

281ST ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY

"INTRUDERS"

NHA TRANG
1965-1970

Company Newsletter No. 19

Winter 2003

HOUSTON WAS GREAT!

The annual reunion of the 281st AHC Assn down in Texas was a smashing success. Over 170 folks attended and all had a grand ol' time.

For those who didn't make it, start planning "NOW" for the 2004 reunion at

-- LAS VEGAS --

(more on next years reunion to follow)

FROM THE PRESIDENT ...

Fellow Intruders,

The fact that you have elected me to lead this Association throughout the coming year gives me great pride and considerable humbleness. I pledge myself to give you my utmost efforts to insure that we have another highly successful year.

Our 2003 Reunion, which we held at the Wyndham Hotel in Houston, was considered by many of your fellow Intruders to have been one of the best Reunions we have had. Many of us arrived on Thursday so we could have an extra day to meet new friends and reminisce with old ones. Although we had a few outside events planned, a golf tournament and a shopping expedition for the ladies on Friday, it seemed as though the favorite activity was simply talking with each other. The camaraderie was something special.

Ray Oksa, our registration chairman, insured a smooth and seamless registration process. Ray and his wife Hanelore also took photographs of everyone as part of the registration process. He has mailed these at his own expense to everyone who was there and Jack

Mayhew will incorporate them into his "Then and Now"

project.

The Annual Meeting went smoothly. Fred Phillips was elected as Vice President, Norm Kaufman as Senior Member-at-Large and Ken Hamilton as Junior Member-at-Large. There was considerable discussion about next year's Reunion and about holding Mini-Reunions around the country. An important consideration in selecting the site of the next Reunion will be the "boots on the ground" factor if we opt to have another Stand Alone Reunion. This refers to the necessity to have Intruders in the vicinity of the host city who can supervise and coordinate the many details that crop up. Brian Paine and Earl Broussard performed that function splendidly for this year's reunion. Thank you and "Well Done", Brian and Earl.

After a delicious lunch, we held our Remembrance Observance, honoring those Intruders who did not return. It was very moving, and featured our own "Wall of Remembrance." As each departed Intruder's name was called several of his comrades came forward and pasted his name onto our Wall. It was one of the best Remembrance Ceremonies I have seen, and I commend Jim Torbert for his efforts in honoring our fallen brothers.

The ceremony was enhanced because several Honorary Members were present and were able to share in the

honoring of their loved ones.

Dinner was a festive occasion. The Colors were presented by a Color Guard from the 76th Division, USAR. They did themselves proud. The introductions of guests included Scott Arthur, a local radio personality who became the Master of ceremonies, Jim Drury, "The Virginian" of the TV series of the same name and Chester Howard of Project Delta. Following the introductions a personal letter from Former President George H. W. Bush was read and copies were distributed to the attendees. Then Scott Arthur narrated the Missing Man Table Ceremony in a most solemn and moving manner. Those of you who have seen this ceremony know how moving it can be. Mr. Arthur's presentation left scarcely a dry eye in the room. We plan to include this ceremony in all our future reunions, if possible.

Dinner was a Texas BBQ buffet, Prime Rib, Ribs and Chicken and was truly worthy of being called "Texas." It was well prepared and plenty for all. After dinner, the Colors were retired, and we enjoyed the singing of our own Jim Bailey interspersed with drawings for the Raffle. A great time was had by all until it became time to say farewell until next year.

This, our first effort in many years to hold a "stand alone" reunion and it was an unqualified success.

Now, we must move forward. The Reunion Committee and the Executive Board are hard at work planning for our 2004 Reunion which will be held in Las Vegas in conjunction with the SOAR. We will be soliciting the input of the membership on future Reunion sites in the near future through the Newsletter. Since this is the only way that we can obtain your thoughts and ideas I encourage all of you to express your opinions when the survey is published.

A final note. I have reluctantly accepted the resignation of Jack Mayhew as Immediate Past President and member of the Executive Board. Jack has had a family situation that is requiring most of his time and does not feel that he will be able to put forth the effort to the Association that he should. I have appointed Bob Mitchell replace Jack.

Diane and I wish all Intruders, wheresoever dispersed a safe, healthy and happy holiday season and all the best in the coming year.

Lynn Coleman
President

† **Michael Frank Hargis** †

Rat Pack (3/67-5/69)

Mike passed away on 23 November 2003

Rest In Peace, Brother.

