

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

Company Newsletter No 20

Spring 2004

## **START FINAL PLANNING NOW!** **281<sup>ST</sup> AHC ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REUNION**

**Held Jointly with the  
Special Operations Association (SOA)**

**PLAZA HOTEL , LAS VEGAS  
29 September to 3 October 2004**

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### ***From The President***

Fellow Intruders,  
We are well on our way to finalizing plans for the 2004 Reunion to be held at the Plaza Hotel in Las Vegas September 30 to October 3, 2004. Elsewhere in this Newsletter you will find a schedule of the planned events. The Reunion Application will be in the mail in the near future and will include the costs and all administrative instructions.

Early this month I spoke with Fred Phillips, our VP and Reunion Chairman and found out that he has lost his vision in both eyes and is completely blind. He said he couldn't even read the numbers on his phone to make a call, much less view a computer screen. His doctor has told him that this condition is probably temporary but he will have to wait and see. We all need to keep Fred in our thoughts and prayers.

Bob Mitchell has stepped up and agreed to become Reunion Chairman. He has completed most of the arrangements and appointed other committee members to clean up the loose ends. Bob has been the Reunion Chairman for two previous Reunions and knew

what needed to be done and who should do it. Well Done Bob.

Some of our members have become remiss regarding their obligations to pay their annual dues. All regular and associate members (except Life Members) are required to pay dues of \$25.00 per year. These are payable on January 1st and delinquent after January 31st annually. Members whose dues are not paid are not in "good standing" forfeit their rights and privileges to vote hold elected or appointed office, to serve on committees or to participate in general membership meetings. I urge those of you who are not in good standing (you know who you are, you received a letter from me) to pay your annual dues and be restored to good standing. If there are any members who cannot afford to pay their dues contact the membership chairman, Gary Stagman, or me so that we can take appropriate measures to give you temporary relief.

We are planning a mini-reunion to be held in conjunction with the Viet Nam Helicopter Pilot's Association Reunion in Dallas. It is scheduled for Friday, July 2nd from 1300-1700. The location will be posted on the bulletin board. Everyone attending the

Reunion and all those who live in the Dallas-Fort Worth area are invited to attend.

Speaking of mini-reunions, I would like to commend Ray Oksa and Jay Hays for the way they have promoted the mini-reunion concept. These events offer a way for Intruders living in the same area to get together to share their experiences and memories. We had a great mini-reunion here in Florida in February and one is planned for the Northern Ohio vicinity next month.

That's all for now. – *Lynn Coleman*

**SEE YOU ALL IN LAS VEGAS!**

## *The Chaplains Corner*

### *“Nudge The Balance”*

When someone loves us, it teaches us love, kindness, charity, honesty, humility, forgiveness, acceptance, and all of these can counteract all the evil in the world. For every good deed, there is one evil deed. Man alone has the power to control the balance between good and evil, but because the lessons of love are not taught often enough, the power is too often abused.

When you enter someone's life, whether by plan, chance or coincidence, consider what your lesson will be. Will you teach love or a harsh lesson of reality? When you die, will your life have resulted in more loving or more hurting? More comfort or more pain? More joy or more sadness? Each one of us has the power over the balance of the love in the world. “Use it wisely!”

Don't miss an opportunity to nudge the world's scale in the right direction!

~Author Unknown~

*Norm Kaufman  
Chaplain*



**145<sup>th</sup> Aviation Ptn  
(Fangs)**

## *The Junior Member-at-Large*

### *“It's Election Time”*

To vote in the election you must be a current member.

In accordance with the By-Laws, Article V, Sections 1 thru 7, the following will be in effect for this year's election.

The following positions will be filled during this years voting process:

#### **Vice President - Jr Member@Large**

The 2004 Membership Election schedule is as follows:

- **Nominations** and **anyone who wishes to declare (volunteer) for a position** need to be submitted to the JM@L by NLT 3 Jul 2004 (90 Days). The submission can be either by email or normal post.

- Nominated **candidates**, and **volunteers** will be made known by email or post to the Membership NLT 2 Aug 2004 (60 Days).

- **Completed ballots** returned to the JM@L must be **postmarked** NLT 1 Sept 2004 in order to be counted (30dys).

