AC-119 Gunship

Special Operations Squadrons in Vietnam

AC-119 GUNSHIP ASSOCIATION

Home of the 71st, 17th, and 18th Special Operations Squadrons and personnel who served in AC-119s



71st SOS

17th SOS

18th SOS



Objectives

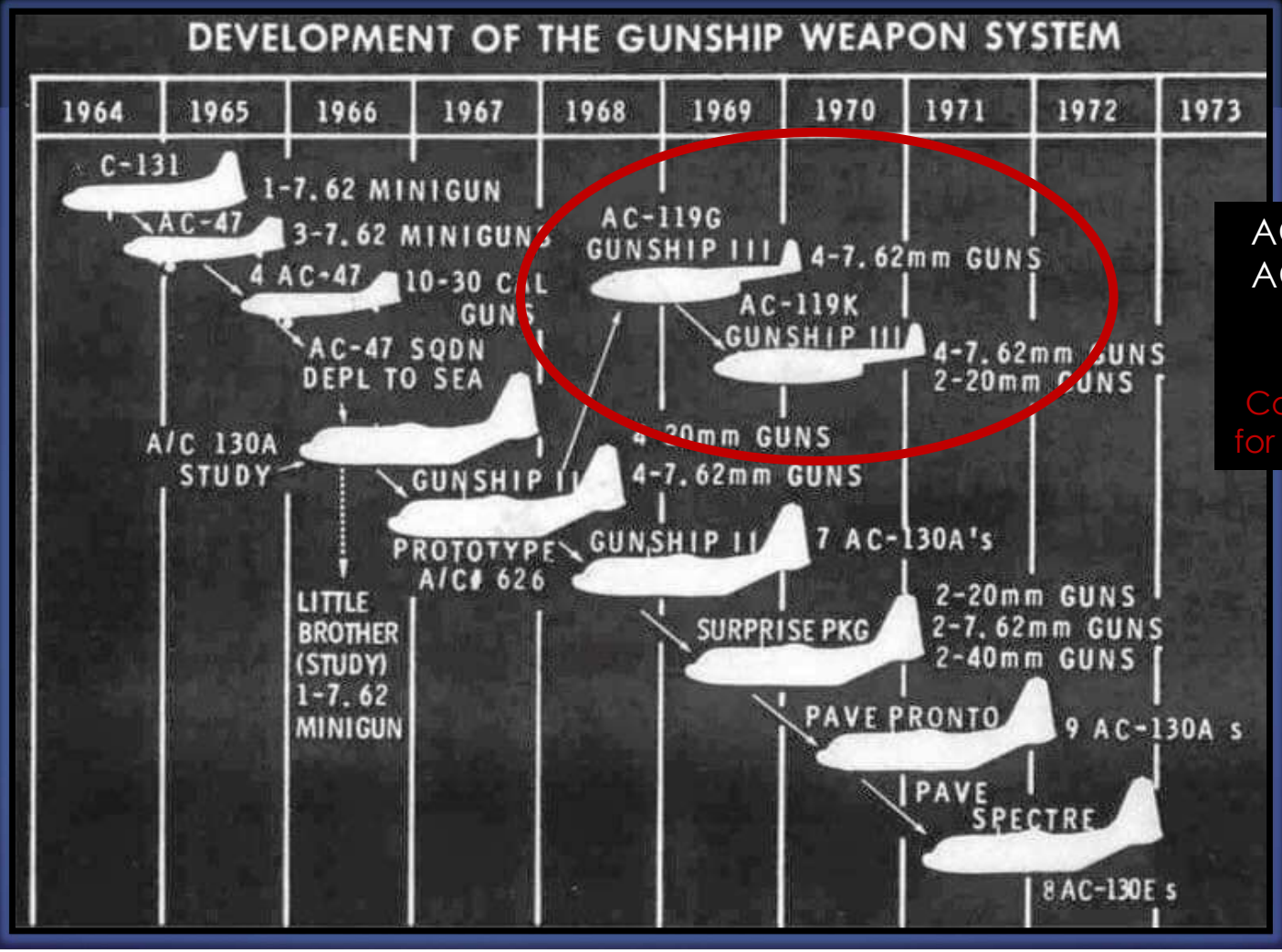
1. The evolution of the AC-119 Gunship
2. Units of Operation
3. Stinger 41 Mission – 2 May, 1972

