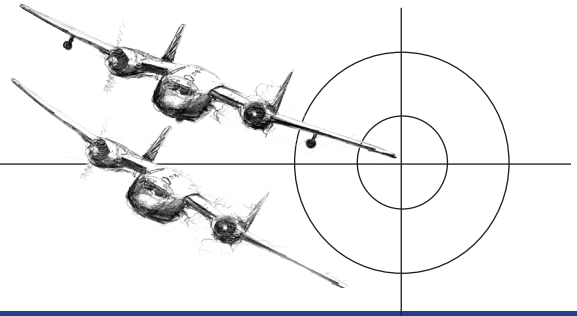


Firing Circle



Spring 2012

A Newsletter of the AC-119 Gunship Association

Mark Your Calendars

Reunion 2012

Ft. Walton Beach, FL

September 26 - 30th

Sheraton Four Points



Retired Colonel Silver C. Chisum, former 18th SOS Commander, with plaque removed from his office door nearly forty years ago.

This year's reunion theme is: ***Duty, Honor, Country, Fortifying the Brotherhood.*** Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand.

Shadows & Stingers will again have the opportunity to reunite with some of the Air Force's finest gunship crews and maintenance staff and their families. It will also be a time to meet old friends and make new friends as well.

Reunion Coordinators for the reunion are: **Gus Sininger** and **Norm Evans**. Keep an eye on your AC-119 website www.ac-119gunships.com for updated information on the Reunion information page.

(More on page 4)


18th SOS Commander and Plaque Reunited

Missing for decades a plaque is reunited with its rightful owner. The story is told that some Australian aviators were visiting the 18th Special Operations Squadron sometime in 1970 or '71 while Lt. Colonel Silver C. Chisum was commander. After much liquid refreshment the visiting aviators decided to acquire the commanders Identity plaque from his door...Move forward forty plus years and an e-mail reaches Bill Petrie, the association's webmaster.

The letter comes from Ron McKenzie in Telopea, New South Wales, Australia. McKenzie was able to track Petrie down via our AC-119 Gunship website. According to Mr. McKenzie "I was eleven years old when my mother pointed out a piece of American military memorabilia at a Salvation Army "white elephant" store in a suburb of Sydney called Chatsworth." McKenzie said he

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Robert "Andy" Bright



President's Message

Hi everyone, I'd like to welcome all of you back to Ft. Walton Beach (FWB) and our Reunion Hotel the Sheraton Four Points.

The Four Points by Sheraton Destin-Fort Walton Beach has become our ideal place to get away from it all. Many of us started out as young, and some old, Air Commandos here. Reunions in Fort Walton Beach bring many of us full circle and fortify our brotherhood.

This year's theme... **Duty, Honor, Country, Fortifying the Brotherhood.** *Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand.*, reminds me that many years have come and gone since our days in Southeast Asia. Memory fades and brothers are lost along the way. What doesn't change, and can never fade, is the special bond that we as combat veterans share with one another.

Especially close to our hearts are those who crewed the AC-119 Gunships flying through heavy anti aircraft fire over the infamous Ho Chi Minh Trail, and other areas of operation, as well as our maintenance men and support teams tending and repairing our old and sometimes wounded war birds while enduring murderous rocket and mortar attacks.

This year we gather again in Ft. Walton Beach to remember those no longer with us, to rekindle the flame of a great and special friendship, and above all...to **Fortify the Brotherhood.**

In addition to the sugar-white beaches along the lovely Gulf of Mexico, many area attractions are within, squeaking-sand walking distance, including the *Gulfarium*

and the *Island Golf Center*. The Four Points also offers you a range of amenities, including a poolside bar, and of course our gathering spot the "Hootch Bar." Speaking of the Hootch Bar we will have a guest selling jewelry on the deck of the Hootch Bar on Saturday. Thank you to Cindy Posey for setting that up.

We also hope to have a Veterans Administration member present to give us a rundown on VA benefits, changes, and other information that might affect us. In addition, a possible trip to the Navy Museum is in the works, as well as a Thursday night dinner at the Bangkok House. So stay tuned.

