

The Firing Circle

Dedicated to all AC-119 & AC-47 Gunship Aircrew, Maintenance, & Support Personnel

2009 Officers:

**President: Gus Sininger - Vice-President: Jimmy Ward – Treasurer: Doug Wohlgamuth
Secretary & Circulation Manager: Jim Alvis – Member-at-Large: Larry Fletcher**

Appointees:

Awards & Decorations:	Steve Mac Isaac	71st SOS Point of Contact:	Jim Alvis
Chaplin:	Larry Hunter	17th SOS Point of Contact:	John Morrow
Next-of-Kin Locator:	Wayne Laessig	18th SOS Point of Contact:	Everett Sprous
Newsletter Editor:	Tony Pakutinski	18th SOS Point of Contact:	Bill Reffner, Jr.
Reunion XI Coordinator:	Wayne Laessig	AC-47 Point of Contact:	Al Sproul
Webmaster:	Bill Petrie	AC-47 Point of Contact:	Sam Tollett
		“The Maintainers” POC:	Bob Farmer

“Red Tornado at Phan Rang” (Pictured Above) **Courtesy of Michael J. Drzyzga Jr.**
“Rolling In” & “Guns Hot” (Pictured Above) **Courtesy of Darby Perrin**

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello Gunshippers!

I'm back once again and I must say it is my pleasure and privilege to serve as your president of the AC-119 Gunship Association. I want to thank you all for your confidence in me. I hope I can live up to your expectations and keep this fine association going.

As you know we just finished up with our Reunion X in St. Augustine, Florida. First, I want to thank Joe Boles, Mayor of St. Augustine; Mark Miner, St. Johns County Commissioner; and Major General Gerald Maloney (Ret.) for their support in St. Augustine. I especially want to thank **Bill Dudley**, Reunion X Coordinator, for putting our Anniversary Reunion together, it was fantastic. Most importantly, I want to thank Colonel **Tom Teal** (Ret.), 40th Anniversary Guest Speaker. Col Teal did an outstanding job of bringing us together, and reminding us of who we are, and what we accomplished in SEA. His perspective of the most critical time in Gunship History, as Squadron Commander for the 17th & 18th Special Operations Squadrons, is featured in this Newsletter. The pictures in this issue show the spirit of Reunion X, and our hearts will always hold the memories. Well Done!

Our History Books were delivered to the hotel on Thursday afternoon, in time to give out the long awaited book. I certainly want to recognize, commend, and thank Larry (Doc) Fletcher, and Ralph LeFarth, for their outstanding dedication to get our stories published, and to Reunion X in time. Please let us know how you feel about the book by email, or letter, to any Board Member. We want your inputs.

As a member, you can help support and improve the Association by attending Reunions when you can, contacting and enlisting new members, making suggestions and communicating with your Association Board Officers. Your current Board Officers are working together to maintain our standards while preparing for our next Reunion XI. Reservations have been made in Fairfield, CA. Mark your calendar now, **September 17-21, 2010**, your Hotel Reservations must be completed NLT **August 14th**! Plan to reunite with fellow warriors, buddies both old, new, ground, and flight crews who share the common bonds of the Gunship Brotherhood.

Last thought: Serving on the Board is an honor and a huge responsibility, and I have loved each event I have been on the Board for, and sometimes not so much! But, overall Board Service is 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 contacting people, keeping records straight, coordination for many items needed to keep the Association on the straight and narrow. **Bottom line - we need Volunteers. Future success of the AC-119 Gunship Association depends on your involvement.**

As we enter Reunion XI preparations, program updates and forms will be available through our Newsletter, and links will be established on our Website. Wayne Laessig has a powerhouse of a get-together planned. So enjoy this issue of "The Firing Circle", keep up as events develop, check out the Reunion X 'Hot-Wash' in the next few pages, and I look forward to seeing you all in September.

Congratulations to Jim Dunn, Winner of the Rifle & Pistol Set, enjoy the pictures!