- **To Nominate** someone for either position, email or snailmail you're your nomination to:

hamilton.ken@comcast.net  
or  
Ken Hamilton  
1431 White Cloud Dr. SE  
Salem, OR 97301-6068

Remember that all nominations must be received no later than 3 July 2004.

*Ken Hamilton  
Junior Member At Large*

## *The Reunion Committee*

It's time to talk about the annual 281st AHC Association Reunion again. This year's reunion and General Membership Meeting will be held in Las Vegas from 30 Sep through 3 Oct concurrently with the Special Operations Association Reunion. Please see the Association Website for specific details on registration.

The 281st will host its own Hospitality Room this year at the Plaza Hotel. We will also have PX items for sale during the get together. SOAR starts 29 Sep and will run through 3 Oct, so you can see that our reunion is sandwiched into SOAR. This makes it easy to participate in both. It also helps us maintain our connection with the Special Operations community.

Contact your buddies and make sure they know about the reunion and let's have a big turn out in Las Vegas.

*Bob Mitchell*

*Reunion Committee Chairman*

**281<sup>st</sup> AHC ASSOCIATION  
2004 ANNUAL REUNION SCHEDULE**

THU 30 SEP	0800-2359	Registration
FRI 1 OCT	0800-1700	Registration-SOAR
FRI 1 OCT	0800-2359	SOAR Hospitality Room
FRI 1 OCT	0800-1700	281 <sup>st</sup> AHC Hospitality Ste
FRI 1 OCT	281 <sup>st</sup>	Golf Outing (Time and Place TBA)
FRI 1 OCT	1600-1800	281 <sup>st</sup> EB Meeting
FRI 1 OCT	1800-2100	Pool Side Party
SAT 2 OCT	1230-1600	Registration-SOAR
SAT 2 OCT	0800-2359	SOAR Hospitality Room
SAT 2 OCT	0800-2359	281 <sup>st</sup> AHC Hospitality Ste
SAT 2 OCT	1300-1500	281 <sup>st</sup> Membership Meeting
SAT 2 OCT	1600-1700	281 <sup>st</sup> Remembrance Ceremony
SAT 2 OCT	1900-2200	SOAR Main Banquet
SUN 3 OCT		See you next year!



***The Remembrance Chairman***

Once a year we are afforded a formal opportunity to remember our fallen brothers and on May the 31st we will again be blessed with this annual event. Some time ago we talked of having a mini-reunion on Sunday the 30th in the DC area but other events have precluded that from happening. However, we can still visit the wall as a group on Memorial Day. Frank Hood, Rat Pack, 1970, (hoodd86@comcast.net) put it best in an email of a few day ago: "Hello Flight, I had e-mailed you all a few weeks ago in reference to a mini reunion rendezvous in Baltimore Md.

Well, I sure hate to be the bearer of bad news, but I'm pretty sure that mission has been scrubbed. Do to unfortunate circumstances; we don't have anyone in that A.O. to facilitate the event. How ever, we could still meet at the wall to pay our respects to our brethren. I usually make it up there twice a year; it feels like spending time with family. This year, I'd like to go there with a list of names from our company; I know they would be glad to see as many of us that can come. Also, I'd thought it would be a special mission to visit another L.Z., while we're together for the day. I'd like to go over and visit the Nat. Cemetery, and see a friend, Bill George, some of you may remember him.

My Daughters & I will be at the wall at 0900 hours with the Guidon, small plaques for each of our 46 brothers and list for anyone who wants them. If you are going to be at the wall please contact Frank or I and we will arrange a meeting spot.

We are still searching for pictures and information on several of our MIA/KIAs and we still need your help.

The Iraq School program is off and running with pledges of support from several Intruders and one lovely wife. This is a great project for everyone in the family. I would hope we could establish "Pen Pals" among the children and grandchildren and make this an ongoing effort. This is one small step by a great "Band of Brothers" and their families that will go a long way toward making a difference. Let us hear from you today.

*Jack Mayhew*

*jmayhew@huntwood.net - <http://www.iraqschools.com>*

**Notes and Comments**

*Next follows "the word" from the 281<sup>st</sup> Liaison to the SOA, our own John Korsbeck. - Fred*

Just a quick informational note concerning SOAR Registration Forms and Membership.