I'd also like to remind the Association ladies that, per their request, there is now a **Face Book page** set up for spouse use. The administrator of the page is Tony Pakutinski and you can find the page by searching for **StingerandShadow SpouseGroup**. You can also email stingerandshadowspouse@hotmail.com if you know of any spouse or friend that should be invited to join the group. *You asked for it ladies... now it's up to you to use it.*

If you haven't registered for this year's reunion now is the time to do it. Remember, registering for the reunion and reserving your hotel room are two separate items so check the Reunion Information page and the newsletter for more information.

Finally, for those of you still skittish about coming to FWB,

(Continued on next page)

President's Message

(Continued from previous page)

Florida's Emerald Coast has 24 miles of pristine white-sand beaches. This sand, made up of pure Appalachian quartz, remains remarkably cool even in the heat of summer, and gives the waters here their trademark emerald-green color by reflecting sunlight back up through the surf. I invite you to join us on the spectacular beaches, and also in our Hootch Bar, as we discover new friends, visit with old friends, and just have a great and relaxing time.

Coming back to Fort Walton Beach is always a special treat. But the ultimate treat is seeing one another again at an AC-119 Gunship Reunion.

I look forward to seeing you at the 2012 reunion!

*Gus Sininger, President,
AC-119 Gunship Association*



facebook

Spouses...

*Want to stay in touch or
plan activities?*

Visit

***StingerandShadow
SpouseGroup
on Facebook***

Commander and Plaque Reunited

(Continued from page 1)

bought it for one dollar and for many years wondered who it belonged to. "Although I did military service I could never figure out what FOL A meant or what the 18th SOS was," said McKenzie. He added, "An Internet search led me to the AC-119 Gunship website and after corresponding with Bill Petrie I learned FOL A stood for Forward Operating Location Alpha and the plaque belonged to the former 18th Special Operations Squadron commander Colonel Chisum."



John Tosh, Bill Petrie, and Silver C. Chisum getting acquainted in the office of the Texas Air Museum in San Antonio, TX.

Petrie received the plaque just prior to a two-year battle with Cancer, and the Petrie family had just moved to a new home. During the move and Petrie's recovery the plaque had been boxed up and forgotten. Chief Petrie recently found it as he and his wife prepared to travel around the United States. He saw this as an opportunity to possibly meet with Colonel Chisum and return the long lost door plaque.

After tracking down Colonel Chisum they arranged a meeting in San Antonio at the Texas Air Museum, Stinson Field Chapter. Turns out his cousin, John Tosh, is the Curator and Director of the museum and they hadn't seen each other in quite a while. The gathering in San Antonio turned out to be a special occasion with the colonel and Petrie reminiscing of their days being associated with the men and the mission of the 18th SOS.

Who would have thought that the search for the wayward plaque would lead to three reunions in one....Silver C. Chisum and his cousin John, Bill Petrie and one of his former commanders, and the Colonel and his plaque.



WELCOME Back to Ft. Walton Beach

and our Reunion Hotel the Sheraton Four Points.

Reunion Registration & hotel room reservation / registration are separate. You can download the "reunion registration form" from our website or use the form on the next page.

Please Note there is a reunion registration fee of \$25 per person.

We also need to remind you of Cancellation Policies

- Reunion Registration cancellations on or before September 1st we'll give you a refund or you can donate as requested.
- Reunion Registration cancellations after September 1st means we have to pay hotel "guarantees", so no refunds (but talk to us if there are special circumstances like family emergencies or losses).
- **Hotel Registration:** if you cancel after their minimum 24 hour notification, you may still be charged.

Hotel Reservation

This year's reunion Hotel is the Four Points by Sheraton Destin-Fort Walton Beach. The hotel is located at 1325 Miracle Strip Parkway, Highway 98 East Fort Walton Beach, Florida 32548

A web site for the AC 119 Gunship Association has been created by the hotel for you. The AC 119 Gunship Association Hotel reunion / room reservation site is:
<http://www.starwoodmeeting.com/StarGroupsWeb/res?id=1112145956&key=15D59>

Guests can access the site to learn more about the event and to book, modify, or cancel a reservation from now until October 2, 2012.

