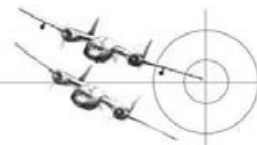


The AC-119 Gunship *Firing* Association Circle



Association President's Message – May 2021

Greetings fellow AC-119ers, Family, & Friends,

Wow, this year is flying quickly past, it seems to me. Good news is that the Association is doing well & on track, especially towards our Reunion XXI in October. We already have about 135 committed to attend, with many “first timers” registered. The June *Firing Circle* has the list of “Who’s Coming”, & the reunion information flyer – please check it out for names of your friends & fellow crew members. Our Web site has become a huge resource now holding much of our history – including Oral History Videos, our biographies, & stories. Next time you are browsing the internet, go visit www.ac119gunships.com.

It is already May, & we are heading to a better Memorial Day than we experienced last year during the pandemic lock-down. As more & more States are relaxing the pandemic restrictions, we will have Memorial Day gatherings to honor those brave Americans we lost in “all wars”. Here in northern NJ, American Legion Post 423 will have a small but energetic event, & I’ll be proudly flipping cheese burgers on the grill for those in attendance. It feels like we are slowly getting back to normal. And I trust things will improve as we pass into summer. Please get out & enjoy the ceremonies.

I communicate often with other Association Board members & those who help run the Association, beyond our monthly Board-Plus Meetings. We have developed friendships & great working relationships. It is sad that we see an increasing rate of loss of our most senior members. In fact, member loss is greater than our gaining of new members. Nevertheless, I am very happy to see that our Facebook community is growing, & that we have many younger family members joining the Association. I am hopeful that the younger members attending the reunion feel & see our comradery, & develop an interest in helping continue the Association’s activities. One of the busiest Associates is Ev Sprous – he does outreach, helps with Facebook, is our media manager, & handles membership. Ev can use help with the monthly task of communicating with “annual members” for membership renewal. If you are OK with Excel spreadsheets & Word documents on a Personal Computer, & you have about 1 hr. a month to donate to the Association, we can sure use your help. Please contact me more details & encouragement.

Thinking ahead: We have made preliminary plans for our 2022 reunion in Branson MO. Coordinator Jerry McDonald has firm plans to return us to Branson. I’m already looking forward to it. But, it is NOT too soon to think about what’s next – 2023. If you all want to have our Association continue with our annual reunions, then we will need someone to take the lead for 2023. Past reunion coordinators have written a “guide book” that outlines what needs to be done, & the leader will be part of a committee that includes past coordinators. If available, we intend to use a professional “event coordinator” that will make the reunion coordinator’s task much easier. We have lots of time, so please THINK ABOUT IT!

[NKP Reunion #2](#) For those of us Stingers that served out of Nakhon Phanom (NKP) RTAFB, there is a well-planned reunion in Destin, FL, November 11, 2021. For more info, go to this link: [2021 NKP Reunion Weblink](#)

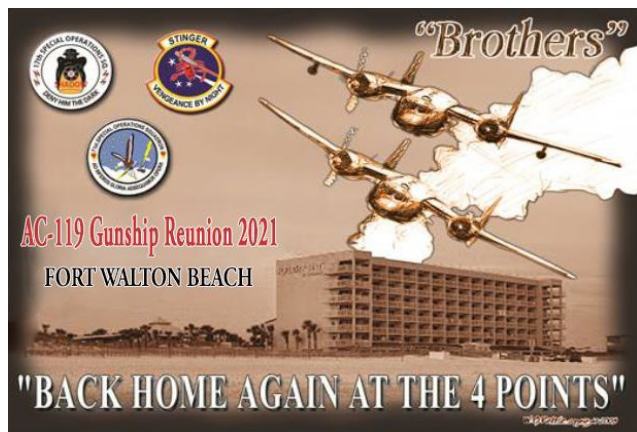
See you in Ft. Walton Beach. Please stay safe & stay well
Mike Drzyzga, Association President
Email: drzyzga513@hotmail.com



2021 AC-119 GUNSHIP REUNION XXI

OCTOBER 6 – OCTOBER 10, 2021 AT FORT WALTON BEACH, FLORIDA

“BACK HOME AGAIN AT THE FOUR POINTS”



In 2000 our Association Founding Fathers got us together to celebrate who we are, the friendships & bonds we'd formed, & to affirm our place in military & SEA History. 400 of us met at Fort Walton. Since then, we held Reunions every year except 2020 at locations all over our great country, doing exactly what our Founding Fathers set out to do. **We added more reasons to get together, like NEW friends & including family members of our honored KIAs.** Show family, friends, & history your pride in being part of this AC-119 Gunship family.

