



2008 Mail bag

"Mail Call" Has replaced our guest book

To post a MAIL CALL entry email the webmaster at retcmsgtatcox.net

Put Gunship Mail Call in the subject line or it may be ignored. If you want your e-mail address posted so members can contact you please put it after your name & location.

Your message will be reviewed & posted as soon as possible.

Important Note: *To help cut down on harvesting of email addresses I will use at instead of the @ sign in e-mail addresses. Remember to change the at to @ when sending an email to someone you want to correspond with.*

2008

My uncle was Thomas Lubbers

Dear Sir -- I'm not sure if this email is still active; I see it's been awhile since this page went online (<http://www.ac-119gunships.com/stories/story10.htm>) but I thought I would write anyway.

I came across this site a few months ago, & sat down to read the story again on Veterans' Day.

My uncle was Thomas Lubbers, aircraft commander of Shadow 78, & he was killed before I was born. Having someone take the time to write down the story of that day means a great deal to me. There was no other way we would have known that story. Many many thanks, very best wishes on Veterans' Day to you.

Sincerely, Jeanine Finn Austin, TX

Urgent Request for those who knew Howard Emerson Wright - 52-H Vance / 18th SOS 69-70

My Grandfather is Howard Emerson Wright, Col USAF (Ret) & from what I can see was a member of the 52-H Vance flight program in Enid. He also piloted many Vietnam missions in the AC-119k Stinger gunship. I'm not aware of which Stinger squadron(s) he would have been attached to. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross & the Bronze Star.

Em & Cay (Carol) reside in Edmond Oklahoma. They were stationed in Germany, Japan, Vietnam, Oklahoma, Ohio, South Carolina (my mom was born in January of '53 so I'm sure Cay was about ready to pop during flight school), France & a few other places... His last position as Colonel was Director of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base - Foreign Technology Division. 1978-1982 I believe. Cold War – fun stuff.

Regretfully, he is battling the final stages of prostate cancer - unsuccessfully. We're praying & believing for healing - but the prognosis is not good.

They have four children: Debbie (my mother), Becky, David & Paul. Each of whom is married with children. Debbie (& husband Neil Westby) & Becky (& husband Brad Sutton) each have two adult boys (Jeremy/Nathan; DJ/Ben), & David (& wife Carol) has three (Joshua/Andrew/Jordan). Paul was busy - he & Sara have two girls (Andrea/Jessica) & three boys (Joel/Timothy/Caleb). All of us cousins affectionately call them Granny & Grumps. I would love for some of his surviving classmates & those who might have flown missions with him to call or write letters of remembrance as an encouragement & final goodbye (tactfully of course - still praying that he'll stay with us for a long while). He's still coherent & sharp as a tack, but movement is rather limited. He has been undergoing radiation & chemotherapy - which has taken a major toll on his lymphatic system. The recent buildup of fluid around the lungs, in his abdomen & in his legs is causing great discomfort & highly-reduced mobility. If you do not have email addresses or phones for surviving members, I would be more than happy to send personal letters with this information as well.

Howard Emerson (Em) & Carol (Cay) Wright

13832 Crest Glen Rd

Edmond, OK 73013-7281

[redacted] (home telephone) cayem@juno.com

Please let them know it's fine to have them call &/or email directly - but I would also like to know who's getting in touch with him, if any.

Respectfully, Jeremy Westby [redacted] 12/7/08

Today is Sept 1, 2008 our holiday, Labor Day. In honor of some labor friends of mine I would like to pay tribute to their sacrifices. On Sept 1, 1969 the last AC-47 SPOOKY GUNSHIP was shot down & all lost aboard EN 021

flying out of Bien Hoa: Capt Robert Acher Jr, pilot; 1st Lt Roy Williams, copilot; Capt James Pitches, nav; Tsgt Albert McBride, flt eng.; Msgt Harry Wecker, flt mech; Ssgt Lester Cavallin, loadmaster; Tsgt Willie Alley, gunner; Ssgt Fred Smith, gunner.

I Still remember.

