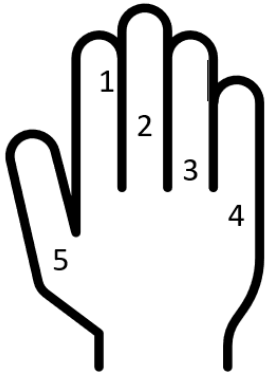


ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – NOVEMBER 2022

Greetings from Texas to all AC-119 Gunship Associates, family, and friends. I hope this letter finds you happy and well. Here are my thoughts on our identity as Association members.

We each took an oath that brought us together as brothers. That is where we started. Now our mission is to preserve our brotherhood. We do that through reunions, the website, our historical archives, and preserving our heritage through ceremonies and memorials.

While interacting with you, I find you still carry the USAF core values.



1. Integrity First.
2. Service Before Self.
3. Shared Values.
4. Aim High in Everything to Achieve Our Mission.
5. Excellence in All We Do Fueled by Innovation.

I am proud to be your President and will do my best to stay faithful to our values. Always feel free to share your thoughts with me. Now, on to some other important topics.

HAVE YOU SIGNED UP FOR YOUR HONOR FLIGHT?

At no cost, this program provides the invaluable opportunity for a personal thank you for every WWII, Korean, and Vietnam war veteran to receive his or her long-overdue day of honor. The deep and meaningful connections established among traveling veterans, and the passion of Honor Flight's volunteers always shine through true and clear. The Honor Flight experience provides a life-altering sense of pride for the remarkable senior men and women war heroes. An application can be accessed at <https://www.honorflight.org>.

AGENT ORANGE REGISTRY IS IMPORTANT.

I encourage every AC-119er who served in SEA to get an Agent Orange Registry exam. It's totally free and is an opportunity to get a good evaluation of current health conditions. Other benefits to joining are the opportunity to learn about a possible presumptive condition so you can make a claim and potential family benefits. You are eligible for a comprehensive evaluation even if you are not enrolled in the VA system. To sign up for an Agent Orange Registry exam, contact a coordinator near you using this link [Environmental Health Coordinator](#). A coordinator will help you schedule an exam with a provider.

AC-119 GUNSHIP ASSOCIATION SURVEY.

Within the next week, you will be receiving a survey from the Association. The responses will help the Association continue to organize GREAT reunions and find ways to keep our brotherhood connected at future reunions with as many brothers as possible. Please take 15 minutes to provide your input when you receive the survey. Thank you in advance for your thoughts and ideas.

GUNSHIP ASSOCIATION FUTURE PROJECTS TO HELP THE BROTHERHOOD STAY CONNECTED.

In addition to our reunions, we want to implement some new ideas that will help us stay connected throughout the year. This year, we will start sending out American Greeting electronic cards. We will be able to send cards for birthdays (please let us know your birthday month only), illness (let us know about yourself or family members) and eventually holidays (like Christmas and Veterans Day).

We would like to use the website to highlight family and holiday traditions, family military traditions (like family members who serve), and hobbies. We would like to request then and now photos from you that could be used on the website or at reunions. I think I can find a childhood picture that you will never associate with me as an adult. I will share some of my info and stories and I hope that you will do that also.

ASSOCIATION'S MISSION TO PRESERVE OUR FIXED-WING GUNSHIP HERITAGE AND HISTORY.

We continue to make progress on the US Air Force Academy's Southeast Asia Memorial Pavilion that includes Vietnam Aircraft Unit Memorial Plaques. Many of you have participated in this project. The dedication ceremony should occur in the second quarter of 2023. All of our brothers in the 71st SOS, 17th SOS, and 18th SOS are showcased on our plaque.

The Association is also working with the Air Force Association on a 50th Vietnam Anniversary Celebration. Part of this celebration will be to honor John O'Neal Rucker, an 18th SOS member, in Lindon, Texas along with family and friends. He was the last American who died at Da Nang during the Vietnam War and was the last enlisted casualty. Association representatives will participate in the ceremony.

