

Association President's Message:

January, 2018

Greetings fellow gunshippers. Happy, Healthy & Prosperous New Year. I pray that 2018 will be an awesome year for all.

The Association's Board is at full-power now, focused on the detailed planning for the October 2018 reunion in Tucson, AZ. Thank you to all the attendees of last year's Dayton reunion for completing the post reunion "survey forms". Secretary Ralph Lefarth did a superb job of summarizing your comments & feedback, & all that information will go into future planning. When can you register for the Tucson reunion? The IT Committee is quickly implementing an easier on-line registration process. You will be able to go to the Quartermaster's Page on the Association's Web site, & complete the registration process. Our Web site required an upgrade, & then some thorough testing. This should be completed by end-of-January. You can now make your reservations at the Double-Tree Hilton at the Airport. -- Call the hotel directly at 520-225-0800 or 800-222-TREE [8733] or go to <http://group.doubletree.com/AC119GunshipAssn>

New Active-Duty Shadows!! This is HOT news. Chief (Ret.) William Petrie passed to me an email from the Duty Officer (DO) from a NEW AC-130J squadron formed under 1 SOW at Hurlburt. Capt. Chris Zenk asked us to provide detailed information regarding the components of the 17th SOS Shadow Patch. Capt. Zenk is the DO of the new 73rd SOS gunship unit known "Shadows", & they are in process of creating the unit's patch. As of this writing, I have not heard of the patch being finalized, but it WILL have the skull & horse carried from the AC-119J test unit "Ghostriders", & it will have our black-capped & hatted Shadow. Who know what evil lurks in the desert sand? (I just made that up).

Donation to USO: Ron Julian received a heart-felt thank you letter from the USO, Southern OH group, for the wonderful generosity of the AC-119 Organization! This is a result of the money donated by the Dayton Reunion attendees last Oct. Al Heuss' AC-119 flag holder, table center pieces, were taken home by a person seated at the table based on their donation. The Holiday Inn matched us dollar-for-dollar, & the USO was able to provide a much warmer & caring effort to airmen not home for the holiday season. Well done my brothers!

Happy Valley – Phan Rang AFB – Facebook Page: I joined this FB page & find it very interesting. Lot of history, pictures, & the stories range from long before AC-119s arrived. They have nearly 1400 members. Their group is planning another reunion, this year Oct. 11, 2018, in Nashville, TN the same week of our Association's reunion in Tucson.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Drzyzga
President, 2016-2018

Association Membership Updates

We give a warm welcome to our new Life Members:

James Farrell, Life #458, 71st SOS & 17th SOS, Gunner

Larry Addis, Life #459, 18th SOS, Crew Chief

Donald Radke, Life #460, 71st & 17th, IO

Joseph Karkoszka, Life #461, 17th & 18th Gunshop

Ronald Newland, Life #462, 17th & 18th Ground Crew

The Association appreciates very much those “annual” members who respond promptly to the regular request to renewal your membership.

Final Flight

Silver C Chisum, 18th SOS Pilot & Squadron Commander, January 5, 2018

Robert H. Finley, 18th SOS Nav, January 10, 2018

Ernest "Ernie" Ray Grimes, 71st & 17th SOS Life Support, November 29, 2017

Don Johnson, 18th SOS Pilot, August 4, 2017

Ben R. McPherson, 71st Pilot, March 29, 2017

Kenneth Nauman, 18th SOS Pilot, January 16, 2016

Ronald D Penrose, 71st & 17th SOS FE, date unknown

Robert Swain, 18th SOS Gunner, January 24, 2018

Charles G Waple, 18th SOS NAV, September 17, 2012

Additional details are on our Association Mail Call site <https://www.ac119gunships.com/mail-call/> & our Facebook site <https://www.facebook.com/groups/195912423919726>

Special Note: It is with a sad heart that we report the passing of Supanee Maddux "Thui", "Toi". Thui was born in Ubon, Thailand & married Spectre Gunner Harold Maddux, who passed in 2006. She met Stinger Gunner, Everett "Ev" Sprous who was her very good friend & Care Giver until her passing, Nov 17, 2017.