Bob McGarry, spooky gunner 3rd/4th SOS.69 Bob McGarry spooky1969ataol.com spooky1969atcomcast.net

Update on the loss of Ray Gravitte – Ray's funeral is at 2pm Wednesday August 27, 2008 at the Mobley-Dodson Funeral Home, 211 E Broadway Street, Sand Springs, OK 74063 phone (918 245-6644) in case anyone wishes to send flowers.

Ray's family respectfully requests that if you wish to make a donation on Ray's behalf please make the donation to the D.A.V. They said Ray would like that.

The AC-119 Gunship Association

Association Loses a brother- The association is sad to announce the loss of brother Ray Gravitte to a massive heart attack. Ray flew with both the 17th & 18th SOS & was a strong supporter of the AC-119 Gunship association & it's reunions. Not only was Ray a fellow crewmember, he was a fellow Oklahoman. His wife Rosie has asked me to say a few words at the memorial service. If anyone who flew with Ray or knew Ray, & has some words to share, especially if you have a humorous story to share, please send them to me by email as soon as possible at retcmsgtatcox.net. A date for the memorial service has not been set but I should know that by tomorrow (Mon) & I will pass that along. Your webmaster 8/24/08

AC-47 Brother falls ill – Ron Rogers has been sick since April 20. He cannot eat or drink anything. He has a feeding tube helping him stay alive. And he keeps getting infections in his lungs. Right now he is in a nursing home {Lima Manor} to help him get well again. We could use your prayers. Hopefully he will be able to get back with you soon. His wife Barb 8-2-08

Another Serious Illness in the family – We have received word that Dale Cullop's wife Somjai has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. We always look to seeing the two of them at our reunions & they will be sorely missed this year. Please keep Dale & Somjai in your thoughts & prayers as they make their way this difficult time. Your Webmaster 7-26-08

Looking to Share a Room at Reunion – I'm Looking for someone to share a room at the reunion on Friday & Saturday night. I'm a non-smoker & a very light drinker. I haven't made any reservations yet. If interested please contact me at yarjjataol.com.

Jim Ray, Stinger IO '71-'72

Looking for Allen Kidney – My father flew on the AC-47's along with the AC-119's, AC-130's. While on the AC-119's he flew with a guy by the name of Gerald "Mingo" Marshland, anyways, Mingo would like to know if you remember, or knew, a guy by the name Allen Kidney? If you could let me know it would be greatly appreciated. I do not know how he knows Mr. Kidney, but he would like to know if you do. Thank you again for any help.

From out of the West, Low & Slow, The Reffners.

Bill Reffner *Posted per request of AC-47 member Don Luke*

To my gunship brothers & fellow members - Your kind & thoughtful expressions of sympathy are deeply appreciated & gratefully acknowledged for the gift to Covenant Hospice in Jeannine's name.

Thank you all for your prayers, phone calls, & e-mails. I appreciate each & every one of them.

Brother Gus

A heartfelt Thank you – The family of Barbara Jeannine Sininger & her husband, Gus, would like to express our gratitude to all of you for your many kindnesses." Your prayers, your cards, your flowers, your visits, your gifts of food; all you did was greatly appreciated. We hope you will continue to remember us, especially Gus, in your prayers during this difficult time.

We have lost someone truly special but will never forget. She will live in our hearts forever till we meet her up in heaven, there never to be parted again. So wait for us dear Jeanie, we are homeward bound.

