



President's Message - April 29, 2019

Greetings, fellow AC-119ers, families and friends: Happy springtime to all! Spring is finally in bloom in NJ, and the warmer weather is welcome over the gloomy, short winter days. This message is a Newsletter FLASH, a Facebook post, and an upload to the Association's website. I feel it's important to have the REUNION XX REGISTRATION Launch for Salt Lake City be a "focused" announcement. I know many of you wondered if you missed the announcements – nope, but the time is here. Beyond this, I will work with Editor Don Luke to send a full-featured *Firing Circle* soon.

Registration is live on-line!! After LOTS of work, we're ready, and the Reunion information flyer provides EVERYTHING you need to know, plus we tweaked our website to make the process as easy as possible for you. The flyer certainly should be printed as a hard copy, for you to have as a handy reference. Wayne Laessig and our Webmaster Liz Buss have my utmost gratitude for putting in the time and effort to get it done. There were many unforeseen delays that resulted in a process that took much longer than imagined. Next year it shall be much quicker. I encourage you to go to <https://www.ac119gunships.com/reunion/upcoming-reunion/> and carefully read all about the activities associated with our Reunion in Salt Lake City.

LET'S CELEBRATE: Reunion Coordinator Chuck Williams is giving us a grand event, something special to celebrate our Association's 20th Anniversary Reunion, and our 50 years of special "brotherhood" as AC-119ers. This dual anniversary will never happen again. What I hear as I meet and talk with you, and what I see on Facebook, is that you love the bonds that we formed and the brotherhood we share. So, let's reunite in SLC, and make this reunion something special! I am sure it will be. The venue hosted by the Little America Hotel is properly elegant for our anniversary reunion. The fresh food is prepared on the spot for us, the hotel amenities are the best, the hootch is very large and well arranged, and the hotel staff will be doing all the leg work for refreshment resupply missions. It will be a pleasure to be more "catered to."

Publicity: Time to spread the word and gather together as many of us as possible in SLC. Board members Cash McCall and Jim Dunn sent out the reunion announcements to a dozen military related publications. Also, Chuck Williams has a very well formatted "publicity" news release that he will use throughout his military contacts, and with local outlets. Nevertheless, we (you and me) can also reach out to our buddies, former hootch and crew mates, and our AC-119 email contact lists, and make this Reunion special.

President's thoughts regarding local social tours: The Association embraced having a "tour coordinator" create this additional reunion activity to make the reunion more interesting to everyone. It is very effective, with past reunion tours well attended and well liked. Andrea Drzyzga accepted the challenge again this year. She began at the end of February. Without venting here all the details, we faced a huge communications breakdown on three fronts. The result was that on April 15, after 6 weeks of effort, the tour for Thursday night that I have been writing about--to attend the Tabernacle Choir rehearsal at Temple Square--was CLOSED to the public. An apology came with an explanation that they were locking down to assure the security of their Church's President visit. Therefore, without delaying the reunion registration launch any longer, we now plan on only **one** formal tour: a great Sunday bus trip to historic Main Street, Park City, UT. PLEASE check out the Tour flyer linked on the website reunion page. There is also much to see and do in Salt Lake City, beyond "hootch time" and our routine formal events, some of which is discussed in the reunion flyer.

Looking ahead: The Association's Board members engage in monthly teleconferences, discussing and brainstorming current events and the future. One thing ahead is a super reunion XXI in November 2010 in Fort Walton Beach, FL. Gus Slinger indicated that our legacy USAF units at Hurlburt, the 18th FTS and 73rd SOS Shadows, are eager to have us visit. Also ahead, for me, is the end of my third year as President. As the Association's by-laws allow, I intend to relieve Larry "Doc" Fletcher from the "Past Presidents" position, and I will start working now with the Board to seek a qualified new President for 2020. With your support, we will keep the AC-119 Gunship Association vibrant and moving forward.

"With sails unfurled,"

Mike Drzyzga, President 2016-2019