Administrative Reminders

1. PLEASE remember to contact your group POC, the Membership Chairman, or the Association Secretary when you **change contact information**, especially your email address. We do very much want to keep in contact with you.
2. If you receive the *Firing Circle* by walking to the mail box after its postal delivery, AND you do have an EMAIL ADDRESS, let me, or your unit POC, or our Secretary know if you want future Newsletters & FLASHES sent via email. You can **SAVE** us a lot by avoiding stamps, printer paper, envelopes, ink cartridges, etc. Contact Association Secretary Ralph Lefarth ralph-l@sbcglobal.net or (314) 846-1009.
3. Are you interested in some AC-119 historical facts, current events, interesting dialogue, photos & stories about AC-119s? If you have Internet (web-www) access on your computer, then you have to join the Association's **Facebook page**. It now has **over 460 members** – not just directly related 119ers, but also history buffs, AC-130 folk, model makers, etc. Just browse to: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/195912423919726/>
4. Also, there are Facebook Pages dedicated to “Air Force Gunners”, “Air Force 462 Weapons”, “Happy Valley – Phan Rang” (almost 1400 members), & “U.S. Military Veterans - News you can use” – very interesting pictures & history, current news, & other valuable information.

**AC-119 Gunship Association Reunion XIX in Tucson, Arizona
Oct 10 - Oct 14, 2018 Double Tree Suites by Hilton Tucson Airport**



Ev Sprous & his team including Lee Jordan, have put together what will be a memorable Reunion XIX. The Double-Tree hotel in Tucson, AZ is beautiful, & the tours are awesome. Ev coordinated our St Louis Reunion; it was awesome & he's done it again for Tucson in 2018!

NOTE: your Reunion REGISTRATION & Hotel RESERVATION are TWO separate actions!

The Double Tree Suites by Hilton Tucson Airport is providing GREAT Hotel accommodations for everything, with rooms at \$95 plus taxes, free parking & breakfasts; and check out the Menus! **You can Reserve your Hotel Rooms now.** Call the hotel directly at 520-225-0800 or 800-222-TREE [8733] or <http://group.doubletree.com/AC119GunshipAssn>. Room rates are good from Oct 8 – Oct 16.

We will send info SOON on how to REGISTER for the reunion & all tours online.

The MAJOR Reunion Events include:

FRIDAY, Oct 12, 2018 MEET & GREET with Tri-Colored Tortilla Chips with House Made Salsa & Guacamole; Mini Chimichangas with House Made Salsa; Roasted Vegetable Spread with Assorted Crackers; Meatballs – Marinara, Swedish Style, or Spicy BBQ; Cheese Pinwheels; & Taquitos

SATURDAY, Oct 13, 2018 BANQUET DINNER & AUCTION. Plated dinner includes Choice of Grilled Salmon with Dill Lemon Cream Sauce - OR - Chicken Breast Dijon with Mushrooms, Tomatoes, Garlic & Dijon, & Beurre Blanc sauce - OR - Roast Prime Rib 8 oz Au-Jus, Horseradish - OR - Chef's Choice of Vegetarian Option; ALL with Garden Salad, Fresh Vegetables, & Chocolate Mousse Dessert (yum!)

SUNDAY, Oct 14, 2018 FAREWELL DINNER. All American BBQ Buffet dinner with: BBQ Pork Ribs; BBQ Chicken Breast; Roast Potatoes, Ranch Beans; Corn on the Cob, Corn Bread; Garden Salad & Dressings; Cote Slaw; Potato Salad; & both Apple & Cherry Cobbler for Desserts. Buffet includes Rolls & Butter, Freshly Brewed Coffee plus Decaf, Assorted Hot Teas & Iced Tea with Lemon.

TOURS, we have Tours for you!! Multiple options include the Aircraft BONEYARD at Davis-Monthan AFB; PIMA AIR & SPACE Museum; a TRIP INTO THE SABINO CANYON in the CORANADO NATIONAL FORREST; & the MINI-TIME MUSEUM of MINIATURES!

NOTE: when you REGISTER for the Reunion on-line through our Web-site, you can also register/pay for any of the tours below.

More Tour Info on next 2 pages:

Friday, October 12, 2018 "BONEYARD" & Pima Air Museum TOUR



The Pima Air & Space Museum is the exclusive operator of the "Boneyard" Tour of the 309th Aerospace Maintenance & Regeneration Group Facility on Davis-Monthan AFB. They offer climate-controlled motor coaches with an experienced, friendly docent on board to narrate a tour of 4,000+ aircraft from the U.S. Air Force, Navy, Marines, Army, Coast Guard, & several federal agencies including NASA in varying degrees of storage, being regenerated, or recycled. This is one of the largest non-government funded aviation & space museums in the world, featuring over 300 historical aircraft, from a Wright Flyer to a B787 Dreamliner! Sitting on 80 acres the museum opened its doors to the public in May of 1976, & over the past 40 years, has grown immensely. Today it encompasses 5 indoor exhibit hangars (2 dedicated to WWII). Take a Docent-led walking tour or museum ground Tram tour; & the museum is also the exclusive offeror of bus tours of the 2,600-acre "Aircraft Boneyard"/U.S. military & government aircraft storage facility. There is a Café in the Museum.