The Chaplains Corner....

I haven't a clue as to what motivates the man, but if we take politics completely out of the mix, then this poem has a lot of merit.

The following is a poem written by Judge Roy Moore from Alabama, the one sued by the ACLU for displaying the Ten Commandments in his judicial building. So no matter how you feel about this subject, the attached poem will shed light on the judge's beliefs.

"AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL"

America the Beautiful, or so you used to be. Land of the Pilgrims' pride; I'm glad they'll never see.

Babies piled in dumpsters, abortion on demand, oh, sweet land of liberty; your house is on the sand.

Our children wander aimlessly poisoned by cocaine, Choosing to indulge their lusts, when God has said abstain.

From sea to shining sea, our Nation turns away From the teaching of God's love and a need to always pray.

So many worldly preachers tell lies about our Rock, Saying God is going broke so they can fleece the flock.

We've kept God in our temples, how callous we have grown. When earth is but His footstool, and Heaven is His throne.

We've voted in a government that's rotting at the core, Appointing Godless Judges who throw reason out the door,

Too soft to place a killer in a well deserved tomb, But brave enough to kill a baby before he leaves the womb.

You think that God's not angry, that our land's a moral slum? How much longer will He wait before His judgment comes?

How are we to face our God, from Whom we cannot hide? What then is left for us to do, but stem this evil tide?

If we who are His children, will humbly turn and pray; Seek His holy face and mend our evil way:

Then God will hear from Heaven and forgive us of our sins, He'll heal our sickly land and those who live within.

But, America the Beautiful, if you don't, then you will see, A sad but Holy God withdraw His hand from Thee.

Norm Kaufman
Chaplain



6th Platoon (Iroquois)



145th Platoon (Fangs)

Gary, our Membership Man...

Membership is slowly growing and the finding of fellow Intruders is growing. The need for old orders that may be stuffed in a box or suitcase in the attic, are still needed just for the wonderful information they contain. Come on 1969 guys, dig out dem orders and stuff you have hidden away. That is the only year that I have very little information such as orders, rosters, etc. When we find, say guys that were together in either as a flight team or maintenance team, the camaraderie is there still and when they get together it's like *'meeting lost loved ones'*!

I feel that this is one of the things that make it, **"What this is all about" !!!!!**

If you missed coming to the reunion in Houston, you missed seeing guys from 65-66 era, the ones that made up the majority to of the flight platoons, then on to the 66 – 70 era... Make plans to attend, this is when I get to put a face to a name that I have talked to in the past year or so... It helps me (and others) to remember things that have happened in the past, also getting together to remember something completely, it may take two or more guys that participated to put the whole story together.

If you are a current member please take a moment and recruit a new member today. This is your organization without regard to rank or duty position in the units. It is simply former members of the greatest unit in the world getting together to renew old friendships and develop new ones.

At the present time the current membership is at "281" !!!!! Great job fellow "INTRUDERS" thank you for your continuing support. Without your support, "WE" would not be where "WE" are!!!!

How GREAT, we have a flight Operations guy, with the 281 membership number. How great it is.. This the guy that Jack Interstein replaced, and on top of it all both are from "New York State" ! And to think, He taught Jack how to drive!!!! Ok, a Jeep anyhow..

Another subject is **DUES !!**

Dues have been coming in pretty **SLOW** this past year, but still are many more out there that need to be sent in. Here it almost is time for next years dues. Start planning on getting them sent in, so we don't have to keep asking about them. You can send them to either:

Brian W. Paine
281st AHC Treasurer
22407 Rippling Shore Crt
Katy, TX 77494

- or - Gary L. Stagman
Membership Chairman
2525 Revere's Route
Granite City, IL 62040

The Commo Guy...

Your Commo Committee has been working with Dr. Karen Forcht (Ned Hientz-KIA) and one of her classes at James Madison University to improve the website. The students, as a class project, have gone over our site from stem to stern and made recommendations for improvement. We are working those issues daily.

The class is also working on upgrading the PX site to include a "shopping cart" and better ordering system that will accept PayPal.

Additionally we are working on providing a searchable database of former members and current members in a password secured file. This will protect the members from compromising their personal information to anyone who happens to come on the website. Hopefully, before the next Reunion we will have this feature up and running.

