

25th AC-119 Gunship Association Meeting: November 15, 2025 Island Resort, Fort Walton Beach

1. Meeting Call to Order at 0902 hrs - Bill Petrie, President (2024-2025) ~ Mike D used a PowerPoint presentation to provide info below.
2. Invocation - Larry Hunter
3. Pledge of Allegiance & Welcome: Terry Sarul
 - a. Recognized 1st Timers”: Rich & Sandra Atkinson, Bernard & Mark Bradach, John & Penny Forbes (Newsletter editor), Carol Mullen, David King, Morgan Ginder, Carolyn Hunter - Jo & Ted Emanuel, Rusty Martin, Michelle & Kenny Mayfield and Jodie & Patrick McGaha.
 - b. Videographer John Paul Mac Isaac encouraged attendees to do an personal interview and provided his room number.
 - c. There were announcements about the Banquet and the Silent Auction.
4. Membership Report - Dave Voisey: Membership structure & numbers
 - Annual and Life were eliminated ~ There is now "Regular" and "Associates"
 - Total Members: Regular and Associates **2024: 549** (504+45) ~ **2025 632** (460+169)
 - Cost: Newsletter snail-mailing ~ \$850 E-mailing = \$0
 - Keep your e-mail **UPDATED**, and we **WILL** have more \$\$ to fund the Association.
5. Treasurer Report - Doug Wohlgamuth
 - a. Current Accounts Total Balances = \$10,175
 - 1) General Account = \$7,547
 - 2) Quartermaster Account = \$2,635
 - 3) Revenue/Donations: T-Shirts Sales \$1,235; Donation from Louis Gonzales \$750; Hootch Supplies (normally a high cost factor) Donated by **Eddie & Del Mims**
 - b. Recurring Expenses to the Association:
 - 1) NO comps 2025 for KIA Family members
 - 2) Newsletter Snail-Mail Postage = \$850 (2024)
 - 3) Videoconference Line (ZOOM) = \$170 (+\$21.00 from 2024)
 - 4) Website Maintenance Fee = \$1,350/ Qtr.
 - 5) Reunion Advertisements = \$0 Thank you Cash McCall and Jim Dunn.
 - 6) Dream Host for Website = \$180/ 3 years.Motion made to accept the Treasurers Report, seconded, all present accepted the report
6. Association Database - Ron Julian. Mike Drzyzga and Wayne Laessig reviewed the following:
 - Huge SQL data base creates the Master Contact List - MCL
 - Tied to the Website
 - All the POCs get “their” breakout Spreadsheet for distribution
 - The Membership List is a subset of the database
 - Tracking all those who take their Final Flight >2,700 entries.
 - Ron provides a VERY LARGE printout at every reunion for attendees to review and update
 - Huge "Thank You" to Ron
7. Website Report - Wayne Laessig / Liz Buss (excused):
 - Home Page - AC-119 Gunship Association ~ www.ac119gunships.com
 - Lots of Historical info at <https://www.ac119gunships.com/history-references/ac-119-air-and-ground-crew-our-bios-videos-and-stories/>
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8. Quartermaster Report - Gus Sininger needs to step back from the QM task – and looking for help managing it. . He explained how much he has in storage locations. No immediate offers from attendees.
 - a. Using e-commerce section of web-site

