

281ST ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY

“INTRUDERS”

Company Newsletter No. 9

January 2001

Combined with the Special Operations Association our

Second Annual Reunion Is Coming Up!

From the Pres

Greetings fellow Intruders! I hope everyone had a Happy Holiday Season.

Since our last newsletter we have been very successful in our membership drive. Gary Stagman and John Korsbeck are doing an excellent job in this area and deserve our gratitude. I challenged them to double our membership during this year and it sure looks like they will get the job done.

Some of us attended the Special Operations Association Reunion this past September in Las Vegas. We made contact with several former Project Delta guys and had a great time renewing old friendships and forging new ones. 281st members in attendance were: Fred and Hilda Mentzer, John Korsbeck, Dean Byrne, Joe Bilitzke, Brian and Marilyn Paine, Buck Sorem and Bob and Sherry Mitchell. We met with the leadership of the Special Operations Association (SOA) and worked out details for our holding a reunion that will run concurrent with their 2001 Reunion (SOAR XXV). Unfortunately, Charlie Telfair, our Project Delta Reunion Chairman fell ill while we were at Las Vegas and is still in need of your thoughts and prayers. As has always been the case with Project Delta, Chester Howard, Delta Recon 1969-1970 has stepped up and is currently working with Jeff Murray in planning a joint reunion between the 281st AHC and Project Delta for this year. There will be more news to come on the 281st AHC/Project Delta Reunion as time grows closer.

Items of note that have occurred since the last Newsletter include:

(1) A production of a video tape that has footage of the 10th Combat Aviation Battalion Memorial Ceremony and McCoig Dedication, the Remembrance Ceremony at the Special Operations Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery and the Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown. There are copies of this tape available at \$15.00 including shipping, contact Brian Paine.

(2) Fred Funk requested 281st AHC Association approval to work on an exhibit for the 281st AHC in the Special Force/Special Operations Museum at Ft Bragg. The Executive Board approved his request and David (Phread) Sherrill and Jim Baker will assist Fred Funk in making this a reality. If anyone has any memorabilia they would like to loan to Fred for this project please contact him directly. You will find his name and address in the attached roster.

In closing, I ask each one of you to continue spreading the word about the Association and our planned reunion. Should you come up with a prospective member just turn their name and address over to Gary or John and they will do the rest. If you are receiving this newsletter and have not paid your dues yet, please contact Gary or John. We have had many happy reunions of members who have found each other after all these years, it is essential that we keep the Association strong and growing to make this happen. The most pivotal part of this is the website, 281stAHC.org. Lost souls are found on a daily basis due to the existence of our website, thanks to Steve and Peggy Matthews.

“Keep your Rotor in the Green”

Bob Mitchell
Bandit 24
President
281st AHC Assn.

From the Vice Pres

After Christmas Sale!
Now is the time for all the new members, those who have joined after July 2000, to get an early start on the General Membership meeting in Las Vegas in 2001. In order to be “with it”, the tee-shirt guru is offering selected shirts at rock bottom prices. Bargains will never be this low again. Each shirt will sell for \$15.00, including shipping. Folks, that’s \$5.00 off last years price or 25%. The tee-shirts are Fruit of the Loom Cotton in Ash color. The various platoon logos or Intruder logo is in vivid color on the left pocket area with the full-figured Intruder outline logo on the back. All proceeds go to the Association, the cost have already been met from last years sales. It’s a first come basis. When I receive an email or a phone call, I will reserve that shirt for you. I expect a check with-in 5 days of the order.

Make the check out to: John W. Green III. This sale will not go out over the net in order to give those folks not on the net to have an equal chance at the order. My contact information is as follows:

225-272-7953 voice
225-272-7966 fax
12736 E. Sheraton Ave.
Baton Rouge, LA 70815
JWG3RD@aol.com
Sizes by platoon and number available.

Bandits: 1-S, 1-M, 3-XL Ratpack: 2-S, 2-XL, 1-XXL

Wolf Pack: 1-S, 2-L, 4-XL Intruder: 1-S, 5-XL

Senior Member at Large

Ok, Now where are we? Well we have increased membership by 40+ members this past year. We have gained several members who have paid their renewals and new members that have chose to save time and expense by becoming "**LIFE MEMBERS**". Regular renewals are arriving each day. From a total of 45 for 2001 renewals, I only have 20 membership cards left here to send out. So hopefully by the 31 Jan 2001, every one will be paid up-to-date , then I can concentrate on getting 2002 on its way.

This also has been a banner year, in that We are now starting to get some of the behind the scenes support personnel found and are joining. We now have flight operations, maintenance and others joining. So we are gaining ground in getting all parts of the unit accounted for. Please check the unit roster on the web site, to insure that personnel information is correct and up to date. If there is a mistake, please contact me either by snail mail, or E-Mail.

In the past few months, I have accomplished designing, printing and laminating Membership Cards for both life and Annual Members. As I said, everyone has received their new cards, except for the ones that haven't sent in their renewals.

I also have designed and started printing Certificate of Membership, hopefully that everyone will be proud of to frame it and show it off. I have printed the Life Members, and now I will be starting to due the annuals soon. I will be sending them out hopefully a few each day, until I have them all done. I hope everyone who has received their cards, that they are happy with them.