The Official 281st AHC Association website can be viewed at <http://www.281stahc-assn.org> or <http://www.281stahc.com>. Our object is to make your website easier to navigate and more easily found by the major search engines, such as Google and others. Please take a moment to view the website and please do not hesitate to offer your suggestions as to how to make it better.

Bob Mitchell
Commo Committee Chairman
Immediate Past President



5th Special Forces
Group



Special Operations
Association

Notes and Comments... (Excerpts from the 281st yahoogroups web site and other sources)**(Fred Mentzer answers: "What happened to the Wolf Pack website"?)**

Over a year ago the Executive Board approved a motion that subordinate unit websites be moved to the Assn web. Recently Bob Mitchell, Commo Committee Chairman, invited the various Webmasters to begin this process. The Wolf Pack was the first to do so. You can access these sites from the Assn home page by clicking **Unit History, 281st Organization**, and then clicking the various logo's. You can access the Wolf Pack website directly by entering the following URL in the address box of the Internet Explorer or Netscape (AOL):

<http://www.281stahc-assn.org/Wolfpack/index.htm>

(This from our "do it all man", Brian Paine)

From: "Brian W. Paine" <bpain@hal-pc.org> Subject: **Reunion Video**

Intruders,

I am privileged to announce the 281st AHC Association has been chosen to lead the way in another important fight. Some of you attending the Memorial Service at the 2003 reunion in Houston might have noticed an individual filming the Ceremony. The National Moment of Remembrance Commission has chosen the 281st AHC Association to be the veteran's organization to represent it in its expansion program. The Commission will use the tape in its presentation to Congress and the White House for the purpose of expanding the national interest in veteran's organizations and reunions. This commission has assisted the 281st AHC Association with its memorial services for the last 4 years. With its assistance, the Association had its own wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery in July of 2000 !

In addition to the tape he shot, the editor wants to use old movies, still photograph, etc. to round out his presentation. He has looked over the photos the association has and selected a large number of pictures. There were a few pictures from individuals he wanted to use but these individuals have elected not to allow the association to use their photos for special projects. Additionally, there were several photos from new and potentially new association members locked away on another web site and restricted from use by the association. In the future, if you desire your photos to appear on the 281st AHC Association web site or in Association projects, please make sure you are sending them to the ASSOCIATION web site (www.281stahc-assn.org).

In just a few short years, the association has grown to an organization of over 260 members and it is still growing. It now has a set of defined goals and with a coordinated effort, will meet these goals. We have gone from a small gathering of old friends to a well organized gathering receiving national attention. We have found out working together today as we did 30 plus years ago, there is nothing we can't accomplish. Now is the time to show everyone just what the 281st AHC Association stands for. - Brian W. Paine, Treasurer and Assistant Webmaster

(Here's an item of interest that will bring back some memories. It resulted from a series of contacts between Don Oxley, Buck Yancey and Dr Banard. I call it "Tabasco".)

11Oct2003 - From: "Buck Yancey" bandit23@hcsmail.com

Ox, and anyone else who wants a copy of that cookbook email directly to Dr. Bernard at: archives@TABASCO.com. I told him that some of the guys from the 281st would probably be contacting him to get copies. I have no idea if there will be a price for this. Based upon his email to me, it seems like he was going to send it out for no charge. - Buck

Hello again!

There were no McIlhennys killed in WWII, or any other wars, although General McIlhenny's father served in the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, better known as Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders. He wasn't wounded in battle, but he contracted malaria and measles in Cuba. Regardless, he continued to fight despite his illness. I attach his biographical sketch below of the General's father, John Avery McIlhenny, along with another image of General McIlhenny (when he was a captain), taken at Guadalcanal in 1942 on receipt of his Silver Star.

I can send you one of the Charlie Ration Cookbooks from Vietnam, if you wish. We still have a number from the original 1966 printing. Sent me your street address and I'll put one in the mail.

Also, below I attach a photo of a gunship crew in Vietnam, with a bottle of Tabasco sitting among them; next to the bottle is the green canister in which we sent the bottles to Vietnam. (Do you or anyone in your assn. have photos from the conflict showing our product?)

We are currently sending LOTS of Tabasco products to U.S. military personnel in Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan, etc., with our compliments, and this is over and above the miniature Tabasco bottles that troops receive in 2/3rds of their MREs.