Tour Registration: everyone must pre-register & receive a security clearance in advance for this tour. The security clearance is issued by Davis-Monthan AFB from info on your online Registration. Given security issues with access to the base & our desire to make the access as smooth as possible, we hired ground transportation between the Double Tree Hotel & the Boneyard-Pima Museum. Our bus is the "only" method to access the Boneyard. **Again: even with a military ID, you cannot tour the Boneyard on your own. This can only be done through the Pima Air Museum & with advance security clearance. Also, you must have your driver's license with you for access (your military ID will not be accepted.)**

We will have two groups of 50 attendees each. Registration is limited to the first 100 people.

- o **0830** - Bus loads at Doubletree Hotel & goes to the Boneyard then Pima Air & Space Museum
- o **1530** - Bus picks up from the Museum & delivers us back to the Hotel

Price is \$45 per person for round-trip Bus, Boneyard Tour, & Pima Museum admission; the cut-off date to register for this Tour is September 9, 2018.

Friday, October 12, 2018 Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures TOUR



The Mini Time Machine
museum of miniatures
4455 E. CAMP LOWELL DR. TUCSON, AZ, 85712

The Mini Time Machine Museum tour is if you want to see a local attraction as an alternative to the "Boneyard" tour. The Museum's mission is to preserve & advance the art of miniatures, & the Chicago Tribune states: "The magic of this place cannot be overstated." They showcase more than 400 antique & contemporary dollhouses & roomboxes sure to delight all ages. The HISTORY GALLERY is a window into the past, offering a glimpse into daily life in 18th, 19th, & 20th centuries, as well as insight into the use & production of miniatures & how that has changed with time. The ENCHANTED REALM Gallery is filled with fantasy themed miniatures & collectibles. Folklore & fiction are brought to life with miniatures inhabited by dragons, fairies, mice, frogs & other imaginary creatures. The EXPLORING THE WORLD Gallery showcases miniatures depicting life around the world. Visitors are amazed by the accuracy of scale & fine attention to detail achieved by the artists represented in this gallery. More info <https://theminitimemachine.org/> Tour timing is TBD. **Price is \$35 per person for round-trip Bus & Museum admission; cut-off date to register for this Tour is September 9, 2018.**

Sunday, October 14, 2018 **Sabino Canyon TOUR**



Experience the beauty of one of the most unique Southwestern desert canyons on a Sabino Canyon tram ride. Sabino Canyon is a natural desert oasis located in Tucson's Coronado National Forest & is home to spectacular desert landscapes & abundant wildlife. Sabino Canyon's history is as diverse as it is fascinating. The Santa Catalina mountain range began its formation over 12 million years ago, 7 million years before the earliest known human being walked the face of the earth. In around 5 million B.C., the mountains ceased formation around the Tucson area, setting the stage for future ecological action. Plant life first appeared between 6,000 & 8,000 years ago, & some of the earliest predominant human occupants of Sabino Canyon were the Hohokam people. An earthquake centered in northern Mexico in 1887 dislodged an array of massive boulders lining the canyon walls, which crashed down & came to rest in the valley below. In 1905, the Forest Service was first created & began overseeing Sabino Canyon & during the Great Depression, the bridges over Sabino Creek & the Sabino Dam were constructed by the Works Progress Administration & Civilian Conservation Corp.

The first trams in Sabino Canyon began operating in October, 1978. From that point on, access to cars was restricted to allow visitors to reach Upper Sabino Canyon by foot, bicycle or tram. Sabino Canyon Tours was founded in May, 1985 & provides young & older visitors alike with the opportunity to experience the exquisite beauty of Sabino Canyon. You can learn more at their web site: <http://www.sabinocanyon.com/> Reunion coordinator Ev Sprous visited the location & scoped-it-out for us. Beautiful pictures are posted on the Association's Facebook page.

Tour timing is yet To Be Determined.

Price is \$30 per person for round-trip Bus transportation to/from the Double Tree Hotel & the Museum admission; cut-off date to register for this Tour is September 9, 2018.

NOTE: This tour is only about three hours long, including travel. Please consider having some lunch BEFORE the afternoon bus departure.

Future Reunion Planning

2019 – Reunion XX, Salt Lake City, UT

Chuck Williams volunteered to obtain the necessary support, & coordinate our 20th reunion. Of course, there is a lot of planning to do & Chuck is studying his "take-off" checklist as you read this. Hill AFB is close by for support. I'll keep you all informed as this effort matures.

2020 – Reunion XXI, Omaha, NE

John & Laura Wolff proposed a reunion in Omaha, NE. Chuck Williams could not coordinate SLC in 2020, so John & Laura agreed that they will work-on the reunion for 2020. Offutt AFB is still an active base & may offer the support we usually depend on.