

281st ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY

“INTRUDERS”

Company Newsletter No 13

May 2002

REUNION 2002 COMING UP!!

25 - 29 September 2002

SOAR XXVI

Special Operations Association Reunion

281st Assault Helicopter Company Assn Reunion

Gaughan's Plaza Hotel Casino

One Main Street

Las Vegas, Nevada 89125

(702) 386-2110 / (800) 634-6575

email: reservations@plazahotelcasino.com

<http://www.plazahotelcasino.com>

Editors Comments

The third annual reunion of the 281st AHC Association is coming up in only a few months time. It promises to be our best to date. From email messages to telephone conversations practically all have ended with; "See you in September". Off the top of my head I would guest-i-mate we will have in excess of 150 of our folks descending on Las Vegas. What a time it will be! I don't know about you, but I can hardly wait!

On a more serious note, many of you have observed or heard of a rather major shakeup in the association leadership. During the last month a series of events have resulted in a spate of resignations for one reason or another. For the most part the officers who chose to resign did so with the best interests of the organization at heart. On behalf of the membership I extend our appreciation to those who devoted considerable time and effort towards the betterment of the association. Thanks guys, we applaud you.

At the end of this newsletter you will find the current board of officers. This board will remain in office until the General Membership meeting in September. At that time practically all the elective positions will be put to the vote. A message from the Immediate Past President is at the end of this newsletter giving particulars concerning executive actions. There will be a special edition coming up shortly in which the elections will be covered in detail by the President and Membership Chairman.. What I would like to ask of you is that if you have a desire to serve your association, **please step forward and make yourself known!** In the next newsletter I will have a

section called "The Candidates Corner" wherein the folks who toss their hat into the ring can do some speechifying. So "get your hat in guys", we need you!

Lastly, please note that the official association web address is at: <http://www.281stAHC-Assn.org>

"We Rotor On"!

Fred Mentzer
"Wolf Pack 36"

Founding Member and Former President

^ *Bob Moberg reports from Thailand that Steve Watson, Wolf Pack 32 (1969-70), passed away on 11 Feb 02, from liver failure and/or hepatitis. His remains were cremated in Bangkok.* ^

The Reunion Chairman Says

Flight, the 281st AHC Assn. Annual Reunion will be held in conjunction with Special Operations Assn. Reunion (SOAR) XXVI again this year. SOAR XXVI will be held 25-29 September 2002 at Las Vegas, NV. The host hotel will remain the same as before: Plaza Hotel, One Main Street, Las Vegas, NV 89101, 1-800-634-6575. Hotel Reservations deadline is 14 September 2002. Registration deadline is 24 August 2002. Please get your reservations in ASAP!!!

Most members of the 281st AHC are eligible for General Membership in the Special Operations Assn. Others are qualified for Associate Membership. Dues are \$25.00 annually. Membership in the SOA is not required to participate in the 281st Reunion 2002, but it is

encouraged.

In the coming months I will keep you informed by e-mail and in the 281st AHC Assn. Newsletter of information on our Reunion as it develops. Our Membership Meeting will be in the Plaza as well as all other planned activities. Specific details will be sent out later.

Bob Mitchell
 Reunion Chairman
 281st Reunion 2002

Treasurers Report

As of 31 March 2002, the following is submitted by the Association Treasurer.

Checking:		
Balance 12/21/01		\$ 3,533.47
Additions		4,285.00
Subtractions		735.37
Balance 3/31/02		7,083.10
Restricted funds		(3,851.99)
Available Cash 3/31/02		\$ 3231.11
Savings		\$ 8,423.01
Restricted Funds		3,851.99
Total Restricted Funds		\$ 12,275.00
Membership as of 4/07/02		
Annual Members		163
Life Members		43
Unpaid members		(19)
Total Current Paid Members		187

Fred Mentzer
 "Wolf Pack 36"
 Treasurer
 (Prepared by Brian Paine)

Membership Committee

During the months since the reunion of 2001, we have gone from 171 members to 207!!

Also, there is a long list of ones that have been contacted, but haven't joined as of yet.

This list totals around 160 +, so if they all joined, there would be well over 300 members. So we are growing and making more contacts.

In my searches, also have found some Died after tour (DAT), which has been added to the web site roster.

Since the original organizational meeting held in Nashville, TN; Jul 1999, there has been 3 milestones accomplished. They are:

- Membership #001-Fred Mentzer, WP 36, 67-68
- Membership #100-AI Hawkins, RP,DG, 67- 68

Membership #200-Dave Connell,145¹, 281st,66-67

We have a pretty well rounded group now in the membership from just about every area of the 281st AHC. This past year we have found or accounted for every First Sergeant that was in the 281st AHC. Also all of the Commanders have been found or accounted for.

