



JUNE 2025

Brothers and Friends,

We are ready to gather once again in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, Nov 10 -17, 2025, for our 25th reunion! Join us to refresh old friendships and make new ones – while we can - and together we will move our AC-119 legacy and heritage just a bit closer to the daylight. We have a great reunion package at Fort Walton Beach's beautiful **The Island Resort** that includes a fun Tour, Association Meeting, Banquet, and Farewell. We'll also gather on Friday with our Legacy 18th **Special Operations Test and Evaluation Squadron!** Our Hootch is open from noon Wednesday until Sunday night, with free snacks and beverages, **except** during our Banquet and Farewell BBQ.

On Thursday, join the Naval Aviation Museum Tour at Pensacola (0800-1500), and there's always Hootch time (0800-2200 daily), or free time (24 hours if you're up to it :-).

On Friday, we'll gather in the afternoon for an informal Meet & Greet with our Legacy 18th **Special Operations Test and Evaluation Squadron** at the Navarre Memorial Park just west of Hurlburt. **No charge:** hamburgers, hot dogs, beverages, etc., along with our Legacy Active-Duty Warriors and a few surprise guests. For transportation, we'll carpool from the hotel. **For this event you must register SEPARATELY from the rest of our Reunion Registration. Simply use the link in the Tour information to sign up. This event was great at our 2021 FWB Reunion and we expect the same!** We'll gather casually in the Hootch afterwards for some light desserts.

On Saturday morning we'll hold our Association Meeting, and our Dinner Banquet in the evening with Mahi-Mahi, Pork Tenderloin, or Vegetarian options. You can note special needs on the registration.

And on Sunday our Board will meet in the morning (while the rest of you get to sleep in), and we'll wrap up with our evening Farewell Buffet featuring a Low Country Boil!

In your free time, visit the renovated Air Memorial Park, and our AC-119 Memorials, at Hurlburt - now open to the public. The Armament Museum is another great place to visit. Both are definitely worth a visit!

I encourage you to register early, and **The Island Resort** is giving us our Group Rate from the Monday before to the Monday after our Reunion! We'll send updates on "Who Is Coming" to help you decide 😊 We'll provide updates in Flashes and Firing Circle, and information is also on our Association's Website and Facebook page.

I hope to see you ALL there!

*Yours In True Brotherhood,
Association President,
Bill Petrie*

AC-119 Gunship Reunion: November 12 - 16, 2025

[The Island Resort at Fort Walton Beach – Hotel Reservations](#)

1500 Miracle Strip Parkway SE, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548

To reserve a room, call 850-337-9194 or 800-874-8962 (reference the AC-119 Gunship Association), or to reserve your room online, use this link [The Island Resort Booking](#).

Our all-inclusive Reunion Rate is \$164.20 for double Queen rooms (you can request a King, based on availability), and includes free Breakfast buffet for up to 2 guests per room, free parking, free high-speed internet, all available Monday, November 10th thru Monday, November 17th, 2025. The resort fee of \$29 is waived for rooms booked in our group block.

But you MUST Reserve by October 20th for our guaranteed rate. Since you can cancel without charge up to 48 hours prior to your reservation check-in date, reserve your room now to guarantee you get our Reunion rate. You can also upgrade to Pool View at \$186 or Gulf View at \$230 based on availability. For reservation changes, or after the 20th cut-off, you need to call Vanessa Blackmon at 850-337-9194 Monday-Friday 0800-1700 CST. Cancellations must be received 48 hours prior to arrival date to avoid a charge of one night's room plus tax.

Important: If you need a handicapped accessible room, **you must call Vanessa Blackmon** for assistance, Monday-Friday 0800 to 1700 CST at **850-337-9194**. **Scoot Around** rents both manual and power wheelchairs by the day and week. Call (888) 441-7575 or visit www.scootaround.com for details or to reserve one.