The Family of Barbara Jeannine Sininger & "Gus"

Daughter: Lee Ann Vaughn Whitaker

Daughter: Brenda Pelloni
Son: Jerry Vaughn, Jr.
Sister: Hilda Campbell 4-16-08

Mini-gun pins Sold Out but more can be made available I just sent out the last of the minigun pins from the first order. *If there is still interest please send me your name* & I will keep a list as I need to order 50 pins at a time. Let me know if you are interested & I will order more when we get close to 50. *Send no money now.*
Thanks Mike Traynor 18th SOS mike119gunneratverizon.net

Hello to all 17th/18th Gunshippers: Some news of interest to all Association folks.
My wife & I have moved into the Air Force Enlisted Village Ft Walton Beach Florida in Sept last year after a combination of health concerns of both of us dictated that we should sell our house in Corpus Christi Texas. By the way, if any of you have not seen the AFEV you ought to take the time at our reunion in 09 to visit. If you need transportation & a tour of the facility just contact me. You would not believe how great living here is. I recommend to all enlisted folks to check it out & at least get on the waiting list.
Anyway, while here in the village, I have noticed that there are different photos of Viet Nam era aircraft hanging in the village rec building & didn't see any of our AC-119 Gunships. I contacted the village director & asked if it would be possible to hang one of the lithograph photos of the G-model 119 & I would donate it.
While the director thought it over, I called Jim Terry in California & asked his opinion to my thoughts. He said it was such a good idea that he suggested that I call Wayne Laessig & see if the Association would donate the lithograph. Much to my surprise, after contacting other Association Officers, Wayne said the Association would donate the lithograph of the G-model Gunship with one requirement—we need to, if possible, have a lithograph of a K-model Gunship to hang along the side of the G-model. Without thinking I knew that it should have been that way in the beginning. Since my conversation with Wayne, & further contacts with the Director of the Air Force Enlisted Villages, we are now going to have a big presentation to the Villages with dignitaries such as the Commander of the 18th FTS Lt Col. Jon Peck assigned at Hurlburt Field here in Ft. Walton Beach & other local dignitaries with news coverage. This will go a long way with PR for both our organization & the Air Force Enlisted Villages. I feel that where ever we can get a chance to educate/promote to the public our history, especially to our own young Airmen of our Air Force, we should take that opportunity. As I travel around the local area, Eglin AFB & Hurlburt Fld, it is amazing how few people knew of our existence. Anyway, God Bless All & see you at Branson MO for the 08 reunion.
Garry Gourley 17th SOS FE Tan Son Nhut 70-71

Staying in touch: In case anyone would like to get in touch, I've changed to davidgalvanatbtinternet.com
Gunner; 17th SOS, 20th SOS, 415th SOTS, Credible Chase. Thanks, Dave

I sure would like to make contact with Ben Collins & Terry Bott – if you have any information on them I sure would like to give them a call. If you could put this on the gunship web site so maybe they could contact me, I sure would be grateful. I Would like to thank them for bringing us all home safe & sound. Ben always left it up to the whole crew whether or not we should go back in over target when we were under heavy antiaircraft attack. I remember we had lots of party's together after missions, I think we are all thanking GOD that we made it back safe & sound. Sometimes I don't remember alot of things from over there, & then something happens & I go oh yeah I remember that. I didn't talk about it for years but now I think I'm ready.
Bob Hamorsky, Joe Alvarez & myself have been talking about this year's reunion to see if we can work it out for all of us, you know how that goes. We would like to all go together so we can all see each other. I have seen Joe several times over the years as he lives in Citrus Heights, CA right near Sacramento. He's been up here & we've been down there. Now Bob lives in Springdale, PA. Although we have not seen each other since Vietnam we do talk all the time. We have never shared pictures or anything, just talked, so everytime I talk to him I still picture him in my mind like he looked in 1971.
Steve McCloskey, Tom Nolan & Ron Dreuri I have lost contact with. I did talk to Ron years ago but then lost contact. Bill, thanks for listening to me & staying in contact. If you have any information for me on Ben or Terry I would sure like to talk to them & thank them.
Your Friend, Dan Jensen 262 Pioneer Road Connell, WA 99326 jbooksateltopia.com 509-234-3838

To all those who served with Pollman's Pirates: Hello from Knoxville, TN from that idiot from the back of the plane! Yep, it's John Coates, left scanner/gunner/packanimal. Recently I read the note from Frank Bartlett, &

after talking with Frank, was able to contact Dickie Pollman.

