



THE FIRING CIRCLE

AC-119 GUNSHIP ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER VOLUME 3 ISSUE 1

Newsletter Editor, Everett Dale Sprous

Our Association President, Rogers Stevens

As the sun rises over the beautiful white sand beaches of Ft. Walton Beach, Florida on October 3, 2003, a bunch of Vietnam Veterans arrive from as far away as Washington State to spend the next three days with their comrades. These are the daring men who flew and maintained the post WWII cargo planes converted to side firing gunships. The ugly twin boom C-119 played many roles in the Air Force. Fifty-two of these cargo/paratrooper flying machines would play an entirely new role in late sixties. Twenty-six C-119G's were converted to AC-119G's with a compliment of four 7.62 Mini-guns. Twenty-six more were converted to AC-119K's with the 4 miniguns plus 2 20MM Gatling Guns. The G model was called the Shadow and the K's became known as the Stinger. The first G's were flown and maintained by reservists of 71st SOS and then turned over to the 17th SOS. The K's were all assigned to the 18th SOS. These Squadrons flew from 1968 to 1973 when all were turned over to the South Vietnamese Air Force.

It took the majority of the crews and maintainers thirty some years to locate other members and to form the AC-119 Gunship Association. I don't know about the rest of the guys, but the day I found the Web Site, was just about the most exciting and emotional day of my life.

The first Reunion of AC-119 Gunshippers was held in September of 2000. It is not required that a person join the Association in order to attend the Reunions. However, to date, we have over 235 members, with over 125 of that number being Life Members.

This year was very special in that we located and invited families of our "killed in combat" crew members. Members of the families were made life members and presented with the numbered brass life membership cards. We are looking and hope to find family members of all eighteen of our KIA.

This and the previous three Reunions have been held in Ft. Walton Beach. Next year we will hold our Reunion in Dayton, Ohio at the Air Force Museum, we will get our aircraft into the history of the Air Force. We hope to have even more of our Gunship Brothers and families there.

Hello Gunshippers, how can you top RE-UNION IV?? Gus, Wayne, Ray, Art, and the other "helpers" did an OUTSTANDING JOB at Ft. Walton Beach for our Association. WE ALL THANK YOU!! Those of you in attendance can attest to that fact.

The Memorial Service and the Plaque Dedication brought many remembrances of our fallen aircrew members. Those family members we were able to locate and then those that chose to attend the reunion, all said they did not realize that we still carried their loved ones in our hearts, as well. The "Guest book" Thank You entry from Teddi Alves says it all.

The AC-130 Static Display at Hurlburt Field was a great opportunity again. I have missed that part of the Reunions since the events of 9/11. While there, I was able to visit at length with the Co-pilot, Flight Engineer, Loadmaster, and Electronic Warfare Officer about their respective duties and recent flight experiences. I now know, even with the unsavory press the military receives, WE ARE IN GOOD HANDS! The dedication, knowledge, work ethic, and desire of those young people was very apparent. It was hard for me to believe the Air Force would give a "bunch of 15 year olds" an airplane of that nature. I feel certain that after we left, they might have said, "Is that what we are going to look like in 30 years??" Thank You for the opportunity to go onboard the aircraft.

General Metcalf's presentation at the Reunion Dinner gave each of us aircrew members an opportunity to see the "not so glamorous" side of the flying game. The problems related to being a "Tenant Unit" on base, and having to beg, borrow, salvage, and steal parts to keep the old bird in the air. If it had not been for the dedication, creativity, and willingness of the "wrench turners" to work long and hard on aircraft, that were probably older than they were, we would not have been able to make our missions. We are forever grateful for your efforts and those of the maintenance teams that let RTB (return to base), and ultimately back to the "world".

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Congratulations again to Ray Barradale on receiving the "Terrance F. Courtney Above and Beyond Award".

REUNION IV what a Great Time!!

I want to say a Special "Thank You" to all of the Association Members who took the time to fill out and turn in the Reunion Survey Forms. They help us make the reunions better because you see and experience things that we may not be aware of.

The REUNION V coordinators have now turned their attention to REUNION V in Dayton, Ohio at the Air Force Museum. The weekend schedule has been established. Letters of commitment have been signed with the Hope Hotel for a block of guest-rooms, the meeting room, hospitality rooms, reception room, and the menus are set for the two receptions and the dinner at the Air Force Museum. Both receptions and the Dinner will be BUFFET style [See, we really do read the survey forms]. We have also signed a MOA (Memorandum of Agreement) with the Air Force Museum for our Saturday Evening Banquet. Our Guest Speaker will be Colonel Ron Terry, USAF (ret), the "Father of the Gunship" (You will be able to read Colonel Terry's biography on the Web Site in the near future). The site for the Memorial Service has been selected. While we will not have "Shadow" or our dedicated plaque behind us, the site is very appropriate.

During our meetings with the Air Force Museum Curator Staff, we were reminded the Air Force Archives (Formal Records) are catalogued, maintained, and stored at Maxwell Air Force Base. The Air Force Museum, however, is a collection of memorabilia that supports the formal records. They use archival practices to capture, preserve, and retain non-archival information. Air Force Museum, Senior Curator Terry Aitken gave us the following Air Force Museum "Wish We Had" list:

Flight Suit Uniforms Crew Member Uniforms Off-duty Uniforms, Patches, Photos of A. Nose Art B. People doing their job C. Equipment Hats, End of Tour Awards, Stuff/Items from the Hootch bars (bells, etc.) . Any Item(s) that depicted the life of the Airman on active duty in South East Asia. We ALL have a story about our experience with the 119. Between now and Reunion V, I would like to request, challenge, beg, threaten, etc. EACH Association Member to write down his most memorable, scary, rewarding mission experience (this included IO's, gunners, F.E.'s also!!). This is the "historical" data that make the Association tick. It's what we are all about, and why we get together each year to commiserate about what we did and how we did it. The ONLY person exempt from this request is Doc Fletcher, but he has a second book underway now. Your mission recollections can be as long as you want it to be. Let's all make a commitment to write "Our Mission Story" during the next 10 months.

See You in Dayton!!