Gus Sininger
AC-119 Gunship Association, President

**AC-119 Gunship Association
Annual Meeting Minutes, September 26, 2009**

1. Association President Gus Sininger called the annual meeting to order at 0905 hours, with Larry Hunter offering the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **Jim Alvis presented the Secretary's report:**
 - a. Membership **decreased** for 1st time.
 - b. Newsletter mailings cost over \$500 annually; updating your e-mails can save us some \$\$!
3. **Doug Wohlgamuth presented the Treasurer's report:**
 - a. Expected "carry-over" balance is expected to be close to \$6,000; lower than usual. Additional book & Litho sales can increase the Association's working funds significantly.
 - b. Raffle & auction items really help; Paul Campbell suggested 50/50 drawings at events.
 - c. Between History Books & Lithos, we have over \$25,000 in "inventory" but we need cash!
 - i. We purchased an extra 100 hard cover plus an extra 100 spiral cover History Books; the printer liked the book a lot & made extras that we purchased at ¼ normal cost. As a benefit to Reunion attendees, History Books are \$5 off "at" the Reunion. Gus stressed the importance of selling our history books, & encouraged members to buy an extra copy, or two or three, & donate them to local schools, libraries, museums, etc. Your grandkids, nieces, & nephews can use one for their school 'show & tell sessions', which can open the door for some great awareness & interest from our next generations.
 - ii. Shadow & Stinger lithographs are reduced to \$25 each, 2 for \$40.
 - d. Members voted to raise reunion fees by \$5 to help offset what the Association pays for like Hootch beverages & snacks, Association Awards, Speaker Models, deceased member donations, mailings, videography, website, History Book donations, & other sunk costs. **Reunion Fees will be \$20 beginning next year.**
4. **Wayne Laessig discussed our Association communication tools:**
 - a. Website & Newsletter:
 - i. We will update website to show the names of guys that we have contact info for, & a 2nd list of guys we have no information about.
 - ii. Tony Pakutinski sent our 4 Newsletters – super work!
 - b. Active Duty Squadron Liaisons:
 - i. Jim Alvis will send our History Book to the current 71st SOS at Kirtland AFB
 - ii. Gus will present a History Book to the 18th FLTS at Hurlburt
 - iii. John Morrow volunteered to make first contact with Lt Col James Brandenburg, current 17th SOS Commander at Kadena (they fly the MC-130P Combat Talon) & will present the 17th with a History Book, our 17th SOS coin, & an Honorary Membership to the Commander (same as we've done for the 71st & 18th SOS).
 - iv. The 4th SOS is reactivated & using the 'Spooky' name; Norm Evans confirmed he is the AC-47 current squadron liaison (4th SOS)
 - c. Master Contact List (MCL): Bob Dydo is working with Ron Julian to create an expanded database that will add flexibility to the current system. Anyone who uses our MCL for mailings, e-mails, name tags, etc, please send a copy of whatever "report" or format you use to Bob.
 - d. Points of Contact (POCs): may revise their role, with Secretary sending "all" e-mails and POCs in primarily a "new contact" or helping folks contact each other mode. Snail mails TBD.
5. Gus presented Campaign & Battle streamers for our 3 AC-119 Squadron Flags to representatives of each of the AC-119 squadrons at Friday's Meet & Greet. Many thanks to Gus & Mac MacIsaac for coordinating with the 18th & 71st Commanders, who donated all 3 Squadrons' streamers for us. Sam Tollett is working on getting the AC-47 Squadrons' Campaign & Battle streamers.
6. JP MacIsaac is again doing video interviews at our reunion. He & Ev Sprous prepared & sold DVDs of all prior video interviews. We now have two-DVD sets for the 17th, 18th, & 71st SOS. We will continue to do reunion interviews & sell the DVDs on the website & at reunions.
7. Gus needs feedback about the history book – positive, negative, anything. Send comments to Gus. We will use your comments for a "why buy one" publicity message.
8. The AC-119 Stinger Monument at Hurlburt is repainted; stone replacement will be a final solution.
9. **Next Reunions:**
 - a. Wayne Laessig provided Reunion XI update, which be held September 17-19, 2010 at Fairfield, CA. Fairfield is near Travis AFB & between Sacramento, San Francisco, & wine country. Room rate is \$114 & includes full hot buffet breakfast. Wayne reviewed historical reunion costs for 3 room nights, average airfares, & the 3 major reunion events:

ABQ - 2006	Destin - 2007	Branson - 2008	St Aug - 2009	CA - 2010
\$640	\$885	\$735	\$702	\$749
 - b. Jimmy Ward volunteered as reunion coordinator for Reunion XII in 2011 in Charleston, SC. Mac MacIsaac volunteered for Albuquerque & Jerry McDonald volunteered for Branson. **Members voted for Charleston & Reunion XII will be there in 2011.**

10. Election of officers for 2009-2010:

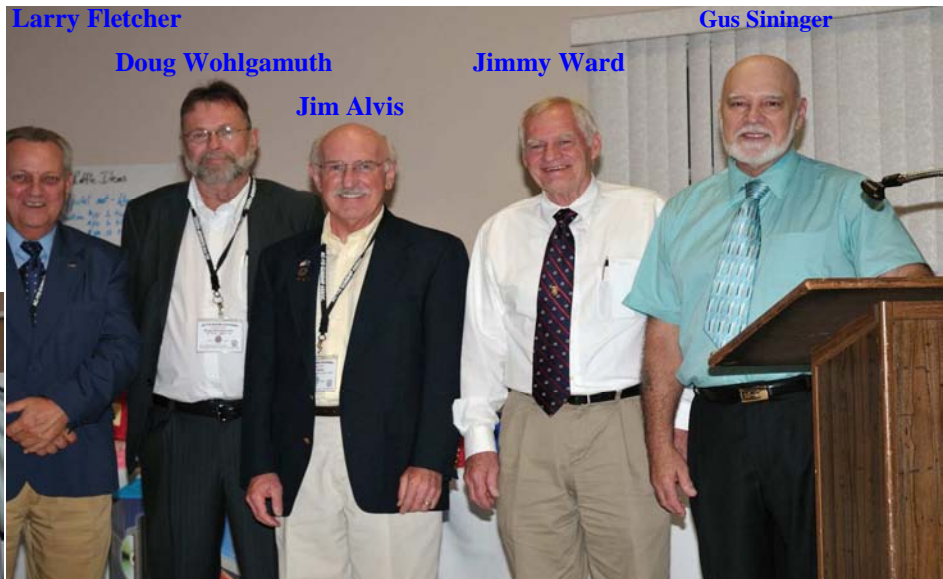
- a. President: Association members nominated Gus, Wayne, & Mac. Wayne & Mac declined; Wayne is Reunion XI coordinator & Mac opted for 2011 board. **Gus accepted a consecutive term & members voted him in.**
- b. Vice-President: Association members nominated Jimmy Ward & Larry Juday. **Jimmy Ward was selected by a majority vote.**
- c. Secretary & Treasurer: **Jim Alvis will continue as Secretary for a final year, & Doug Wohlgamuth will continue.**
- d. Past Board Member: Association members nominated Larry Fletcher, Chuck James, & Vern Hansen. **Larry Fletcher received the majority votes.**

11. Bruce Byrd made an excellent presentation about the discovery & possible recovery of the only known AC-119 gunship, #53-7850, a K-Model. Bruce offered three options for consideration:

- a. Do Nothing, Let a 3rd party attempt to acquire it, or Have the Association pursue acquisition.
- b. A major consideration – is it worth acquiring, for display only, based on condition. Bruce’s preliminary costs include \$30,000 to disassemble, \$30,000 to transport, & \$20,000 to reassemble (estimates did not include restoration costs). A total cost could be \$250,000 or higher, with almost all funding from external sources like the Commemorative Air Force, Air Force Museum, History Channel, possible documentary, grants, & even private donors. Bruce proposed the next step: send an appropriate person to Ho Chi Minh City to meet with people to determine if we can acquire 850, & if it is worth acquiring. Much discussion ensued.
- c. **Steve Mac Isaac made the following motion that was carried:**
 - i. Contact the Air Attaché office to first to determine if there is a remote possibility of acquisition based on the aircraft’s condition. The Association will ask the Air Attaché to make that assessment & provide us with as much details as they can.
 - ii. If the Air Attaché assessment determines there is an acquisition possibility, call for personal pledges to raise funds, only to send representatives onsite for a final determination if the aircraft can be dismantled and reassembled for display.
 - iii. No Association funds expended without membership approval; only personal pledged \$\$\$, & only if Air Attaché assessment is that 850 can be dismantled & reassembled for display.

12. We closed the annual meeting at 1130 hours.

Respectfully Submitted,
James R. Alvis, Secretary





Col Tom A. Teal, USAF (Ret.)

Dear Gus,

I would like to thank you, the officers and members of our Gunship Association for your many courtesies, kindnesses and Great Spirit of comradeship that were extended to my family and me during the recent Reunion at St. Augustine. The Reunion theme, "We became Shadows; we became Stingers" was exactly what happened to us in combat and continues today. There still appears to be a Gunship closeness and spirit that has further developed down through the years. It is that feeling of brotherhood that makes this organization unique when compared to the other reunions, military and civilian that I have attended since retirement.

I would also like to thank you for the remarkable gifts of two AC-119 Gunship models that are superb in detail and in every visible aspect. I will see these models every day and be reminded of courageous and generous Shadows and Stingers and our AC-119 Gunship Association. You have made this old Shadow and Stinger very proud indeed.

Until we meet again, may your lives be healthy, your disappointments few, and peace and tranquility hold you and yours in their arms forever.

Tom A. Teal
Colonel, USAF (Ret.)



Reunion X 'Hot-Wash'

Hotel Registration: Historic Holiday Inn at 1302 Ponce de Leon Blvd in St. Augustine, Florida.

Wednesday, September 23rd 2009: 6:00 p.m. - Hootch opens.

Thursday, September 24th 2009: 11:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. – Casino Cruise off the Florida coast.

Friday, September 25th, 2009: 1:00 – 3:30 p.m. – Northrup-Grumman tour - 6:00 p.m. Meet & Greet.

Too many great pictures, so little room! This Newsletter features the 'Hootch', and Friday Night's Meet and Greet. Saturday's Banquet pictures and highlights will be featured in the March issue of "The Firing Circle". If you have pictures from the Reunion, you'd like to share, please email them to me for posting in The Newsletter. Pakman03@gmail.com.



Jim Dunn, 18th SOS Navigator, 71-72.
The Winner of the Rifle & Pistol Set.



STINGER

AC-119 Gunships • Special Operations Squadrons

United States Air Force

SHADOW

1968 - 1973





MEMOIRS OF AN OLD SHADOW AND STINGER COMMANDER IN VIETNAM 1970-1973

Tom A. Teal - Colonel, USAF (Ret.)

It has been 36 years since this story began at Saigon with the Shadow Gunships and a remarkable group of mostly young men. For the Stingers in DaNang, a string of 35 years has flown by for an equally remarkable group of young men. What links these two groups of Gunshippers? I link them because I was lucky enough to be Commander of Fighting C Flight for a year and then nine months later as Commander of 18th SOS, Det 1, stationed at DaNang, until the UN monitors verified our departure on 29 March 1973.

After all these years, why am I writing these memoirs now? Some former Shadows at Saigon have expressed a desire to know more about the background to what happened there. Call it natural curiosity about events that affected their lives and memories of those events that seem to grow more important as time goes by. Make no mistake about the Vietnam War. It changed all our lives, particularly if we were young and it was the first war we faced our own mortality. I believe that the Stingers will also appreciate the background information to events at DaNang that occurred during the long year of duty there.

What I am not writing these histories/memoirs for is to toot my own horn or to justify decisions I made or did not make. I just thought it might be useful in this informal format for you to see your experiences from a different viewpoint. I hope that you agree, and that this presentation finds you and your families in good health and spirits.