Sadly to say, NOT all members of the 281stAHC are eligible to become SOA members for various reasons. This is the one that raises the most questions and concerns - To become a SOA member ( General or Associate Member ) an individual has to have flown for, or participated in missions that are of a SOG nature, NAMELY for the 281st it's DELTA missions - of which

the 281st stopped flying after 1-1-70. With a few exceptions, almost all SF missions outside of DELTA were NOT considered SOG / SOA missions.

NOW to my point : For those who DO NOT qualify to become SOA members ( or do not desire to do so ) you need to have A SPONSOR when registering with SOA as A GUEST. The sponsor needs to be a CURRENT / PAID UP SOA member, and also needs to be in attendance at SOAR. For those of us who meet these qualifications, I feel sure that any of us will be more than happy to be listed as YOUR SPONSOR on the SOA Registration Form.

Remember, if you are NOT registered with the SOA as well as the 281st, you will NOT be allowed admission into ANY of the SOA areas or functions (including the free bar )

When the time comes to fill out the SOA Registration Form, or if you have questions - call, email, or snail me and if I don't have the answer - I'LL GET IT FOR YOU !

Hope to see everyone in Vegas. We will have a GREAT REUNION !!!!!

And a little cooperation and pre-planning on everyone's part will make things simpler for all concerned. See Ya in Sep - Oct ! – **John Korsbeck,**

P.O. Box 117,  
Malta, MT 59538,

Tel: 406-654-2547 - email: kcountry@ttc-cmc.net

*An email on the 281<sup>st</sup> Chat-Net from Jack Mayhew about one of our latest "Lady" honorary member..*

Flight, I had a nice talk with Bill Purdy and his Mother this afternoon and she asked that I thank each of you for honoring her with membership in the 281st. AHC Association. She is a lovely lady and a great supporter of our organization. Jack

*Here's an appeal from Gary Stagman, our intrepid Membership Man.*

Date: Sun, 29 Feb 2004 From: "Gary Stagman"

I just got a call from one of the 1969 - 1970 guys, that was trying to fight the VA by himself. I told him not to do that, Get to a VSO and get them to help. He said he was a member of the VFW and that he thought they had VSO's..

He had cancer in his hip and they operated and did radiation treatments. Now his legs have been Diagnosed with: Peripheral Neuropathy - which his Dr. said it was or is caused by being around herbicides. Wouldn't a sheetmetal guy be?? If he worked on any of the a/c plus went to the field and helped make reventments using old 55 gallon drums. It is a numbness in his legs and feet.

He needs help and here is his information:

Richard G.Fierro  
1651 Carrol Court  
Denver, CO 80229-3628

303-288-0338 - Thefierros@aol.com  
Maintenance Sheet Metal  
281st AHC 6/69-6/70

If anyone can help, please contact Richard, He's just another one of our guys needing assistance with the system. - Gary

*A report from Jack Mayhew on a great mini-reunion down in Florida.*

John Mayhew <jmayhew@huntwood.net> wrote:

Flight, another great 281st event. On Saturday we arrived at the Bar LH Cattle Company on a bright sunny Florida day to be greeted by our host, Lance and Gayle Ham who graciously opened their home and ranch to us. I will leave the photo publishing and attendance roster to Ray Oksa who photographed everyone in attendance and has matching names. First let me say that Ray and Jay Hayes have gone the extra mile in not only encouraging our members to host mini-reunions they were both in attendance and ready to help out. Jay has certainly become the 281st roving ambassador and I cannot think of an other individual that has visited so many of our folks. Lance and Gayle's event attracted as many first timers and non members as there were current members. Most of the new attendees brought their photos, several missing pieces of information concerning our MIA/KIAs were uncovered and we have new search projects for Gary along with a commitment to provide him with orders that are stored in the old foot lockers.

Ellie Lynn who served as the 281st commander in 69 joined us for his first 281st reunion and we look forward to seeing him in Vegas in Sept. Most of the new folks there committed themselves to attend the upcoming reunion in Vegas.

Our mainstay at 281st events rode his bike from GA to be there and as always seeing Bill Purdy was not only a pleasure but an honor. Bill was one of the first CE's and is a great Intruder. By my account he has only missed one 281st gathering.