Rogers Stevens President, AC-119 Gunship Association



Teddi Alves (widow of Moses "Mo" Alves) and Family

About your Newsletter Editor

I am Everett Dale Sprou, the Editor of "The Firing Circle". The official Newsletter of the AC-119 Gunship Association.

I began my Air Force career in 1963, at the age of 17. I had always loved airplanes and decided the Air Force was the place for me. I became a Security Policeman, and never saw a plane for my first four years.

I got out after four years and stayed out for over a year. In 1968, I decided I wanted back in. The Recruiter was very anxious to have a prior service guy, and said I could choose any career field I wanted. I chose Aerial Photography but he said that field was closed. My next choice was Weapons Mechanic, which was maintaining the weapons systems of fighter aircraft. I could at least be around aircraft, though my greatest desire was to fly.

My Tech School was at Lowry AFB, Colorado. From there to Luke AFB, Arizona for advance training on F100's. Next was my first tour of Vietnam. I was assigned to the F100 Squadrons at Bien Hoa AB, Vietnam.

From Nam, I was assigned to Travis AFB, California, as an POL Specialist (gas pumper). I wanted very much to get back in the Weapons field. My chance came within a few months, when someone told me that the AF was looking for ex weapons personnel to train as Gunners. Not only would I get back in weapons, I would also get to fly.

I had no idea what I would fly on and I didn't care. I just knew I was finally going to get off the ground. I went through all my training, air chamber at Castle, Flight training at Hurlburt, Survival at Fairchild and Jungle School at Clark.

I then found my orders had been changed from Phan Rang, Vietnam to NKP, Thailand. Great, I would not have to fly over Vietnam. I soon learned that the areas we were to fly over, were sometimes worse than Nam. I did go TDY to Bien Hoa in early 1972.

After Nam, I was assigned to Italy. My job there was to watch Italian Airmen load Nukes on F-105's. That was a great tour.

From Italy, I went to Laughlin AFB, Texas, where I cross trained into the computer field.

I ended my career after 13 years, thinking I could get out and make better money as a civilian in computers. I did make good money, but I wished I would have finished my 20 years.

I searched every magazine and veteran paper I could find, in hopes of seeing something about the Gunships. Finally, in 2001, I started hitting keys on my computer. At long last, after 29 years of searching, I found the AC-119 Gunship Association.

I went to my first reunion in 2001, which was the second reunion for the Association. I came away feeling depressed as I felt like an outsider and didn't remember hardly anyone.

I started thinking when I got back, that I hadn't seen a Newsletter published by the Association. I then emailed some members of the Board and expressed my willingness to publish a Newsletter for the group. I was told to go for it and the result is what you see now. With the help of Bill Petrie, I was able to produce a desirable Newsletter. The title "The Firing Circle" came from Larry (DOC) Fletcher. After conferring with the Board, everyone felt this was an appropriate title for our Newsletter. With this issue we have produced four Newsletters since Reunion II.

Getting involved was the best thing that ever happened since finding my Brothers. By Reunion III, everyone was saying great "Newsletter EV", keep up the good work. I still can't remember half of the men I flew and worked with, but I have many new friends (BROTHERS). I look forward to each and every Reunion as a new adventure.

I have also taken on the membership duties. We now have a new policy for membership. Instead of memberships running from reunion to reunion, they now go from the date that a person signs up for one year. I send out renewal notices about one month before the expiration date of your membership. I also order the Brass Life Cards. Along with Brass Card, life members also get a laminated paper card.

I want to thank all members for their support. I will remain your Newsletter Editor, as long as I am able and the Membership

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WHAT IS THE AC-119 GUNSHIP ASSOCIATION?

Formed during our first-ever AC-119 Gunship Reunion in October 2000, the AC-119 Gunship Association is a brotherhood of men who served with the 71st, 17th and 18th Special Operations Squadrons in Southeast Asia during The Vietnam War.

WHO CAN JOIN THE AC-119 GUNSHIP ASSOCIATION?

You are eligible for membership if you served with the 71st, 17th or 18th SOS as an Air Crew or Ground Crew Member, on the AC-119G Shadow or the AC-119K Stinger Gunships. There are also Associate and Family (only annual memberships) (there is no charge for surviving spouse's of deceased life members) memberships available. Contact the Association Membership for full information on all types of memberships available.

HOW DO I JOIN?

Obtain an application for membership in this newsletter or on the Association Website, fill out & submit the application to the Association Membership, with a money order or check made out to *The AC-119 Gunship Association*. We offer an annual membership at \$20.00 per year or a lifetime membership for \$119.00 (available only to regular members). Surviving spouse's of life members, become life members automatically

WHAT ARE MY OBLIGATIONS AS A MEMBER?

Just like Southeast Asia, where it took every man in the 71st, 17th & 18th SOS to accomplish assigned missions, every member of the AC-119 Gunship Association is essential to the preservation and betterment of the Association. As a member, you can help solidify and improve the Association by attending reunions if possible, contacting and enlisting new eligible members, making suggestions, and communicating with any of the Association Officers.

If you have questions or contacts with new members or our fallen heroes (families), or changes in address information, please contact the following officers at:

New Member/Family Research Officer

Jim Terry
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Fairfield CA 94533-2909
707-422-6774
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Newsletter Editor/Membership

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If you have concerns or questions, please contact any of the Association officers at:

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Chaplain

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Congratulations! to AC-119 Gunship Association Officers for 2003-2004
(left to right) Doug Wohlgamuth, Bill Petrie, Everett Sprous, Rogers Stevens, Bob La Rosa, Ray Barradale and Wayne Laessig



Our Chaplains
Leigh Norstrum & Larry Hunter

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From Lt. Col Marsh, our memorial service speaker at Reunion IV

Families of those we are here to honor today
AC- 119 gunship association members and guests

Thank you. It is my great honor to be a part of this memorial today.

The military is intertwined with tradition – for us, it binds us to our past - One of valor, service and sacrifice. It is the source of our pride, our honor and instills the conviction to prevail when the odds are against us. No tradition is more sacred than the honor we give our fallen.

Today on these – our hallowed grounds. We honor these men who made the ultimate sacrifice supporting AC-119 combat operations in south east Asia.