Evolution of the Gunship
Col. Ronald William Terry USAF (RET)



- Father of the Fixed Wing Gunship
- 8.26.33 – 4.2.22

Evolution of the Gunship



AC-119G: 2 yrs. 9 mos.
AC -119K: 3 yrs. 2 mos.
Combat Duty

Combined almost 6 years for a "temporary" program

The Evolution…
AC-119 GUNSHIP



C-119 Flying Boxcar

- 1949-55: Fairchild/Hiller produced and delivered 1,200 C-119 "Flying Boxcars" for the USAF
- June 1967: USAF instituted the Gunship III program
- 52 C-119s from the Indiana Air National Guard, based at Bakalar ARB, Columbus, IN were converted into AC-119 Gunships



AC-119G Shadow

- 19May68: First AC-119G "Shadow" was delivered to Air Force
- 27Dec68: First AC-119G "Shadow" arrived in SEA
- 5Jan69: First combat mission flown from Nha Trang AB, RSVN
- Sep71: All AC-119Gs turned over to VNAF



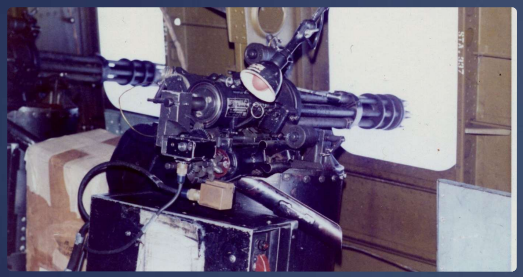
AC-119K Stinger

- 1969: First AC-119K "Stinger" was delivered to USAF
- 3Nov69: First AC-119K "Stinger" arrived in SEA
- 13Nov69: First mission flown from Phan Rang AB, RSVN
- 1973: All AC-119Ks turned over to VNAF

AC-119G – "SHADOW"

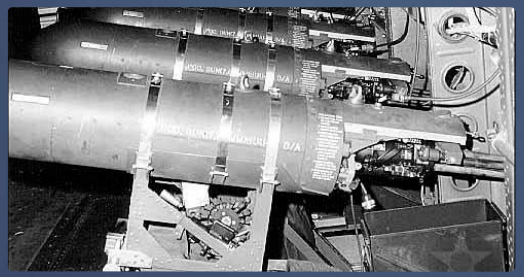


GAU-2A/B 7.62mm Minigun (GE)



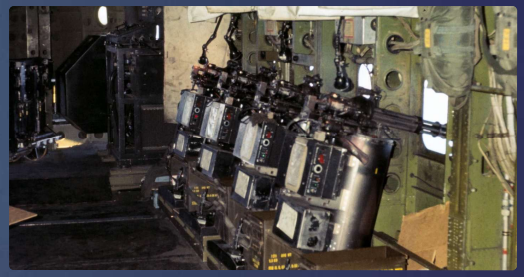
- 7.62mm NATO round
- 3,000-6,000 RPM

SUU-11A/A Minigun Pod



- Carry over from AC-47D
- 4- 7.62mm SUU-11B/A gun pods

MXU-470/A Gun Module



- 4 modules w/ 2,000 rounds capacity in each drum
- Rate of Fire: 4,000-6,000 RPM

AC-119G – "SHADOW"

NOS



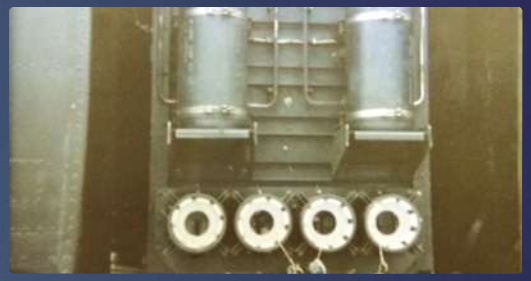
- AN/AVQ-8 Night Observation Sight
- Lt. Larry Barbee
- "Black Killer Duck"