**Register for Reunion 2012
Now!**

Firing Circle 4

Handy Links

Need a Ft. Walton Beach /Destin Weather forecast? View one at www.underground.com

Want news about the Northwest Florida area? Read the Northwest Florida Daily News at www.nwfdailynews.com

For general information on Ft. Walton Beach and Destin check out www.destin-fw.com

Need a car rental or airline tickets? Visit www.travelocity.com

Driving to Ft. Walton Beach? See www.mapquest.com for directions

Need info on Eglin AFB click on www.eglin.af.mil

How about info on Hurlburt Field? Go to www.hurlburt.af.com

2012 AC-119 GUNSHIP REUNION XIII REGISTRATION

SEPTEMBER 26-SEPTEMBER 30, 2012, FORT WALTON BEACH, FLORIDA

DUTY, HONOR, COUNTRY
"Fortifying the Brotherhood"
Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand

This is Not your Hotel Registration (this is your Reunion Registration Only!)

Name: (First, Middle Initial, Last) _____

Are you an AC-119 Gunship Association member? Yes No Years Served with Gunships: _____; _____

Squadron: 71st; 17th; 18th; 3rd or 4th ACS; other (____); Crew Position/Role: _____

Address: (include Zip+4) _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Spouse/Guest Name: (First, Middle Initial, Last) _____

Additional Guests: (#) _____ Name(s) _____

Are you staying at the Reunion Hotel Yes No Staying somewhere else. Where _____

Is this your 1st Reunion: Yes No Would you volunteer to help a 1st timer on their 1st day: Yes No

REUNION FEE.....# attending _____ X \$25 = \$ _____

YES! I / We will attend:

* Thursday Night is being worked; maybe a tour or a Dinner at the Bangkok house; check the web for updates.

We'll let you know as soon as we firm it up. Sign up & you can cancel later # attending _____

• Friday Night Meet & Greet (See web or Newsletter for menu).....# attending _____ X \$29 = \$ _____

• Saturday Night Banquet (Elks Lodge # 1795)

▶ Chicken Cordon Bleu.....# of meals _____ X \$16 = \$ _____

▶ Baked Fish (Pang Asia).....# of meals _____ X \$16 = \$ _____

▶ Prime Rib.....# of meals _____ X \$21 = \$ _____

NOTE: Dinners include baked potato, green beans, salad, dinner rolls, peach cobbler, & tea, water or coffee

• Sunday Morning Golf Tournament (Green Fees separate).....# playing _____ X \$10 = \$ _____

• Sunday Afternoon Gulf Coast Shrimp Boil (See web or Newsletter for menu).....# attending _____ X \$30 = \$ _____

Check # _____ Total Payment \$ _____

NOTE: For special meal needs, contact Gus Sininger at 850-865-2634 or stinger7172@cox.net

After filling-in this page mail it (if you use the web version, print it first since it will not save your info) with your payment (**make check payable to AC-119 Gunship Association**) to:

Doug Wohlgamuth (AC-119)
504 Shea Place
Sun City Center, FL 33573-5726

Mailing this page with your payment completes your **Reunion registration**; you still need to contact the hotel direct for your **Hotel registration!** See the Newsletter or web for details.

Questions? Check the web at <http://www.ac-119gunships.com>; call Doug at 813-938-1886 or 813-781-5728 e-mail Busch791@tampabay.rr.com; or Gus at 850-865-2634 e-mail stinger7172@cox.net

See You in Fort Walton Beach, Florida

PLEASE NOTE: Cancellation Policies

- Reunion Registration cancellations on or before September 1st = refund or donation as requested
- Reunion Registration cancellations after September 1st = we have to pay hotel "guarantees", so no refunds (but talk to us if there are special circumstances like family emergencies or losses)
- Hotel Registration: if you cancel after their minimum 24 hour notification, you may still be charged

Reunion Activities

Agenda

Some activities and events are subject to change as we are still working on some of the reunion elements. Somewhere in this year's program we hope to have a presenter on VA benefits. Something we can all use a refresher on. Also in the works is a possible trip to the Navy Museum in Pensacola.

For a rundown on the reunion agenda please look at the reunion registration form on Page 5.

Remember (if you use the web version of the reunion registration, print it first since it will not save your info) you can then make your check payable to AC-119 Gunship Association and send to:

Doug Wohlgamuth (AC-119)
504 Shea Place
Sun City Center, FL 33573-5726

Mailing the reunion registration form with your payment completes your Reunion registration. You still need to contact the hotel directly for your "Hotel" registration! See the Newsletter or web for details.

