



281st Assault Helicopter Company Association

NEWSLETTER
NUMBER 42

"INTRUDERS"

NHA TRANG
1965 - 1970

Spring
2010

THE 281ST HOSTS THE SECOND REUNION OF THE 10TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION



AT THE

ST LOUIS AIRPORT CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL

4-8 AUGUST 2010



... 2010 FRIDAY NITE THEME ...

"RETURN TO VIETNAM"

The Prez Speaks...

Our esteemed editor has been after me for the last week to complete this article for the newsletter. So here I am up very early on a Saturday Morning to, in his words, "Git 'er done." Of course, you can't start a project like this without a pot of coffee. Can you guess which coffee mug I grabbed from the shelf? The mug says it was our first annual reunion, in Washington, D.C. It was in July, 2000. How many of you were there? We were coat tailing off of the VHPA with that reunion. I remember the parade, the heat, and then boarding the bus for the ride out to the lovely home of Jack Mayhew for happy hour and dinner. Now we know that this was not really our first reunion, several had gathered in previous years. We also were quick to realize that even though the VHPA was very helpful in meeting our needs, however, their requirements of pilots only for members, did not allow us to be together as a Team. We all knew the importance of successful team work from our early days. I wonder how many of you out there have been to every reunion? Drop me a line if you have. Have there been 9 reunions since then? I remember DC, and Nashville, and Houston, and several in Las Vegas.

Two other things I would like to tell you about. One - Marilyn and I just returned from our spring vacation. We spent a week on the outer banks of North Carolina at a town called Duck. This was my first visit to the Outer Banks, and I always have wanted to go there to visit the Wright Brothers Memorial at Kitty Hawk, which is also on the Outer Banks.

I was not disappointed in my visit to the memorial. In fact, I was thrilled to learn about what they did to accomplish the first manned flight in a powered machine. Did you know that on that first day, they really had four flights, two by each brother. I guess on that first day they started the tradition of one pilot taking each leg as I remember we did in Viet Nam most of the time. Two - I belong to another Viet Nam Veterans Organization here in Atlanta. We have several things that we do to honor veterans. If you are ever in the Atlanta Airport on Friday morning, we are there with the USO to "Welcome Home" our service men and women who are

coming and going from their R & R. We also have a memorial service each year to honor a service man from the Atlanta Area who was killed in Viet Nam. One of those Memorials is in the Buckhead area of Atlanta and honors CW3 Tommy Condrey. Of course we remember and honor the entire Wolfpack crew of four who were killed in May of 1968, a mere 42 years ago. Tommy Condrey, Jimmy Dayton, Earl Jenne, and Dan Jurecko, May 8, 1968.

ALL HONOR TO THEIR NAMES

*Jim "Mom" Torbert
President*

Peeps from the Veep...

Fellow Intruders; let me start by telling you about how good the Reunion Planning and Participation is going this year. St. Louis is going to be more fun than ever so it is time for you all to get that check book out and get your reservations in now. To date Don Torrini, the "boot on the ground" in STL, has collected over 58 registrations for 100 participants from the 281st, the 192nd, the 155th & 10th CAB for the Reunion starting August 4, 2010. You can log on to the website: <http://www.281st.com/> and click on the Reunion tab: **"New! New! > 281st AHC 2010 "VAGABOND" REUNION"** on the home page and download your registration form and get that check book out and get it in the mail. **DO IT NOW; DON'T BE A PROCRASTINATOR!** Be sure to download all the attachments including: the Cover Letter, the Registration Form with Backside for special meals or assistance, the Schedule of Events and the Event Sign-Up Form.

I want to give special recognition to the work that our "boot-on-the-ground" and also "Intruder of the Year" honoree, Don Torrini is doing with taking all your money and keeping track of all the participants. Don is the glue that makes all the reunions work. Be sure to give him a big kiss (or at least offer to buy him a beer) when you see him at the registration desk at the STL Crown Plaza in STL this August. Also please fill out the volunteer form and give Don and all of us a hand at making this one the best reunions yet.

So far we have been successful in filling a whole bus for the new event, the **Thursday**

Night Skyline River Boat Dinner Cruise. The good news is the event is sold out; more good news is that we're going to continue to accept registrations for the dinner cruise! The new deadline for signing up is now **July 1st**. So "keep'em coming", the more the merrier! Hopefully this will be a continuing event for future years so those that missed it this year will be sure to sign up early next year and get their Prime Rib Dinner on the mighty Mis-is-sip!