Join us, while you can, at the Four Points Hotel in Fort Walton Beach!

NOTE: you must have a COVID vaccination to attend. If you won't or cannot, contact Roy Davis or Mike Drzyzga [Contact Roy or Mike](#)

Hotel Room Reservations – Four Points by Sheraton

1325 Miracle Strip Parkway SE, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548

- **All-inclusive rooms prices are \$110.88 for a King Bed (no view), \$133.28 for two Queen Beds with Courtyard garden view, or \$172.48 for 2 Queen Beds in the tower with a beach view. **Hotel Reservations** are not part of the **Reunion Registration** & you must contact the hotel separately. Use their website [Book your group rate for AC-119 Gunship Association Reunion](#) or call 1-850-243-8116 for the hotel direct or 1-800-325-3535 for central reservations to **reserve** your room. Tell them you are with the AC-119 Gunship Association. **BOOK NOW!** You can reserve rooms at our Reunion rates from Monday, Oct 4th to Tuesday, Oct 12th, 2021, but our **Reunion rates are only guaranteed through Sept 20th**. After that, the rates are only good for as long as rooms are available. Bottom line: since you can cancel without charge as long as you cancel no later than 24 hours prior to your reservation check-in date, **reserve** your room by Sept 20th to guarantee you get our Reunion rate.**

After making your Hotel Reservation, Register for the Reunion!

- Register online at [Online Reunion Registration](#). **Note:** When you Checkout, you'll see a place where it asks "Are you a returning customer?" & "Do you want to create an account?" Those are PayPal fields & you can ignore them. Just go to the end of the Checkout page to complete your registration using either PayPal payment or a credit card. It's a good idea to print your completed registration & bring it to the Reunion. If you cannot pay online, CALL Doug Wohlgamuth at 813-781-5728 (he's East Coast time). **Note: Reunion Registration cut-off is October 5th**. If you cancel on or before then you can receive a refund, or make a donation. If you cancel after Oct 5, we may have to pay contracted costs, so no refunds (but, talk to us if there are special circumstances like family emergencies or losses).
- **When you arrive**, head to our Reunion Table to pick up your **Reunion Registration** packet with name tags, Event tickets, etc. If we're not there when you arrive, check-in at the Hotel Desk & go to the Hootch to pick up your **Reunion Registration** packet.

Transportation

- **Airlines:** Allegiant, American, Southwest, United, & Delta fly to Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport (VPS).
- **Car:** Parking at the hotel is **free**.
- **RVs/Campers:** Hurlburt (850-797-0103) & Eglin (850-883-1243) FamCamps: no reservations; call a couple weeks ahead; Geronimo RV Resort (850-424-6801); & Destin West RV Resort (850-203-4533).

Reunion Agenda

Wednesday, Oct 6 [Reunion Registration](#); Hootch; anything you want to do on your own!

NOTE: Our Hootch opens & stays open **daily** from about 0800 until about 2200 **except** during our Meet & Greet, Banquet, & Farewell BBQ. Hootch snacks & beverages are free (donations always welcomed :->)

Thursday, Oct 7 [Reunion Registration](#); Hootch; & Pensacola Area Tour!

Tour Time TBD: this Pensacola area tour, COVID permitting, is \$25 & will include the Vietnam Wall South, Pensacola Historic District, Naval Air Museum, & lunch (not included in tour price) at the Cubi Bar Café.

Friday, Oct 8 [Reunion Registration](#); Hootch; 18th & 73rd Legacy Squadrons' Picnic, & Meet & Greet!

