

President's Message, July 2019

Greetings fellow gunshippers, friends and family

Happy summertime to all. I know there has been so much nasty springtime weather across the USA. Many of our associates felt some set-back from the weather. Hopefully your summertime will be enjoyable.

Excitement is growing for our reunion in Salt Lake City. Andrea and I have our flight reservations from Newark, NJ (EWR) to SLC. As many email threads and Facebook posts demonstrate, we are looking forward to a special time with those that can attend. If you are already registered, and you do not see your buddies name on the Who's Coming list, get on the phone and encourage them to attend. Our 20th anniversary will only happen once!

New Member of the Zipper Club. On June 4, I had five arteries by-passed during open heart surgery. All went well, and I am on the road to full recovery. I discovered that very many of my friends and associates in this Association, and the American Legion, and the Senior Club in town, have a long incision down the chest that looks like a zipper, hence the "zipper club". For those of you who caught this news on our Facebook Page, and sent lots of love, prayers and well-wishes – **thank you!** It has been difficult working while on pain meds, and I feel that I am falling behind. Nevertheless, your Board and all its committees are working full throttle to keep the Association moving in the correct direction. On a side note, it pains me to see in the past month so many of our senior members and families – serious illness, medical set-backs and losses. This is clearly a sign of the aging of our Associates, and in my mind, a very compelling reason to make it to the Salt Lake City reunion n Sept!

Successful "outreach" efforts. One of our very "busy" Associates is Ev Sprous. Ev took the initiative and has been successfully locating folks that we've just lost contact with. He started with the 71st SOS and unfortunately learned that the reason we lost contact is that our guys have passed. But, on a way happier note, he also made some contacts with guys who didn't know about us or reconnected some who hadn't updated their personal contact info. I spoke with a 71st/17st SOS Pilot who is thrilled we found him, and is coming to SLC (his 1st reunion), AND he is signed up to do a personal history video. Great job Ev, Thank You.

Personal Interview (Oral History) Videos. Here is a very newsworthy update. Almost all of the personal video interviews are easily viewed from an easy to get-to link: <https://island-escape.com/AC119/>. The Association's web site is gaining more and more functionality, and it needed a reorganization to put all our history book stories, interviews, and other stories on one page. A big Thank You goes to Roy Davis, with help from Everett Sprous and Jerry Hester to attain this achievement. Also remember that the Association is supporting new video sessions at the SLC reunion. Many reunion registrants have signed up already. I encourage you to help tell the story of the AC-119 gunships – do it not for yourself, but do it for your family's history.

T-Shirts for 20th Anniversary Reunion: Since this is a special reunion, we decided to make a special t-shirt. These t-shirts can be ordered on-line until August 7th. The T-shirt orders are going strongly – as of this note, more than 80 are ordered. Woo-hoo!. The cost per shirt will be approximately \$18.50 plus tax. There will be a small upcharge for shirts larger than XL. The shirts will be available for pick up **at the reunion**. If you're not planning to pick up your t-shirt at the reunion, you will have to pay for shipping when you order. If you have any questions call Roy Davis at 253-549-2044 or email at roy@island-escape.com. **LAST DAY TO ORDER IS AUGUST 7TH**. Link: <https://www.customink.com/g/wvq0-00bu-h3fe>

You can also find a link to this Order Form on the Association Web-site under the Quartermaster's page

July 2019 Firing Circle: We are working on a full-featured July Newsletter. One of the featured stories is the **50th Homecoming Anniversary celebration of the 71st SOS reservists return to Columbus, ID. Thank you** to Jim Alvis for writing a super summary of this very special event. Keep scanning your inbox!

That's it for now,

Yours in Service,

Mike Drzyzga, President 2016-2019

7/2/2019