

# 281<sup>ST</sup> ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY

## "INTRUDERS"

Company Newsletter No.8

September 2000

## A MEMORABLE REUNION 2000! *The First Annual Reunion of the 281<sup>st</sup> AHC Association was in a word, FANTASTIC!*

### *From the Pres*

Let me re-introduce myself. I am Bob Mitchell, formerly known as "Mop" or "Bandit 24" while in the 281<sup>st</sup> AHC from 5 May 1969 through 5 May 1970. I have been active in the 281<sup>st</sup> AHC Association since it was re-established in 1998. I was the Reunion Chairman for last year's reunion and I have been very active on-line with the eGroups Network and the Bandit Homepage that is now part of the 281<sup>st</sup> AHC Homepage. I live in Pinson, Tennessee with my original wife, Sherry, and own and operate my own business. I am still active in the military with the Tennessee Army National Guard.

I am honored to have been elected as your President and will work hard to grow this Association. I regret not having been more active during the 1980's when several guys were struggling to form an organization and to keep the spirit alive. I salute those guys and thank them for planting the seeds that produced what we have today. The 281<sup>st</sup> AHC Association as we know it today is growing, and it is the intention of your Executive Board to continue this growth and find as many "lost souls" as possible. Our objective is to double the membership by our next reunion in 2001. In an effort to accomplish this end we have appointed Gary Stagman, Senior Member at Large, as the Membership Chairman. Gary has jumped right in and is working hard to produce the end result of, doubling the membership. If you have not heard from Gary yet, you will.

Fred Mentzer, Immediate Past President, is the editor and publisher of this Newsletter. Jack Green was elected Vice President and will follow me as President for next year. Joe Bilitzke was re-elected Secretary/Treasurer and will continue to do the great job for the Association that he has done in the past. Dennis Crowe was elected Junior Member at Large and as mentioned earlier, Gary Stagman was elected Senior Member at Large. Jack Mayhew has been appointed as Memorials Chairman and Dean Roesner was appointed Historian. Steve Matthews will continue as Webmaster of the best Vietnam Helicopter Unit Website on the Internet. Brent Gourelly is the 281<sup>st</sup> AHC Assn. Legal Advisor. Jeff Murray has been appointed as your Reunion Chairman for 2001. I have also asked Charlie Telfair, a former Recon Team member of Project Delta (1966) to assist

I first came to the 281<sup>st</sup> in Jan 66, at Fort Benning, Georgia and arrived in Viet Nam with the unit in Nha Trang. I was with the unit from Jan 66 to Dec 68. During

Jeff with the next reunion. We plan a joint Project Delta, Recondo and 281<sup>st</sup> Reunion at the Special Operations Association Reunion in Las Vegas in 2001.

You might notice that we have a fairly good representation of each part of the 281<sup>st</sup> AHC on this board. We have Ratpack, Bandit, Wolfpack, Maintenance and even an "old Commander." We have the "guys in front", the "guys in back", the "guys from the hangar" and even guys that had desks. With the addition of Charlie Telfair, we even have the "guys on the other end of the ropes". I am very excited about working with all of these folks in the coming year and am confident in their abilities to make things happen for the 281<sup>st</sup> AHC Association.

In closing, I would like to say a few words about our Reunion in Washington, DC. We were fortunate to have the assistance of Jack Mayhew, who lives in the area, in the planning and execution of the various events that were held. For those of you who were unable to attend, you were represented well by those who came to DC. We held a very moving Remembrance Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery for our KIA/MIA members and also were fortunate to have our own Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns. We had over 80 folks including wives, children, grandchildren and friends at our "Picnic" that was held at Jack Mayhew's home. The Reunion was an unparalleled success and we are looking forward to another great event in Las Vegas next year.

"Keep your Rotor in the Green"

Bob Mitchell  
Bandit 24  
President  
281<sup>ST</sup> AHC Association

### *From the SML*

My name is Gary L. Stagman, elected as Senior Member At Large and appointed as Membership Chairman for the 281<sup>st</sup> Assault Helicopter Association during the Unit Reunion/Business Meeting of July 2000.

