friends. The list of Who’s Coming as of early July is in this Newsletter, and if you want to SEE those old friends (or have them see YOU) sign up and join us in Colorado Springs!! Take a look and see who you know on the list.

For those attending the reunion, a few notes to remember:

- **Name Tag Pouches/AC-119 Neck Lanyards:** IF you have one from a previous reunion, PLEASE pack it for reuse this year.
- **Auction Items:** Some of the Association’s “fund raisers” are the Silent and Live Auctions held after the Saturday awards banquet. If you want to bring any memorabilia (items of interest to this group), please do so! The auctions are fun and benefit our Association immensely.

We are very happy to have John Paul Mac Isaac, **our videographer**, joining us again – he captures our stories from “back then” for history (not for us, but for our children and grandchildren). If you have not done a video or a written Biography, please sign-up during the on-line registration.

Speaking of history, AF Special Operations Command (AFSOC) is sending their “**historian**” Dr. Roy Dowdy, from Hurlburt AFB to meet us AC-119ers, record who we are, and what we did. Dr. Dowdy knows how often the AC-119 Gunship is overlooked in history and is committed to help correct that!

Announcing some welcome changes to the Association’s working group; please welcome:

- **John Forbes and his wife Penny** as your new Newsletter Editor Team. They have put together the Firing Circle you are reading now.
- **Craig Corbett** is the 18th SOS Point-of-Contact (POC).
- **George Renfro** is the 17th SOS POC.
- **Dave Voisey**’s “interim” title is now changed to Membership Coordinator :>)
- Lastly, **Mike Drzyzga** is back in the “acting” Secretary position until a slate of officers is voted-in at the Reunion’s Saturday business meeting.

And, above all, we are still seeking a person with the right-stuff for the **President position**. Send a note to your POC if you are interested in any Board role!

Your Board of Directors wishes you a safe and healthy summer, and we will “see you in September!”

Mike, Wayne, and Terry

Colorado Springs Reunion - Who is Coming?

We thought you might be interested in knowing which of your friends will be at our Colorado Springs Reunion, and maybe help decide that YOU would like to also SEE them again, by Registering at <https://www.ac119gunships.com/reunion/upcoming-reunion-2024/>

Stan & Cindy Baker; Dean & Chris Barnard; Jack & Carolyn Bastin with friends Linda McCoin & Evelyn Algood; Paul & Teri Beagley; Jim Boyd; Craig Corbett; Van Criswell; Chuck Daldry; Roy Davis & Paula Pascoe; Roy Dowdy (AFSOC Historian), Mike & Andrea Drzyzga; Bob & Janet Dydo; Jim & Christina Farrell; LeRoy & Rose Frahm; Lloyd & M.E. Froelich; Ron & Patty Gilbert; Janis Goryl; Richard Hall; Bob Hamorsky & Jennifer Fusilli; Barry & Bernice Harmer with Son Shawn & Daughter-in-law Kim; Jerry & Ellen Hester; Gerald Heuer; Clement & Suzanne Hill; Ron & Carol Hinton; Gary Hitzemann; Baby Huey Hunter & Ruth Chapman; Dan Jensen; Mike Krauss; Wayne & Lynette Laessig; Ralph & Joyce Lefarth; Bob & Daughter Brooks Lyall; Steve & Nancy Mac Isaac & Son John Paul; Dan & Arlene Mages; Dale & Jeanette Martin; Larry Mersek & Susie Ryslinge; Jim & Karen Montgomery with Brother-in-law & Sister-in-law Bruce & Marlene Artis; John Morgan & Leysia Gartley; John & Harolyn Morrow; Mike & Theresa Mullen; Tom Novak; Rod Olson with Daughter Cyndi & Granddaughter Freya Hathaway; Bill & Karen Petrie, Roger Points; Joaquin & Sally Ramirez; Jim Ray; Howard Reid; Mike Ryan; Bob Safreno & Sandy Paxton; Terry & Theresa Sarul; John Schumann; Larry Shaw, Gus Sininger; Jerry & Diane Snyder; Larry & Kathy Swanson; Dan Thompson & Linda Lucke; Wilma Tyler with Daughter Cheree & Son-in-law Steve Bachmann; Dave Voisey; Scott Williams; Doug Wohlgamuth; Bill & Paula Zito.