Reunion Registrations:

Register online at <https://www.events.afr-reg.com/e/2025AC119>

NOTE: online registrations close October 13th! After that day, latecomers can contact Doug Wohlgamuth to register. He'll provide instructions and a form to mail with your check to AFR.

Schedule of Events

Bold = Ticketed Event

Wednesday, November 12

Time	Event	Room Name
1200 - 2200	Hootch Open	Fiji Room
1400 – 1900	Reunion Registration Open	Foyer
	Free Time to Explore Fort Walton Beach	

Thursday, November 13

0700 - 0900	Reunion Registration Open	Fiji Room
0800 - 1500	National Naval Aviation Museum	
0800 – 2200	Hootch Open	Fiji Room
1500 – 1700	Reunion Registration Open	Foyer
	Free Time to Explore Fort Walton Beach	

Friday, November 14

0800 – 2200	Hootch Open	Fiji Room
1400 – 1700	Navarre Memorial Park - Hosted Meet and Greet	See important info on next page
1800	Light Desserts in Hootch	Fiji Room
	Free Time to Explore Fort Walton Beach	

Saturday, November 15

0800 – 2200	Hootch Open	Fiji Room
0900 – 1100	Association Annual Meeting	Aruba Room
1700 – 2200	Cash Bar	Maui Ballroom Foyer
1800 – 2200	Dinner Banquet	Maui Ballroom

Sunday, November 16

0800 – 1000	Board Meeting	Bali Boardroom
0900 – 2400	Hootch Open	Fiji Room
1700 – 2000	Cash Bar	Aruba Ballroom Foyer
1800 - 2000	Farewell Dinner	Aruba Ballroom

Monday, November 17

	Farewells and Departures	
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CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date of October 13, Armed Forces Reunions Inc shall process a full refund less the non-refundable Group registration fee (\$35 per person). Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent vendor commitments and guarantees will allow less the non-refundable Group registration fee. For math mistakes by the user that incur charges above the intended amount that require a refund, the user will be responsible for additional credit card fees. Cancellations will only be taken Monday - Friday from 9am - 5pm Eastern Time, excluding holidays. Call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities. Refunds will be processed 4-6 weeks after the reunion. NOTE: canceling your hotel reservations does not cancel your reunion activities.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13
NATIONAL NAVAL AVIATION MUSEUM TOUR DESCRIPTION

Pensacola, Florida is home to the National Naval Aviation Museum, which captures naval aviation's entire heritage with over 150 planes representing the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Soar with the Blue Angels in the dazzling seven-story glass and steel atrium. The West Wing is devoted almost entirely to WWII carrier aviation and showcases a full-size replica of the USS Cabot Carrier Island and flight deck along with aircraft such as the Corsair, Avenger, and Hellcat, among others. While there, you can enjoy flight simulators and IMAX type films for extra fees.

Enjoy lunch on your own at Cubi Café. Please note: seating is limited and for faster service we highly suggest that not everyone goes to lunch at the same time.

NOTE: The Museum is kept very cool, so a jacket is recommended. There is also a limit of one hydraulically lifted scooter or wheelchair per handicap accessible bus, and the combined weight of the passenger and motorized wheelchair or scooter may not exceed 500 lb due to lift limitations. If you use a scooter or motorized wheelchair but can climb the steps to board the bus, either you and/or a person travelling with you must be able to put the scooter or wheelchair in the bus's luggage compartment. Due to liability issues, drivers and tour guides cannot assist with scooters or motorized wheelchairs.

8:00am board bus, 3:00pm back at hotel

\$72/Person includes bus and guide. Lunch is on your own.

Tour Buses will load and unload at the front of the hotel lobby, and guests should meet in the lobby. Please be at the bus loading location at least 10 minutes prior to departure.