This time frame I flew as Crew Chief in Wolf Pack, Rat Pack & Bandits flight platoons. In Oct 68 when I was promoted to SSG, I was then moved to Maintenance. I

again returned to the 281<sup>st</sup> in Jan 70 and served as Maintenance Platoon Sgt till unit deactivation in Dec 70. I probably am one of the unit's longest serving members.

Ok, Where are we today? Well we are one elite group of veterans, that served together at one time or another over a period of almost 5 years. This was a time of friendships and bonds that formed to make the 281<sup>st</sup> the unit that each member know that he could rely upon one or another in the performance of a successful mission.

My main function is to recruit and process new members. Every one of us are in fact recruiters and we will turn over our newly found potential members to the membership chairman for processing and signing up. My goal for this year is to try to find any and all former members of the unit. The flight platoons are coming around pretty well, but would still like to find more of the members of Aircraft Maintenance, Operations, Tech Supply, Motor Pool. It was a combination of all parts of this unit that made it as unique as it was and also as well known for its dedication to duty and outstanding performance.

I have selected John Korsbeck as my Assistant Membership Chairman, otherwise know as "Country". He has been very helpful in the recruitment of new members.

I currently have 30+ potential new members letters sent and 20+ E-mails sent awaiting response so I can get their addresses to send letters. I have tried to personalize the letters and envelopes with the Platoon Patch to each potential member if I can find out what platoon they served.

I can be reached at E-Mail: Cooter@Charter.Net and John Korsbeck: Kcountry@ttc-cmc.net

Looking forward to seeing you at the 2001 Reunion.  
Gary

## **Remembrance Committee Chairman**

As usual this is a plea for help. As you know we started this project with a self imposed goal of completing it by the 2001 reunion. So far we have completed 3 of the 43 individuals and we have volunteers working on 10 more. The 3 we have completed have been turned them over to Steve for placement on the web and to Dean for retention in the official records. If you have not done so please go to the web site and take a look at Donald McCoig's story in the excellent memorial section that Steve created for us. In there you will see what we are trying to achieve.

Our goal is to recall the lives of these 281<sup>st</sup> heroes, who gave it all, and to put their story on the record so that they can never be forgotten. To do this we need help!! If you do the math you can see that we have 20 KIA/MIAs that we still do not have sponsors for. It is a great way to get to know and individual and to honor their memory. I have personally made life long friend with the family members of the first three. It is a hearing and rewarding experience that you will never forget. Let's do this as a flight in the memory of those we lost and those we left

behind. This is a team effort and Bob, Steve, I along with the rest of the flight are available to assist you. Regards,  
Jack Mayhew

## **From the Webmaster**

I hate to sound like a broken record, but I am concerned that so many Intruders may be missing out on so much that the present-day group of Intruders has to offer. In case you're not on the Internet (and even for many of you who are since I received a "true confession" awhile back from an active "onliner" that he had NEVER visited the 281st HOMEpage), you are missing MANY, MANY pages of Intruder history, pictures, personal recollections, documentation, unit awards and distinctions, and a trip down memory lane that makes Dorothy & Toto look like pissants. And maybe more importantly, the rest of us are missing out on the opportunity to gain more perspective and shine a light on those cob-webbed corners of our memory that might otherwise be full of happy and worthwhile rememberings.

I have personally benefited greatly by contact with other Intruders over the past year and a half, to the extent that I would never have thought possible. First, I got reacquainted with another Rat Pack 15, Jim Baker who remembered me from Vietnam. Do you know how great that feels to be remembered? He even had pictures of me! Then I reconnected with Dean Roesner, the CE with me when I got shot, thru an old address in an old 281st Newsletter that I was given by somebody else. He added so much to my recollection of events. I contacted an old Rat Pack drinking buddy thru e-mail, and then talked to him LimaLima. AMAZING! (Unfortunately, he's not interested in remembering anything or anybody from Vietnam, and I can respect that.) Then I was contacted thru e-mail by Rick Galer, a Wolf Pack pilot, who had an audio tape of that mission when I got shot. UNBELIEVABLE! A great personal moment forever captured in time. Then I met the Rat Pack Plt Ldr Dan Wall at the reunion in Washington, D.C. What a trip! All these guys that I rubbed shoulders with over 30 years ago, who remember me and helped me remember a major time in my life. What more can a guy expect?