Have questions? Check the web at www.ac-119gunships.com or you can call Doug Wohlgamuth at 813-938-1886 or 813-781-5728 e-mail Busch791@tampabay.rr.com; or call Gus Sininger at 850-865-2634 e-mail stinger7172@cox.net

Make Your Hotel Reservations Today!

Remembering our Own

John "O'Neal" Rucker

**Stinger Crew Chief 18th SOS
Nakhon Phanom, Thailand
Da Nang, Vietnam 1972-1973**

On January 27, 1973, 11 hours before the cease fire took effect, Sergeant John "O'Neal" Rucker became the last American who died at Da Nang during the Vietnam War, and that war's last enlisted casualty. O'Neal was assigned to aircraft maintenance for the 18th Special Operations Squadron's Stinger aircraft. Several of his friends

and crew mates told his parents that they'd had rocket attacks a week earlier and that this one occurred when O'Neal was off-duty, sleeping in the barracks. O'Neal was 21 years old.

John "O'Neal" Rucker was born March 17, 1951 in Kilgore Texas and shortly thereafter moved to Linden Texas, his home town. After graduating from Linden-Kildare High School, even though he had a high draft number, he volunteered for the Air Force in February 1971.

O'Neal told his parents and friends he wanted

(Continued on next page)

to serve, and make the Air Force a career. When the Air Force asked him for his assignment preference during basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas, he volunteered for service in South East Asia. O'Neal was initially assigned to Nakhon Phanom (NKP), Thailand in April, 1972. In July he went TDY to DaNang with the 18th SOS, and was PCS'd to Da Nang two days before the fatal rocket attack. O'Neal was scheduled to return to Thailand before coming home.



John O'Neal Rucker

Mae Rucker, O'Neal's mother, told us they called him O'Neal because he was named after his father and they couldn't have two Johnny's in the house. O'Neal's sisters Marsha and Margie, and his brother Frank remembered his R&R in Linden for Christmas 1972. He told Marsha to be careful waking him since he couldn't guarantee he wouldn't jump pretty high. Margie remembers he really liked what he was doing there on the flight line, and Frank knew he was proud to be in the Air Force.

Shortly after the cease fire took effect, the Department of the Air Force and the Republic of South Vietnam joined together to erect and dedicate a memorial at Da Nang Air Base to recognize all Americans who lost their life

protecting freedom. The memorial park included a plaque honoring Sgt. Rucker. Colonel Hoover, Da Nang's Commander, sent the following letter to O'Neal's parents:

*Dear Mr. and Mrs. Rucker,
Today is the 34th day into the cease fire agreement and phase down of United States Air Force activities in the Republic of Vietnam. The particular significance of this day is the fact that at 9:30 this morning, a group of USAF and Vietnamese personnel paused to dedicate the Da Nang Air Base Memorial Park.*

This dedication, attended by approximately 400 people, while recognizing the overall contributions of all Air Force personnel here at Da Nang and those who died in the cause of freedom, gave special recognition to your son, Sgt. John Rucker.

The Park contains an engraved marble plaque in his honor; and I want to assure you that his memory and supreme sacrifice will not be forgotten.

I was extremely proud to have your son under my command.

*Sincerely, WILLIAM W. HOOVER,
Colonel, USAF
Commander*

Linden, Texas is a small town of several thousand with traditional values – patriotic, family and friends as cornerstones of life, obedience, being an individual, and foremost of all, belief in God and country. On November 11, 1973 the people of Linden erected and dedicated a monument in the courthouse square in memory of Sgt. John O'Neal Rucker.

We can say it no better than Paul Rowan, who interviewed dozens of Linden's citizen's shortly after O'Neal died in Vietnam, and wrote an article for the Fort-Worth Star-Telegram. He said, "Sgt. Rucker will be worth remembering because he died in the service of his country and with a firm trust in God. In Linden, a man can make no higher marks in history."