They went into harms way knowing - there could be no triumph without loss - no victory without suffering - no freedom without sacrifice. And still they answered their nation's call to arms - All gave some – some gave all.

In remembering - we reopen old wounds. Yet, It's right that we remember, and even that we mourn for our fallen heroes. In doing so we fulfill that sacred pledge we make to every soldier, sailor and airmen who goes to war – to never forget the sacrifices they made for us all.

The AC-119 association and others like it help us keep that solemn promise. For those we honor today and for those still in harms way today - I thank you.

We honor their families, the innocents who pay the highest price in war, for their sacrifices. None can measure the grief of a wife who lost a husband, a parent who lost a son, a sibling who lost a brother or a child who will endure a lifetime never having known their father. To the families of the lost, I assure you, you are not alone.

For I know closeness that forms in units in time of war – far from home - we become one as we share our hopes, dreams, and troubles. Our nation, our unit, our crew, our brothers. All of our lofty ideals aside, it's this unity that compels us to risk our lives. When a mission calls for great risk - we must go. Not for glory – but because we know if we do not, someone else will be called upon to do so – and none of us are willing to sit in safety while we send our brother to such peril.

And for those who do not know – operating a gunship in combat is often perilous. These are little more than cargo planes – big, slow, and not very stealthy - fitted with guns and sent to the sounds of the guns – where men are at risk – and the enemy is prepared to defend themselves. Built to defend our soldiers in close combat –



and to do so without endangering the innocent - to save lives.

How many owe their lives to the SHADOW and STINGER – we will never know – but we do know that many men one have come forward to say – if not for the gunship overhead we would have surely perished. I believe that is why these men we honor - and those who fight today risk their lives.

I have had the honor to lead such men in combat and I know the dangers they faced, and I tell you when I read of the courage of the men of the 71st, 17th and 18th SOS I am awed and inspired. The men who flew and supported these aircraft displayed - without exception - uncommon valor.

We airman of the 4th and 16th SOS who fly the AC-130H and U model gunships are keenly aware of our proud heritage of valor and sacrifice. It's what brought us to choose this profession - why many of us will devote our lives to it – and why we are so intent to preserve it for those who will follow us.

I AM A COMMANDO

As my brother Commandos before me, I am proud to step into history as a member of the Air Force Special Operations Command. I will walk with pride with my head held high, my heart and attitude will show my allegiance to God, country and comrades. When unable to walk another step, I will walk another mile. With freedom my goal, I will step into destiny with pride and the Air Force Special Operations Command.

Even now as dusk approaches far to the east – airmen are launching their gunships into combat over the skies of Afghanistan and Iraq. They will be seeking to sort out the friendly, the enemy and the innocent over the field of battle. They are the chosen few of a new generation of warriors who have answered the call to take the fight to the enemy far from our shores. With them rests the hopes and prayers of our great nation. Failure is not an option. They are ready for the challenge for they carry with them the banner of honor, the spirit, and the lessons learned by the men we honor today over the skies of SEA 30 years ago.

To the families – For us all and especially for those who found sanctuary under the watchful eye of the AC-119 - I offer our gratitude for your sacrifices and the deepest sympathy of the nation.

We dedicate this service to you and we offer to comfort you with this indelible fact - they were with us then and they are with us now –They will never be forgotten.



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From Bob La Rosa, Vice President

Our Fourth Reunion have come and gone all too quickly. As I look back on each of the past Reunions. Each one of them has been a great success; each in their own way. Each year Brothers, the reunion's gets better and better. We have grown into an Association that brings our fellow Gunship brothers closer together. As we rekindle older friendships, we also make new ones at our Reunions. We have reached out to the relatives and families of our deceased Brothers who were killed in S.E.A. So that they will know. As Gunshippers. "We ARE A FAMILY " This past Reunion we were Honored to have some of those family members as guests. As your Vice President, I will do my best. To work hard to get as much history about our Gunships and our Association to the Air Force Museum. We are all part of the history that went on in S.E.A. We are, and will remain forever...." Those that were part of the Air Force's Special Operations Group " The 71st. AC, 17th, & 18th SOS made history and we are all part of it !

Bob La Rosa
Vice President AC-119 Gunship Association

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Changes to By-laws to follow.

My Gunship history. I was first assigned to Phan Rang in Dec.1970 as an Aerial Gunner on Stinger's. Reassigned to Danang Vietnam Jan. 1971. Reassigned in Sept. 1971 to N.K. P. Thailand until Jan. 1972.

Bob

In order to save time & expenses , we will attempt to send the Newsletter to all members that we have email addresses for, to their email address. If for some reason a member can not down load the Newsletter, or if we do not have an email address, we will send it by regular mail. If you wish back issues of the Newsletter, please contact:

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3521 Salena
St Louis MO 63118-4024
314-865-0920
edsprous@msn.com

AC-119 Gunship prints

8 X 10 Fine quality, black line, composite drawings that are suitable for framing. *They look great matted and framed.*

For a donation of only \$12 for the *Brothers* drawing and \$10 for the *Stinger* or *Shadow* drawing, Postage is included, you can get your frame able drawing from Bill Petrie.

**All donations for the drawings are split with the association and used to support this web site.*

\$12 - Special Edition...Only 200 will be printed. The 8 X 10 drawing "*Brothers*" depicts the bond between the Shadow and Stinger AC-119 Gunships. The print is numbered and signed.



\$10 - The 8 X 10 drawing "*Shadow*" portrays the AC-119G Gunship on the prowl. A Great single drawing for all you Shadow guys.



\$10 - The 8 X 10 drawing "*Stinger*" below depicts the AC-119K in the hunt over the Ho Chi Minh Trail. A Great drawing for you Stingers.