We still have 19 members that have not paid their renewal dues. In order to be able to vote in the Association elections, you must be paid and current for that year.

Remember if you have contact with a buddy that is not a member; pass his information on, so we can contact him. There still are many of the guys out there just waiting for someone to contact/find them.

Thank you all for your support to the 281st AHC Association.

Gary Stagman & John Korsbeck
 2001 - 2002 Membership Committee

The Memorial Team

An updated listing of 33 Died After Tour people is submitted for everyone's review. It would be appreciated if you would take the time to review the written memorials on our web, which are in the Died After Tour section. If you knew any of these folks and have something to add to the current written memorial please send it to me as follows: Jack Serig, Sr., 9021 SW 140th St., Miami, Fl. 33176-7108 or email me at: jack.serig@gte.net.

Kind regards to all. - Jack Serig

281st AHC ASSOCIATION

MEMBERS WHO DIED AFTER VIETNAM TOUR (DAT) WITH 281st AHC

- 1.AUSNESS, ROBERT, LTJG, USCG; 2.BAIRD, E.G., MAJ; 3.BAKER, RICHARD, C/E; 4.BELANGER, GILLES D., C/E; 5.BITLE, DAVID, PLT. SGT.; 6.BONNARENS, FRANK O., MAJ; 7.BROWN, JAMES, CAPT; 8.BYERS, JAMES L., SP-4; 9.CARTER, ALAN, C/E; 10.CARTER, THOMAS, CWO; 11.CAREY, JAMES E., CWO; 12.DEGNER, HERBERT L., LTCOL; 13.DONEY, JOHN PAUL, SR., SP-5; 14.EDGLEY, ROBERT, CWO; 15.FRAZIER, ROBERT J. "PETE", COL; 16.GEORGE, ROBERT L., CWO; 17.GOINES, SP-4, C/E; 18.GOMEZ, GEORGE, SP-4; 19.GRAFFE, PAUL L., CAPT; 20.GRIMSHAW, STEVE; 21.HARPSTER, HENRY (HANK), C/E; 22.HILDERBRAND, DON C., CWO; 23.KAY, S. F. #; SGT. 24.MARTIN, JOHNNY C., 1st SGT; 25.MAY, DAVID D., CAPT; 26.MONTGOMERY, ROBERT, CWO; 27.O'CONNOR, GARY D., CWO; 28.SCOTT, DOUGLAS #; 29.SHANHART, F.P. #; 30.SMITH, L.A., CWO; 31.UNTALAN, L.T., CWO, 32.WATSON, STEVE, CWO; 33.WELCH, FRANK, C/E; 34.WINGFIELD, THOMAS, CWO3.

Rank unknow. Please advise.

Jack Mayhew - Corky Corkran - Jack Serig
 Memorial Committee

NOTES & MEMO'S

(Note – Following is the poop on membership to SOA from John Korsbeck followed by thoughts from the President on the same subject)

From: John Korsbeck

Subject: SOA membership

This is a synopsis of the membership rules for SOA

Because the 281st AHC was the ONLY aviation unit assigned to Project Delta and under 5th SFG control, as of this date we are the ONLY unit that has been granted "ALL PERSONNEL" blanket authorization to join SOA . This includes everyone from the CO to the mail clerks, the Opns pers , Maint, POL, etc,

The question that becomes most discussed is: will they become General (voting) members OR Associate (non-voting) members

This is where Ray Chambers, Membership Chairman & VP, and I come in I'm Ass't membership for all aviation assets. My SOA membership number is #326Life got my 20 year pin 2000 in Vegas. There is only one other pilot with a lower number in all of SOA, a 189th pilot snuck in and beat me by 20 + numbers. When a aviation app. comes in, either to me or Ray C, it must be background checked by me and some of my contacts & signed off by me before it goes to Ray C for issue or denial. FYI, I just rejected what I suspect was the biggest WANNNABEE aviator to ever try for membership

Back to the rules: The applicant must have FLOWN on insertions, or extractions, or gun cover on Delta or SOG missions and had the opportunity to subject to hostile fire while DIRECTLY supporting such, to be a General Member. All others, i.e. unit support such as Opns, POL, Maint, Staff, etc, can become Associate Members. REMEMBER, in all other aviation units -- ONLY those that FLEW in Direct support will be allowed membership. All support pers from those units DO NOT EVEN QUALIFY for Associate. Membership. Flying a 5thSFG support mission (but not a Delta or SOG) and/or CCN , CCC, CCS will NOT get you a General Membership.