Illuminator



- AVQ-8 Type 1A Xenon Light
- Rated: 20kw/425,000 Lumens

Flare Launcher



- LAU-74/A Flare Launcher
- Capacity: (24) Mk 24 Magnesium Flares
- Flare Rating: 2,000,000 Candlepower

AC-119G – "SHADOW"



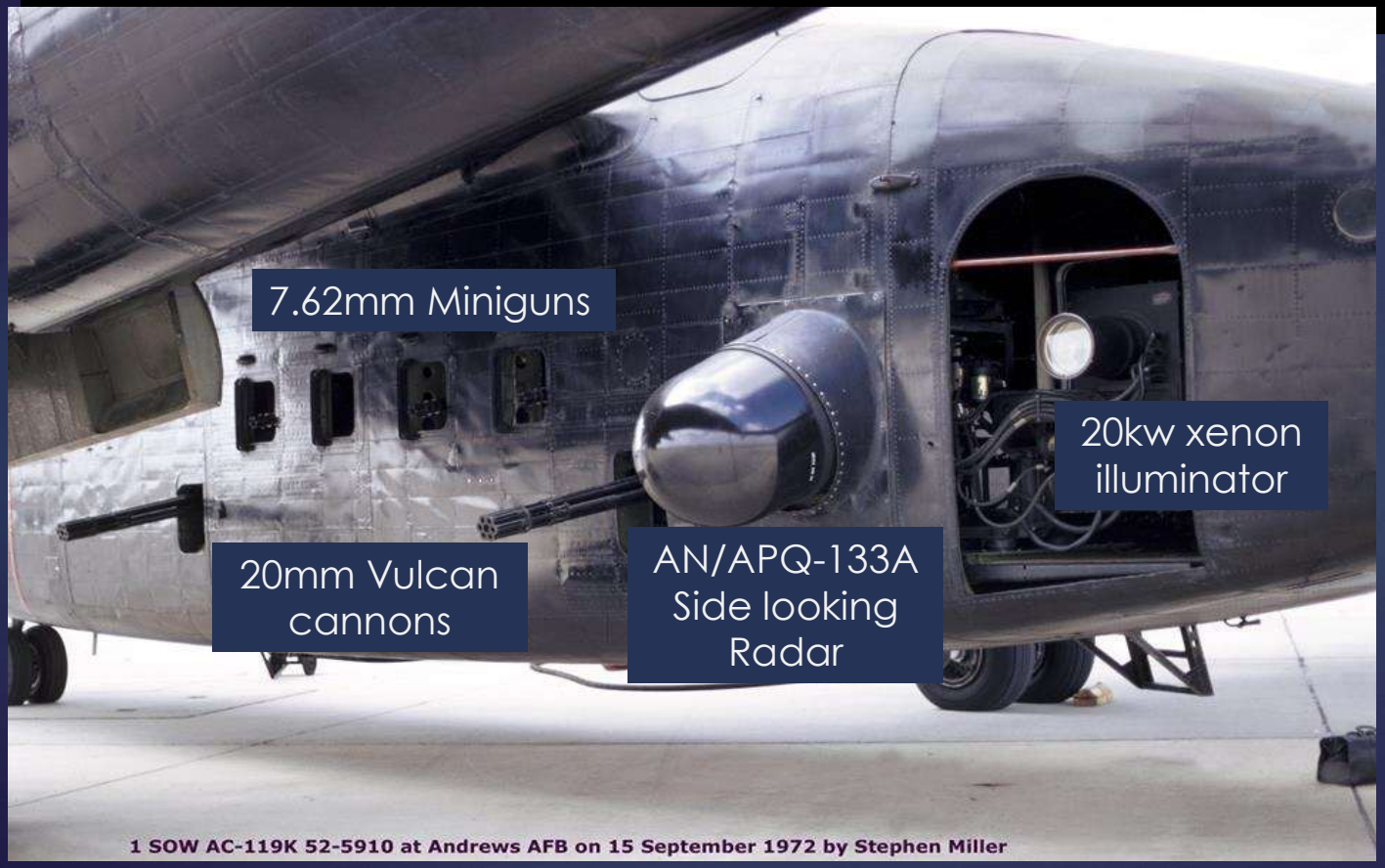
- Shadow = Four 7.62mm miniguns and "NO" 20 mm Vulcan cannons
- Shadow Gunner:
- Mike Drzyzga (President of the AC-119 Gunship Association)