AC-119 GUNSHIP ASSOCIATION ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

In coordination with the AF Special Operations Command (AFSOC) History Office, we have added an additional way for our members to document their history in AC-119 gunships. The AFSOC history office is interested in doing audio interviews and will have one of their representatives attend our upcoming reunion in Colorado Springs. Most of you are aware of our oral history video (OHV) program with videographer John Paul Mac Isaac. This audio program supplements our video program and is a second method of telling your story and having it published on our web site. If you are interested in doing an audio or video session at the reunion, please contact Roy Davis by email (roy@island-escape.com) or by phone (253.549.2044). If you already marked "Yes" for a Bio on your Reunion Registration, we will coordinate with you. You can take a look at what we have on our website at the following link on the home page [OUR BIOS, VIDEOS, AND STORIES.](#)

ORAL HISTORY VIDEOS, AUDIOS AND BIOS

As a guide, video/audio sessions are often 10 and 15 minutes long, but longer is fine. If you already have a bio you can use it as a guide for your video/audio. If you don't have a bio you can write one (one to two pages or 1000 to 1500 words) using the format below. If possible, please submit them in MS Word format. There are many ways to do this. Use your imagination. You can include whomever you want in the video/audio (wife, group video, etc.). The major emphasis should be on your experiences in the AC-119 gunship.

OHV FORMAT:

- When and where were you born
- Where did you go to school
- Why and how did you enter the Air Force
- **AC-119 experiences**
- What did you do after AC-119s and other Air Force assignments
- What are you doing now

We already have a great oral history program and would love to have you become a part of it.

Of those coming to the Colorado Springs Reunion, here's how their OHVs break out:

These Brothers already did an OHV. THANK YOU!!

Paul Beagley, Craig Corbett, Roy Davis, Mike Drzyzga, Bob Dydo, Jim Farrell, LeRoy Frahm, Lloyd Froelich, Ron Gilbert, Joe Goryl, Richard Hall, Jerry Hester, Gerald Heuer, Clement Hill, Ron Hinto, Gary Hitzemann, Larry Hunter, Dan Jensen, Wayne Laessig, Ralph Lefarth, Bob Lyall, Steve Mac Isaac, Dan Mages, Dale Martin, Larry Mersek, Jimmy Montgomery, John Morrow, Mike Mullen, Tom Novak, Bill Petrie, Roger Points, Jim Ray, Howard Reid, Bob Safreno, Terry Sarul, John Schumann, Gus Sininger, Jerry Snyder, Dan Thompson, Bill Tyler, Dave Voisey, Doug Wohlgamuth, Bill Zito

John Morgan already signed up to do an OHV at this Reunion. Thank you, John!

These Brothers haven't done one or signed up yet, but they can contact us to schedule one, or sign up to do one when they arrive :-> Stan Baker, Dean Barnard, Jack Bastin, Jim Boyd, Van Criswell, Chuck Daldry, Bob Hamorsky, Barry Harmer, Mike Krauss, John Morgan, Rod Olson, Joaquin Ramirez, Mike Ryan, Larry Shaw, Larry Swanson, Scott Williams

Future Reunion!

After Colorado Springs., we go back east, back "home":
**2025 AC-119 Gunship Association Reunion XXV in Ft. Walton Beach
October (TBD), 2025**

AC119 Association Membership Updates

Dave Voisey reports three new members -

Last	First	Position	Date	Member #
Ramirez	Joaquin	18 th SOS Propellor Mechanic	5/19/2024	622
Obernier	Ron	AC-119 Engine Shop	6/3/2024	624
Maly	Joseph	17 th SOS Maintenance Officer	5/30/2024	623

Final Flight

Brothers who made their Final Flight. Please remember their families in your prayers. R.I.P. Brothers.

Lawrence 'Duane' Arnold	18 th SOS Navigator	Passed March 27, 2023
James N. Holt	18 th SOS Navigator	Passed August 21, 2022
Walter F. Kowalsky Jr	71 st and 17 th SOS Maintenance	Passed November 23, 2018

Tributes are on our Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/195912423919726>. Please let us know if you learn of a Brother passing. We also want to find more of our Brothers, preferably alive, who we don't have contact information on. Please visit <https://www.ac119gunships.com/membership-contact-information/alpha-roster> and add any missing names or contacts you have.