HOW DO YOU JOIN? I have an application scanned into my system. For the computer literate, email me BC and I will send to you the attachment. If your printer DOES NOT make a good copy let me know and I will US mail you an app. You guys that are not on the computer just send me a snail mail request for the application. Dues are: Annual \$25 Life \$250

Any further questions send me an email BC or regular mail, we WELCOME new membership, and SOA goes out of their way to make ALL aviation members feel more than Welcome. BUT, they go the extra mile for the 281stAHC. Just ask those who were in Vegas this last September. - John Korsbeck

From: Jack Green

SOA membership

Intruders, It took quite a bit of hard work and lobbying by

John, Bob "Mop" Mitchell and some others to get the membership question resolved. Just by being a member

of the most unique aviation unit in the Vietnam war,

qualifies our people for membership in the SOA. No matter what category you fall into, General or Associate, gives you the braggin' rights that very few can claim. Thousands of aviation people were involved with many of the Special Operations in RVN, but not in the capacity that the 281st enjoys. I would be proud to claim any type of membership in this Association, General or Associate. As Bob Mitchell spelled out earlier, our spin-off unit, the 160th Regiment is involved in the very same operations that we invented, molded and excelled, over 35 years ago.

I have been extremely busy these days telling my story about Delta and Special Ops to people who really want to know what the devil is going on over in Afgan Land. -Jack

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The SOA is a Good and Proud Association and I am grateful for the opportunity to belong to it. -Jack Green

(Next are email messages on the 281st CHAT site between Jack Mayhew, Gary Stagman and Al Junko clearing up some CRS on a sapper attack in early 1967 at Nha Trang)

From: John W. Mayhew

Date: 21 February 2002

Flight, I think you will find the sapper attack under discussion covered in the following note from Al. Junko. Fred Mentzer was not in the hospital at the time of Tet 68 (Barc Boyd was the hospitalized Wolf Pack Cmdr but was back in the states by Tet) and John is correct, we suffered little damage during Tet. Unless you consider the discussion that Bill Smith (Co 17th Avn GP) had with me concerning the Wolf Pack's attack on the local ESSO station which went up in flames and the close in support rendered to the Field Force HQ by the Pack. If you want a great first person recollection of Tet, buy Fred a drink in Vegas and let him tell you the story of how the Pack distinguished itself with only part of the gun-ship fleet.

We did loose Major Le Nhu Tu who was the commander of the 91st ARVN Ranger Bn. Maj Tu was one of the finest officers that I have ever had the pleasure to serve with. Le was killed on the main street along the

beach when his Bn made contact with an NVA Bn and proceeded to eliminate each and ever one of them. Much like the new slogan "Let's Roll", we had our own slogan created the morning of Tet when Bob Moberg's son, Se, rallied the Villa troops with his with his repeated cry of; "THE F----G VC COME!" - JM

*Note from All Junko, 281st CO 1967. – "My predecessor as CO was William "Bill" Griffin. We had an unrehearsed change of command ceremony at around 0010 hours 11 Feb 67, the day I assumed command. Sappers had penetrated the airfield perimeter and blew up four or five of our choppers. Whether the event happened on his watch or on mine is quite immaterial. The irony of the incident occurring at almost the precise moment of command change is almost too much to believe. But it happened. I did have a picture of Bill and me shaking hands in front of one of the helicopter hulks after I had just remarked, "Well, Bill, we had one hell of a change of command ceremony, didn't we?" We both were laughing as the lighter side of the occurrence was considered." – AJ

From: Marshall "Hawk" Hawkins

SPECIAL AWARD CEREMONY FOR PAUL SWOL

[CAUTION, IT'S A SECRET: As of this date the recipient does not know of his impending honor. Through special effort on the part of the publisher, this newsletter will not be emailed (or snail mailed) to the recipient. Any person knowingly divulging to the recipient the fact or circumstances of this award will be severely admonished by their mother for telling secrets and cut off from the open bar at the reunion. Seriously guys, a lot of effort and expense has gone into this award and if at all possible, we would like for it to be a complete surprise.]