"Stinger" Lineage Continues

Viper Strike or Griffin small standoff munitions

AC-130W to be Named Stinger II



the AC-119 Gunship Association has been informed that the MC-130W Dragon Spear, will be officially re-named the AC-130W Stinger II. The AC-130W name "Stinger II" has cleared all the hurdles for approval. SAF General Council recommended approval and it is now at SecAF for final approval. The final nod is expected sometime in May.

The Dragon Spear program is designed to augment the aging AC-130 gunship fleet in lieu of a lapsed AC-130J project. Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) plans to eventually convert its entire fleet of MC-130W Combat Spears into Dragon Spears with the new designation of Stinger II.

The Stinger II gunship is created by applying a roll-on, roll-off Precision Strike Package to existing MC-130W Combat Spear aircraft. The resulting MC-130W Dragon Spears are operated by the Air Force 73rd Special Operations Squadron out of Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico.

We will keep the Association advised of any new and official activity. Let's hope part of the celebration at our upcoming reunion will be acknowledging our lineage is alive and well our upcoming reunion.

MC-130W Dragon Spear - Features

Armaments

The MC-130W Dragon Spear can be fitted with an array of sophisticated weapons. The Precision Strike Package is a modular weapons package and can include:

- Wing-mounted GBU-39 Small-Diameter Bombs (SDB's)
- Bushmaster II Mk44 30mm gun
- Gunslinger weapons system featuring a launch tube capable of deploying up to 10 GBU-44/B

The various weapons fitted are managed by a battle management system (BMS).

Avionics Standard MC-130W Dragon Spears feature a GPS and Inertial Navigation System navigation and a AN/APN-241 Low Power Color weather/navigation Radar. A sophisticated communications fitment includes satellite and data burst capabilities. The Precision Strike Package adds an improved infrared sensor and electro-optical targeting system, communications and the battle management system.

Defensive Systems

Dragon Spears feature state of the art radar and missile warning sensors and countermeasures such as jammers and flare and chaff launchers

Refueling Systems

Combat Spears can receive fuel from other airborne tankers via its Universal Aerial Refueling Receptacle Slipway Installation.



Photo : US Air Force - A MC-130W Dragon Spear from the 73rd Special Operations Squadron.

The Dragon Spear is the result of a program to convert MC-130W Combat Spear aircraft into gunships by application of roll-on-roll-off conversion kits. A Bushmaster II Mk44 30mm cannon can be mounted (as shown here on the port side) as well as various air-to-ground guided munitions such as GBU-39 Small-Diameter Bombs. Dragon Spears are fitted with AN/AAQ-38 FLIR and a battle management system (BMS). The aircraft will be called the AC-130W Stinger.

Alpha Roster

What is it & Why Should I Care?

The answer is twofold: **1)** it's a way to publicize who we have contact information on (*without creating a SPAM vulnerability*), and **2)** the more we can expand our contact info, the more folks we can 'touch', keep in our loop, get to reunions, contact easier, and ultimately keep going longer as a robust, self-managed AC-119 Gunship Association of old friends and new friends who make sure we're included as part of the Vietnam War & nation's history.

We estimate there were over 3,000 AC-119 Shadow or Stinger aircrew, and even more maintenance and other support folks involved with AC-119s. That means our 'potential' database is at least 6,000.

“Our MCL accounts for less than one-third of our potential listings”

Presently our Master Contact List (MCL) includes 1,021 folks where we have a mailing address, 890 of those with phone numbers, and 480 of them with e-mails. The MCL also includes about 550 more names where we don't have 'any' contact info. The MCL also includes an additional 280 folks who we know are deceased. Our MCL accounts for less than one-third of our potential listings. Most of us could add a dozen names to our MCL just by thinking about who we trained, flew, and worked with.

Can you imagine having two to three times the number of folks at a Reunion? And two

to three times the number of folks involved in running our Association? We also spend way too much of our limited funds sending snail mails. The higher our number of e-mail addresses & phone numbers, the easier it is to keep folks up to date on what's going on.

How does this work?

We have posted an alphabetical roster of names on our website www.ac-119gunships.com/ titled Updated Contact List (Alpha Roster) that shows everyone we know about, and whether we have contact info for them. The Alpha Roster does not include any "direct" contact info except for the associated POCs. We have POCs for 71st, 17th, 18th, Maintenance, and Final Flight/ Special Members.