I have a personal story that came to came out of this meeting that I would like to share with you. When I arrived at 17th AVN Group HQ for assignment to the 281st I ran into a young WO waiting for his assignment and after we chatted a bit I ask the group personnel officer to let me take him with me. He gave me the OK and together we went across the air field to the 281st. I must tell you that was one of the best decisions I ever made. WO Forest Hall not only became one fine Bandit AC he ran the Moberg supply system with skill and finesse and in so doing keep us supplied with about anything anyone ask for and in most cases at least three of everything on the books. But one the thing I recall most about Forest was his positive can do attitude and his big smile. I recall flying with him on several occasions and more than a few times I had some serious concern as to the conditions and situations we were in, but in Forest's case the only thing one need to

do was relax and let him do his job, which he did in true Intruder fashion. Forest drove down from his home in Jacksonville and there are no words to explain how great it was to see him again after all these years. He still flies commercially and is now back in the fold, so watch out for him to knock on your door.

Lance and Gayle, you have our heartfelt thanks for arranging and hosting this great event. Ray and Jay, keep up the good work, you guys are great. All you old guys, it was great seeing you again and all you new guys, don't be strangers. Send Gary Stagman <cooter@charter.net> your membership application along with copies of all the orders and names that you have stored away. If you are looking for a fellow Intruder contact Gary and he will help you find him. Send "Brian W. Paine" <bpaine@hal-pc.org> your photos and slides and he will put them on the association web site under your name so that they will be preserved, along with the unit history, for your grand children and their children to see. If you have a story or a history item please send them to Bob Mitchell <bob.mitchell@mitchellsbodyshop-inc.com> and he will put them on the web for you. If you have information or pictures of a 281st MIA or KIA please send it to me and I will see that it is included in their "Book of Remembrance." If you lost a friend in the unit please jot down your memories of the individual and send them to me so that they can be added to their book on our web site. We believe; "That a man is not dead until he is forgotten." Last but not least: We have a great support system in place and if you know of an Intruder that needs help please contact Lynn, Bob, Gary or me and we will see to it that the individual get our full attention. *See you all in Vegas. Jack Mayhew*

PS: Contrary to popular belief the boots on the Bar LH ranch fence did not belong to Brian Paine and the "old" guy with me was Cliff Wheeler, my father-in-law who does our MIA/KIA sketches. Cliff served in WWII as a medic with the Marines and was on Iwo Jima when the flag was raised. He also served as a medic in the early days of Korea and was a POW in that war.

*Now here's a tale of woe. Buck Yancey appeals to "only those who understand". – Fred*

Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2004

To: CHAT\_281AHC@yahogroups.com

Subject: A Day of Sorrow and Lamentation

This is a lamentable day. I truly feel that all is lost, and there seems no longer to be any hope, hardly any reason to carry on at all. After 18 years since I retired from the military this very afternoon my wife, as women are apt to do, came to me and said it's broken -- fix it. In this case it was the vacuum cleaner, but it could have been anything. I told her sure, just a minute. We guys always have to say just a minute, to be real guys. Then I sauntered out to where I store my most trusted tools. I reached into the bin, and alas there was only a little bit of the precious stuff left. My eyes began to water, my chest felt constricted, and my head felt light when the reality finally sunk in -- I was down to my last repair. From now on parts will be flying off of everything, and I am afraid that NOTHING will ever work right again. How in Hades can any self-respecting aviator continue on without his 90 mile an hour tape. From now on I will have to live like mere mortal men, and rely on (God forbid that I should have to say it, and it is bitter on my tongue) -- "Duct Tape alone!"

LET THE MOURNING BEGIN FOR IT IS A BLACK DAY INDEED

***An expression of thanks and appreciation from the 281<sup>st</sup> Assault Helicopter Company Association.***

On behalf of the Association I would like express our appreciation to Honorary Member Dr Karen Heintz Forcht and the James Madison University students who worked on the 281<sup>st</sup> AHC webpage page projects during the semester. Karen tells me that they really enjoyed working on something real and not having to look/listen to professors. Karen related that many of them told her, both this semester and last semester, that they learned a lot about Viet Nam by working on the page.

Today's high school textbooks contain very little about the 60's--just anti- war protests, etc. Karen's daughter is a high school history teacher and is shocked at the lack of 60-70's coverage and the Viet Nam slant (very negative). The students learned the human side of Viet Nam from working on the 281st page.