Contact: Bill Petrie
7532 NW 129th St
Oklahoma City, OK 73142-2568
Phone (405) 721-4490
RetCMSgt@aol.com

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1. **Gus Slinger opened the meeting and last year's minutes were approved. Reports followed:**

a. Secretary Ray Barradale Membership Report: Over 280 Members

- 125 Life Members as of this meeting (up from 50 in 2002)
- 152 Regular Members, 1 Family Member, and 4 Honorary Members as of this meeting

b. Treasurer Art Perry Financial Report

Reunion 2003 Costs - \$7,598.00
 Account Balance after last Reunion \$22,664.77
 Project expenses: Plaques, Unit Flags, Printer for Newsletter, etc - \$6,314.00

Merchandise expenses: Hats, Shirts, Patches - \$1,967.00

Income from Merchandise + \$4,301.00

Dues and Reunion +\$11,645.00

Account Balance as of 21 Sep 03 \$30,329.77

NOTE: IRS limits us to \$25,000 at end of year. Reunion expenses/approved projects will assure that.

a. 2003 Web Manager Bill Petrie Report

- Website valuable in preserving AC-119 history
- 80,000 hits to website informing members about reunions and activities and recruiting new members
- Since 1998, website hosting fees paid by donations. Association will fund as donated funds get depleted, with normal yearly expenses of \$300 for website host and domain registration

· Website management: Macromedia's Dreamweaver for HTML coding and web page design & layout; Adobe Photoshop used (preferred) for posted photos; and Microsoft Word to write and edit content and stories.

- Project Volunteers wanted:
 - Project Volunteer to track deceased members & update the Final Flight list (Jim Terry volunteered)
 - Project Volunteer to locate additional AC-119 gunship info and fine-tune content already on website's main pages. Research and/or locate info on gunship, equipment, and operations for website plus authenticate/verify info already posted on site (Doc Fletcher volunteered)
 - Project Volunteer assist photo processing for site. Need strong Adobe Photoshop skills, or if can use another program compatible with or comparable to Photoshop, we can discuss (Dan McDuffie and Duane Hampshire volunteered)
 - Project Volunteer to edit/prepare stories for site. Must know Microsoft Word and be a good proofreader (Craig Corbett and Doc Fletcher volunteered)
 - Project Volunteer for history section and each squadron. Could be same as #2 (Doc Fletcher volunteered)

- Association voice vote approved purchase of software for volunteers to assist (\$400 5 sites)

b. Newsletter Editor Ev Sprouss Report

- Since Reunion III, published 2 newsletters.
- Reunion III wrap-up sent April-May 2002; second was Reunion IV information.
- Mailed 200, approximately 70 via email. Saved money by sending newsletters electronically. Can read using Adobe Acrobat Reader (free download)
- Helped Ray Barradale with membership: sent renewal notices; ordered the Brass Life Membership Cards or made membership cards and sent them to the new or renewing members; kept the member rosters up to date and sent updates to the Board.

· Board previously approved basic printer and scanner; paid \$200 for printer and \$130 for scanner. Web Master Bill Petrie generously built and donated a PC to EV. Editor requested a new

professional printer and digital camera to keep photo album, to take shots at the reunions both for the album and Newsletters. The camera, printers and scanner will be the property of the Association.

BOARD NOTE: the Board pre-approved these requests and the new printer and scanner are already being used in the hootch.

· Association voice vote approved providing Paper cards for Life Members

c. Vice President Wayne Laessig Report

- Brass Memorial Plaque in place at Air Memorial Park honoring Squadron Members lost in SEA
- Family members of those lost in SEA are our Honored Guests. Anyone who knew the lost members, TALK to their families!
- Teddi Alves, wife of Maj Moses Alves, and family: Jim Terry Escort

- Robert Knapic, son of Lt Col Bernard Knapic, and family: Gary Gourley Escort

- Dewight Fage, son of Staff Sergeant Robert Fage, and family: Jim Terry Escort

· "Contact Roster" in hootch for members AND those who were in our units or involved in AC-119 Gunships: everyone please update it!

· Memorial Fund is in place and used when Association Board is notified of Member deaths, new Gunship videos and "AC-119 Gunship" license plate holders are in the Hootch

· FLIR Technology presentation by 'Sundog' FAC Tom Milligan in hootch Saturday @4:30 and Sunday@2:00

d. 2004 Reunion Rogers Stevens and Ron Julian Report

1. WHY Dayton and Wright-Patt Area?

- Site of original gunship development
- Near our 434th Provisional and 71st SOS sister Reunion Groups (Evansville, Indiana and Columbus, Ohio)
- Goal: get our AC-119 role into the AF history books and increase the visibility and recognition of the AC-119 role in history
- Influence the premier air museum in the U.S.
- Speaker, Col Ron Terry 'Father of ALL Gunships'
- Add the 434th and 71st Groups' participation = everything in one swell foop

2. 2004 Reunion Facilities and Access

- AF Museum – new hangars; IMAX; Waynesville (antiques); German Village in Columbus (BEER); 100th Yr of Flt Celebration. Dayton Coordinator will check Family Camp details
- Hope Hotel Next to Wright Patterson AFB
- 125 rooms set aside, with Hospitality Room no cost. Can bring in own refreshments to Hospitality Rm
- Meeting Room (Saturday a.m.) and support to all three evening meals with Banquet Rooms set aside
- Use Hope Hotel cash bar at meals (Friday & Sunday)
- No breakfast on site but many close by
- Good Airport access: Dayton, Columbus, Cincinnati
- Easy access to AF Museum and golf; Air Force Museum Facilities reserved
- Easy access to restaurants and shopping
- Lots of transport available from Airports

3. 2004 Reunion Estimated Costs

· Hotel	\$82 per night
· Friday Gathering and Social	\$23
· Saturday Dinner in Museum	\$35 (Includes Museum Fee)
· Sunday Golf	\$24 - \$35
· <u>Sunday Farewell Buffet</u>	<u>\$27</u>
	Total \$167

(excluding golf) Note: 2003 Cost Comparison: \$121 (excluding golf; including Museum Fee) However, we were also told to expect FWB rates to go up in 2004 as well. Air Fares usually a little less into Dayton area.

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4. 2004 Reunion Recommendation

Survey responses favor Dayton for 2004 then return to Fort Walton Beach for 2005 >95% = Dayton in 2004 and >5% = only Ft Walton Beach ever

Dayton as presented for 2004; returning Fort Walton Beach for 2005 approved by Association voice vote

e. USAF Gunship Association Report

Tabled last year - lots of Pro's and Con's.