ASSOCIATION WEBSITE.

The Association has a great website that is both attractive and informational. I would be remiss if I did not thank Wayne Laessig and Liz Buss for all their creativity and effort. Thank You!

I hope you stay safe, healthy, connected to each other, and happy in the coming year.

John Cootz
President

MIKE DRZYZGA'S OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings AC-119ers, family and friends. Looking back at 6 yrs. as Association President, I am honored to have served you, and feel very well as we faced some real challenges and endured quite successfully. Looking forward, in my opinion, your new Board has the skills and energy to continue our Association successfully. The President is John Cootz, who will do a great job leading the Board – I wish him great success.

Reunion XXII Summary, Branson, MO: It was awesome. We were blessed with a week of bright blue skies and sunshine. Coordinators Jerry and Karen McDonald did a superb job setting it all up and interacting with the Radisson Hotel. We car-pooled to the Dolly Parton Dixie Stampede on Wednesday and the Branson Belle showboat on Thursday for two fun social events. With about 140 attending the reunion, we did have a significant group of "first timers", always heart-warming to me – I enjoy welcoming them to our AC119 family. You will hear this elsewhere, but three significant outcomes of the Saturday morning business meeting were: 1) members ratified a change to the by-laws so that the Board will accept nominees for Officer Positions, and provide a vetted slate of candidates to the membership to vote on, 2) members present voted to go to Colorado Springs for Reunion XXIV in 2024 (we will continue to use a professional event coordinator, Armed Forces Reunions), and 3) a new FULL Board was voted in. After the meeting, Carol Hinton did a wonderful job

of holding a Quilts of Valor (QOV) ceremony where 28 Quilts were wrapped around our veterans who had never received one. Thank you, Doug Wohlgamuth, for helping to get pictures of this meaningful event. We did gather at noon outside the hotel for a short series of group pictures by a local professional photographer. Very well done! The Awards Banquet had one annoying “bump-in-the-road”: As much as I practiced showing a video presentation of past reunions (Thank you Andrea and Roy), the audio part failed, really diminishing the presentation. But, once we reset Windows on the laptop, the show happily went on. I presented awards to Carol Hinton for two years of QOV ceremonies; Don Luke who continues as our Firing Circle editor; Ev Sproul for continually volunteering whenever we needed things done along with his efforts as media manager, Facebook, and handling membership; the McDonalds as reunion coordinators; and past presidents. The Above & Beyond Award went to Terry Sarul for his many successful efforts participating in presentations on the AC-119s, and his Operation Present Stinger at the 18th SOTES at Hurlburt AFB. One very memorable moment occurred at the Farewell BBQ on Sunday. Three Shadow Gunners did a photo op in front of the Association’s flags. The flags tumbled taking down a back-drop curtain with it. It seemed like it happened in slow-motion. The event became a comical highlight at the end of the reunion. Nevertheless, another successful reunion for our history files.

New task: President John Cootz asked me to take on a project to be the lead on gathering our documents (USAF Orders, and such) and develop an organized document archive. I have been called many things, but now I’m an Archivist! We will add this change of process to a Facebook post, on our website, and, of course, in the Firing Circle newsletter. Therefore, if you do have copies of PCS or travel orders, awards and medals, and rank promotion orders, I’m the one to send them to. **PLEASE DO.**

QOV II

“WE’VE GOT YOU COVERED”

By Terry Sarul

At the conclusion of the Membership Business Meeting, on Saturday, October 1st at the Branson Reunion, we were honored to host the 2nd “Quilts of Valor” presentation ceremony to follow up on our 1st QOV presentation at our last reunion in Fort Walton Beach, Florida.

This event was organized and conducted by Carol Hinton with the coordination from Sharon Brown of the “Quilts of Valor” Chapter from Shell Knob, Missouri, and our sincere gratitude goes out to Carol and her QOV Association.