(This from Jack Interstein out yonder in New York/New Jersey)

From: Jack Interstein <jint_10306@yahoo.com> Subject: 281st AHC Hat

For the 3rd time, this year, a Vietnam Vet, in Staten Island, recognized our unit designation, on my cap. He served in the 1st Logistical Command, Cho Lan(sp), near Saigon. I inquired how he knew of the 281st, having been stationed so far south of us. He said he had heard stories about us in 68-69, even down south. Knew of our Special Forces connection. That a long time to remember such an unrelated unit! – Jack

(A message from Jack Mayhew, our "behind the scene's man")

Folks, William "Bill" Purdy's 80+ year old mom served our country in WW II as a parachute packer with the 11th Airborne Div in the Philippines. Bill was one of our first Intruder crew chiefs and in fact was there before the 281st landed. He is a great supporter of the association and has never missed a reunion. His mom is not doing very well on the health side but still has her spirit and is a lovely lady to talk to. She is an RN and has spent her life helping others. This morning she told me that her only wish was to be young enough to go help the "boys" fighting for our freedom. If you have a chance please pick up the phone and give her a call or drop her a card. She is a true patriot. (Bill Purdy (11/65-11/66), 173 Jefferson St. Newnan, GA 30263 Tel: 770-254-0537) - Jack Mayhew

Editors Comments ...

As you've read and heard, our Houston Reunion was indeed a smashing success. I've heard nary a complaint or critical comment to date. That the event was so enjoyable can be directly attributed to the hard work, dedication and perseverance of three individuals. **Earle Broussard** and **Brian Paine** were in every respect the embodiment of the term "beyond the call of duty"! They spent countless hours and many months working to ensure that we, the members and guests of the 281st Assn, would have a great and memorable reunion. And they did a fantastic job! The third person deserving of recognition is **Kelly Mayhew**, daughter of founding member Jack Mayhew. At the reunion, no matter what the venue, you would find Kelly, rushing about, keeping folks organized, tending to arrangements and doing her utmost to ensure that nothing was left out, no one was unrecognized and everyone's needs were attended to. She was the ULTIMATE HOSTESS.

Our heartfelt thanks and deep appreciation for a wonderful job to,

Earle Broussard - Brian Paine - Kelly Mayhew

(Following is more on our reunion. I thought that the everyone would be interested in Earl Broussard's running commentary in the form of daily "after action reports". I've included only the first and last days reports.)

Date: Thu, 11 Sep 2003

From: "Earl Broussard" <wolfpack281stahc@msn.com>

Flight, will try to give you an update on the reunion as it goes along and it may be slanted since I am a Wolf Pack member. Wolf Pack 35 (Lance Ham) is up at the present and today we will be picking up Wolf Pack 36 (Fed Mentzer) from the 1967 era. I know Wolf Pack 33, Jeff Murray, and Lynn Coleman (I think was WP 35 & 36) is at the hotel so we will have a Heavy Fire Team up flying cover. Perrin, Broussard, Humphreys, Esquilin, & Corney will all be onboard as crew members. Rat Pack has some representation, Jay Hays, Frank Little & Red Renfrow, are present to crew an aircraft or two and if I know Frank the one bird is already had a DAILY and then some done to it. BP (Bandit) has already pulled pitch and were the hell he is going no one knows, but he is in the flight pattern; someone please issue a NOTAM. Gary Stagman, Jack Interstein & Jack Mayhew also arrived and represent Maintenance, OPNS & HQ. Jack will set about getting all straight and the company ready for whatever presents itself. All seems primed for all to have a grand time, wish you were all here, man what a time that would be. Could you picture it? All of us together!! All your old buddies!! Some of our members have passed away and can't attend these functions and believe it or not we are all getting old. Who said that? So plan on coming to the next reunion next year, we would all like to see you. Will try to send pictures and comment as things proceed. – Earl

Date: Sun, 14 Sep 2003

From: "Earl Broussard" <wolfpack281stahc@msn.com>

Flight,

The awards ceremony took place at 9 in the morning. The awards and personnel will be posted by the minutes of the reunion and reported at a later date. The general meeting was called to order by Jack Mayhew and the officers made their reports of their respective areas. Reunion locations for next year was discussed; St. Louis, MO, Orlando, Las Vegas, NV, El Paso, TX are some of the places that were discussed. Further input from the rest of the Members will be sought and a decision will be made by EB in next few weeks. Intruder of the Year was award jointly to two distinguished Intruders, Bob Mitchell & Brian Pain, for the work they have performed this passed year. Both were cited for work they did for the association. Both gave of there time and talents to the Association in the spirit of a member of the team and not expecting any individual recognition. Both are quite the Gentlemen.