On Saturday May 18, 2002, a group of former 281st Assault Helicopter Company members will gather at Ft. Bragg, California to honor Specialist Fourth Class Paul Swol. At this surprise ceremony Paul will be awarded the Air Medal by US Representative Michael Thompson, the Congressm an for Paul's home district. The award is expected to be made in the Memorial section of the Botanical Gardens in Ft. Bragg. Intruders expected to attend are Paul Leonard, Bill Henderson, Doug Powell, Albin Szulc, Ken Smith, Brian Paine, Jack Mayhew and Marshall Hawkins. Afterward a more informal ceremony will be held with presentations of an autographed copy of "Silent Birdmen" donated by it's author, Al Rampone, and a Certificate of Appreciation from the Special Forces Museum (at the other Ft. Bragg) for Paul's donation of a painting depicting a door gunner in flight which is now displayed there. Copious fluid refreshments and animated conversations are also expected.

Paul Swol began his service with the 281st in April 1969 as a POL specialist. During an operation at an FOB in the Ashau, he observed 281st flight crews returning to the coast nightly due to the insecure nature of the FOB. It didn't take him long to conclude that if it wasn't safe enough for the helicopters to RON, what the hell was he doing there? At the next available opportunity, he spoke with Maj. Little and was transferred to the Bandits where he served as a door gunner for the rest of his tour. He left Vietnam and the service in May, 1970.

Paul originally went back to his native Connecticut after Vietnam but eventually wound up in California with his 281st buddies Hank Harpster, Richard Baker, Doug Powell and Paul Leonard. Thereupon, he met his lovely wife Roschelle and settled in at Ft. Bragg. He was employed in the lumber industry.

Paul is currently disabled with inoperable cancer in the chest, possibly caused by exposure to Agent Orange. He lives peacefully in Ft Bragg with his wife Roschelle, near his two grown daughters and grandchildren.

During a discussion last Fall with one of his buddies, Paul made a side comment that he had spent 13 months in Vietnam, most of it flying and for whatever reason he had not received an Air Medal. While he wasn't particularly concerned about it, the word got back to the Association of this administrative oversight and measures were taken by many folks in the Association, Department of the Army and his Congressman's office to document his flight service, process the application and obtain this long overdue recognition of his Service.

Anyone desiring to attend the ceremony should be at the Botanical Gardens in Ft Bragg, California by 4:00 p.m. Saturday, May 18, 2002. Additional information can be obtained by contacting Ken Smith.

(Some words from the former President reporting on recent Board actions regarding the Quartermaster)

Intruders, as many of you know, JR Saunders resigned as Association Quartermaster. A number of you have asked if we will reappoint another or do away with the position altogether. After intense discussion among the EB, over 50 email messages, we decided to step back, look at the status of our position and go in a slow and concise direction on this matter. We will have items for distribution and for sale at the reunion. We only placed the Quartermaster issue on temporary hold until we can arrive at workable plan. In the past; some members including myself, paid for memorabilia out of our own pockets in hopes that these items would at least pay for the cost. After the costs were recouped, all profits went to the Association. Some sold and others didn't. Other associations, such as the VHPA with 6000 members and 2500 attendees at reunions, uses vendors who pay the association for the rights to sell at the reunion. We are not that lucky. We must approach it differently. This year the memorabilia sales will be handled through our reunion committee and should be acceptable to all who wish to leave LV with a fond memory and momentos. What happens after that will be looked thoroughly with a plan that is workable. The Association does not have the luxury of

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having abundant funds or capabilities to survey the sales needs, design, purchase, man booths, sell mail order, transport, insure and store items that may or may not sell. However, we are well aware that we need something that many members will purchase not only at the reunions, but also by mail order as they join the Association. There are a couple of members that have expressed an interest in doing the quartermaster job. I will state right now, if anyone out there has a burning desire to take on this very important and rewarding job, please email me back channel with your ideas and a well thought out plan as to how you would accomplish our goals. Some of the areas, but not limited to, include the items above: to survey needs, design, purchase, man booths, sell mail order, transport, insure and store items. The individual must possess the ability to work within the framework of the reunion committee/EB. We voted two years ago, not to allow anyone to make personal gain from the Association without adequate compensation to the Association. The logos, momentos and other sales items are for the exclusive use of the Association and its members. In closing, be aware that we are working on the quartermaster situation and hope that an acceptable plan emerges in the near future. We will not implement anything that is not satisfactory to the Association, requires undue hardships for the people involved, not cost effective and requires a new plan every year.

Jack Green

(Last December Bob Mitchell organized a "care package" effort, dubbed "Operation MOP", for the men of the 160 Aviation Regiment in Afghanistan. The email messages below gives everyone the "rest of the story" concerning this ongoing worthy project.)