Our intent is to allow folks to search the list alphabetically and send a contact request to the respective POC. Or you can add contact info for someone you know, or add a missing name. All through the Point of Contact.

All that's good, but it could take a l-o-n-g time! So we also have a team of volunteers searching the Internet for contact information on our missing guys. As we continue to build the Alpha Roster and increase the numbers who we actually have contact with, we should begin to expand our overall numbers, instead of losing every year.

Yep, there's a finite number of us, and unfortunately we're missing over two-thirds of that finite number! We ask you to please check the Alpha Roster and plug in every name you can think of, including anything else you can remember like their Squadron, crew position or role, time in AC-119s, locations, etc. Our volunteers can only search for contact info on names we have, so please do this now.



Important Reminder for Association Members

If you change your contact information, email or postal mail address, please remember to contact the Association Secretary with your updates. Also, mailing costs are increasing. If you are getting the Newsletter by postal mail, and are able to read it on a computer, please tell the Secretary to change the distribution list from postal to email.

Spouses Corner

For many years our spouses met separately while we've held our Saturday morning Association Meetings at our reunions. Charleston was no exception. Some of the areas they discussed were reunion locations, optional reunion activities & tours, projects they might want to do (like ascots with Shadow & Stinger logos embroidered on them), sharing information about reunions & Association projects, and ways to improve our reunions & the Association.



Some of their ideas included:

1. More pre-organized tours plus more info on things you can do on your own; provided ahead of time (website) as well as posted at the Hootch entrance or Message Board:

- a.) Tour options; specifically for San Antonio: Alamo, El Mercado, River Walk, New Braunfels, Fredericksburg (hill country with lots of arts & crafts), Padre Island
- b.) Specialty shop & Restaurant listing with their specialties; ditto on any local or regional craft fairs.

2. Put up a Message Board outside the Hootch

3. Having local aircrew participate in Reunion activities is great – & important.

4. Move Breakfast Meeting to Friday so spouses can discuss where they might want to visit, car-pooling, next reunion location preferences, etc. Having some kind of agenda helps make the meeting productive for all!!

5. Raffles: our Banquet night raffles offset many of our reunion & annual operating costs. We appreciate ALL the raffle items folks have brought or sent. If you plan to bring one, let the Reunion Coordinator know (Gus for 2013).

Thoughts on Association projects & future Reunions:

1. Some spouses were not aware they can become Association Members themselves – as annual (\$20) or even Life (\$119) Associate Members.

2. There is now a spouse's *Facebook* page. Log into Facebook & search for **StingerandShadow SpouseGroup** Please "Friend" it & use it!

3. Logo-embroidered Ascots, like we wore with our Party Suits:

- a.) Mary McCall will embroider them if we'll provide Shadow & Stinger templates.
- b.) Debbie Barbee & Nancy Maclsaac would help make the actual ascot (neck band portion)

4. Computer searches to find more of "us" and expand awareness of our Association & participation.

- a.) Andrea Drzyzga, Betsy Alau, Margaret Scott volunteered to help.
- b.) Our goal is to increase our known contacts & to increase our e-mailing capability (Much less cost than snail mails or phone calls)

5. J.P. Maclsaac's Videotaped sessions for our histories/heritage archives: spouses are invited to do one & talk about the impact of AC-119s on them and their lives with us; particularly what life was like at home while we were over there. Several spouses expressed interest in a short written input, similar to our History Book inputs. Either one is great & the Association Board wants to reconfirm our interest in those inputs – video or written.

Please think about it & plan to do an interview at the next Reunion. Also, if your husband has not done a video session, ask him to do one to supplement our History Book & provide valuable historical & personal insights into our time the AC-119 gunships.

6. Cruises? In the past, individuals coordinated

(Continued on next page)

a pre-reunion cruise. These are great & if anyone wants to volunteer to coordinate one, the Association will support it by putting their info on the Association. Ditto for a Vietnam trip; several of our folks have done his & said it was a great trip & experience. Again, anyone wanting to try to put together a Vietnam trip, we'll put it on the web/in the Newsletter.