- b. Adding new items, losing others - SHRINKING THE INVENTORY!
 - c. Overhead and shipping COSTs continue to increase.
 - d. **Continue investigating outsourcing the store -**
9. Newsletter "Firing Circle" Editor - John Forbes:
- a. Summary: **11** Firing Circle and FLASH messages
 - b. We distribute to about 1,200+ people!!
 - c. What could be new or refreshing - Suggestions welcome! Please (very little from members)
 - d. If you send pictures to us, please include descriptive information.
 - e. Future Plan: Same format, keep to 8 pages or less, double sided, color (Postal mail is all B&W)
 - f. Thank your unit/group POCs for excellent distribution.
 - g. Flash messages go to only those with email address.
10. AC-119 Gunship Facebook Page - Admins Update - Andrea Drzyzga reported 835 contact members.
"AC-119Gunships" - *Our official Facebook Group Page for the AC-119 Gunship Association.*
"AIR FORCE GUNNERS" - *We endorse this site which was initiated by Ev Sprous.*
"U.S. Military Veterans news you can use" - *We endorse this site created by our Facebook Admins.*
"Fixed Wing Gunships" - *We endorse this site which was initiated by Ev Sprous.*
- There are many more re: air war in Vietnam!***
11. **Association** - Point of Contacts (POCs) These are your "go-to(s)" to **UPDATE** your contact information!! Mike Drzyzga Reporting:
- a. 71st SOS – Interim John Forbes **NOTE:** Chuck Callahan volunteered as POC after the meeting
 - b. 17th SOS - George Renfroe
 - c. 18th SOS - Interim Wayne Laessig **NOTE:** Bob Dydo volunteered as POC after the meeting.
 - d. Maintenance Personnel - Tom Brander
 - e. KIA Families - Wayne Laessig
 - f. Family/Friends/Honorary - Wayne Laessig
12. **Legacy Squadrons** - Point of Contacts (POCs)
- 18th SOTES Hurlburt AFB - Gus Sininger
 - 71st SOS Kirland AFB - CV-22 Osprey (Note: Chuck Callahan volunteered after the meeting)
 - 16th SOS Cannon, AC-130J Ghost rider-- _____ They absorbed the 17th SOS "Jackals"
 - 4th SOS Ghost rider) - Hurlburt, AC-130J - They absorbed the 73rd "Shadows" 2023
 - 17th SOS returned, OK WRANG OA-1K "Jackals" Waiting for call-sign Shadow or Stinger to return
- NOTE:** While the AC-130J is named (Officially) "Ghost rider", the AC-130 Squadrons have included AC-130W Stingers and AC-130 Shadows, so we ARE part of their history, lineage, and heritage. Likewise, if a Squadron was/is activated as the 71st, 17th, or 18th, (no matter the aircraft) we again are part of their history, lineage, and heritage.
13. Stinger 850 Update (Only surviving AC-119) - Mike Drzyzga and Wayne Laessig reporting:
- Originally found at TSN with a few other U.S. aircraft. Boots on the ground verification - THANK YOU Bruce Byrd.
 - Lots of information and pictures on our Web Site.
 - Disassembled once and relocated three times. Hangered once and started to be restored.
 - MAYBE find it on Web - use "Google Earth". See 2024 Newsletter.
 - May be moving to a museum near Khe San.
 - Terry Sarul has a new contact in Australia - Frank Palmieri.
 - No hope of "repatriating" 850 back to the USA.
 - As of October 2025 = Nowhere in Sight! Reportedly still intact; and Wayne discussed Kirstin Hamman's upcoming trip to Vietnam.
14. Awards and Decorations, PACT act, DD214s - (?? Chair, Roy Davis Mike Drzyzga) Mike D reporting:

- a. Stinger 41 Awards - In Process 4 + Years! Wayne Laessig reported about information published of Web site and other places. He also stated Mark Tarpley would help with Politicians.
- b. Agent Orange Registry & PACT Act, Get with the VA, use a Veteran Service Officer!
- c. Correct/Obtain DD214s.

15. Future Reunions

- a. 2026 - Phoenix, AZ. Holiday Inn Phoenix-Mesa. October 20 - 25.
- b. 2027 - Somewhere EAST of Mississippi River
- c. Armed Forces Reunions (AFR) is our Reunion event coordinator - This makes having reunions much easier BUT (but, but..., but....) there's still a lot we must do!!
- d. Mike D Polled the Attendees asking for a Show of hands.
 - 1). Current reunion format - 5 days, 2 tour choices. Membership voted and approved 5 days, OR
 - 2). Shorter (less FORMAL) event - Friday & Saturday? Membership did not approve. Large Majority of attendees like keeping the reunion format as it is – noting that people have the option to shorten the trip as they see necessary.
 - 3). Wayne Laessig spoke about money for the reunions and donations to our Association.

16. Election of 2025/26 Board of Directors / Slate of Officers

President: Bill Petrie

Vice-President: Terry Sarul

Secretary: Robert "Bob" Safreno

Treasurer: Doug Wohlgamuth

Immediate Past President: Mike Drzyzga

Members-at-Large: Gus Sininger, Roy Davis and Dave Voisey

Motion by Mike Drzyzga, seconded by Gus Sininger to approve the Slate of Officers. Passed by all members present.

NOTE: the new Board: Plans to meet Sunday, for about an hour.

17. **Moola, Denaro, Bread, Pienza, &&& Wayne reporting:**

- a. **BLUF**, if you might leave the Association some money in your will, donate it now if you can (!!!!).
- b. A few years ago, one of our members donated \$10,000 that helped keep our heads above water.
- c. Just bringing in enough for ongoing expenses is tough, now that almost all of you have paid your \$119 life memberships:
- d. Any ideas? NOTE: if your idea(s) include someone working hard (or harder), please volunteer to be that "someone".
- e. Information for making presentations on Web site.

18. Closing prayer.

19. Adjourn at 1032 hrs. With a reminder to attend the "Quilts of Valor", which will start at 1100 hrs.

Bob Safreno, Secretary