DD-214 - What you need to know

The Association's Awards and Decorations POC, Steve "Col Mac" Mac Isaac found a very informative article about the DD-214 discharge paper, and how important it is to Veterans deserving VA benefits. There is a paragraph on "How to get your DD-214", but it is just too much info to provide to you here, instead here is a link to the information [DD214: What You21eed to Know | Military.com](#). It is worth a browser visit!! Thank you, Steve.

Administrative Updates and Reminders

1. John and Penny Forbes have signed on to become the newsletter editor. John was with the 460th AMS (Instruments) which supported the Shadows operating out of Tan Son Nhut. His tour was Sept 70 through Aug 71. John and Penny both retired after 35 plus years in the information technology field. They reside in Lacombe, LA and have three children and seven grandchildren.
2. Our website has a great feature called **Meet Your Brother – Spotlight of the Week**, where we've randomly selected one of your Bio Stories and created a link directly to it. Our goal is to give everyone visiting our website the opportunity to learn a little more about the men who flew and supported our AC119s. Go to any main page on our website and you will see a "Widget" link on the side of the page.
3. PLEASE remember to contact your group POC, the **Membership Coordinator DAVE VOISEY** at dvoisey@hotmail.com or 713-818-9234, or Association Secretary Craig Corbett when you **change contact information, especially your email address**. We very much want to keep in contact with you. If you receive the *Firing Circle* by walking to the mailbox after its postal delivery, AND you have and use an EMAIL ADDRESS, NOTIFY your unit POC, or our Membership Coordinator NOW if you want future Newsletters and FLASHES sent via email. You can **SAVE** us a lot by reducing the cost of postage, printer paper, envelopes, ink cartridges, etc.
4. Are you interested in some AC-119 Gunship historical facts, current events, interesting dialogue, photos and stories about AC-119s? If you have Internet access on your computer, tablet or cell phone, then you have to join the Association's **Facebook page**. It now has **over 763 members** – not just directly related AC119ers, but also history buffs, AC-130 folk (including some former 73rd SOS Shadows or 17th SOS Jackals), model makers, etc. Just browse to: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/195912423919726/>. Also, there are Facebook Pages dedicated to "Air Force Gunners", "Air Force 462 Weapons", "Happy Valley – Phan Rang" (almost 1400 members), and "U.S. Military Veterans - News you can use" – very interesting pictures and history, current news, and other valuable information.
5. **Awards and Decorations** coordinator Steve "Col Mac" Mac Isaac continues to aid us in fixing incorrect DD214s. He has helped many get on the trail to receiving decorations they earned through research of documentation and orders shared by association members. Questions and comments: Contact Col Mac by email: colmacmac@mac.com, or cell phone: (302) 249-1499 (MT).
6. **WE NEED YOU TO SEND US YOUR SPECIAL ORDERS**. Please send copies of your special orders, PCS orders, etc. to Mike Drzyzga. We need these to help our comrades with claims and family members after their loved one passes. Email them to Mike Drzyzga at drzyzga513@hotmail.com, or

mail to 37 Pecan Lane, Oak Ridge, NJ 07438, or call Mike at (201) 310-2943. Please do this as soon as possible.

7. **Books:** Our web Store has 7 books written about and by AC-119ers. Their experiences and legacy are treasures to read, learn from, and enjoy! These include our original History Book; a history book with all the original plus new Bios; a book of Stories; *Spooky, Spectre, and the Man* by Mike Friel about Ron Terry's battles to create and utilize fixed-wing gunships; a book of the cartoons that were our way of inserting humor into SEA; *The Gunship Chronicles* by Larry Barbee including his Stinger 41 story; and *History of Fairchild C-119 Flying Boxcar* by Wendell Cosner. Your actual selections and purchase in the store are via Amazon.

From Facebook via Annette Robeck



The AC-119 Memorial Trike owned by the Robeck's (Patriot Guard Riders) participated in a Gary Sinise Foundation event on May 29, 2024 for a wounded warrior in Nolensville TN, Josh Hargis. There's a picture or 2 of his children on the Trike.