SHADOW GUNSHIPS AT SAIGON AND DISTANT PLACES April 1970 - April 1971

This is the way I remember my year with Fighting C Flight. When I arrived by Shadow Gunship from 14th Special Operations Wing in Phan Rang, I found a relaxed flying unit that was not flying a lot. Seventh Air Force Headquarters operations orders called for an aircraft and crew on ground alert with launch, if needed, by that headquarters. That mission fitted in with C-Flight's location of operations and maintenance facilities near the end of the prevailing runway. The building we occupied was a large air-conditioned facility powered by a dedicated electrical generator on site. There were also five protected aircraft parking revetments adequate for the five AC-119s assigned to the Flight. There was even a room equipped to sleep the alert crew until needed. I pulled alert a couple of nights and never launched which is not a good way to keep a unit sharp and motivated.

When I became commander a short time later, I went over to visit Seventh AF operations and made a strong case for flying two sorties a night, one early and one late night. What this plan did for 7th AF was to have a Shadow Gunship airborne, in radio contact, that could be used for troops in contact or other uses such as to check out locations that had lost radio or telephone contact with their headquarters. What this did for C Flight was to get us airborne, doing what we had been trained to do and a big plus, we learned methodically the geographic features and working conditions of our area of responsibility. We also learned to fly in the changeable weather conditions of that part of the world. Our Fragmentary Order was changed by 7th to flying each night and 14th SOS supported it wholeheartedly. One interesting event happened on an early night sortie. We were sent to investigate possible bad guys deep in Four Corps area down in the swamp where the Mekong has several branches emptying into the seas. As we flew over the area at app. 1500 feet altitude, we saw a large campfire with people scurrying around it. All of a sudden, the hostiles opened fire at us with rifles but did no damage. Since we had no clearance to fire on that position, we reported the contact and position back to 7th and continued the remaining time for our flight.

Clearance to fire was a continuing problem unless we were sent to a Troops in Contact (TIC); then the ground force commander there cleared us to fire around the perimeter or on specific locations, which he marked for us. Other Shadow crews had similar events happen to them, which were to prepare us for what was to come, as our mission was to change with no warning. Note: I was informed later that there had been over 10,000 TIC's defended by Gunships in S. E. Asia and that none of the locations had ever been overrun as long as a Gunship was overhead. That's good stuff!

I was sitting in my office one Sunday afternoon, smoking my pipe, when our mission was changed drastically. The secure phone rang and the DCO of the 14th SOW said that our mission was to provide Shadow Gunship coverage over Cambodia day and night, 24 hours a day. Stress to all your people that this is a highly classified mission and no radio or communications of any kind will mention Cambodia. Now how many sorties a day will it take to keep coverage over Cambodia? I said initially six sorties a day should be suggested to Seventh AF with Shadows flying 4.5 hours, which we have been doing. That would leave a thirty-minute gap between sorties over Cambodia but could be made up as necessary by launching the next sortie thirty minutes early. For six sorties a day, we will require five more aircraft with seven more crews, and assorted maintenance and parts. The DCO said that he would pass that information to Seventh AF and the DCM will be in touch. The DCM called and said he agreed with the ten aircraft for six per day or thirteen for thirteen for eight sorties per day. Then our detailed planning started.

To Be Continued - Part II will be featured in the March Issue of "The Firing Circle".

AC-119 Gunship Association Reunion XI



"Next Stop, Vietnam - Gateway to SEA"
Fairfield California - September 17-19, 2009

Reunion XI Information

Our 2010 Reunion XI theme is “*Next stop, Vietnam*”, not because it was part of a popular song back then by [Country Joe McDonald](#) - but because almost all of us departed the States from Travis or McChord AFB. It was where we transitioned from life in the states to life in SEA.