Date: December 2001

From: Bob Mitchell

Gentlemen,

As you know the war in Afghanistan is being conducted by Special Operations and Special Warfare units. The 281st was involved in Special Operations and Special Warfare while in the Republic of Vietnam and was the only Helicopter unit attached to the 5th Special Forces.

Today the 5th Special Forces Group is doing business in Afghanistan in operations much the same as we were doing in RVN. The aviation support is being provided by the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. The 160th is doing what we did many years ago for the 5th Group. With this in mind, I am sure you guys all remember the "Care Packages" from home. I remember getting them and sharing with my buddies and my buddies sharing with me. We can get this going again.

The best way to get a package to the guys of the 160th is to send it to one of the addressees that I have listed below. These guys will ensure that the packages are shared or spread around the unit to make sure that everyone benefits. It has been determined that a shoe box size parcel is the quickest and best way to send the goodies to the guys. Fred Funk, former Ratpack pilot, is still working in the Special Operations area, albeit stateside, and he assures me that these guys would be very happy to receive these packages, especially from their mentors from long ago.

They would appreciate getting snack sized containers of the following: Fruits Banie Weanies Spam Potted Meat Chicken Summer Sausage Jerky Tuna and so on. Tobacco products such as Cigarettes, Cigars, Chewing Tobacco and Snuff (Skool, Kodiak, etc) are also good. Remember how much we liked the Kool Aid since it would make the water taste better? (read as drinkable)

This has to be done by individuals without any media attention. We cannot use any rank or job titles due to Operational Security (OPSEC) so this is the reason I am giving you the name only along with the APO address. Maybe a little note in the package to let the guys know that they are receiving the package from an old warrior that once did what they are doing now would help keep their moral up while they are working on the flight line, flying the missions or working in operations. Just remember to practice OPSEC in your note. Do not mention the name of the unit, i.e., 5th SFG or 160th SOAR.

Joe Garst Unit 1 Stronghold Freedom (OSNW-PERSCO) APO AE 09824

The other names are: McManamon, Kyle Remick, Kyle Faudree.

So, come on "old warriors," let's take care of these kids that are doing the business today in a place far way from home.

Bob Mitchell

Date: Tue, 11 Dec

From: John W. Mayhew

Subject: Remember the Packages from Home

OK flight here is the challenge. Our esteemed Past President has laid down the mission and it is a great one. I suggest that we name this "OPERATION MOP" in his honor and see how many packages we can send out. I put the challenge to my family, friends and office staff today and have a solid pledge to have 27 packages in the mail by tomorrow evening. My 16 (going on 25) year old home schooler worked on her 5 all afternoon. All stamped "From Operation MOP." I'm sure that Jack green will be glad to keep score and make sure that all is above board and I for one will go on record as starting the "MOP fund" from which we will buy dinner in Vegas next year for those members of the platoon that sends the most packages. (To be eligible for dinner you must have participated in the mailings) I

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would suspect that BP will kick in. However, everybody is a winner in this deal. I'm sure you recall the voting mission we worked on as a flight last year and this one begs for the same degree of intensity.

What a great way to show these young tigers that we care. So let's hear it and "MAKE IT SO"! - J M

Date:12/11/01

From: Brian Paine

Not to take away anything from MOP's leadership and writing skills, however, I believe the original plan came from Paul Hill .

Date: 12/11/01

From: Bob Mitchell

That is correct and I was remiss for not mentioning it in the message to the membership. Paul Eddie Hill, Project Delta Ranger Advisor, is the man behind this whole thing. The addresses he gave me were for the Aviation guys. He has addresses for the ground side and is doing the same thing for them. I do not want to take any credit for the idea or the action. I do think it is a noble cause and think it will be well accepted by the guys in country.

Operation MOP is a little much methinks, but I hope that each one of you will respond to the soldiers. I am not seeking any recognition or benefit from this endeavor. I would think an action such as this would be like wetting ones pants while wearing a pair of black wool trousers. It gives you a warm feeling but no one else notices:-)

Date: Thu, 27 Dec 2001

From: Garst, Joseph, CPT

Subject: THANK YOU

Gentlemen,

Today I returned from a mission in a remote location that seems a world away from my home and places like Oldsmar, FL, New Florence, PA, Gambrills, MD, Belton, Highland and Fort Worth, TX. But today I felt closer to home than I have in many months. And I have you and your generous families to thank. The packages that you have sent to the men in my unit and myself are so greatly appreciated. It is truly hard to express both the gratitude and pride I feel towards you all.