Tim Shaeffer, Spectre Gunship Association

We ARE mostly well-aged, over 55, dudes with superb experience and savvy. Long-term we ARE getting older, fewer, & all are fixed-wing Gunshippers. Louder "voice" by working together, with more support to current troops 4th, 16th, 19th (schoolhouse) SOS's & families from their heritage (us old farts)

Vision: "Chapters" to maintain identities with umbrella group to help administrative stuff

Association believes there are more benefits to stay as we are for now. We're still growing and still trying to define our specific AC-119 niche as a Vietnam-era gunship. It is critical to maintain our focus on putting the AC-119 into the Air Force and Vietnam history. Recommend continue discussions & participation in each other's annual Reunions (Norm Evans) & revisit again next yr.

After discussion Association decided to continue discussions and participation in each other's annual Reunions (Norm Evans), with new Board working with Tim and report next year.

2. Board's By-Law Recommendations

a. ADD: Webmaster and Newsletter Editor as 'Voting' positions

b. ADD: new board 'Voting' position: Past Board Member to increase continuity of past board actions and strategies; reduce 'LEARNING CURVE' for new board members. Impartial voter with no specific role. Incoming board selects from outgoing-board volunteers

c. CHANGE: Membership Renewal to annual cycle based on 'date paid' (calendar year from date paid)

d. ADD: "Honorary Life Membership" for next-closest-kin of members lost in SEA and for other specific honorees who contribute significantly to Association: next-closest-kin of members lost in SEA is automatic; other specific honorees at discretion and vote of board; all with same membership rights as Associate Members

e. ADD: 'Any' family member can apply for Family Membership with same rights as Associate Membership

f. Proposed By-Law additions and changes approved by Association voice vote

3. Brass AC-119K 'Stinger' Model recommendation to place 'Stinger' model on pedestal at Hurlburt Air Park Memorial

a. Current Air Memorial plaque references AC-119G/K and both Shadows and Stingers; AC-119G 'Shadow' Display Aircraft; no AC-119K visual; and 'completes' Memorial. Estimate approx \$3000 to bronze 'dip' wooden model and install for 2005 Reunion

b. Brass AC-119K 'Stinger' model on pedestal at Hurlburt Air Park Memorial approved by Association voice vote. NOTE: Gus Sininger will be POC but need someone to get another wooden model to Gus (like one for speaker)

4. Shadow and Stinger Paintings and Lithos

a. Paintings of both aircraft depicting each one's traditional SEA combat operation will be donated to the Air Force Museum (pending new Board's confirmation they will not be put in storage)

b. Overall painting costs of approximately \$4000. 100 numbered, signed Lithographs of each are included and will be offered to Members for purchase. Lithograph sales (approximately \$35-\$50) will recoup all costs. Col Terry can sign them at the Dayton Reunion.

c. Proposal to authorize painting and lithograph purchases approved by Association voice vote. NOTE: Litho price will be determined by new Board.

5. Association Board Authority

a. Your Board designs, plans, and completes Reunion preparations that includes:

Hotel: coordinate rooms, Mixer food selection/quantities, Meeting room, Comm System, BBQ, music, register members, Set the hootch up: plan and get soda, beer, water, wine, munchies – and track it all

Order and sell T-Shirts, hats, license holders, patches, pins
Coordinate Memorial Service at Air Park with Protocol, Honor Guard, Guests, Wreath, Transportation, media, plaque coordination w/CE to build pedestal and install it, music, speakers, speeches
Coordinate Banquet location, meals, ROTC Honor Guard, awards, gifts, servers, busers, greeters, tickets, music, speakers, speeches

b. Throughout year, your Board also:

Maintains web content/structure/costs/stories/pix/Guest book

Designs and publishes Newsletters (purchase and maintain PC/Printer/Scanner/supplies/mailings).

Coordinates memberships and cards, tracks and manages \$\$\$, maintains rosters and makes contacts

Purchases and sends flowers for Members' families at

deaths

Makes policy decisions like 'no one should pay Association-related expenses out of their pocket' and authorizes prepaid annual web costs, merchandise accounts, Newsletter supplies, web hook-ups, and lots of other stuff

c. And your Board does not ask 'may I' or for a vote on stuff like that. Your Board believes the Members expect them to do that. So, your Board manage and spend a fair amount of \$\$ and time for the Association. They believe you voted them in to do that.

d. Your Board does ask Members to decide on Reunion locations, big investments and things that reflect the Association like Memorial plaques and models, Gunship paintings and Lithos, By-Law changes, etc.

e. So what's the big deal (you ask)..... Your Board wants to know Members agree they're exercising the authority needed (as volunteers) to do all this! By a loud voice vote, the Association gave the Board a vote of confidence to continue exercising the authority to do the kind of things just described to plan, decide, and spend Association \$\$, and to bring the bigger things like those just described back to Members for a vote.

6. Awards & Decs Report: (Steve MacIsaac) Air Force DP info will be on Website and in Newsletter. Lost, forgotten, etc can be reviewed; some get awarded (30 out of 260 last year). Info we provide will give you the details needed to get submittals approved Like a letter or memo from AC, flight orders for mission, mission log, frag order, awards that others received, etc. The better the package, the better the chance. Can go through Congressman if all that fails.

7. Nominations for 2004 Association Board were opened.

The Association elected the following by voice vote:

a. President:	Rogers Stevens
b. Vice-President:	Bob La Rosa
c. Secretary:	Ray Barradale
d. Treasurer:	Doug Wohlgamuth
e. Chaplain:	Larry Hunter and Leigh Norstrum

f. Prior-Yr Board Mbr: Wayne Laessig

g. Newsletter Editor: Everett Sprou (no vote required)

h. Webmaster: Bill Petrie (no vote required)

i. Dayton Reunion Coordinator: Ron Julian (no vote required) with primary Museum Curator POC: Rogers Stevens + Doc, Milo, Wayne

j. Contact Coordinator: Jim Terry (no vote required)

k. Reunion VI Coordinator: Norm Evans with Frank Zemanick, Larry Hunter, Jim Bennes, Gus Sininger

8. Business from the Floor: ADD to the Registration (web/Newsletter): want to split a room?

9. Adjourned and moved to Memorial Service at Hurlburt Air Memorial Park

THE FIRING CIRCLE

MERCHADISE FOR SALE BY THE ASSOCCIATION


REFURBISHED SHADOW & STINGER CALLING CARDS & BUSINESS CARDS

FRONT

BACK

WHEN UNVITED GUESTS DROP IN ...
CALL FOR THE SHADOW

We Provide
Lighting for
All Occasions
Beaucoup 7.62
Mortar Suppression



We Defend:
Special Forces Camps
Air Bases
Outposts
Troops In Contact

WHO KNOWS WHAT EVIL LURKS BELOW the JUNGLE CANOPY?
"THE SHADOW KNOWS"





LARRY ELTON FLETCHER
SHADOW PILOT
1969-1970
TAN SON NHUT VIETNAM



WHEN UNVITED GUESTS DROP IN ...
CALL FOR THE 18th S.O.S.