After spending some time away from the USAF, I resumed my illustrious career with Naval Air, retiring as a SCPO after a combined total of 22 years. Through a mutual friend, I met a retired dentist from Knoxville, who, despite being a dentist, is a fine lady & writer. We live in the beautiful mountains of East Tennessee. I am eternally grateful to Frank, Dickie, & the rest of the fine people of the 18TH for keeping me alive so I can enjoy the life & wife I now have.

Melinda & I are looking forward to joining the rest of the pirates & air gangsters this Fall in Branson.

John Robert Coates 865-588-7780 jrcpenny@yahoo.com

Illness in the family– We have received word that Gus Sininger's wife Jeannie has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. I know I don't need to remind anyone what a workhorse fellow crewmate & charter association member Gus has been for us. Always, right there beside him has been his wonderful wife Jeannie supporting him as he faithfully supports us. Please join me & the rest of the Association officers in keeping Jeannie & Gus in your thoughts & prayers as they travel through this difficult time.

Your Webmaster

Attention all 71-72 Stinger Crewmembers – My Name is Frank L. Bartlett. I was a Lead Gunner out of NKP, assigned to DaNang for 11 months, mostly flew with Capt. Polman, as *Polmans Pirates*. I have lost all records (everything) that accounted for all of my flights. I wanted to make it part of my DD-214. I logged over 200 plus combat missions & would like to know if anyone has a record of the flights that I was on as a Gunner. I also flew missions at An Loc. If any one has a frag sheet, FORM 93, or anything that contains my name, I'd appreciate getting a copy very much. I was there in the Nov 1971 to Nov 1972 time frame... give a month or two. Also, on a mission South of DaNang we made an emergency landing & Col Teal took me to the emergency room because a mini-gun round exploded & I received power burns to my eyes. Dan McDuffie & I believe, Gus Sininger were aboard.

I am applying for a purple heart from that mission & require flight crew supporting statements to use as supporting documentation.

All help is greatly appreciated.

Much Thanks. Frank L. Bartlett (SMSgt Ret) 602 154th Circle Bonner Springs, KS 66012-8211

913-724-2118 snfbarts(at)sbcglobal.net PS don't forget to change the at for @ in the email address.

OK you *Yankee Air Pirates* you, two short up-dates:

1) NOT FOR YOU you are too old to 'give-a-shi_' - this for your kids/grandkids who may(?) think you are 'very special'. LEU's Handicraft Co. (address below) makes the worlds best sets of MILITARY RIBBONS - both the current USAF Chief & Vice-Chief wear them....they guarantee their work 100%...i.e.. If you do not get exactly what you ordered.....they will 'fix'/replace it! They have an 'easy-order' web site GO LOOK AT IT! Dig out your 'old' DD-214. ...all your ribbons should be on there (unless you got some 'after' your DD-214 was issued.

Leu's Handicraft Co.

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Pan Chio City, Taipei, TAIWAN

PH: 886-2-2259-0152 Fax: 886-2-2257-2122 E-mail: leuhandatso-net.net.tw Website: <http://www.ribbons.com.tw>

2) I have a copy of a 1hr+38min DVD of a C-82 ('baby' \$1.19) landing at the Hagerstown Air Museum, PA. - IF(?) you would like a copy, send me your name/snail mail address - I'll get my son J.P. To 'burn' you one. may cost a buck=beer or two to handle the shipping.

Luck & Cheers & Happy New Year Col Mac

I was searching C-119 aircraft & came across the AC-119 Gunship website. I have enjoyed going through & reading about all of the events. My connection to the Shadow program is when it started at Bakalar AFB, IN. We were activated & our C-119's were then converted to the AC-119 at Fairchild in St. Augustine, FL. I was in the Electronics field & was designated as one of the inspector's who accepted the aircraft as AC-119's. I went many of a trip down & back with Capt Doc Evans during this conversion time.

We were then transfered to Lockbourne AFB, OH. From there we faired the planes to Vietnam, in three different locations. I was at Nha Trang AFB where I worked on the Night Obseration Scope.

Larry L. Hartog, CMSGT, Retired lhartogatsbcglobal.net