As you have realized, and one day you must tell me how you knew, that we have traveled a similar path. As I looked through the packages, it dawned on me that the foundation for the mission my organization is currently executing was laid by men like you, in another time, in another distant land.

I dare to compare our missions, what you did, how you did it, and your thoughts during the execution phase. Perhaps it will please you to know that in the last few mouths, we have truly taken the fight straight into the hearts of those who dare attack this wonderful country. These men have fought a war that will never be seen on the news or spoke of in public, the real part anyway. They have flown night after night in the most extreme conditions I have ever seen, and taken more fire, real fire, than I care to remember. And each night, we have only one priority, to take care of the precious cargo that has entrusted us to get them to the target and back home. Perhaps this is the bond between our organizations. I am proud to say that we have been very successful at this to date, and God willing, it will continue. Like you, we have carried America's finest into battle, brought home the wounded and the dead, and stand ready to bring the rest home again. I guess what I am trying to say, and hope you understand, I believe we are doing things right, and to the standard you set for us many years ago. Again I would like to thank the men and the families of the 281st Assault Helicopter Company. Their thoughts, prayers, and gifts are greatly appreciated. All of the packages will be distributed as soon as possible. I only have a few e-mail addresses, so I ask that this small Thank You be disseminated throughout your association. I am sure that my men will send additional letters very soon. And perhaps one day, our organizations can get together to share a drink and a story or two. I will be happy to show you around the finest helicopter ever built, and the workhorse of this conflict.

I wish you all the best. And I hope that this holiday season finds you well and at home with your families, you have earned that simple pleasure.

Very respectfully, Joe BADBOYS 06

Date: January 2002

My apologies for my absence, you would not believe where I have been here of late. Perhaps one day over a cold one I will give you the lowdown. Lets just say it has been a good couple of weeks for the nation and our boys. THANKS for all the packages. Hopefully you are receiving letters back from us. The boys are telling me they are sending them. Our unit is even sending them "forward" to us, all the better. We can tell from the contents tha someone who has been in this situation is packing them. I received a photo of your group, looks like a great bunch of guys. At the end of this thing I will send you a group picture of us. Have a truly nice day. Will be in touch. Joe

PS - Still looking forward to Vegas in September

Date: February 2002

The fight continues, slowing somewhat but still going. Both the crews and myself could use a break. 1000 plus

hours flown the first 100 days, and we have a very, very, small fleet. We have not had two back to back days off since August. We were deployed for training on SEP 11, and the race began. That's what they pay us for I guess. I am sure you watch the news, helicopters crashing everywhere. We are the only helicopter unit in this fight who has not lost an aircraft. Haven't even scratched the paint (Knock on wood), we have been lucky! This environment is nothing to play with. And those "unfriendly" folks that live here keep trying to kill us. Go figure! Thanks again for your support! It means more than you may know. Perhaps in Vegas, I will buy the drinks. Say hello to the 281st families... Joe

Date: Sat, 16 Mar 2002

From: Jack Mayhew

(Look who is home!!!!!! What a great way to start the day!!! JM)

Good Morning John,

I am very happy to report that this e-mail comes from my home, far, far from "wonderland"! The rotation that was planned for months finally happened. They said it would happen fast but this even surprised me. 27 hours after my last flight in country, I am driving home with the family.

The last six months has been some of the most interesting, trying, challenging, terrorizing, invigorating, wonderful time of my life. I have seen good men do exceptional things. Displays of courage, dedication, and American pride....

I feel lucky to have walked with such men!

You may have heard we had a rough period. First the loss of 8 brothers doing what they love in another part of the world. Then our little adventure on the mountain. I saw the best and worst of life that day. I would like to say we mourn the loss of Phil, but I am not sure that is the word that best describes the sensation. We do so miss him! The wounded are home (or at least in hospitals in the states) and recovering nicely. Spirits are high and all are looking forward to strapping that beautiful machine back on. Go figure! It is unfortunate that after all the missions and accomplishments, this came towards the end. We can all take pride in what has happened!

I am sure that you and your friends in the 281st have walked this road. Perhaps this is why you still gather together for a beer or two after all these years.

But enough of my rambling. I want to again pass on to you and everyone how took the time to send a package and a little bit of home to a stranger. It has meant more than most of them will ever know. And we do so thank you and them!!

Since this was a "scheduled" rotation, we still have boys in the field. Our sister company has picked up the fight for now. So the question is if your organization would like to continue? I can get you a new point of contact and a new address if you like. They are good folks! Please advise.