18th & 73rd Legacy Squadrons' Picnic across from the Hurlburt Main Gate in the Picnic Area (not "on" the base) is **free** to Reunion attendees but will depend on deployments & COVID. For now, sign up & we'll provide more details as we get closer. Plan to attend, & meet today's Air Force warriors who carry on our Gunship heritage & legacy!

1700 - Meet & Greet Cash Bar

1800 - Meet & Greet on the North Pool Deck & Patio is \$41; kids ages 4-12 are \$20.

- Introductions of Reunion newcomers, special guests, & KIA Family members.
- **Buffet includes:** Beef Wellington hors d'oeuvre, Swedish Meatballs; Bacon wrapped Scallops w/horseradish sauce; vegetable Spring Rolls; fried Chicken Fingers w/honey mustard; vegetablesCrudit  w/onion & Ranch Dip.

Saturday, Oct 9 Association Meeting; Hootch; anything on your own; Banquet!

0900-1100 - Business Meeting for all Regular & Associate Members.

1700 - Banquet Cash Bar

1800 - Banquet on the North Pool Deck & Patio is \$49; kids ages 4-12 are \$24.

- **Buffet includes:** Blackened Mahi Mahi w/pineapple rum sauce, Jamaican Jerked Chicken, BakedHam w/citrus glaze, Roasted fresh vegetable, Caribbean Confetti Rice, Tossed Salad w/Ranch or Balsamic Dressings, & Banana Pudding.

Sunday, Oct 10 Golf; Hootch; anything you want to do on your own; Farewell BBQ!

Early - Golf Tournament is \$10 & Doug Wohlgamuth will coordinate details with golfers.

1700 - Farewell BBQ Cash Bar

1800 - Farewell BBQ on North Pool Deck & Patio is \$44; Kids ages 4-12 are \$22.

- **Buffet includes:** BBQ Baby Back Ribs, BBQ Half Chicken, Southern Potato Salad, Twice Baked Potato Casserole, Smoked Baked Beans, Southern Green Beans, Tossed Salad w/Ranch or ItalianDressing; Summer Fruit Salad w/Citrus-Honey-Pecans; & Banana Pudding

Breakfasts & Lunches are on your own. The Four Points has excellent, affordable breakfasts!

Reunion Special Information

- **We will notify you & update the website if anything changes. The important thing right now is to complete your **Hotel Reservation** & your **Reunion Registration!****
- **Reunion Helpers:** Coordinator Gus Sininger can use help on a few things at the Reunion. If you can help, please contact him & let him know what you can help with, like:
 1. **Welcome Team** to greet folks & give them their Reception package Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday afternoon or evening (after that, Reception packages will be in the Hootch)
 2. **Hootch-Sitters** to be the “Go To” person in the Hootch for a specific morning, afternoon, or evening. You’ll replenish snacks/beverages & make sure questions or requests get to Gus.

• Wednesday afternoon or evening	• Thursday morning, afternoon, or evening
• Friday morning or afternoon (no Sitter needed during Meet & Greet)	• Saturday afternoon (no Sitter needed during Association Meeting & Banquet)
• Sunday morning or Sunday afternoon (no Sitter needed during Farewell BBQ)	

- **Silent Auction:** If you’d like to contribute, something that fits in luggage works well. If you have an item you think needs to be bid upon as an Active auction item, please let Gus know & he’ll coordinate with our Auction Team on whether it will be a Silent or Active auction item.
- **Special Raffle:** a **Commemorative Kimber 45 Pistol**, Classic 1911 model, Stainless Steel, Combat Trigger & Ambi (ambidextrous) Safety, in a special box, crafted & donated by Cherokee Firearms gunsmith Ron Soderquist. Raffle tickets are 1 for \$10; 6 for \$55, & 13 for \$110 (LIMIT 100 Tickets per person). This pistol has special AC-119 commemoration pistol grips; comes with two magazines, carrying case, & gun lock.