So, I hope you can understand my concern for those of you not online. What if I had never made any connections with these guys? After getting reconnected, am I "better off than I was 4 years ago?" ABSOLUTELY! Even though I've spent MANY hours doing the website and unit history (that I might have spent doing something else with my beautiful and generous wife), it has paid back dividends that are well worth the investment. I can only hope that as we continue to grow and contact more Intruders, more Intruders will acquire the capability to communicate thru the Internet and be able to have the same experiences I have by remembering. There's no better way to remember, and share! Think about it!

Just one more comment, then you can move on. After the reunion and the KIA/MIA Memorial Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, I tried to make a website that was more befitting the memory of our comrades lost in SEA, and present the essence of the ceremony for all those who could not attend. I hope you'll visit the site at <http://www.281stAHC.org/memorial/KIAMIA.html> and experience just a small bit of what the rest of us fortunate few were able to by participating.

And one other major highlight of the HOMEpage (OK, so I was lying about one more comment.) is the Search Form. I have created a form from which you can "key word" search the whole Intruder website and look for specific subjects. If all you're interested in is finding somebuddy, just go to <http://www.281stAHC.org/SEARCH.html> and type in his name and vio'la' there you have a list of pages where his name can be found. Or, I guess it could be OH CRAP, he's not listed anywhere. But that situation you can change, just e-mail me at [webmaster@281stAHC.com](mailto:webmaster@281stAHC.com)

See ya online!!

Steve Matthews

"Rat Pack 15" 6/68-6/69 Webmaster

## ALERT ORDER

**SITUATION:** A foray into the desert of Nevada has been planned and we need to infiltrate it, blend in with the local populace, and report all suspicious activity.

**MISSION:** The 281<sup>st</sup> Assault Helicopter Company bases Association membership will assault LZ Vegas at time TBA, XXOCT2001, in order to secure the objective by overwhelming concentration of troops and prevent the takeover of Nation Nevada by soldiers attired in soft, green hats.

**EXECUTION:** 281<sup>st</sup> AHC troops will arrive via commercial air, fanning out from the LZ in massed formation to secure a hotel to be named later in sufficient quantity of members to establish a beachhead and improve the quality of the ongoing activities significantly.

**LOGISTICS:** Credit cards authorized for purchase of airline tickets and any methods deemed necessary may be used to secure adequate accommodations within the vicinity of LZ Vegas, to include double bunking with other members as long as there is spousal approval (you are not allowed to tell us this is going on, however). BYOB is highly recommended, especially if you expect to entertain President MOP in your quarters as he never brings his own. Opportunities abound for improvement of economic status, as does the converse. Skimpily clad women may be observed throughout the LZ carrying various libations, however be cautious, the libations are for the taking, the skimpily-clad women are not. Violators are subject to being bounced.

**COMMAND & SIGNAL:** An early recon may be conducted, results to be published when complete. Frequency is WWW.281stAHC.ORG.

For the President  
Jeff Murray,  
Reunion Chairman

Official  
MOP, President

## The Immediate Past Pres reports

As the headline indicates, the eunion was fantastic! I'll try to give a running remembrance of the occasion even if it may be a bit "fogged" by more than a few containers of the yellow brewed bubbly stuff (to this Lance Ham can attest, as he was my unfortunate roommate).

The 281<sup>st</sup> Assn had quite a full schedule of events. In fact I feel we outdid the VHVA with the exception of the Banquet, but even there the 281<sup>st</sup> was grouped together. There were any number of highlights during our reunion. Its difficult to single out any event as outshining the other however as each was very special in its own way.

The barbecue at Jack Mayhews gorgeous Maryland residence. Cindy Mayhew, the beautiful and gracious hostess, overseeing the incredible layout of food, helping Jack to insure that everyone was enjoying themselves. Guys gabbing about old times, wives meeting new friends and old, kids and grandkids in the pool, close to eighty people milling around having a *wonderful* time. Brian Paine flitting about, cameras strung from his neck, recording the event for posterity. It was truly a wonderful time and a "family" occasion that none of us will forget.

The wreath laying event at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. A beautiful Washington day, mild and sunny. We rode to Arlington National Cemetery on buses provided by Jack Mayhew. This ceremony was with full participation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry "Old Guard", wreath placed before the Tomb, taps played, four of us standing before the monument representing the 281<sup>st</sup>, remembering our fallen.