I look forward to September and talking to each of you.

Thanks again and God bless, -- Joe

From: Steve Matthews

I have shared with some of you my experiences from our annual Intruder Reunion, but I thought sharing them with all of you might encourage any reluctant "joiners" among you. I have never been a "joiner" - someone who joins the local lodge, or civic club, or alumni association, or American Legion, VFW, etc. It just wasn't my thing, as they say. But then over three years ago I got involved with the Intruders, and that became my thing. I wanted to fill in the gaps in my rapidly advancing CRS of my tour with the 281st AHC from 6/68-6/69 (be careful what you wish for), and I have been rewarded in spades. I've learned more about my tour with the Intruders from guys like Jim Baker, Dean Roesner, Paul Maledy, Doug Stowe, and a few others, than I ever could have remembered on my own. And that's really what it's all about. My wife likes to say (since my memory is naturally poor anyway), "If you don't remember your life, it's like it never happened." Well, we all know our tour with the Intruders did happen, and for those of us blessed enough to make it home, we are grateful for the experience. I've always said, "I wouldn't take a \$million for the experience, but they couldn't pay me a \$million to do it again." So, it seems to me that we should try to remember our tour with the 281st AHC, for a multitude of reasons.

If you're like me, trying to remember events from 30+ years ago isn't easy. That's why the Intruder Reunion is a great way to share the combat the individual CRS and share the collective memory of those experiences. During the first Intruder Reunion in Nashville I met Jim Baker again after 31 years, and it was a great meeting. I learned things about my tour that I had TOTALLY forgotten. I also briefly talked with the Rat Pack Platoon leader Dan Wall about that Operation Warbonnet Delta mission we were on together. I thought Reunion 2000 would be uneventful compared to that, but I was very wrong. I met more guys I remembered and who remembered me, and shared more details. Last year in Las Vegas 2001 I met a couple of Rat Pack crew chiefs who remembered even more experiences we had shared, of which I only had vague recollections, and we talked for at least 3 hours over the course of the reunion. Bottom line? If you think you won't get much out of attending an Intruder Reunion, you couldn't be more wrong. The Reunion is as much a part of your tour in RVN with the Intruders as anything. Hope to see you at the Plaza Hotel in Las Vegas this September 25th.! - Steve Matthews, "Rat Pack 15" 6/68-6/69, "Intruder" Webmaster

(Here be some info from Jack Mayhew concerning Award & Decorations)

From: John W. Mayhew

Subject: Awards

I would like to review the current situation concerning awards as the subject continues to come up. The current Army philosophy and law is that anyone who thinks they were due an award and failed to receive it should contact their congressman and request their assistance in obtaining the award.

Please understand that that is not a case of passing the buck it is the current federal law. The US Army Total Personnel Command Awards Branch cannot not accept awards request for or from former service members that are not processed through their congressman or woman. The congress person is also charged with the responsibility for insuring that all privacy laws are complied with. Once the award is processed by the US Army Total Personnel Command and approved it is returned to the Congress person for presentation. If the 281st Association wishes to make the presentation we must ask the congress person to give us the award and they must, by law, have the permission of the recipient to do so.

This web site will tell you how to go about this process but it does not tell you to send your request to your congressman, which is a must. <http://members.aol.com/forvets/htom.htm> In the case of the Air Medal it helps if you have or can get a copy of your flight records.

If you, or any member of the 281st that you may know of, feel that an award should have been made please contact me and I will help you through this process. However, just because an award is not listed on your DD214 does not mean that it was not awarded. If you have copies of old orders you may wish to check them first as it is easy to have an award added to the 214. There is a lot of lead way on the part of the Army Awards Branch in terms of award documentation, other than the basic forms, but as always they respond to the members of congress much quicker than they do to me. The key to this process is establishing contact with a member of your congressman's local office who will assist you. In one case it took us about 3 months to get the local person off her bureaucratic butt and in a mood to process the request. (I'm sure she was a Jane Fonda supporter). Beware, this process requires the patience of a saint and the tenacity of a bulldog

(One of our guys found)

Date: Tue, 15 Jan

From: John W. Mayhew

Flight, in following up on Lou Lerda's lead I spoke to Rudy Morud for some time this evening. Rudy was the first 483 Det Cmdr and the resident heavy equipment operator. He also told me that he was a fighter pilot in WWII and was retired after his tour in VN with the 483rd. As Lou reported he is in an assisted living environment. Sounded strong but said that he had some serious work to do to get the OK to attend the reunion in Sept but he planed on being there. If you have the time, call or write him as he would love to hear from the former members of the unit.