NOTE: Photos show the actual Kimber pistol as crafted by Cherokee Firearms gunsmith Ron Soderquist. The actual pistol will be on display at the 2021 Ft. Walton Beach reunion.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kimber Classic Stainless Steel 1911 Style Pistol • 45 ACP Caliber with 5-inch barrel • Combat Trigger & Beavertail Grip Safety • Ambidextrous Extended Thumb Safety • Tactical Hammer & Sear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat Checkered Main Spring Housing • Open Mag Well • Fitted Barrel Bushing with Guide Rod • Fiber Optics Sights Installed • Custom Box for Storage.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custom Engraved Grips: AC-119 Association Patch on one grip panel, Brothers image on the other panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original Rosewood Grip Panels Will Be Included when sent.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slide has “Vietnam 68 – 73” & the 71st, 17th & 18th SOS engraved 	

Buy your tickets from Doug Wohlgamuth, who will hold all tickets for the actual Raffle, which will occur at the 2022 Branson Reunion. Pay by PayPal to dawohlgamuth@gmail.com. Put “Pistol Bids” in the PayPal subject line. You can also send Doug a check or money order at Doug Wohlgamuth, 504 Shea Place, Sun City Center, FL 33573-5726. Be sure to indicate that the payment is for the Pistol raffle.

- **Oral History Videos & History Book Bios:** Over 250 of our air & ground crew, plus family members & spouses, have made oral history videos &/or written History Book bios. New videos & bios are posted on our Association web site. Videos may be done solo or with your spouse, crew or other crew members. If you have not made a video or written a bio, we encourage you to do so. You can sign up to do a video or History Book Bio when you complete your Reunion Registration. Click on this link for some tips for making a video or writing a bio. [Bio & Video Info & Samples.](#)
- **Books:** 7 books written about & by AC-119ers are in our Store. Their experiences & legacy are treasures to read, learn from, & enjoy! These include our original History Book; a History book with all the original plus new Bios; a book of Stories; *Spooky, Spectre, & the Man* by Mike Friel about Ron Terry's battles to create & utilize fixed-wing gunships; a book of the cartoons that were our way of inserting humor into SEA; *The Gunship Chronicles* by Larry Barbee including his Stinger 41 story; & *History of Fairchild C-119 Flying Boxcar* by Wendell Cosner. Your actual selections & purchase in the store are via Amazon.
- **Special Reunion Event:** many of you may remember Marshal Mullins and his AC-119 KIA Commemorative Harley Trike. It was Marshall's dream to be a Patriot Guard Rider on it, but we lost him before he could fully achieve that. However, Marshall's dream lives on in Matt Robeck, Patriot Guard Rider & Director of the American Legion Rider Program! Matt now rides Marshall's trike to PGR events, & he's bringing it to Fort Walton. Matt & his wife Annette proudly carry Marshall's rich legacy, & they'll be at the Reunion late Friday through early Sunday. Visit with them, hear their (and Marshall's) stories, & celebrate the continuing dream kept alive by these patriots on this beautiful machine.



Marshal on the Trike



Matt on the Trike



ON YOUR OWN: Things to see & do in Fort Walton Beach & Vicinity

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do a BX run :->) • Dinner Cruises • Flea Markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armament Museum • Gulfarium Marine Adventure Park • Mini Golf 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ or full day Fishing Trips • Scuba dives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And, walking distance to beautiful white sand beaches, area dining, night life, & entertainment! 		