The Tomb memorial event was followed immediately by a special observance at the Special Operations Memorial located close by. Again with the Old Guard participating. Here we honored the memory of forty-four of our MIA and WIA 281<sup>st</sup> comrades, with the presentation of colors, prayer, the reading of each individuals name with the placement of a flower on the memorial, taps, and moving words from Steve Matthews, Master of Ceremonies, and Carmella LaSpada, Chairwoman of the No Greater Love Assn. There was not a dry eye to be found from beginning to end. Words from Bob Mitchell contributed to the torrent! Both events were recorded by Brian as well as by FOX and CNN News.

It must be said here that our Assn owes a great debt of gratitude to Carmella and the No Greater Love Assn for making our Arlington memorials possible. And no less to Jack Mayhew, without whom so much of our Washington reunion experience would not have been nearly so poignant, memorable, and, just plain fun.

Well enough of that. I hope I gave you at least a "feel" of what our reunion experience was about. There was more, but you can see for yourself when Brian makes the photo's available. And I might add, a video of the ceremonies. Contact Brian Paine directly regarding a CD with the photo's and the video he is preparing.

Lastly I'd like to include a e-mail letter to the Assn from Linda George, widow of Bob George who passed away last year. I don't think I need to comment further.

Fred Mentzer

Date Mon, 17 Jul 2000

From "ROBERT GEORGE" <bg@stroudsburg.com>  
Subject DC Reunion.

I have tried many times to set down at this old computer, that Bob loved so much, to thank you all for a wonderful reunion weekend. The words wouldn't come, but the tears flowed abundantly. I have not been so filled with pride, grief, humility, dignity and love all in one, since the day I walked behind the caisson that carried "my hero" to his final resting place in Arlington. So you can imagine how I felt... at the fly by...he was in the right seat flying over the wall, saluting his best buddy, at Arlington even though he wasn't killed in action, his "actions" (flying gun cover for those spreading Agent Orange) in Vietnam took his life ...and at the banquet, his name didn't appear on any of the tables but you can be assured he was there, and finally, he would have burst at the seams with pride to march down Constitution Avenue with the comrades that knew him best.

I echo the sentiments of Joe Galloway, America doesn't get it, and you know what, America never will. You brave band of men have experienced the "likes of something" that can never, and will never be replicated in our history! Thank you, thank you all!

I for one am proud to be the wife of an Army Aviator.

Linda George

### **Notes & Memo's** *from the Publisher*

**21Aug2000** - Long telecon with Lou Lerda. Wants to organize a "suds&spuds" in Sept for 281<sup>st</sup> vets in the Washington and Oregon area. Get ahold of Lou if you can make it.

**23Aug2000** - *(The following is taken from the private 281<sup>st</sup> eGroups chat site on the Internet. I thought you'd be interested)*

From "John Galkiewicz" <galkie@hotmail.com>

Subject: Where were you

Gentlemen,

Here is one that will shake the cob webs. Where were you when Armstrong set foot on the moon?

I was stationed in Germany and went to the Rhine-Main Air Force Officers club to watch the big TV there. As I recall it was about 900PM and just as they were about to land the moon was perfectly positioned in the middle of the big picture window they had at the club. You could see both the TV and the moon with just a glance. A very memorable occasion for me. How did you guys in country hear about it.

Galkie

From "Dick Ziegler" <royz2nd@aol.com>

I was in North Vietnam sitting on my a-- in a prison camp. The only way we found out the we landed on the moon

was when one of the North Vietnamese said something to the effect, "If you can land men on the moon, why can't you stop the war in Vietnam?" From that point on whenever we saw the moon when we were outside we would salute the moon because we knew our flag was there. It would really piss them off.