Driver and Guide gratuities are not included in the tour price and are at the discretion of the individual.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14
Visiting the USAF Armament Museum During Reunion 2025

During a recent visit to Ft. Walton Beach, FL, Mike Drzyzga visited the USAF Armament Museum at Eglin AFB and met with their lead docent, Brian Olmstead. Brian is willing and able to set-up a formal visit of the museum if we want, for the AC-119ers attending our November reunion. The Museum has our Shadow and Stinger Lithographs on display. But most interesting, AC-130A "First Lady" has been restored inside and out, has electrical power to it, and is opened periodically for special events. Brian can have First Lady opened for us. Mike is also planning an informal car-pool visit for reunion attendees desiring to visit the Museum. The museum visit will be scheduled for Friday morning, Nov. 14, leaving the *Island Resort* hotel at 9:00 a.m., arrive at Museum around 9:30 a.m., We'll leave the museum around 11:30 am to arrive at the hotel around Noon. We will be back in plenty of time to enjoy the *FREE Meet & Greet later that day* at Navarre Park. If you are interested, contact Mike before Nov. 1 at email: drzyzga513@hotmail.com or cell-phone 201-310-2943.

Also, if you plan to attend and have a car with available seats, and are willing and able to take some folks, please let Mike know.

For more Armament Museum information here is a link to Museum's website:

[Air Force Armament Museum Foundation | Admission is FREE and all are welcome!](#)

NAVARRE MEMORIAL PARK - MEET AND GREET

Our 18th SOTES Legacy Squadron plans to host an informal Meet & Greet Friday afternoon at the Navarre Memorial Park, just west of Hurlburt, with burgers, hot dogs, beer, sodas, etc. There is no charge for this event! We did this several years ago and it was fantastic! It also provides an opportunity to stop by the Hurlburt Air Memorial Park, which is now open to the public. If the 18th SOTES deployment pace impacts their participation, we will still meet there to begin our Reunion Events.

Start time will be 2 pm and we plan to wrap up about 5 pm.

Transportation will be via Carpools, and we plan to gather in the Hootch afterward.

IMPORTANT: this event is separate from the rest of the AFR Registration Form.

To register for our Meet & Greet, use this online link to provide the names and info for those who will attend: [**Reunion 2025 – Navarre Meet & Greet Registration - AC-119 Gunship Association**](#)

Silent Auction

Many folks bring auction items to help fund things like Hootch supplies, KIA Family participation, Color Guard meals, etc. Most items are **Silent Auctioned**, where everyone can bid on them until bidding is closed the afternoon of the Banquet and the “winner(s)” are announced. If you’d like to contribute, things that fit in luggage work well. If you have an item you think needs to be “live” auctioned, email Gus at stinger7172@live.com. The “live” auction items are part of the festivities after the Banquet. The auctions are fun and benefit our Association immensely.

Fort Walton Beach Reunion - Who is Coming?

We thought you might be interested in knowing which of your friends will be at our Fort Walton Reunion, and maybe help decide that YOU would like to also SEE them again, by Registering at

<https://www.ac119gunships.com/reunion/upcoming-reunion-2025/> Attendees:

Stanley Baker, Paul & Teri Beagley, Jim Boyd, Mike & Andrea Drzyzga, Bob & Janet Dydo, Jim & Tina Farrell, Jim & Marilyn Fiala, Rod Friese & Friend David King, Ron & Patti Gilbert, Charles & Donna Glickman, Janis Goryl, Dora Gravitte & Guest, Clement & Suzanne Hill, Ron & Carol Hinton & Family, Gary Hitzemann, Lee Jordan & Family, Mike Krauss, Bob Krueger & Guest, Wayne & Lynette Laessig with Guests Michelle & Kenny Mayfield, Rod Olson with Daughter Cyndi Hathaway, Jim Rash, Howard Reid, Matt & Annette Robeck, Bob Safreno, Terry & Theresa Sarul with Daughter Lisa Redden, Al & Carmel Smith, Gene & Brother James Van Over, Dave Voisey, Doug & Karen Wohlgamuth

For those attending the reunion, a note to remember:

Name Tag Pouches/AC-119 Neck Lanyards: IF you have one from a previous reunion, PLEASE pack it for reuse this year.