Who's Coming To The Reunion

- Frank & Shirley Bartlett
- Jack & Carolyn Bastin & Guest Linda McCain
- Paul Beagley & sons Mark & Michael
- Greg & Debbie Blackmon
- Jim & JoAnn Boyd & son (GySgt, Ret) Scott
- Tom Brander
- Paul & Beverly Brown
- Eugene & Kay Caruso
- John Cootz
- Craig Corbett
- Peggy Craig & Guest
- Alton Criswell & Guest
- Charles & Sharon Daenzer (Gus Siningers daughter & son-in-law)
- Roy Davis & Paula Pascoe-Davis
- Mike & &rea Drzyzga
- Bob & Janet Dydo
- Norm & Shirley Evans
- Mike Friel
- Lloyd & Mary Ellen Froelich
- Sam & Debby Gallo
- Ron & Patricia Gilbert
- Donna & Charles Glickman (Gus Siningers daughter & son-in-law)
- Joe & Janis Goryl
- Jimmy Grant
- Karen Graves & Guest Julie Schuler
- Irving & Gail Greenberg
- Rich Hall & Guest
- George Hardy
- Jerry & Ellen Hester
- Ron & Carol Hinton & son Brian & wife Imari Hinton
- Larry "Baby Huey" Hunter
- Lee Jordan & Guest
- Mike & Mary Alice Kimmel
- Mike Krauss
- Wayne & Lynette Laessig
- Mike Lee & spouse
- Joe Lentini & Guest
- Diane & Wes Lord
- Don Luke
- Robert & Cheryl Lyall
- Mac & Nancy MacIsaac & son John Paul 'JP' Mac Isaac
- Dale & Jeanette Martin
- Cash McCall
- Buck & Linda McCants
- Steve Meleen & Guest
- Jerry & Claudette Michaud
- Bruce Miller & Guest
- John Morgan & Guest
- John & Lynn Morrow
- Mike & Theresa Mullen
- Bruce & Mary Muller
- Larry & Loretta Nelson
- Phil & Rosemary Nordstrum
- Tom Novak
- Joyce & Vaughn Pelloni
- Bill & Karen Petrie
- Bill & Cindy Posey & son (CMSgt Ret) Bill Jr & wife Robin, & Grandson (MSgt) Brandon
- Jim Ray
- Matt & Annette Robeck
- Frank Rudolph & daughter Laura Rudolph
- Terry & Theresa Sarul
- Chris Schnell (Hamman) & daughter Liz Kolepp-Mayer
- Gus Sininger & Grandson Tyler Vaughn
- Lonnie Sininger
- Frank "Ski" & Yami Sledzinski
- Ronnie & Venita Soderquist
- Ev Sprous & sister Ruth Sprous-Chapman
- Donna (Crews) Stapleton
- Kenneth & Veronika Stearn
- Bill & Wilma Tyler & daughter Cheree & Steve Bachmann
- Gary & Evan Vanlerberghe
- Gene Van Over
- Dave & Mary Voisey
- Tom & Marisa Weisenfluh
- Lee Ann & Glen Whitaker (Gus Siningers daughter & son-in-law)
- Doug & Karen Wohlgamuth
- John & Laura Wolff
- Teddy Wood & Guest

AC119 Association Membership Updates

We give a warm welcome to our new Life Members:

- John Santivaschi, Life #553, 18th SOS Logistics
- Ruth Sprous-Chapman, Associate Life #554, Sister of Ev Sprous
- Henry Sehne, Life #556, 18th SOS Crew Chief
- Stephen Paynter Life #557 18th SOS Navigator

We also give a warm welcome to our new Honorary Life Member:

- Clifton Johnson, Honorary Life #555, New 73rd SOS Commander

We give a warm welcome to our new & renewing Annual Members:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duane Arnold, • Dean Barnard, 18th SOS, Maintenance • Charles Botula, 17th SOS, Pilot • Nanci Browning, • Gilberto Chavez, 18th SOS, Maintenance • Mitch Dorger, 18th SOS Maintenance • Larry Juday, 18th SOS, Pilot | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Hollstein, • Tom Newbold, 71st SOS Gunner • Barry Packard, 18th SOS, Nav • Butch Poehler, 18th SOS, Nav • Levi Rosecrans, 17th SOS, Maintenance • Richard Siela, 18th SOS, Maintenance • Stephen Zolock, 17th SOS, Pilot |
|---|---|

Relatives Accepting Life Members Numbers:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sue Fletcher from Larry Fletcher • Catherine Moore from James Moore | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Hoover from Bill Hoover • Jo Anna Byrd from Bruce Byrd • Henry M K Alau from Henry D K Alau |
|--|--|

Final Flight

We remember our human frailty & the strength of our brotherhood in the loss of these who joined our Final Flight. Please remember their families in your prayers. We raise a glass to all. R.I.P. Brothers.