We Provide
Lighting for
All Occasions
Beaucoup 7.62 &
20MM Truck &
Mortar Suppression




We Defend:
Special Forces Camps
Air Bases Outposts
Troops In Contact
We Also Stop Truck,
Sampan and Other
Traffic

A FLY BY NIGHT ORGANIZATION





EVERETT DALE SPROUS
STINGER GUNNER
1971-1972
NKP THAILAND BIEN HOA VIETNAM







BUSINESS CALLING CARDS



AC-119 GUNSHIP
AIR CREW or
GROUND CREW MEMBER



SUPER CREW CHIEF
J-85 JET ENGINE MECHANIC
1971-1972
NKP THAILAND-BIEN HOA VIETNAM














The *AC-119 Gunship*
Association



EVERETT DALE SPROUS
3521 SALENA
ST LOUIS MO 63118-4024
(314) 865-0920
E-MAIL edspro@juno.com



COST: \$4.00 + .50 FOR A MINIMUM OF 10 or \$20.00 + .75 FOR A MAXIMUM OF 50
SEND CHECK OR MONEY ORDER TO: EVERETT SPROUS 3521 SALENA ST LOUIS MO 63118-4024
E-MAIL edspro@msn.com PHONE (314)865-0920

THE FIRING CIRCLE

MERCHADISE FOR SALE BY THE ASSOCOCIATION

T-Shirts

Association Reunion T-Shirts

The Reunion IV T's have the SEA map on the right sleeve and the US flag on the left sleeve.

T-Shirt colors are black only.

Order form below for AC-119 Gunship Association Reunion T-shirts

Or Contact:

Gus Sininger
Tooke Street
Ft Walton Beach FL 32547
Phone (850) 863-9649
g.sininger@seii.net

FRONT



BACK



New Association Golf Shirt \$27.00—these will be by special order through Gus.



Newly designed! Shadow and Stinger Hats - \$15



Check with Gus on availability of Reunion I, II, & III T-Shirts



Reunion IV Videos \$20.00

MULTIPLY YOUR QUANTITY BY THE UNIT PRICE TO GET YOUR TOTAL PRICE

Reunion IV T-Shirts (BLACK ONLY) \$20.00.

SIZE(S): _____ X's \$20.00 _____

Golf Shirts: (White) Size(s): _____ Name on front: _____ X's \$27.00

LAOTION HIGHWAY PATROL: X-LARGE ONLY— NUM. _____ X's \$10.00 _____

HATS: SHADOW: _____ STINGER: _____ X's \$15.00 _____

Reunion IV Videos _____ X's \$20.00

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

“MAKE CHECK or MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO:

GUS SININGER

206 TOOKE ST.

FT WALTON BEACH FL 32547

Or contact Gus at phone (850) 863-9649 or E-MAIL at g.sininger@seii.net

THE FIRING CIRCLE

BOOK AVAILABLE DR. LARRY FLETCHER'S
Shadows of Saigon



AVAILABLE
FROM BARNES &
NOBLE BOOK
STORES
GO TO
www.bn.com

Author and Former United States Air Force Captain, Dr. Larry E. Fletcher flew 177 combat missions as a pilot in AC-119 Shadow gunships during his tour of duty in Southeast Asia. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster and the Air Medal with eight Clusters. Nominated for Pacific Air Forces Outstanding Junior Officer of the Year, Fletcher was assigned to Fighting C Flight of the 17th Special Operations Squadron at Tan Son Nhut Air Base; Saigon, Republic of Vietnam.

Look for Dr. Larry Elton Fletcher's sequel novel to **SHADOWS OF SAIGON** in **mid-2004**. Final editing of manuscript and graphics are currently underway. Fletcher will again publish with Xlibris Corporation, a subsidiary of Random House. Website address is www.xlibris.com Soft cover and hardcover books will be available from Xlibris, Barnes & Noble, Amazon, Borders, and local book stores. Fletcher plans to have copies for sale next fall during the AC-119 Gunship Reunion V at the Hope Hotel, Wright-Patterson AFB. The title of the novel is **THE SHADOW SPIRIT** with subtitle of **Flying Stingers & BUFFs in S.E.A.** For **SHADOW OF SAIGON** readers, you will find out what happens to 1/Lt. Paul Knight, 1/Lt "Killer" Dameron, Marie-Laure, and Major Dick "The Prick" Mueller. You will meet many new AC-119 Stinger crewmen like FE Freddie Farkle, Gunners, Sgt. Mackey, Sgt. Sproul, A1C Scott, and IO, Sgt. H.T. "give'm hell Harry Truman" Savage. Majors Carpenter, Franklin, Willingham are the navigator/sensor operators. Assigned to Delta Flight at NKP, they night hunt the enemy in the Barrel Roll, Steel Tiger, and the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Knight, Dameron, and a Stinger navigator receive orders for SAC. Flying G model BUFFs, the three former AC-119 gunship air commandos are really lucky. With the fighting spirit of Shadow and Stinger, they get to bomb Hanoi during Linebacker II.

SOME OF MY FAVORITE REUNION PHOTOS



THE FIRING CIRCLE

MERCHADISE FOR SALE BY THE ASSOCIATION

STINGER PATCH



SHADOW PATCHES



YANKEE AIR PIRATE PATCH



FOUR FLAGS PATCH



(Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, Laos)



Cambodia 100 Mission Patch (Shadow) & Stinger 100 Mission Patch (Laos)

Note: These are in limited quantity. More will be made if the demand calls for them.