7. Website & in the Newsletter; BUT it will be the Cruise Coordinator's role to do the actual coordination. Go for it!

8. Interest in a shirt for the women that identifies them as members of the Association.

9. Reunion locations:

a.) First, some background: it helps if we can find a military connection, like Albuquerque has the active duty 71st SOS; Ft Walton the 18th SOS (Note: the 17th SOS is located at Kadena – a little farther than is realistic for a Reunion); Dayton was near where we trained; St Augustine was where they converted the C-119s to AC-119s; & Fairfield was near Travis where many of us departed the states for SEA. Several locations were chosen as a good location with a strong military affiliation, like Branson & Charleston.

b.) Preferences: San Antonio & Albuquerque for 2013 over Dallas & Washington D.C, with Hawaii, Boston, Seattle, & San Diego (in that order) as "next".

c.) Biggie that we haven't made clear enough: if there's not a volunteer Reunion Coordinator for a specific location, that location will not be considered for a Reunion.

Spouses: if you want a specific location, start talking it up to find out who is willing to be a Reunion Coordinator for that location! While we are looking at contractor support, the volunteer Reunion Coordinator is still a critical piece. Not to mention, we need a lot more volunteers to step up if you want all these requests to happen.



Final Flight

Retired Col. Fred Blum, 81, passed away January 14th 2012 in San Antonio, TX following an injury in October during a trip to Europe. AC-119 Stinger Navigator, Life Member #49, one of the founding members of our AC-119 Gunship Association, and one of our NKP Stinger Operations mainstays, Fred mentored many to future careers.

His Memorial Service was held at the Air Force Village II where he had volunteered in Wilford Hall and the AF Village Thrift Shop. Fred was buried with full military honors at Ft Sam; with Mac Maclsaac and Jerry Hester attending.

Blum is survived by his wife of 56 years, Dodie and his sister Ann Gersch. Please keep Dodie and all their family in your prayers.

Donald Jerrels Sr, 75, of Peru, Indiana passed away on February 8th 2012. AC-119 Life Member #229, Don served 36 years including 71st "Shadow" Flightline Supervisor at Nha Trang Vietnam; and also Bakalar and Lockbourne AFBs; & Desert Shield. Jim Alvis remembers: "I worked for Don at Bakalar & Lockbourne; I enjoyed & appreciated his leadership. He & his wife Marcia attended a few Association reunions until his health deteriorated. Don will be missed by his 71st buddies."

Don was buried in Sunset Memory Garden Cemetery with full military honors. Memorial contributions may be made to the American Diabetes Association.

Please remember Don's wife Marcia; his sons Donald Jerrels Jr & James Jerrels; daughters Sonia Brooks & Shelia Smith; stepson David Diaz & stepdaughter Deborah Bales in your prayers

Robert "Bob" McNew, 69, of Merced, California passed away on March 1st 2012 after a brief battle with cancer. Bob joined the Air Force when he was 18, went on to

(Continued on next page)

(Final Flight Continued)

run a successful Auto Parts business for the rest of his life. He was Life Member #28, and became one of the founding members of our AC-119 Gunship Association.

A Memorial Service was held at the Livingston-Hills Ferry Masonic Lodge, in Livingston, CA.

Memorial contributions can be made in his name to Cancer Research.

Please keep Bob's wife of 50 years, Karen, his son Sherman, and his daughters Margaret, Heather, Phyllis, and Cheryl in your prayers.

We lost **Bill Feezor**, 73, of Midwest City, Oklahoma to cancer on April 9th 2012. They found Bill's lung cancer in October, with chemotherapy successful at first, but the cancer spread.

Bill was a Flight Engineer with the 18th SOS and Life Member #131. Always full of spunk and fun to listen to, Bill loved to tell the story of how he survived when his AC-119K's fuel system malfunctioned and his aircraft out of gas. Jeff Baker was on that crew and remembers that although they had to crash-land, the whole crew survived.

Bill was buried at Arlington Memorial Gardens Midwest City with full military honors provided by his son Tony's Reserve Unit Honor Guard from Tinker AFB.

Please keep his wife Jeanette and sons William, Douglas, and Tony in your prayers.

Help Save Association Resources

If you receive multiple copies, or wish to receive the newsletter via e-mail, contact Association secretary Mike Drzyzga at [drzyzga513@hotmail.com] so we can update our mailing list.

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