- Robert “Andy” Andrews, 18th SOS Stinger Gunner, passed January 18, 2021
- Ronald “Ron” Benedict, 18th SOS Stinger Nav, passed February 5, 2021
- Robert “Bob” Bokern, 17th SOS Shadow Nav & Shadow 78 Survivor, passed January 5, 2021
- Aloysius Casey, 18th SOS Stinger Nav, passed June 10, 2020
- Wiley Gilmore, 18th SOS Stinger pilot, passed on April 30, 2021
- William “Bill” Hoover, 17th SOS Shadow & 18th SOS Stinger Pilot, passed May 1, 2021
- Corney “Barney” Lowe, 18th SOS Stinger FE & IO, passed January, 2018
- James “Jim” Moore, 18th SOS Stinger FE, passed March 12, 2021
- Roger Nyberg, 71st & 17th SOS Shadow FE, passed December 16, 2020
- Daniel Pruitt, 18th SOS Stinger Nav on MacKay Trophy Crew, passed May 31, 2018
- Tonny Simms, 18th SOS Stinger Gunner, passed October 29, 2008
- Ronald “Ron” Traudt, 18th SOS Stinger Pilot, passed January 27, 2021
- Robert “Bob” Van Abel, 18th SOS Stinger IO, passed January 20, 2021

Additional details are on our Association Mail Call site <https://www.ac119gunships.com/mail-call/mail-call/> & our Facebook site <https://www.facebook.com/groups/195912423919726>. You might also notice that some who took their Final Flight did so long ago. Ev Sprous & his Outreach Team do a super job locating, contacting, & reconnecting with our remaining living crewmates. They also find many who are already deceased. They can only reconnect us with our remaining living Brothers if they know who to look for! **PLEASE** visit <https://www.ac119gunships.com/membership-contact-information/alpha-roster> & add any missing names or contacts you have.

Administrative Updates & Reminders

1. PLEASE remember to contact your group POC, the Membership Coordinator (Ev Sprous), or the Association Secretary (Andrea Drzyzga) 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 & use an EMAIL ADDRESS, TELL Mike Drzyzga, Roy Davis, your unit POC, or our Membership Coordinator NOW if you want future Newsletters & FLASHES sent via email. You can **SAVE** us a lot by reducing the cost of postage, printer paper, envelopes, ink cartridges, etc. Contact Association Membership Coordinator Ev Sprous, via email at ac119kstingergunner@gmail.com or call (520) 528-9444.
3. Are you interested in some AC-119 Gunship historical facts, current events, interesting dialogue, photos & stories about AC-119s? If you have Internet access on your computer, tablet or cell phone, then you have to join the Association’s **Facebook page**. It now has **over 679 members** – not just directly related AC119ers, but also history buffs, AC-130 folk (including some new 73rd SOS Shadows), 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.
5. **Awards & Decorations** coordinator Steve “Col” Mac Isaac continues to aid us in fixing incorrect DD214s. He has helped many get on the trail to receiving decorations they earned through research of documentation & orders shared by association members. Questions & comments: Contact Col Mac at email: colmacmac@mac.com, or (MST) Cell phone: (302) 249-1499.
6. **WE NEED YOU TO SEND US YOUR SPECIAL ORDERS**. Please send Ev Sprous copies of your special orders. These are needed to help our comrades with claims & family members after their loved one passes. Send them to Everett Sprous at ac119kstingergunner@gmail.com or 639 E. Orchard Lane, Gilbert, AZ 85296 or call Ev at (520) 528-9444. Please do this as soon as possible.

7. **Order your AC-119G or AC-119K Wooden Model & stand; made in Philippines. \$130 includes shipping**



To order yours, visit <https://www.ac119gunships.com/shop/models/ac-119k-wooden-model-with-stand/>

Future Reunions

2022 AC-119 Gunship Association Reunion XXII

Reunion XXII was approved by vote for Branson, Missouri. Due to the COVID-19 disruptions, that reunion is now August 2022. Jerry MacDonald is the coordinator, & we will be at the Radisson Hotel again.

2023 AC-119 Gunship Association Reunion XXIII

Reunion XXIII will be at ???.