Be sure to read '[Wayne and Lynette Laessigs' Notes](#)' in upcoming newsletters for info on:

Reno Casinos and shows; Lake Tahoe; Yosemite; Monterey Bay; Jelly Belly Factory Tours; San Francisco Bay; Golden Gate Bridge; Chinatown; Ghirardelli Square; Bay Ferry rides; Redwood groves; Old Sacramento; Railroad Museums; Budweiser Brewery; Travis AFB and McClellan Museums; and plenty of great wineries in Napa, Solano, Sonoma, Amador, and El Dorado counties.

Reunion XI Activities: We will hold our normal Friday night Meet and Greet; Saturday morning Membership Meeting with concurrent Ladies Meeting; Saturday Night Banquet; Sunday morning Golf Tournament; and Sunday afternoon Farewell BBQ.

The Hootch opens Wednesday, September 15th with the standard free beverages and munchies – it is our primary place to informally visit with old friends, meet new ones, buy a T-shirt or other AC-119 merchandise, and display pictures and paraphernalia.

Reunion Hotel Info: Hotel Reservations, call the **Hilton Garden Inn Fairfield** *beginning 04 January*, at 1-707-426-6900, be sure to ask for the for the **AC-119 Gunship Association Group Rate**. The hotel is located just off Interstate 80 between San Francisco and Sacramento, at 2200 Gateway Court, Fairfield, CA 94533.

You can book to arrive as early as Sept 13th and stay as late as Sept 20th at the Reunion rate of \$114. To guarantee this rate, which includes free full buffet breakfasts, you need to make your hotel reservations **NLT August 14th**. After that, we cannot guarantee room availability. You can cancel up to 24 hours prior to your arrival date, without incurring fees or cancellation charges.

Reunion Room Rates: \$114 per night, with tax, the final room rate is \$127.68. There are a few adjoining rooms (first come first served). Our group rate includes full buffet breakfasts. Room amenities include Internet, fridge, coffee/maker, microwave, and use of the pool and fitness center.

• **Airport options:**

- San Francisco (**SFO**) airport is large, 45 miles south of Fairfield. Often, better rates. If you go through San Francisco, you might want to go over the Golden Gate Bridge, but expect to add 30-45 more minutes for the drive to Fairfield. (**See Note**)
- Oakland airport (**OAK**) is 45 miles south of Fairfield. Sometimes, better rates. Same as San Francisco.
- Sacramento (SMF) airport is 45 miles north of Fairfield. Commute traffic is usually not a factor, with about a 45-minute drive to the hotel anytime. Rates can be higher, but it's the easiest to get to-from Fairfield.
- Reno (RNO) airport is the farthest at about 145 miles northeast of Fairfield. If you plan Reno Casinos or shows, or Lake Tahoe, it's a good choice the drive is about 3 hours and the scenery is beautiful.

Note: If using SFO or OAK, be advised of weekday commute times, 0700 to 0830 & 1600 to 1800. The traffic turns a 45-minute drive – into a 2 hour journey.

The Reunion Registration form will be in the next Newsletter and we will put a Reunion Registration link on the website soon.

Projected Reunion XI Agenda

Wednesday, September 15th

6:00 p.m.: Hootch opens and will stay open through Sunday with snacks, wine, beer, sodas and water **No Charge** to reunion attendees. There is space for your memorabilia and pictures, or to visit with friends.

Thursday – September 16th

12:00 pm – 7:00 pm: Winery and Poker Run. We'll set up visits with 5 local wineries for free tasting, plus you pick a card from a poker deck at each. At the last winery, there will be dinner and everyone gets to play their "best" poker hand from the cards they drew. Highest hand wins first choice from a table of prizes; next best hand gets next choice, etc. **A car-pool "designated driver" event. Price TBD.**

Friday – September 17th

9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.: San Francisco Tour. We plan to charter a bus to get you there and back in time for the Meet and Greet. You will cross the Bay Bridge and be within walking distance (or you can take the famous San Francisco Trolley) of Ghirardelli Square, the San Francisco Wharf, and historic Chinatown. On the return trip, you will cross the Golden Gate Bridge with a quick stop at the overlook for pictures. Buses will leave the hotel approximately 9:00 a.m. and arrive back at the hotel approximately 5:30 p.m. You will have about 6 hours in "the city." **Price TBD.**

6:00 p.m.: Meet and Greet \$28 per person in the hotel.