The 1st QOV ceremony held in FWB consisted of presenting 44 quilts. This year, in Branson, 28 additional quilts were presented to our AC-119 Gunship members!

The calling out of the individual recipient’s name with their presenter was added this year and it provided a sense of personalization to the already amazing ceremony.

In addition to the amazing work accomplished by Carol, added recognition should be afforded to Marissa Weisenfluh and Tina Farrell for their contributions by assisting in the making of the quilts.

We are hoping that Carol will be able to continue this new tradition at the upcoming reunion in Washington D.C. in 2023. With that in mind, she is looking for any donations of 12.5” X 12.5” quilt blocks or squares. Also, anyone that has the ability and the means to make and donate one of these marvelous quilts for next year would be greatly appreciated. Give Carol a phone call at: 478-397-5061 or shoot her an email at: cahin2002@yahoo.com.

Again, Carol, we are grateful for your perseverance and dedication in this memorable presentation and are appreciative to be able to bestow these quilts to many in our AC-119 Gunship community.

QOV Pictures



Our Benefactor, Carol Hinton



Lineup For The QOV Presentations.



QOVs Awaiting Presentations



Proud AC-119 Brothers With QOVs.



Back Side Artwork of QOVs.



More Back Artwork of QOVs.



Paula and Roy Davis QOV.



Quilted Bill Zito and Dave Voisey.



Lloyd Froelich Awaiting Quilt.

2022 Branson Reunion Pictures



Auctioneer Wayne Laessig



Award Presented to Ev Sprous.



Baby Huey and Larry Barbee.



Gus Taking A Break



John and Wayne.



OOOPS! All Fall Down.



Gathering of the 119 minds.



Mike & Theresa Mullens and Ron Hinton.



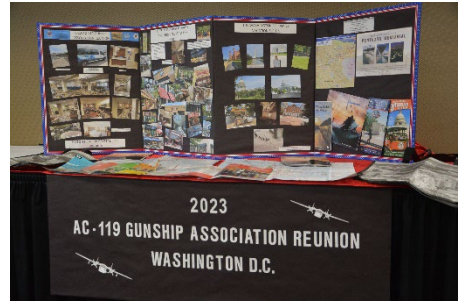
Hanging Out In The Hootch.



2023 Board of Directors



Farewell BBQ.



2023 D.C. Reunion Display.



Terry Sarul "Above and Beyond" Award.



Ev at Media Central.



Jerry Holding Down Registration

AC119 Association Membership Updates

- Sonya McDuffie, Associate Life #17, in honor of her husband, Dan McDuffie.
- Tammy Kelly, Associate Life #172, in honor of her father, Bill Tyler.
- Ben Goryl, Associate Life #300, in honor of his father, Joe Goryl.
- David Hathaway, Associate Life #572, retired Army, friend of Ev Sprous.
- George Allen, Life #574, 18th SOS Fire Control.
- Debby Gallo, Associate Life #578, Sam Gallo's spouse.
- Dora Gravitte, Associate Life #579, Daughter of Ray Gravitte.
- Carol Hinton, Associate Life #580, Spouse of Ron Hinton.
- Brian Hinton, Associate Life #581, Son of Ron Hinton.
- Diane Lord, Associate Life #582, Daughter of Ron Hinton.
- Venita Soderquist, Associate Life #583, Spouse of Ron Soderquist.
- John Cootz, Life #584, 18th SOS Gunner.

Final Flight

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

- James "Jimmy" Bond 71st SOS Shadow Illuminator Operator, passed on November 11, 2022.
- Rodney J. Guidry, 18th SOS Stinger Gunner, First Sergeant, & Life Member 39 passed on July 18, 2022
- Dennis H. Harris, 17th SOS Shadow Maintenance, passed on July 10, 2021.
- William "Bill" J. Kuhns Jr, 17th SOS Shadow Pilot, passed on July 30, 2022.
- Levi N. Rosecrans, 17th SOS Shadow Maintenance, passed on June 15, 2022.

