

## March 2003 Hello Gunshippers

Our 4<sup>th</sup> Reunion is coming together & I want to give you some highlights plus some idea on what we've been working & spending our time & your money on. First, some things that have been done or being worked on:

- Wayne Laessig & Jim Terry through their efforts have consolidated various listings of names into one database. This Master List has over 800 names of Members of the 71<sup>st</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, & 18<sup>th</sup> SOS members. Flying personnel, Support personnel, Technical personnel & so on. We will try to reach each & everyone on this list to see if they want to stay on the list or not. More on this at the membership meeting by Wayne & Jim.
- A Brass Memorial Plaque, S. E. A. Video's & a one-of-a-kind AC-119 Gunship Painting & Lithographs.
- Norm Evans & I are on call for the next meeting for the Hurlburt Air Park committee to request that a concrete stand be built for the placement of our Memorial Plaque.
- Norm now has SEA Video's for the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> SOS. They each start out at Lockbourne & then in country of day & night firings & each crew position. Nice tapes please order one for yourself.
- Our newest Board Member EV Sprous has done a super job on our newsletters, including E-mailing to many of you. To get the newsletter by E-mail you will need to have Acrobat reader. Acrobat reader is free so download it & get your newsletter.
- The Web site is just amazing. PLEASE take a some time & read the Guest book entries-there are messages from all kinds of people from Spouses, Sons & Daughters & lots of fellow Gunshippers. Take a short walk through the Web's Links & pages for I'm sure you'll add it to your "Favorites" list. For those of you without a computer, ask **someone** you know that has a computer or ask one of us to walk you through it at the reunion. We'll even print you some of the pages you might want.

The Reunion itself has a full slate as well as plenty of time to visit with old friends & hopefully make some new ones while you "hootch it" or just enjoy Ft. Walton Beach again after all those years! Four Points Hotel Sheraton in Ft. Walton Bch. will once again be our host & we could not have better hosts for the last past three years! Super breakfast every morning & the Pool party along with the BBQ dinner & oh yea waking up every morning on the beach. It doesn't get any better then that. We want to see more Gunshippers at the 2003 Reunion, which will once again be held in Ft. Walton Bch., Fl. On October 3-4-5. We'll send the details on the Reunion activities & schedules soon in another message. But, right now, please take the time to fill out your Reunion Registration Form & then call the Four Points, telephone number 1-800-874-8104, to make your reservation (be sure to tell them you are attending the AC-119 Gunship Reunion). Now do this before it's too late or this gets put aside & you forget OK! Here are just a few highlights:

- Guest Speaker will be Maj. Gen. Douglas Metcalf, which continues our tradition of speakers who were with us & who traveled a career path built on foundations we forged there. He'll help us understand a little more about our "ground pounder" brothers who gave us the tools & support to fly & fight with, & to return alive. His topic is "From the Ground Up". Maybe we'll hear about what it took to replace & engine that blew over Steel Tiger or one of those nice places we took their aircraft (funny how we kept bring them back broken & with new holes in them).
- Memorial Services back at Hurlburt Field at our Gunship.
- Dedication of a Plaque for the lost comrades in SEA from the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> SOS
- Special Visitor "Sundog FAV" Tom Mulligan who flew with Terry Courtney at An Loc that tragic & heroic day in 1972. Tom's also involved in the state-of-the-art FLIR technology to give us some insights to today's world of Gunships & other applications. He also has a funny story or two, like Spectre BDA that will make you grin.
- Our Association computer + our scanner + our printer + our digital camera + your old crew or mission pictures + whoever you can get to come to the reunion that was in that picture = a composite picture to take home (kind of a then & now). Bottom Line: bring your pictures & stuff-you never know who will show up!
- T-shirts-T-shirts-T-shirts! Plus, Hats, Patches, Pins, Mission CD's & actual Shadow & Stringer Video's. Soon to come Lithographs of the AC-119, Coins, & Gold Shirts.

Look at the last meetings minutes & our by-laws changes. We'll be voting on some biggies at this Reunion. For example, the Reunion survey responses are running 9-1 in favor of Dayton Ohio for the 2004 Reunion. [Why](#)

Dayton? To begin with, Wright-Patt is where the AC-119 mission was born; we had our initial training at Lockbourne, the Air Force Museum is expanding their Gunship display & we can give them knowledge based on real gunship people & stories (that's you & me guy's), the German Village is an hour away (Plank's here we come). Rogers Stevens & Ron Julian live near Wright Patterson & are our POC's for checking things out for us. They will brief us & we will vote on this at the 0800 Saturday Membership Meeting in the Hudson Hall at the Four Points Hotel.

On a more somber note, we've lost some brothers this year, but I know they are with my very best friends Fred Graves & Mike Friel & the others who have left us, just raising hell & grinning at us running around down here. (Hey Fred-Dreams do come true-Thanks Buddy-Love You!). Please join me in remembering those who have gone in the past years & those we have lost this year: Jim Acquaviva, Jose Cachuela, & Rene Pommerelle. Our prayers are with them; their families & other loved ones.

Some last thoughts: Serving on the Association Board is an honor & huge responsibility. I've loved it & even "not liked it so much" sometimes, but over all it's one of the greatest things you can do for all of us. Please think about filling one of our All-Volunteer roles next year-not just as a board member but those who contribute their time in contacting people, keeping records straight, coordinating for plaques, awards, pictures, patches, shirts, speakers the web & meals (need I go on). Bottom Line is we can always use volunteers. Call Bill Petrie if your interested in helping with the web site (you need to know a little more than: a mouse is a little furry animal" though). Call Wayne with contacts for the master list, EV for the newsletter support or articles for the newsletter, or me for lots of other opportunities to support " your " association. We're also looking for an Association Chaplain, to fill our new board member position, so if anyone is interested please let me know (& no you don't need to be ordained minister to fill this position).

Be sure to register for the Reunion at the Four Points Hotel on October 3-4-5, 2003, & I can't wait to be reunited once again (Hopefully Bigger & Better).

God Bless One & All

Gus Sininger

President AC-119 Gunship Association