John "Country" Korsbeck is the Assistant Membership Chairman, who has been very helpful in the recruitment of finding new members.

I do know that if I was having to go to work each day, this would be probably not as far as I am, but with being not able to work, this has been good therapy trying to find more of you guys. This is good therapy, as you all are the good guys!!!!

At the present time the current membership is at a total of: **107!!!!!!!**

A big hearty "**SALUTE**" to all of the "**INTRUDERS**" for their continuing support.

Gary Stagman

Senior Member at Large - Membership

From the Webmaster

There's an old saying that- "Life is what happens while you're making other plans." Well, my other plans included keeping the roster updated, and adding more information, pictures, stories, reunion photos, etc. to the website. It's all still there - in the plans! But, life happened these past few months. (Sometimes known as job security!) Hopefully, I will make time to get the plans done in the near future.

For now, I survive thru the help of my "better half" whom many of you know as Peggy. Without her support of me and the Intruders, I'd get alot less done than I do.

In the mean time, I hope everyone will continue to feed me information, pictures, stories, well, you get the idea. At least if I have it, I can do something with it someday. If I don't have it, then I'm off the hook. There is obviously alot more work to be done on the website as more (of the above type stuff) is generated by everyone's improving CRS, and as more work is accomplished on the Books of

Remembrance. Keep up the good work, and don't hesitate to send me whatever you have directly atsmatthews@kscable.com.

For those of you not online (I hope you get there soon), send me via regular mail whatever you have hard copy that you would like added to the website and I'll be happy to scan, or make it electronic, or convert however to the web and send it back to you. 2014 SW Regency Parkway Drive, Topeka, KS 66604

We can make it work for everybody.

Steve Matthews

"Rat Pack 15"

Webmaster

From the Immediate Past Pres

It's been almost six months now since our first annual reunion. And what a fantastic time it was. Now we have videos of the event available and it brings back all the emotion and comradery that we experienced at the time. The video also shows the dedication ceremonies at Ft Drum in honor of Donald McCoig. Anyone wanting a copy should contact Brian Paine who is primarily responsible for producing the video. Great job Brian, and on behalf of all of us, thanks.

^ I am saddened to inform you of the passing of David Bittle "Wolf Pack 36 Yankee" on 27 September 2000. David was buried with full military honors at the Punchbowl National Cemetery, Hawaii. "Have a cold beer waiting for us, brother". ^ We Rotor On

As Bob mentioned earlier our next reunion will in at Las Vegas in conjunction with the Special Ops Assn. The SOA annual get together is held each year the end

of September so start making your plans accordingly.
Jeff

Murray is the 2001 Reunion Chairman and may call on you to help in organizing the 281st part of the event at SOA. Give him your support. B-52 Project Delta and the 281st Assn plan to make this a "smashing good time"!

The 281st online email chat site continues to grow and is a great way to find old friends and to generally kinda bable on about times past to folks who understand. When you get a computer and learn how to tickle the keys get in contact with Brent Gourley who is the administrator of the 281AHC eGroups site. Check his email address on the roster. A word about our newsletter. Anyone wishing to contribute an article, search for a lost comrade or make an announcement, whatever, let me know. The next newsletter should be published roundabout the end of April. In the meantime, "We Rotor On".

Fred Mentzer
"Wolf Pack 36"
Immediate Past Pres and Publisher

281st Assault Helicopter Company Association

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
Assn. Historian....Dean Roesner
Webmaster....Steve Matthews

Web Sites

281st AHC - www.281stahc.org
Rat Pack - downtown.ala.net/~bgrly/281/ratpack.htm
Bandits - www.angelfire.com/tn/mitchellrw
Wolf Pack - www.angelfire.com/wa2/wolfpack
SOA - www.specialoperations.org/Main.html

Notes & Memo's *from the Publisher*

Note: The following was written by Chester Howard, B-52 Delta Recon, for the 281st AHC eGroups email chat site.
Date: Wed, 6 Dec 2000

From: Chester Howard <chesterhoward@mfpoer.com>

After I answer this from my personal stand point, I will forward to Delta eGroup for additional personal remarks. As there was no SOP, aside from common sense, OF COURSE extraction for me was going back to Safety, Beer, Food, a Shit, Shower, and Soft Cot. Don't know if ya'll knew or not but, we carried little in the way of personal comfort items; 3 X 6 foot plastic ground cover, 6 to 8 canteens of water, two cans of "C rations" per day sometimes a bag of VN rice. We did not shit in the field, Uncle provided Super Lo Moedle (SP), recently discovered to cause cancer, the highest incidence among VN Special Ops Types. Personally, not being a pill taker, I trained myself to shut down that function.

By far, the majority of our gear was for when shit hit the fan. Once we requested extraction and flashed (signal mirror) the FAC, all we had to do was wait for you guys. Unless of course there were others there that wanted our body's real bad. Sometime the FAC would lead us to an LZ, on the run or otherwise. We tried to be on time, depending on terrain and what was happening at the time. We knew the neighborhood was armed. Best not to upset them anymore than necessary unless help wasn't far away. We didn't pick unnecessary fights unless we were after a prisoner, target taken out. The mission always came first.