AC-119K "STINGER"



AC-119K "STINGER"









THE UNITS OF OPERATION



71st SOS

- *13May68: 71ST TAS, Bakalar ARB, Columbus, IN activated.*
- 15June68: 71st TAS designated 71st ACS
- 8July68: 71st ACS designated 71st SOS
- 5Jan69: First combat mission flown- Nha Trang AB, RSVN
- *1June69: 17th SOS Replaces 71st SOS*
- *18June69: 71st SOS reservists released from active duty*



17th SOS

- *1June69: 17th SOS activated-18 AC-119G Shadow gunships "in country"*
- 11Oct69: Shadow 76- 1st Shadow lost in crash due to engine failure on TO
- 28Apr70: Shadow 78- 2nd Shadow lost in crash due to engine failure on TO
- June70: A Flight: Phu Cat AB-(5 acft.)
  B Flight: Phan Rang AB-(6 acft.)
  C Flight: Tan Son Nhut AB- (5 acft.)
- 10Sep71: Last Shadow combat mission flown
- *24Sep71: 17th SOS de-activated*



18th SOS

- *25Jan69: 18th SOS activated*
- 3Nov69: First AC-119K arrives at Phan Rang AB, RSVN
- 13Nov69: First AC-119K combat mission flown
- 4Feb70: 18 AC-119K Stingers "in-country"
- 8May70: MacKay Trophy flight
- 2May72: Stinger 41 shot down during day light mission over An Loc, RVN. 3rd Stinger loss
- *31Dec72: 18th SOS de-activated*

18th SOS - "Vengeance By Night"

WHEN UNINVITED GUEST DROP IN CALL FOR

18 S. O. S.

A Fly By Night Organization

We Provide :
Lighting for
All Occasions
Beaucoup 7.62
& 20 mm Truck
& Mortar Suppression



We Defend :
Special Forces Camps
Air Bases
Outposts
Troops in Contact
We Also Stop
Truck, Sampan and
other Traffic

DANANG VIETNAM **N.K.P. THAILAND**

The 18th SOS
My Journey and "our time" in the 18th

The Three Amigos – The Beginning

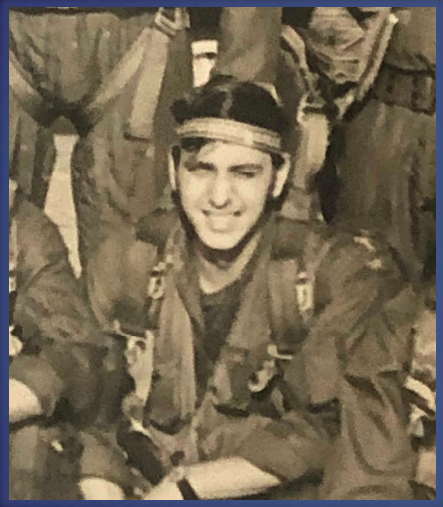


Joe, Terry, John



Joe, Terry, John, and cast of characters

The Crew
AC–119K Stinger



Terry Sarul – Gunner
"Yours Truly"



Wayne Laessig, Donnie Williams, Dave Savelle, Don Poore, Ken Reed
Jerry "Judy" Garland, TBD, Dennis Chamberlin, Terry Sarul, Muriel Hawpe