If you didn't elect to attend the river cruise; we have an alternative event on Thursday evening to go see **Footloose** at the St. Louis Muny Opera Music Event. There is also the Presidential "Mom" Torbert **Golf Outing** during the day on Thursday. Friday offers a repeat of the successful "**Missouri Weinstrasse**" to take a trip out to the wine country and sample some very fine Mizzu Wine (that's a California wine snob saying that too!)

There are of course the two banquets included in your Registration Fee. Fred Mentzer and his able assistant Karen will have a surprise "Return to Vietnam" theme R&R memory banquet for Friday night with a very eclectic menu. Don't worry; it's not that weird, and Patrick McGlasson, the able event planner for the hotel has worked out an outstanding buffet that will please almost everyone. And what mysterious character will Fred and Bob Ohmes dream up this year. I hope it won't be about the steam baths in Nha Trang. Maybe just some dirt on the Villa and what the RLO's did down there!

Speaking of Bob; he has arranged for a UH-1H (static display, sorry no rides, but a good photo opportunity) to be on hand in the parking lot complements of the Hotel Manager, Shirley Wheeler's generosity, in letting us park it in her parking lot, and the owners of the Huey, Vietnam Veterans #243, who will accompany the chopper. It will be outside the banquet doorway in the parking lot on the SE corner of the hotel. Bob has been deeply involved in the restoration of this war bird.

Well if that is not enough to get you to get that check book out then I have failed. But I am telling you; **yall gonna miss one hellava party if you miss this one.** Remember the hospitality room is stocked daily with free snack food, beer, wine (from Trader Jo's compliments of Mom &

Marilyn) and hard liquor to. So! I really hope to "Meet you in St. Lou!"

*Ken Smith
Vice President*

The Bean Counter...

Since we are in the midst of reunion registration I thought it would be a good time to provide the members with some detail of the collection and payment process.

Registration checks received this year include registration fees, dues, riverboat fees, scholarship donations and other donations. All checks are sent to Don Torrini and most of the time these fees are submitted on one check by the registrant.

Don inputs the fees by category on a computer spreadsheet after which he send the checks to the Association's bank approximately once per week. He then emails the spreadsheet to the reunion committee to review the registration progress. The spreadsheet is also sent to Gary Stagman (membership chairman) to enable him to update the dues records.

I also receive the spreadsheet for comparison to the deposits posted to the bank account. The bank sends an email notice whenever activity such as a deposit takes place. I immediately forward the bank's email notice to Don to let him know that the deposit was received. The spreadsheet data is then used to input the amounts by category into the Associations accounting records using accounting software (Quickbooks). The spreadsheet is posted to the 281st web site by Fred Mentzer.

Any outlays that have to be made before the reunion (e. g. mailings, decorations, supplies) are made via online banking checks. Payments are made upon receipt of invoices and authorization for such payments received either in the reunion budgeting process or from the reunion chairman. Scholarship donations made with the registration are sent to the scholarship fund treasurer (Brian Paine) via online checking. The primary outlay for the reunion is the hotel bill which is paid by debit card at the conclusion of the reunion.

As can be seen no cash is handled in the process with the exception of some that may be received at the reunion and that amount is generally minimal. The process is done this way

to provide some degree of internal control of the proceeds and expenditures.

Jerry "Fred" Beck
Treasurer

The Senior Member @Large...

Contrary to popular belief the "primary additional duty" of your Senior Member @ Large is not to keep the "Two Fred's" (Mentzer and Beck) always with a Bud Light in their hand; nor, is it to "always agree with Jack Mayhew". No, **it is to chair the 281st AHC Association's Awards Committee**, and it is in this capacity that I am now accepting nominations from the membership for the 2010 Intruder of the Year Award (IOYA). The IOYA is open to any Association Member in "good standing" who has "made a meritorious contribution to the stated goals of the Association".

The following guidelines shall govern the selection of the IOYA recipient:

1. There will be only one IOYA recipient annually.
2. No individual shall receive the IOYA more than once.
3. Only members of the Association shall be eligible to receive the IOYA.
4. Monetary contributions to the Association alone shall not be sufficient basis for selecting an individual as IOYA recipient.
5. Posthumous award alone shall not be sufficient basis for selecting an individual as IOYA recipient.