Transportation

- **Airlines:** Allegiant, American, Delta, Southwest, Sun Country Airlines, & United fly into Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport (VPS).
- **Car:** Parking at the hotel is **free** with hotel booking.
- **RVs/Campers:** Hurlburt (850-797-0103) and Eglin (850-883-1243) FamCamps: no reservations but call ahead; Geronimo RV Resort (850-424-6801); and Destin West RV Resort (850-200-4533).

The Origins of the AC-119 Facebook Page

From Jim Mattison:

In 2013, Everett Sprouss and I joined forces to create the fledgling Facebook (FB) Page devoted to the AC-119 Gunship family. As the FB Page grew and we accepted members, the AC-119 Gunship Association consented to the Page being the Social Media presence for the Association. The Board held the Page to very high standards in order for it to achieve credibility as the Association’s voice.

Everett and I were tasked with maintaining the security and integrity of the Page. We would only allow sales posts that are linked to the Association’s Webstore. We were further tasked with vetting new members, as described in Terry Sarul’s article.

We operate with 3-5 Administrators, who share the management responsibility of running the page. The administrators strive to maintain a safe and family-friendly environment.

The Page serves to quickly and interactively communicate with our 830+ members. Friendly discussion is encouraged, and there are subsections for members to view. Subsections are:

“**Media**” is a repository for member-submitted Photos, Videos, and a selection of themed Albums. This is also where people can find the Tributes for our brothers that have “flown west.”

“**Files**” contains Word Docs, PDFs, and many other file types uploaded by members.

Also in Brotherhood,
Jim Mattison, FB Co-creator

From Everett Sprous:

Jim Mattison texted me and asked what I thought about creating a Facebook Page for AC-119 people. I said, "Great", and became an administrator. We worked together and started adding people. There is a vetting process to ensure potential members are not going to post sales, etc. We added more administrators, and the page became a success.

Everett Sprous,
FB co-creator

AC-119 Gunship Facebook Page Member Vetting Process

Greetings, fellow AC-119ers from your most "Junior" FB Administrator. I hope all are doing well and looking forward to and preparing for our next Gunship reunion in Fort Walton Beach in November 12-17.

As the newest and most "junior" FB admin, I personally have not been overly involved in the administration of our page. However, it occurred to me that because of our limited number of administrators it was time for me to be more active in the administrator capacity. Therefore, after discussions with all involved, it was decided that I should take the lead on membership applications. In that capacity, I would like to shed some light on what is involved with vetting an application and introduce you to our newest members.

The page is classified as a "PRIVATE GROUP". Because of this classification, a vetting process takes place before a new applicant is allowed membership. This process was put in place to keep our group focused on the main objective, which is people or their family members who were directly associated with our AC-119 gunship. It was meant to keep out any scammers, hackers, or trolls from infiltrating our page and disrupting our mission, which is to facilitate camaraderie and relationships within our gunship family.

To that end, there is a strict vetting process when considering a new applicant. This vetting process will NOT be compromised. Some of the tools that may be used in the vetting process are: the MCL (Master Control List), the Alpha Roster from the web page, the squadron POCs, and even the applicant's FB page. The use of these tools helps in the verification process and assures us that the information being given is accurate.

The vetting process contains two simple questions:

1. What was your involvement with the AC-119 or our associated squadrons?
2. If you were not directly involved with our AC-119, who is your relative that was?

If the applicant cannot answer one of these questions or does not adequately reply to a follow up query, the application will be declined. Period, full stop. No exceptions. I hope that this helps in the understanding of the membership vetting process.

With the "nuts & bolts" out of the way, let me introduce you to our new members:

1. Eric Criswell: Son of Alton 'Van' Criswell, (Pilot-18th SOS).
2. Lance Sherrick: Grandson of Rudy Vadovich, (Gunner-71st/17th SOS).
3. Johnny Wheeler: Son-in-law of Edward Stockwell, (FE-18th SOS).

Please look at our page. It can be a tremendous source of information for you to connect with the individuals that you served with and to connect you with individuals that served with your relatives and loved ones.
"GUNS HOT".