Capt. Donnie Williams: Pilot



Lt. Wayne Laessig: Co-Pilot

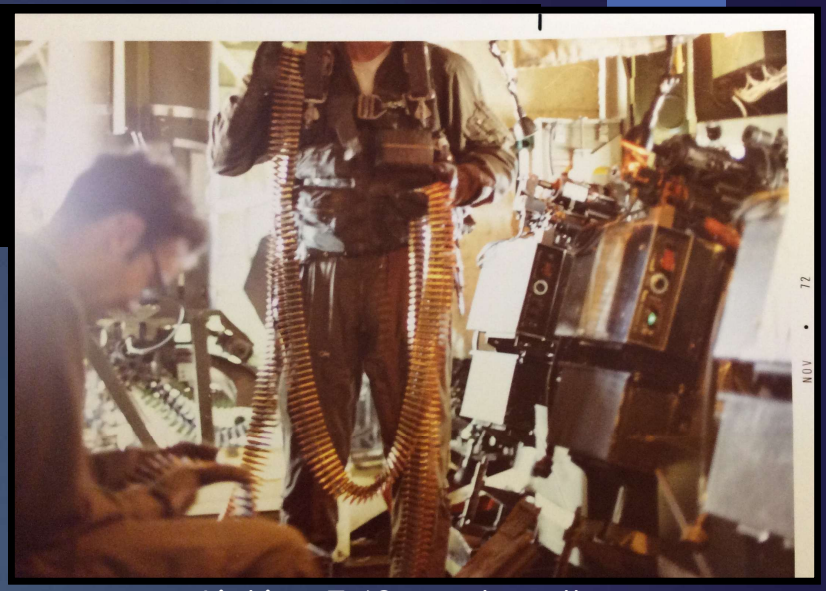
The Crew



NOS locating a target



A gunner holding a belt of 20mm HEI



Linking 7.62 mm together



A gunner at the ammo racks

Firing Circle
aka "Ring of Fire"