The faculty who were involved this semester were: Dr. Michel Mitri, Roster, membership pages, the students were from his Advanced Web Design Class and Dr. Robert Brookshire, PX page, Introductory Web Design Class.

Our heartfelt thanks to the professors and students for their outstanding efforts.

*Fred Mentzer  
Public Relations and Newsletter Editor*

*Steve Matthews contributes the next. Good stuff. – Fred*

From: Steve&Peggy <spmatthews@cox.net> Subject: **Privileges of War** by Tom Ross

FLIGHT, Here is some exciting news. Our good SF friend Tom Ross has published his book in which he details the Montagnard Village rescue operation in August of 1968, a joint operation between A-502 and the 281st AHC. Tom's letter below will give you pertinent information about the book, and I strongly recommend you visit the website for a complete look at the book review. Tom was even able to get Joe Kline to lend his "God's Own Lunatics" art and used a 281st helicopter on his book cover.

You can see Tom Ross' pictures of 281st AHC crew who were on the rescue operation (thru the History link) at: <http://www.281stahc.org/MontRescue/MontPage1.htm> and read the Aug/68 Green Beret Magazine article on the Montagnard village rescue (thru the Stories link) at: <http://www.281stahc.org/pictures/greiner/greiner.html>

Many thanks and congratulations to Tom Ross. Steve

*Gary Stagman received this from Tubby Brudvig. Tubby has also penned a tribute poem to Bob George, KIA 17Feb79, on the Wolf Pack website. - Fred*

From: G. Stagman

I received a check and a letter with a poem from Duane "Tubby" Brudvig. Note read:

04/13/04

Dear Gary Stagman,

I am sending my dues, sorry that they are so late as I just have been busy with other things lately, so it kind of slipped by me. Hope to see to see you all in the near future. Here is a poem I wrote about the guys from the Wolf Pack bunch that you might like. It isn't professional, but it comes from the heart. If you care to add it to the 281st AHC Assn collection of writings or whatever, that would be fine with me. I have nothing but respect for all those guys who risked their lives and gave their lives for our country. Take care and GOD bless. - Tubby

### WHO WAS THE WOLF PACK?

Penned by Duane "Tubby" Brudvig who now resides in Bella Vista, AR, with his lovely wife Deborah Faye. Tubby can be contacted at: [debnduane@highstream.net](mailto:debnduane@highstream.net)

In war there have been individual men  
Who have risen to the occasion when it was time  
Their stories have been put to the pen  
Placed in books, on film, or written in rhyme

Once they were back home safe and sound  
With their loved ones by their side  
They would remember those who kept them around  
Especially those who risked it all and died

In this war there was a platoon that stood out  
Making their mark in the annuals of history  
Flying in helicopters was what they were about  
What made them special is still a mystery

So who was this band of men called Wolf Pack?  
They were ordinary guys who volunteered to do  
A tough job where other would lack  
The wanton disregard and tenacity to follow through

They all had different backgrounds before signing on  
But they had one love and one reason to fight  
Flying in an aircraft equipped with M-60, rocket pod  
and mini-gun  
Gave them the wherewith to prove their might

They were brave men those soldiers of the air  
Fighting with their machines from the sky  
To show others in need that someone up there  
Was willing to protect, rescue and even die

When the guys on the ground were in big trouble  
The Wolf Pack crews were always ready to lend a hand  
They would arrive at the scene on the double  
To cover the teams and the hole ships who had to land

For no greater love has any man than that one  
Who was willing to lay down his life for a friend  
Just as our Savior did for everyone  
Because of his great love for us, that He did send

If one of their own was down for the count  
They would rally their courage and strength  
With an all out effort they would mount  
An attack that would repel the enemy at great length



The Winter Newsletter concluded with a "Historical Note". Continuing on that theme below is a photo of the First Annual Reunion of the 281<sup>st</sup> AHC Association with the VHPA at Nashville in 1999. At that meeting a Constitution and By-Laws were approved by the members present and the Association came into being. The first officers were nominated and as the saying goes, "The Rest is History". - Fred



So much for the Spring Edition Newsletter. Please give me your comments, good or bad. If you want to write an article or would like to see additional features, just let me know. We'll talk about it.

Fred Mentzer - Editor

**LAS VEGAS REUNION**  
**BE THERE !**

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

**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