Menu: Carved Beef Station, Swedish Meatballs, Chicken Wings, Cheeses, Garden Vegetable Trays, Mini-quiches, and fresh baked Cookies/Fudge Brownies. **Dress:** Party Suit or Casual. Cash Bar

Saturday – September 18th

9:00 – 10:30 a.m. – Membership Meeting with concurrent **Ladies Meeting**, both in the hotel

6:00 p.m. – Banquet Happy Hour in the hotel

Dress: we encourage Party Suits if you can still get into it. If not, coat and tie. Cash Bar.

7 p.m. – Banquet Dinner in the hotel, cost of \$35 per person includes 2 bottles of wine per table.

Menu: Your choice of either:

- Sliced Filet of beef w/Jack Daniels peppercorn sauce
- Chicken Picatta w/lemon and wine sauce
- Grilled Salmon w/orange soy sauce

8:00 p.m. – (We've Requested) the Air Force Band of the Golden West

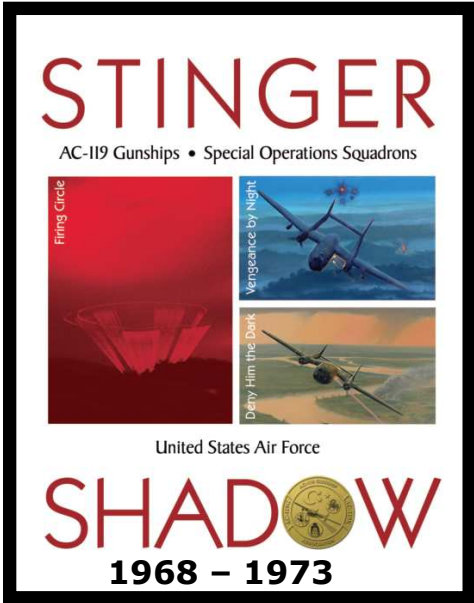
8:20 p.m. – Association Awards and Raffles

Sunday – September 19th

9 a.m. – Golf Tournament (location TBD) **\$10 per person.** Green fees are separate.

5 p.m. – Farewell BBQ - Brisket & Chicken with baked beans, cornbread, salad, cole slaw & dessert. Cost of **\$30 in the hotel.** **Dress:** Casual. Cash Bar.

Questions? Contact Wayne Laessig at (707) 592-4492 or Qadvocate@sbcglobal.net



**AC-119 Gunship History Book
Order Form**

“Our book seems to cover every aspect of the AC-119 Vietnam experience. Personal accounts of guys, who flew gunship missions, and including those of maintenance and other support people, highlight the good, the bad and the ugly of operating has-been aircraft in less than desirable conditions while flying highly important missions. The little known history of AC-119 gunship operations, missions that provided an important tactical piece to the Vietnam puzzle, is fully exposed in our History Book. Our book will be immediately valued by those who served and will become more valued by those who inherit the book down through the ages”.

“Needles to say, I treasure my copy of our History Book”.

Chuck James
17th SOS  'A/C'

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone #: Land Line _____ Cell Phone _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Ship To: Name & Address if Different from Above

AC-119 Gunship History Book	-	Number of Copies	x	Price per Copy	=	Total	_____
Hard Cover		_____	X	\$50.00	=	\$	_____
Soft Cover / Spiral Bound		_____	X	\$35.00	=	\$	_____
Shipping & Handling per copy:		_____	X	\$ 5.00	=	\$	_____

(No Credit Cards Accepted) GRAND TOTAL = \$ _____

Check Number: _____ Amount: _____ Cash or Money Order Amount: _____

Make checks or money orders payable to “AC-119 Gunship Association History Book Fund”

**Doug Wohlgamuth, Treasurer
AC-119 Gunship Association
504 Shea Place
Sun City Center, FL 33573**

If you ordered a History Book, you should have it by Christmas – if not – check with your local post office.