From Facebook Via Roy Davis, June 4, 2024 and Jim Dunn via email

Here's a sincerely meaningful song being shared by Vietnam Vets, from Jack Murphy, 199th Light Infantry Brigade 1969-70: [Just Another Day in the Nam \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

From Phan Rang Newsletter:



Doug Severt, Admin for the Phan Rang AFB "Happy Valley" Facebook group and publisher of the *Phan Rang Newsletter* for more than a dozen years, with articles and bios about our AC-119s. We thought you would like to see some samples. The following two articles came from Vol 287, and these were originally from the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper. Remember that?!



Doug's Comments: After nearly 12 years and almost 6,000 pages of the Phan Rang Newsletter, I thought I pretty much covered the entire history of Phan Rang AB, but then I thought of all the stories that I've seen over the years that I've missed or looked over because they didn't seem to be relevant to what I was looking for at the time. So, with that in mind I thought of looking at all the Stars & Stripes publications since 1966 and found hundreds of articles that in some ways pertained to Phan Rang AB, even if they didn't have a dateline of Phan Rang.

This issue is Part 2 of that effort. To subscribe to Phan Rang News, email dougsevert@gmail.com and put 'subscribe' in subject line.



"Happy Valley" Phan Rang AB, RVN The History of Phan Rang AB and the stories of those who served there. **"Keeping the memories alive"** Phan Rang AB Newsletter No. 287".

Viets to Fly Gunships, SAIGON (Special)—The U.S. 7th Air Force Monday started training South Vietnamese aircrews on the AC119 shadow gunship at Phan Rang AB, Air Force spokesmen announced Monday. The gunship is the first aircraft both designed for close support missions and large enough to carry all the equipment, including sensors, necessary to locate enemy trucks, storage areas or troops. It has been used in Southeast Asia since 1967. Instructors will teach the Vietnamese basic flying and combat tactics on actual missions, spokesmen said. The training is a part of the continuing Vietnamese Air Force improvement and modernization program (*Pacific Stars & Stripes Thursday, Feb. 4, 1971*).

On the Job Training Halts a Red Attack, PHAN RANG AB, Vietnam (Special) — The Vietnam war saw another first as a "schoolroom" went into combat. Republic of Vietnam Air Force (VNAF) personnel training with U.S. advisors here in the AC119 gunship program, recently responded to an emergency call by Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) ground forces who were in combat with Communist troops five miles southwest of Dak To. The ARVN unit had lost its interpreter and the U.S. Air Force crews supporting them could not understand Vietnamese. An emergency call was placed to the 14th Special Operations Wing Headquarters here, where the decision was made to divert the VNAF crew and their American instructors, complete with their AC119 classroom. Arriving on the scene of the fighting, the VNAF crew found the ARVN unit surrounded by Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army forces. With the enemy about 800 meters away from the camp and closing in, the VNAF crew positioned their gunship and opened fire on the enemy, keeping them off guard long enough for their ARVN counterparts to regroup.

Maj. **Donald D. Fraker**, a USAF instructor flying on the gunship, stated, "Even though the VNAF crewmembers were only half-way through their training, they did an A plus job. They also had an opportunity to see what goes on during an actual mission which should help them greatly." The VNAF crew, one of those that composed the first-class training in the AC119, was commanded by Maj. **Dang Van Due**. Due acted as interpreter for the crew during the mission over the base camp and aided greatly in ensuring his crew worked smoothly (*Pacific Stars & Stripes, Thursday April 1, 1971*).

Editor's Note: from Mike Drzyzga, "My last four month at Phan Rang, Apr. – Jul 1971, found me upgraded to instructor Gunner, and on Crew #8 training the VNAF."



The left picture is Mike Drzyzga and VNAF Student Gunner, NOTE the 819th Black Dragon unit designation.

The right picture is Crew 8: FE TSgt Frank Gentry, IO SSgt Bryon McNulty, Nav Maj. Jim Rash, Gunner SSgt. Mike Drzyzga, IP Capt. Dick Howze.

From Facebook via Bob Laymon:



AC-119G Shadow Gunship under repair in MAG-12 hanger. Landing gear malfunction.

Photo by Col. L. Wiseman VMA- 211 Ordnance shop.1969.

The right prop was damaged due to nose gear problem.

From Facebook via Jim Mattison

AC Vu Aviation Art is dedicated to the VNAF from 1955 – 1975.

To see many very interesting fine artwork paintings, take a look at <https://vnafartworks.blogspot.com/>

Here's an example of the image "Flying Dragons".