Nominations should be submitted in writing to me either by email at haased@ix.netcom.com or by regular mail at my home address:

Ed Haas
39 Farmington Chase
Farmington, CT 06032

The nominations will list the nominee's name and why he deserves the award. The nominee's "meritorious service does not have to be limited to the year of the Award. Nominations must be received by June 4, 2010 (60 days before the start of the annual Reunion). The selection committee will be the Association President (Jim Torbert), last year's IOYA recipient (Don Torrini), and the Senior Member @ Large (Ed Haas).

The 2010 IOYA will be presented at the 2010 Reunion in St Louis this August.

And so my fellow Intruders as the 2010 Reunion rapidly draws near you can rest assured your Reunion Committee is gearing up to insure another great event (**the best yet**) – don't take my word for it; checkout the Events List and make your plans and reservations **NOW**. The only thing I can think of that could diminish the event is if **YOU** can't make it to St. Louis again this year. I'm told the list of attendees is mounting rapidly – Intruders that haven't been present for a few years will be there along with some Intruders who will be attending for the first time. So don't **YOU** be the one that's left out. Don't forget guys from the other units of the 10th CAB Vagabonds (192nd, 155th, 92nd, and 48th AHC's) will be joining us again this year so finalize your travel plans early and send in those completed Registration Forms **NOW!** See You in St. Louis!

Ed Haas
Senior Member @ Large

The Scribe...

40 YEARS!

It's hard to believe but I noticed last week that it was the 40th "anniversary" of the death of Bob Gardner and his crew. 40 years, that is one long time. In fact, when May 20th rolled around it became at least 40 years for every single KIA the 281st had.

I'm getting old and getting old means each day I tend to feel more mortal than the day before, but when I glanced up at my VHPA calendar above my desk at work and saw Bob's name, along with Stan Miller, his co-pilot, I silently said a little prayer. The prayer was to give thanks for the opportunity to have known Bob and to seek a small measure of forgiveness for not having attended his services. The fact that I didn't know about it until after it was all over and done doesn't really make me feel any better, and even though I have made at least 3 successful visits to his spot at Arlington National Cemetery after our reunion in 2000, I probably should have been there when he himself first went there to stay.

Then I got to remembering those I knew best in the 281st, others who cannot attend our reunions, and Alan Johnson came to mind. He was one of my favorite back seat guys during my brief stint

with the Bandits, and I always tried to have a few words with him whenever we happened to cross paths on a Delta mission. Friendly guy, always willing to do whatever was necessary, and like all the others Alan died too young. I missed his services as well but I did manage to take a picture of his name on the NYC wall down the street from the NYSE.

40 years, that is almost twice the time those two were alive, and it could have been me. But it wasn't, and that is one reason I try to stay in contact with whomever served in the 281st. We lost far too many but the survivors are a special bunch. See you in St. Louis.

Jeff Murray
Secretary

The people guy...

In 11 years we have climbed to member # 364 !!! This past year 2010 dues have come in very slow. If it wasn't for them being included with the reunion registration it would be worse. It could also be better too.

Number 364 is an ole Intruder, Michael K. Whisenant.

I had sent out through December thru January many letters in which I was trying to get or try to get all the officers off the unfound list. I think I mailed well over 34 letters and only had 2 returned, but had new addresses so I was able to forward them.

Starting 1 Aug 2010 will be the start of the NEW dues year for 2011. I am happy to see the number of 2011 dues that have come in with the reunion registrations. In fact I've had some that are catching up on their dues now, THANKS!! So things are now really looking up in this area..

I have noticed a bit of loss of interest in the 281st AHC Association, whether it be due to lack of interest or the word being put out is not of the most favorable.. Needs to be some real thinking of where we are heading for the future of the organization. One thing that has to be remembered, this is NOT a Officer or Enlisted Organization, but just a group of ole guys that served together in which each of their jobs no matter what, added to the successful completion of the unit's missions! I have noticed a large number of telephone calls to my home phone and my cell phone asking me if I was going to be

at the reunion. I asked them why, their answers most of the time was if you aren't coming I'm not going to be there anymore. This is just information to use as food for thought to improve the Association further.... Oh yes something else, if any of you want or need a reply to a email sent out, go to the OPTIONS area and set your email up so it will indicate if and when it was opened or looked at.