The Memorial Service was by far the best that I have ever seen. A Color Guard presented the Colors and the names of our Comrades were called and members wishing to present their names to be enshrined on own Wall of Remembrance. Norm Kaufman delivered an elegant service to memorialize our fallen comrades. It was quite dignified & moving and a great job by Jim Torbert organizing the Memorial Service. The office of Kay Bailey Hutchison was represented and documented the Memorial Service by videoing the proceedings and will be used in Washington. Again, this was done so tastefully, Great Job.

The membership was seated and Honorary Members were escorted to their tables and were presented a yellow rose. James Drury "The Virginian" was present at our Dinner Banquet as a special guest. A presentation of the Missing Man Ceremony was conducted. Norm Kaufman gave the blessing of the meal and we enjoyed a good ole Texas Style BBQ. Beagle Bailey provided the entertainment for the group with his & others renditions of songs that were concocted during his tour in Viet Nam. During breaks for Beagle to regain his vocal strength, we raffled off the items collected for the reunion.

We finished off the ceremonies and just sat around and visited with each other and to tell our good byes to our friends and membership. I just wished that all could have attended this wonderful reunion. Telling each other good-bye is always hard. After just meeting a lot of folks that you did not remember or maybe just slipped through the holes in your memory, it was really hard to say anything but let's make sure we all see each other next year. If you sit down and think at our age just how many years that we will be able to attend these functions, we have just so many left and for some of our members there are not too many left. We have to make every effort to attend our reunions and enjoy our Brothers-In-Arms. No one shares our youth's experience but them! You don't have to explain anything to them, but just ask, "Do you remember when."

To coin a phrase I saw on a jacket at the reunion. I can't remember it exactly but here it is:

FREEDOM: A PATRIOT BELIEVES IN IT. A VETERAN DELIVERS IT.

God Bless you all.

Earl Broussard

(Here are some more comments after the reunion)

Date: Mon, 15 Sep 2003

From: Don Budlong <mrbud_2000@yahoo.com>

Leaving Houston to return home, I had the pleasure to fly back to North Carolina with Kay Sutton Turner, Vic Sutton's widow. This was her first reunion and she honestly did not know what to expect. She said that many men (she mentioned quite a few by name) that knew Vic spoke with her about him and she was very touched by the kind words, sincerity and support from those who new Vic. It was a good experience for her and she is looking forward to the next reunion. She also said that if she had won the tickets to the football game, she would have flown back for it. - Don Budlong

Date: Tue, 16 Sep 2003

From: "Packer" Mike Fellenz <Packermike@att.net>

Just wanted to say thanks to all the Intruders that worked so hard to put together a great reunion. And a special thanks to Brain Paine for getting Mrs. Ware to come. - "Packer" Mike Fellenz, "Bandit" 455

Date: Thu, 18 Sep 2003

From: "Robert L Ohmes" <rohmes@kc.rr.com>

Subject: Super

Kelly: You need to be thanked for all you did for the men while there in Houston---you were a great help. We all appreciate you. Make sure you come back next year. - Bob Ohmes

Date: Wed, 17 Sep 2003

From: MerJerN@aol.com

Thanks for sharing. We so enjoyed the reunion and meeting you. What a treat it was to meet men who served and flew with Tommy (*Ed. Note: "Tommy" is Tom Condrey*). Meant such a lot to us. You all did so much to make the weekend a very special one.

The memorial service was WONDERFUL and MEANINGFUL. Thank you for everything. - Mary Ellen and Jerry

From: Eileen Ware

To: "Brian W. Paine" <bpaine@hal-pc.org>

Hi Brian & Marilyn,

Just a note to tell you I arrived home today. Had a good trip home. Toni met me. All seemed glad to have me home. Had a good time with my niece. I can never thank you enough for all you did for me to make my trip such a great one. I will never forget it and you will never know how much it meant to me. Thank you all, please pass this on so all the fellows will know how much I love all of you. Keep in touch. Love, Aileen

(*Ed. note – Eileen, who resides in a nursing home at Pendleton, Oregon, is the mother of John Ware KIA 4Nov69, and has become the un-official "Mother of the 281st"*)

(Finally, a historical note: As Kojak would have said; "We've come a long way baby"! Following is an email that was copied to Newsletter #3 back in 1999, that I wrote in response to the question; "How did this all come about?")