Patches are all approximately 4x4 inches

Contact: Art Perry
220 Sagebrush Trail
Ormond, FL 32174
386-615-9756
APerry9567@aol.com

1 patch \$5 + Add 50 cents for 1 or 2 patches' and 75 cents for 3 or 4 patches, and \$1 for 5-6 patches.

Thanks! Art for your great work on getting these patches replicated.

MISSION CD-ROMS

CD's - \$20 per set
Dan McDuffie has done an outstanding job telescoping rare mission tapes from Stinger and Shadow sorties and burning them to a CD. (remember? those tapes had lots of



GREAT WORK DAN ON GETTING THESE TAPES REPLICATED. THANKS

VIDEO

Shadow & Stinger Video VHS Tape - donation of \$21.50 per tape



The tape contains video and still images from both the 17th & 18th Special Opera-

Contact:

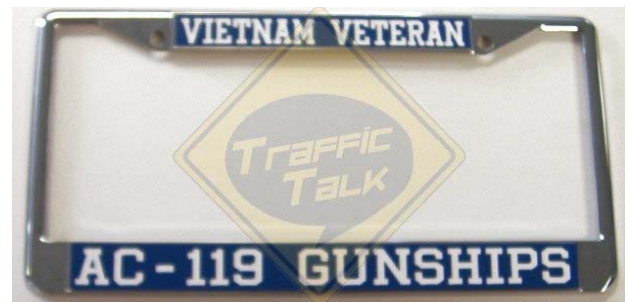
Norm Evans
611 Center St #12
Ft Walton Beach FL 32547
Phone (850) 864-0923
normevans873@cs.com

Reunion IV Photo CD—\$5.00—over 200 photos from our 4th reunion—contact Everett at 314-865-0920 or edspro@juno.com or Everett Sprous 3521 Salena St Louis MO 63118-4024

\$10.00

NEW LICENSE FRAMES

\$13.00



Contact:
Norm Evans
611 Center St #12
Ft Walton Beach FL 32547
Phone (850) 864-0923 normevans873@cs.com

Contact:
Lee Kyser
3430 Via Dona
Lompoc CA 93436
Phone (805) 733-2443 linvel@earthlink.net

THE FIRING CIRCLE



The **AC-119 Gunship Association**



Hi AC-119 Gunship Brothers, Families & Friends, we would like to invite you to join or renew in our AC-119 Gunship Association, as a member, family member or associate member. This Association was created for you, whether you were a Aircrew member or worked on the AC-119's on the ground. **We want you in our Association.** Please note: there is no charge for surviving spouse's of members. Surviving spouse's of life members, become life members automatically. *Also, associate members are eligible only for annual membership.*

Annual dues are only \$20.00 or a lifetime membership for only \$119.00 (available only to regular members). Please make your check or money order to:

THE **AC-119 GUNSHIP ASSOCIATION** & mail to:
Everett Dale Sprous, Newsletter/Membership
AC-119 Gunship Association
3521 Salena
St Louis MO 63118-4024

AC-119 GUNSHIP ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION or RENEWAL

Please Print All Information

I, _____, Hereby renew or apply for membership in the AC-119 Gunship Association and agree to abide with the By-Laws of the Association.

My Date of birth is (mm/dd/yy) _____

I, or my Spouse (no charge to surviving spouse's) or Parent served in combat with (circle one) 71st SOS 17th SOS 18th SOS From _____, 19__ to _____ 19__

In (SEA) Southeast Asia as: (enter air or ground crew position) _____

Or I feel I am qualified to be an Associate Member (eligible only for annual membership) due to the following: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: ____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____ FAX: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Enclosed is my check or money order in the amount of \$20.00 for my annual membership or \$119.00 for a Lifetime membership, (available only to regular members).

"Make check or money order payable to the: **AC-119 GUNSHIP ASSOCIATION** as a donation for annual or lifetime membership dues and mail to:

Everett Dale Sprous
Newsletter/Membership
AC-119 Gunship Association
3521 Salena
St Louis MO 63118-4024

Or contact Everett by phone (314) 865-0920 or E-MAIL at edsprous@msn.com

THE FIRING CIRCLE

Five Year Milestone for AC-119 Gunship Website

This month marks the five year anniversary of our website. With more than 90,000 hits to the website, our presence on the World Wide Web continues to prove invaluable in collecting and preserving AC-119 gunship history as well as inform members about reunions, Association activities, and the recruitment of new members. The website not only enables us to tell our "little-known" story about our involvement in the Vietnam War, it enables us to rekindle friendships with those we served with, their families, and those we flew to protect.

With no prior knowledge of Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) 5 web pages were developed over a "pull-your-hair-out" weekend in October 1998 (now you know why I'm bald). Initially, website hosting fees and seed money were provided by the webmaster and then by donations of fellow Gunshippers who learned of the website. The generosity of our brothers brought our site to life and they have kept it alive for the past five years. Those initial funds are now depleted but it was enough for a great five-year maiden voyage of *ac-119gunships.com*.

AC-119gunships.com has evolved into the *Official Website of the AC-119 Gunship Association*. Now, the AC-119 Gunship Association will fund the site on a yearly basis. Normal site expenses run approximately \$300 for website hosting and two domain name registrations. Website management is accomplished using Macromedia's Dreamweaver4 (soon to be Dreamweaver MX2004) for HTML coding and web page design and layout; Adobe Photoshop7 for processing and posting photos; and Microsoft Word to write and edit content and stories. The Association also voice voted approval to purchase software for volunteers to assist in their duties updating the website. This software, Macromedia's *Contribute*, will cost approximately \$400 for 5 licenses. The software is still under review so more on that later. To date, no Association money has been spent on software or hardware for the web site.

The *ac-119gunships.com* website continues to be a part-time; after work; late in the evening; in between honey-do's project for your webmaster....It has become a labor of love.