Thanks Lou, for finding him. We need to find the rest of the old timers like him. JM

(Stanley J. "Rudy" Morud Apt. B-1, 6001 Earl Brown Drive Brooklyn Center, MN 55430, Tel: 763-503-6994)

Date: Tue, 14 May 2002

Subject: Resignations-Succession to Office

Members,

Pursuant to the By-Laws of the 281st AHC Association the following actions have occurred due to the resignation of Jack Green.

Article VI provides for actions by the Executive Board that may actually by pass the existing rules in the event of urgency or for the better good of the Association. This provision was used to appoint Marshall Hawkins to the position of VP. However, due to the resignation of the President, Jack Green, the Executive Board felt that this action should be nullified. Article IV provides for early succession to office in the event of resignations of both the President and the Vice President. We have followed that Article and have realigned the Executive Board as follows:

Dennis Crowe, the Senior Member at Large will succeed to the office of President. The office of Vice President will remain open until the next General Membership Meeting (GMM). The office of Senior Member at Large will be filled by Marshall Hawkins. Gary Stagman, the current Junior Member at Large, opted to not move to the Senior Member at Large position and remain as the Junior Member at Large. This was done to keep from thrusting a brand new man into a position of having to administer an election at the next GMM. Jim Torbert will remain as Secretary and Fred Mentzer will remain as Treasurer. I will remain in the Immediate Past President position.

The current By-Laws of this Association can be viewed on the internet at: http://www.angelfire.com/tn3/281stahc_assn/bylaws.html. Over the past few months the Executive Board has been working to produce a set of By-Laws that fit our Associations needs. This was done by committee and then through the full Executive Board. The end product is to be presented to the membership for approval during the next GMM which will be held in conjunction with our Reunion this September in Las Vegas. The By-Laws as amended can be

viewed at http://www.angelfire.com/tn3/281stahc_assn/bylaws2002_revisions.html. Please take a look at these two documents to better understand what has transpired and to be better informed of what you will be voting on this fall. You will also notice that there is a provision in these By-Laws for amendments to be submitted by the membership. Should you find problems with the work that has already been done and would like to submit your own amendments please feel free to do so. Your amendments or revisions may be sent to the Executive Board through the Secretary, Jim Torbert at jtorb@bellsouth.com. Please copy the text of the section as currently written in Black text and make your proposed change in Red text to help us understand your proposed change better.

As you are obviously aware, we will be electing a President, Vice President, Senior Member at Large and a Junior Member at Large during the next General Membership Meeting. As it is the responsibility of the Junior Member at Large to conduct this election, please contact Gary at Cooter@charter.net if you desire to seek one of these offices. These positions are open to any member in good standing. A member in good standing is defined as Member whose dues are current.

Within a few days a Reunion Registration form along with full information on this year's Reunion will be posted. The registration form should be printed, filled out and mailed in to the address provided.

Dennis Crowe is currently attending the Army Aviation Association of America (QuadA) Convention in Nashville and will not be available until Thursday of this week. Please send your congratulations and encouragement's to Dennis at dennis.crowe@attc.army.mil

For the President,

Bob Mitchell
Immediate Past President

281st AHC Association, Inc. (Established July 4, 1999)

Elected Board Members

President....Dennis Crowe
Vice President.... (vacant)
Immediate Past President...Bob Mitchell
Senior Member-at-Large....Marshall Hawkins
Junior Member-at-Large....Gary Stagman
Secretary....Jim Torbert
Treasurer....Fred Mentzer

Key Personnel & Committee Chairmen

Membership....Gary Stagman
Memorial....Jack Mayhew
Legal Advisor....Brent Gourley
eGroup Administrator....Brent Gourley
Reunion & HistorianBob Mitchell
Awards....Steve Matthew

THE OFFICIAL WEB

281st AHC – <http://www.281stAHC-Assn.org>
Members Only Chat Net - 281AHC-HQ@yahoo.com
Informal Chat Net - 281AHC_CHAT@yahoo.com

Other AHC Websites

281st AHC "Intruder" - <http://281stahc.org>
1st Platoon "Rat Pack" - <http://downtown.ala.net/~bgrly/281/ratpack.htm>
2nd Platoon "Bandits" - <http://www.angelfire.com/tn/mitchellrw/index.html>
3rd Platoon "Wolf Pack" - <http://Wolfpack36.org>

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