How We Started



Intruders,

The formation of a 281st Association has caught fire, to the point where there appears to be more and more folks that are unaware of the initial efforts and intent. I'd like to take this opportunity to give a little history of how the most recent effort came about.

At the 1998 Ft Worth annual reunion of the Viet Nam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) about 18 former 281st pilots got together for a little mini reunion. At that gathering we decided to attempt to put together an association. There were volunteers for temp positions and the hat was passed for initial operating costs. I ended up the "Secretary Pro-Tem" and also "Editor" of the newsletter. It was emphasized from the very first that the association would be "FOR ALL FORMER PERSONNEL OF THE 281ST ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY AND SUPPORT ELEMENTS", and that's the way it will be. It was the general consensus that the initial organizing would be at VHPA gatherings as the most convenient and appropriate way to get things started (I don't think any of us anticipated how quickly and with what enthusiasm the project would "take-off", I mean Zooom! Just take a look at our email list, and that's not considering what's likely happening in snail mail land). And, we decided that the

VHPA 1999 Reunion at Nashville would be the time and the place to constitute the association, vote for officers, charter and what-all. Although the reunion at Nashville is a pilot affair, nothing that I know of precludes ANYONE from coming to the mini-reunion or to the reunion in general. Of course the program events and functions are VHPA only.

So, the 281st Mini-Reunion at the Renaissance Hotel, at 1100hrs on the 4th of July, is OPEN TO ALL 281st!

In order to try to harness the enthusiasm and keep a modicum of control we've formed a Organizing Committee, the purpose of which is to put together a program for the Nashville meeting where we'll formally organize and constitute the 281st Association. The committee follows:

Fred Mentzer, Joe Bilitzke, Jack Green, Brent H. Gourley, Jack Mayhew, Bob Mitchell, Jerry Montoya, Robert L. Williams, and Corky Corcoran

I don't want anyone to feel left out of the organizing of our association. If you want to nominate some one for an officer position, suggest by-laws, offer constructive (or otherwise) suggestions, let one of the committee guys know, or better yet, come to Nashville (one thought I've had is write-in votes for those who won't be there) I'll be putting more on the above in the next newsletter.

So guys, that's it for now. Spread the word about the association and send info about any new found 281st'ers to myself and Steve Matthews. – Fred Mentzer, Secretary Pro Tem

"Sure the LZ is secure, I'm whispering because I have a cold. Trust me."

VEGAS REUNION
SEPTEMBER 2004
Start planning NOW!

281ST AHC ASSOCIATION, INC.
Established 4 July 1999



EXECUTIVE BOARD

- President**
Lynn Coleman
- Vice President**
Fred Philips
- Secretary**
Jeff Murray
- Treasurer**
Brian Paine
- Senior Member@Large**
Norm Kaufman
- Junior Member@Large**
Ken Hamilton
- Immediate Past President**
Bob Mitchell

APPOINTED OFFICERS

- Awards** - Jack Interstein
- Membership Committee Chairman** - Gary Stagman
- Remembrance Committee Chairman** - Jack Mayhew
- Historian** - Bob Mitchell
- Internet Groups Administrator** - Brent Gourley
- Commo Committee Chairman** - Bob Mitchell
- Legal Advisor** - Brent Gourley
- Reunion Committee Chairman** – Fred Philips
- Survivor Assistance Chairman** - Marshall Hawkins
- Memorabilia Sales Committee Chairman** - Brian Paine
- Chaplain** - Norm Kaufman
- Newsletter Editor/Public Relations**
Fred Mentzer



GEORGE BUSH

August 2003

I am happy to have the opportunity to pay my respects to the members of the 281st Assault Helicopter Company who will gather for a big reunion on September 13, 2003. Greetings to all.

As veterans of the United States Armed Forces, you are heroes in the truest sense of the word. Your courage and sacrifices reflect the great spirit of which General MacArthur spoke at West Point: that of duty, honor, and country. I have no doubt these words have guided you all your lives.

As a fellow veteran and as a former Commander-in-Chief, I salute each one of you for taking up the torch of freedom and answering your country's call to duty. I also join you in remembering those who made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom. All Americans owe them a lasting debt of gratitude.

Have a wonderful and memorable gathering. We Bushes send our very best wishes to you and to your families.

Sincerely, -

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. W. Bush", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.