Roy (Dick) Ziegler

**31Aug 2000** - Some interesting email traffic between Gary Stagman and Juan Souto, B HEL ASAL 601 (equivalent to AHC 601) of the Argentine Army Aviation Battalion based in Campo de Mayo, Buenos Aires. Argentina concerning #66-17138 that belonged to the 281<sup>st</sup> back in 68 to 70. Anyone interested can get together with Gary or contact Jaun at: Lavalle 695 piso 11A,1878 Quilmes, Buenos Aires, Argentina - [juan.souto@grupo-estrella.com](mailto:juan.souto@grupo-estrella.com)

**15Aug2000** - *(This from Jack Mayhew)*

**How can I locate a former soldier or buddy from an old unit?**

The Privacy Act of 1974 prohibits releasing the last known address of former Army members without their written consent. However, the agency identified below will assist your search by forwarding your letter to the service member's last known address.

To pursue locating a former Army soldier

- Write a letter to the soldier. Place this letter in a sealed and stamped envelope, including your full name and return address.

- Write a letter addressed to the National Personnel Records Center requesting their assistance with your search. Be sure to include the service member's name, serial number and/or social security number, and date of birth if available.

- Place your envelope addressed to the service member AND the letter to the **National Personnel Records Center in ONE envelope. Address this envelope to National Personnel Records Center, 9700 Page Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63132-5200.** Please note current addresses for discharged service members are not maintained at the records center - this center only has the service member's last officially recorded address. Letters to service members the record center can not identify or who are known to be deceased will be returned to you.

## **281st AHC Association, Inc.**

**President....Bob Mitchell**

**Vice President....Jack Green**

**Senior Member\_at\_Large....Gary Stagman**

**Junior Member\_at\_Large....Dennis Crowe**

**Immediate Past President....Fred Mentzer**

**Secretary/Treasurer.....Joe Bilitzke**

**Legal Advisor, OneList Admin.....Brent Gourley**

**Reunion.....Jeff Murray**

**Historian....Dean Roesner**

**Webmaster....Steve Matthews**

# Program

Monday, July 3, 2000 Arlington National Cemetery

## A Time of Remembrance

### Wreath Laying

#### Tomb of the Unknowns

Members, 281<sup>st</sup> Assault Helicopter Company

Allen Denmark

Fred Mentzer

Jeff Murray

David Sherril

### Master of Ceremonies

Matthews

Member

281<sup>st</sup> Assault Helicopter Company

Dr. Steven

### “Turn, Turn, Turn”

LtCol Mark Gibson, USMC (Ret), soloist

Accompanied by:

Colonel Don Meno, USA

Captain Roger Jaskot, USN

Commander Tina Jaskot, USA

### “Remember”

A poem by MSG James J. Richard USA

Bob Mitchell

Member

281<sup>st</sup> Assault Helicopter Company

### “On Eagle’s Wings”

LtCol Mark Gibson, USMC (Ret), soloist

Accompanied by:

Colonel Don Meno, USA

Captain Roger Jaskot, USN

Commander Tina Jaskot, USA

Colonel Jack Mayhew, USA (Ret)

### Prayer

Reverend Norman Kaufman

Member

281<sup>st</sup> Assault Helicopter Company

### Presentation of Colors

US Army Color Guard

### Pledge of Allegiance

Fred Mentzer

Member

281<sup>st</sup> Assault Helicopter Company

### Placing of Remembrance Wreath

Fred Mentzer

Colonel Jack Mayhew, USA (Ret)

281<sup>st</sup> Assault Helicopter Company Association

Board Member, No Greater Love

### Remarks

Carmella LaSpada

Founder, No Greater Love

Bob Mitchell

### Taps

U.S. Army Bugler

### Roll Call to Remembrance

Representatives

281<sup>st</sup> Assault Helicopter Company

Jack Green, *Mardi Gras*

John Hyatt, *Fangs*

Jerry Montoya, *Wolf Pack*

Corky Corkran, *Wolf Pack*

Fred Mentzer, *Wolf Pack*

Jack Mayhew, *Intruder*

Ken Smith, *Bandit*

Ron Schwachenwald, *Intruder*

Lance Ham, *Wolf Pack*

Dennis Crowe, *Bandit*

Bob Mitchell, *Bandit*

Jim Baker, *Rat Pack*

Roger Green, *Bandit*

Jeff Murray, *Wolf Pack*

Dennis Canfield, *Wolf Pack*

Ken Boling, *Bandit*

Steve Mathews, *Rat Pack*

Jim Torbert, *Intruder*

Bain Black, *Wolf Pack*