The site's impressive growth, as well as the wealth of photos and other material needing to be readied for posting, created quite a burden on the webmaster. With that in mind, a call went out during the 2003 general meeting for Project Volunteers to assist with various areas of the web site. During that meeting the following brave souls stepped up to the plate (or should I say computer) and volunteered:

Jim Terry

Project Volunteer to track deceased members & update the Final Flight list and to contact family members of those we lost in Southeast Asia.

Larry (Doc) Fletcher

Project Volunteer to research and/or to locate additional AC-119 gunship info and fine-tune, authenticate, and verify information already posted on the site, to include the 17th & 18th Special Operations Squadrons, their equipment, and operations for use on the website and any print material.

Dan McDuffie and Duane Hampshire

Project Volunteer to assist photo processing for the site. This position needed strong Adobe Photoshop skills, or the ability to use another program compatible with or comparable to Photoshop.

Craig Corbett and Doc Fletcher

Project Volunteer to edit and prepare stories for web. This volunteer must know Microsoft Word and be a good proofreader

Thank you again to the above project officers who stepped forward. Your assistance will greatly enhance and speed up web site management.

If you see an area on the website, or an area in which you feel the Association could use you as a volunteer, please e-mail me at [RetCMSgt@aol.com] or snail mail me at Bill Petrie, 7532 NW 129th St, Oklahoma City, OK 73142. Due to the speed that reunion preparations take place and the need to try and be timely with information on the web site, it is important that all association volunteers be connected to the Internet.

On a final note, I know everyone in the Association joins me in sending a heartfelt thank you to the *Lead Crew*, those generous brothers who's initial contributions enabled this site to become a reality. To *all* our gunship brothers, please continue your contributions of stories, photos, and other information for that is what breaths life into this website. As your webmaster I'm extremely proud of your outstanding support, and as the "Godfather of Soul would say...*Please, Please, Please* continue showing your patience.

YITB (Yours in the Brotherhood)

Bill Petrie, Webmaster

THE FIRING CIRCLE

Some Guest Book Messages

Just wanted to salute all of you Veterans and say Thanks! I will be running in the Gulf Breeze 5k Veterans Day race tomorrow morning and will think of you all. I will also be wearing my sign that I'm running in honor of my two deployed son's whom I received a call from today. They both sound tired, homesick, and ready to come home. Dustin says there is more going on in Afghanistan than is reported. Tony says Baghdady has become more dangerous and has been putting in very long days. Dustin made a comment about how the Vietnam Veterans survived the day in and day out of what they lived through, he says he just can't imagine worst conditions than what he is living every day in Afghanistan. My little boys have certainly grown up. I will run my best race for all soldiers present and past tomorrow. I salute you all!!! Donna Crews <donna.crews@hurlburt.af.mil> Ft Walton Beach, FL USA - Friday, November 07, 2003 at 15:50:44 (EST)

I attended both the memorial service and the dinner at the annual reunion held on October 4, 2003. I was very impressed with the excellent way in which both events were organized. The ceremony was very moving to me since I lost close friends in Southeast Asia myself. This Gunship organization is a top notch group. I salute each and every one of them. Jerry Stalnaker, Colonel, USAF-Ret. Jerry Stalnaker <gwstalnaker@seii.net> Destin, FL USA - Tuesday, October 14, 2003 at 10:31:01 (EDT)

Reunion was fantastic and can't wait for the next one at Wright Pat and the AF Museum. We'll get our story where it belongs, in the real history of gunships in Vietnam. The most thrilling thing at the reunion was when we were told that they're doubling the number of gunships in the AF after finally recognizing their true worth, which we already knew. I'm also excited with the prospect of a unified gunship organization with the Spookys and the Specters but which also retains our unique 119 identity and heritage. Keep up the good work past and present officers and thanks for the best reunion ever. Irv Greenberg <irvgberg@hotsprings.net> Hot Springs, AR USA - Sunday, October 12, 2003 at 12:23:42 (EDT)

Great Re-union AGAIN !! Made all re-unions except #3 (Wx Cnx) !!. Had a wonderful experience happen while waiting to catch my flight out of FWB. After checking thru the Security Screening i was setting in the waiting room ,With my flight jacket with all the Gunship Memoribelia & patches on it laying across my lap. A young lady (in her early 30's) tapped me on the arm and said "Thank You" I asked her for what ? she responded with "For being there and doing what you do" That was a very touching moment for me. See everyone at Dayton next year Milo G. Yowell <Stinger21golf@webtv.net> Halfway , OR USA - Wednesday, October 08, 2003 at 23:39:09 (EDT)

De Debil's photographic memory has faded as has the thinning and greying of his hair. Klongs are canals, binjo's are the drainage ditches that lined the streets at NKP. After nearly diving into one at Rocket City to escape personal harm from a 122 rocket, I made a personal committment that "I would rather die" than fall, dive or tumble into a binjo ditch. Terry "When you're hot, you're hot" Bott will attest to that fact. Talking of slings and arrows there are no witnesses to the alledged falling into the ditches of NKP. It's all fabrication by De Debil and a sniveling attempt to discredit my capacity for the juice of the barley. Crew 1 will bear witness to our prodigious accomplishments. Just you wait for the replay at Dayton in 2004. "Ollie" Gresham, or USA - Friday, October 10, 2003 at 11:57:28 (EDT)



THE FIRING CIRCLE



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To perpetuate the existence and names of three U. S. Air Force units that served in Southeast Asia (SEA) as effective combat forces during the Vietnam War, known as the:

71st and 17th (Shadow) and 18th (Stinger) Special Operations Squadrons.

To revere the memories of our fellow military ground and aircrew members whose lives were sacrificed in service to the United States of America and to comfort their survivors.

To renew and promote camaraderie among individuals who served in SEA with Shadow and Stinger, and with other personnel who contributed to the establishment and support of gunship development and operations.

To promote reunions and to engage in other activities approved by the members that are consistent with the aim of promoting the general welfare and enjoyment of Association members and their families.

To record, maintain, and preserve the history and details of Shadow and Stinger contributions in support of our Nation during the Vietnam War.

AC-119 GUNSHIP ASSOCIATION WEBSITE
<http://www.ac-119gunships.com/welcome.htm>

AC-119 GUNSHIP ASSOCIATION
3521 SALENA
ST LOUIS MO 63118-4024

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