Never could understand why ya'll worried so much about finding us. We were always right where we said; "by the BIG GREEN TREE"! What the Hell was the problem? Just joking. If we were not at a preselected extraction LZ and needed out, we checked our maps, which were not usually accurate, and went in search of a spot where we

could see SKY. A must for an LZ. Even better was if there was room for the helicopter (sometimes the area needed for the blades was probably not considered as much as it should have been). Shit, Army Aviation should have thought about that and built those blades tougher for chopping wood! I didn't know you trashed em every time you hit something. We did have sense enough to get out of the way if you started to fall out of the sky.

McGuire wasn't so bad, beat the hell outa running from Charlie. The ride at least dried our sweat as our clothes were mostly soaking wet. Did get chilly with the altitude and wind. We didn't have Stabo's during my time. Seemed kinda neat unless they hurt your crotch. Can't imagine wearing one for six days. We did not change clothes, drawers or socks during out missions. Didn't want to get caught with our proverbial pants down, don't ya seeeee. That's when I first noticed the difference between fish eaters and meat eaters. We smelled like rotted flesh.

I only saw a formation once when I was outside Lang Vei, south of the DMZ and Khe San. I was on a hill side, been out of water for three days. We were so weak we barely had strength enough to crawl in the chopper. There was a six pack of beer in the center of the Aircraft and it was hot but we guzzled it down, at least it was wet. Whoops!! Got off the subject. Since I was on the side of the hill and it wasn't too wooded around me, I heard and saw the formation coming, saw the hole ship drop in to pick us up.

Depending on terrain and canopy we could hear but seldom do I recall seeing ships until the hole ship began to maneuver for the pick up. Once inside the Huey I knew I was safe. Ya see, with all that metal skin and stuff running through your ship I always felt safe inside. Now I get to use my favorite movie line, which I have never had the opportunity to use before this writing. I realize you guys took lots of hits and thought you were without armor and that I never sat through a crash. But my rebuttal is; "JUST HOW THICK DID YOU THINK THAT FUCKING TIGER STRIP SHIRT WAS?????????" Always wanted to say that.

We did not typically have to prepare for extraction, it all depended on how you were going to take us out. We would just secure the LZ. Ya see, at that stage of things when you were near, ya'll became the prize, not us. If they clipped your wings that might get us too as a consolation. Not very exciting was it. In Delta we were told right up front that they would promise us a medal, a body bag or both (Beckwith saying). Doc Simpson, Recon Section Leader always said most likely we'd die, that he didn't like wasting good men but wanted to be realistic. Everyone was a volunteer, had to have an initial interview, could quit when they choose, and like you guys, we were ONE. No questions asked - no thinking required. If a Recon man needed help, all were ready to go. Due to the nature of our business we were not to expect medals and such. Always thought that the guys that got serious medals musta been dead or BAD MF'ers. That was the only job I ever knew in the Army, that never had anyone to save but one other American and occasionally with the BDA there were more. Just wasn't Recon's purpose to be there for the Glory. They didn't give big medals for saving so few.

I just found out in August of 1999 that Delta was declassified in June 1996. Now that I'm becoming an old Phart like the rest of you, I've begun to open up. One day I hope to talk to my family and talk openly to others. I believe more than ever we were very significant during the Viet Nam War and we could not have done it with out each other, Delta / 281st AHC. I am proud to have been lucky enough to get into Delta and be a part of it all. Brian has been of great help to me here, of the guys in my local SFA Chapter only one was a Recon man and he was with CCN. He and I hit it off at Vegas but he doesn't live close.

Thanks for reading my version."C"

Note - This one from John Korsbeck. Perhaps typical with what you'll put up with at Vegas. It will be GREAT fun!

From: John Korsbeck <kcountry@ttc-cmc.net>

Subject: SF

Back in Viet Nam, there were two fine SF troopers, Jeff and Dave. One day, the two were enjoying a strong sasarilla in the Delta Hilton, when a SOG man walked into the bar with an NVA's head under his arm. The CO shakes his hand and says, "I hate NVA, last week the bastards burnt an A-camp to the ground, shot up the troops and killed some Indig troops." The CO then says, "If any man brings me the head of an NVA I'll give him one thousand dollars." The two SF troopers looked at each other and walked out of the bar to go hunting for an NVA. They were stalking around in the jungle for a while when suddenly they saw one; Jeff, in order to be silent, threw a rock which hit the NVA right on the head. The NVA fell down, but landed seventy feet down a ravine. The two troopers made their way down the ravine where one of them pulled out a knife to claim their trophy. Suddenly, Dave said, "Jeff, take a look at this." Dave replied, "Not now, I'm busy." Jeff urgently tugged him on the shoulder and says, "I really think you should look at this." Dave says, "Look, you can see I'm busy. There's a thousand dollars in my hand." But Jeff was adamant. "Please, take a look at this." Dave looked up and saw that standing at the top of the ravine were five thousand NVA. He just shook his head and said, "Oh my God, we're going to be millionaires!!!" Airborne!!!!