Photo credit: Michael Drzyzga



Fact:
Every fifth round is a tracer

A few personal pictures on the AC–119K



Trying my hand at the FLIR



Me in the left rear scanners position

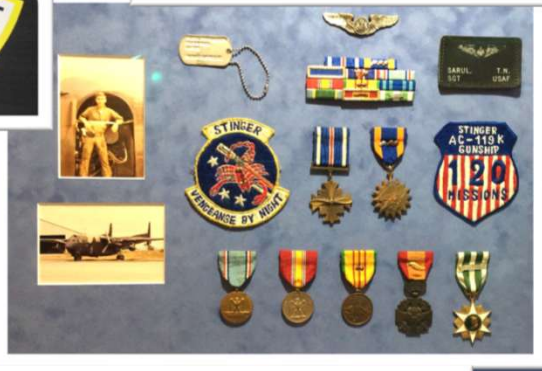


Me next to the number two 20 mm Vulcan cannon

A "few" items from my personal collection of Stinger Memorabilia…















MacKay Trophy Flight – 8 May 1970

Given to the most meritorious flight of the year

Pilot Al Michalic and Crew receiving MacKay Trophy



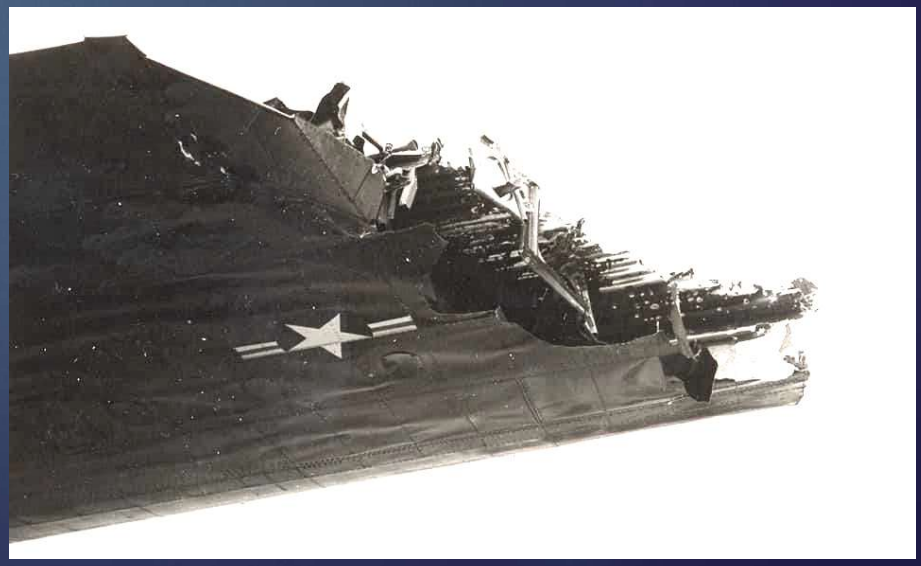
The crew of Aircraft 883 flew a combat mission over the Ho Chi Minh Trail on 8 May 1970. During the mission, 15 feet of its right-wing had been shot off by AAA. The aircraft and its entire crew were able to successfully return to base *against all odds*.

MacKay Trophy Flight

AGAINST ALL ODDS:

- 15 ft. of wing missing
- Nosedive / lost 1000 ft. altitude
- Wrong direction
- Needed to clear 10,000 ft. mountain tops
- No flap landing at Udorn AB
- No runway lights (oops on the tower)
- Tanks dipped – zero fuel left





Stinger 41 – 2 May 1972

2 May 1972

- DAYLIGHT Mission over An Loc SVN
- 37 mm AAA damage to right wing and engine
- Right engine on fire, the plane entered a dive
- Crew ordered to bailout
- Pilot - Capt. Terry Courtney stays with aircraft to facilitate bailout
- Three crew members did not return, seven survived after an extensive SAR rescue mission
- Capt. Terry Courtney was awarded the Air Force Cross

- KIA: Capt. Terry Courtney, Capt. Dave Slagle, & SSgt. Ken Brown
- Survived: Lt. Larry Barbee, Lt. Jim Barkalow, LtCol. Byron Tash Taschioglou, SSgt. Dale Iman SSgt. Frank "Ski" Sledzinski, SSgt. Allen "Yogi" Bare, A1C Craig Corbet

Stinger 41 – 2 May 1972



Lt. Larry Barbee





7 Surviving Crew Members

Lt. Larry Barbee
Navigator, Stinger 41

"I'm not sure how much the gunship world knows about us, but there are a lot of ground-pounders who appreciated Shadows and Stingers…

…To me, just being airborne in the airplane, was like being back in WW1, with clouds of oil smoke on start-up, with the wind blowing around us, open doors and hatches with people hanging out in the slipstream, and low altitude maneuvering to dodge defenses and put down accurate fire. Being concerned about the high ground and the karsts around sort of prepared me for the night TFR in the F-111."

Col. George Hardy
Pilot, 18th SOS



Iconic Member of the 18th SOS

- WWII
  - Tuskegee Airmen
  - P-51 Pilot
  - Xyz Missions
- Korean War
  - B-29 Pilot
  - Xyz missions
- Vietnam War
  - AC-119K Stinger Pilot
  - Xyz missions



850 – The Lone "Survivor"



850 resides at the
Tan Son Nhut AB, Ho Chi Minh City, RVN





Dedicated to the Brave Crew Members of AC-119 Gunships, and those who lost their lives in Southeast Asia. Thank You.



Credits

- LARRY BARBEE: Author of “The Gunship Chronicles-Stinger 41”
- MIKE DRZYZGA: “Firing Circle”/“Ring of Fire” photo
- RON JULIAN: General Information
- WAYNE LAESSIG: General Information
- BRUCE MULLER: General Information
- WAYNE MUTZA: Author of “GUNSHIPS -The Story of Spooky, Shadow, Stinger, and Spectre”
- EVERETT SPROUS: Photo
- AC-119 GUNSHIP ASSOCIATION: Web Page History
- So many, Apologies to those that were missed…
- For more information, visit www.AC119Gunships.com