In Brotherhood and Solidarity,
Terry Sarul, FB Admin, Assoc. VP

Origins of a Patriot Guard Rider Trike

Marshall Mullins was a Life Support Specialist who packed our AC-119 parachutes, and he was proud of that role. He was just as proud being part of our AC-119 Gunship Association and wanted to honor our KIA.

Marshall always wanted to be a Patriot Guard Rider, but barriers kept getting in the way, including prostate cancer. But his wife Marilyn's employer was a guy who recognized Marshall's dream and decided to do something about it. Marilyn's boss bought a Harley Trike, custom-painted to honor ALL our AC-119 KIA, and presented it to Marshall to fulfill his dream of becoming a Patriot Guard Rider and honoring our KIA.



In 2015, Marshall passed away. In the ensuing years, Marilyn struggled to come up with something meaningful to do with the trike as Marshall had requested. The things she knew he was passionate about were veterans, veterans' rights and prostate cancer awareness.

So, Marilyn contacted the AC-119 Gunship Association, the military group that Marshall belonged to and asked them to come up with ideas. Their Board came back with a suggestion to donate the bike to the Patriot Guard so that it would spend its life riding in funeral processions for veterans and first responders. Marshall always wanted to ride his trike at these ceremonies, but he never had the stamina. Marilyn knew this was something that would make him happy and proud.

To decide who would be the right person to be the trike's next "handler", several in the AC-119 Association worked with the Patriot Guard and Marilyn. We narrowed it down until we found Matt and Annette Robeck in Antioch, Tennessee. They were perfect, including Matt's resemblance to Marshall. The trike was serviced at Pikes Peak Harley, followed by a small turnover ceremony with Matt, Annette, Patriot Guard Riders, and a representative from the AC-119 Gunship Association.

Annette remarked, "Our Journey has begun" while meeting and hugging [Marilyn](#). Later, they met Tia, whose father was KIA. We listened to her story, knowing her father is listed and, as such, he will be with us on this journey. We'll be carrying on for Marshall through the Patriot Guard missions and events. Matt is humbled and honored to keep Marshall's mission going long past our return to Tennessee.



Marilyn said since Mike and Annette stewardship of the trike "it has participated in many PGR Events where they give military teddy bears to the children of the deceased."



Matt is so committed to honoring Marshall's dream and our veterans that he purchased a trailer to transport the trike to and from PGR Events. He flies the AC-119 Gunship Association Flag next to the US Flag on the back of the trike! Marshall did get to ride his trike to an AC-119 Reunion, and Matt & Annette have brought it to several since.

Matt's also done some additional, amazing artwork on the trailer.

They are bringing it to the Fort Walton Beach November Reunion. We hope you can join us to meet this amazing couple and hear more about their and Marshall's journeys. The Memorial Trike and its trailer will be on display!



If you'd like to help Matt and Annette as they proudly continue their ongoing PGR work, and help them honor our Veterans, use this QR Code and send Doug a note telling him it's for the Trike!! And, if you'd like to learn more about Marshall's story watch his video on our AC-119 website at <https://youtu.be/Ad7n3punLTA>

Final Flight

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

Richard (Steve) Mac Isaac	18 th SOS – Pilot	January 24, 2025
John F. Windsor	17 th SOS – Navigator	June 19, 2024
Bobby Herron	71 st & 17 th SOS – Flight Engineer	October 9, 2022
Anton (Tony) Bautz	18 th SOS – Pilot	February 28, 2023
Charles A. Wallace	18 th SOS – Maintenance	October 23, 2021
Larry Mason	18 th SOS – Maintenance	February 4, 2025
William (Bill) L. Jowers	18 th SOS – Pilot	February 3, 2025
Ronald Wilson	18 SOS – Gunner	May 22, 2024

In addition, we grieve with the Posey family on the loss of Cindy Posey. Cindy passed on March 3, 2025. Cindy was Bill's spouse of 68 years.