Additional details are on our Association Mail Call at <https://www.ac119gunships.com/mail-call/mail-call/> and our Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/195912423919726>. Ev Sprous and his Outreach Team do a super job locating, contacting, and reconnecting with our remaining living crewmates but they also find many who are already deceased. They can only reconnect us with those Brothers if the Team knows who to look for! **PLEASE** visit <https://www.ac119gunships.com/membership-contact-information/alpha-roster> and add any missing names or contacts you have

Administrative Updates and Reminders

1. Our website has a new feature called **Meet Your Brother – Spotlight of the Week**, where we've randomly selected one of your Bio Stories and created a link directly to it. Our goal is to give everyone visiting our website the opportunity to learn a little more about the men who flew and supported our AC-119s. Go to any main page on our website and you'll see a "Widget" link on the side of the page. **NOTE: on Oral History Videos and History Book Bios**, over 250 of our air and ground crew, plus family members and spouses, have made oral history videos and/or written History Book bios. New videos and bios are posted on our Association website. 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 and Video Info and Samples.](#)

2. **Extending our Gunship Legacy:** United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) AC-119 Plaque Project (info at <https://www.70seapavilion.com/>) Good news on this project to include our AC-119 as one of the heritage gunships in SEA; others associated with us are actively interested. Col Mac is now officially the Chair of the "USAFA AC-119 Plaque Committee", he is in communication with the others on this. Picture shows Spectre example. Send your best donation, none too big or too small to Steve Mac Isaac, 6449 Coventry Hills Dr NE, Rio Rancho, NM 87144. The memo space on your check should say for AC-119 Gunship Plaque, made out to AC-119 Gunship Association. For questions, call Col Mac at 302-249-1499, or e-mail colmacmac@mac.com.



3. PLEASE remember to contact your group POC, the Membership Coordinator Ev Sprous, or Association Secretary Andrea Drzyzga when you **change contact information, especially your email address**. We very much want to keep in contact with you. If you receive the *Firing Circle* by walking to the mailbox after its postal delivery, AND you have and use an EMAIL ADDRESS, NOTIFY your unit POC, or our Membership Coordinator NOW if you want future Newsletters and 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, at ac119kstingergunner@gmail.com or call (520) 528-9444.

4. Are you interested in some AC-119 Gunship historical facts, current events, interesting dialogue, photos and 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 742 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/>. Also, there are Facebook Pages dedicated to “Air Force Gunners”, “Air Force 462 Weapons”, “Happy Valley – Phan Rang” (almost 1400 members), and “U.S. Military Veterans - News you can use” – very interesting pictures and history, current news, and other valuable information.
5. **Awards and Decorations** coordinator Steve “Col Mac” 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 and orders shared by association members. Questions and 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 copies of your special orders, PCS orders, etc. to Mike Drzyzga. These are needed to help our comrades with claims and family members after their loved one passes. Email them to Mike Drzyzga at drzyzga513@hotmail.com, mail to 37 Pecan Lane, Oak Ridge, NJ 07438, or call Mike at (201) 310-2943. Please do this as soon as possible.
7. **Books**: Our web Store has 7 books written about and by AC-119ers. Their experiences and legacy are treasures to read, learn from, and enjoy! These include our original History Book; a History book with all the original plus new Bios; a book of Stories; *Spooky, Spectre, and the Man* by Mike Friel about Ron Terry's battles to create and 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; and *History of Fairchild C-119 Flying Boxcar* by Wendell Cosner. Your actual selections and purchase in the store are via Amazon.

Future Reunions

2023 AC-119 Gunship Association Reunion XXIII will be in Washington, D.C.

2024 AC-119 Gunship Association Reunion XXIV will be in Colorado Springs, CO.