Also it is imperative that each of us be totally aware of the each members of the EB and the committee's are to be handled IAW the Constitution and the By-Laws. It is imperative that all ballots received by the proper authority, be certified that the person send in the ballot is a MEMBER-IN-GOOD-STANDING and how is that to be accomplished????

I want to thank everyone that has been sending me their new information to update the master roster, this saves postage and you get your newsletters faster. If for some reason that you do not receive your newsletter by email or snail mail, go to www.281st.com and click on newsletters and you can print it off. PLEASE keep your information on the master roster up to date then you should receive your newsletters as they come out. If you have a good email, then it saves postage in mailing. The latest master rosters have been uploaded to the Intruder Website, so they are much more complete and that's due to you all providing the updated information.. Thanks !!

Thank you for your continuing support, to the 281st AHC Association!! This allows me the extra time to try to help others thru information to pursue their claims within the VA system.

The next dues year (2011) will be 1 Aug 2010 to 31 Jul 2011.

Again thank you for your support and have a very Safe and wonderful summer, camping, golfing or whatever interests you may have...

Gary Stagman
Chairman, Membership Committee

And now the JM&L

Well spring is here in the Mid West. Rain, mud, mosquito's, sounds like a place we all visited many years ago. Well in less than 90 days we hope to see you here in Missouri at the St. Louis Crowne Plaza.

That means that it is time for the annual election of officers. As the JML I have the job to put the election together. The following people have agreed to have their names placed as candidates for the following offices: Ed Haas as Vice President, Dave Mitchell & Jim Baker as Jr. Member at Large, and Fred Beck as Treasure.

We had several good people suggested, but for one reason or the other they were unable to serve at this time. If you were overlooked this year and are interested be sure and get in contact with the new JML and I am sure he will be more than happy to talk with you about next year.

At the end of this news letter you will find a copy of the ballot for the 2011 election. If you are a dues paying member of the 281st AHC Association do one of the following:

To make this as easy as possible print the ballot off if you are on e-mail, fill out and snail mail it to me at the address included or e-mail your choice with your name and Membership # if you know it. If you are on snail mail, just sent the ballot back to me marked and signed. I will need the ballot back on or before July 9, 2010.

Now on to my small part of the reunion. On Thur. night if you are not going on the River Boat come join us on a trip the the St Louis Muny. This a long standing St Louis tradition, Broadway quality show. It starts at sundown and if the day is hot they have fans that reminds you of helicopter prop wash. Foot Loose is what is showing on Thursday evening. The cost is whatever you want from free to 40 or 50 dollar box seats. Most of the time we get \$18.00 seats which are in the middle and very good. As for as the getting to the Muny we will have POV's lined up, or we are looking at the possibility of using the buses from the river boat trip if we can make the timing work.. That is just a possibility at this time, but we will have some kind of transportation arranged.

This looks to be one of the best reunions yet with lots of things to do for your family while we old men set and tell war stories. So block out the first weekend in August, pack the family up, (I think my wife looks forward to this as much as I do), come to St Louis, make some new friends, and see some you have not seen in 40 years. There will be lots for everyone to do and enjoy plus two great evening banquets that are included in your registration fee.

Remember if you are a dues paying 281st Association member be sure to send you ballot to me by July 9, 2010.

Remember any person who was associated with any of the company's of the 10 Th Battalion in Viet Nam is invited to St Louis in August. Lets see if we can fill the Hotel for the weekend. See you in August and remember to vote.

*Frank Becker
Junior Member & Large*

The Remembrance Chairman...

Your association has tried to provide sympathy, support, and recognition of those Intruders that have left us with flowers at their funeral. However this has been a hit and miss process in that it is based on getting timely information concerning the event.

Marshall Hawkins, Gary Stagman and I have tried to handle these events over the years and have found the process to be less than satisfactory. Therefore, last month we ask the association EB to approve a change in the policy that would replace the traditional flowers with a flag case that contains a brass plaque recognizing the individual's service with the 281st. This has been done and Gary has volunteered to be the action person and as such will from now on insure that he widow of a deceased Intruder receives an engraved flag case.

Our goal is to have an intruder who lives close to the family present it to the widow at the time of the funeral.

*Jack Mayhew
Chairman, Remembrance Committee*

The Chaplains Corner...

With all the terrorist attacks in the news these days I thought I would share this little anecdote with you all. I know that terrorists consider us infidels but maybe if we just follow these guidelines at the end we could win a few over to our side. There is quite enough "hate" in this world already.

**BEWARE OF TERRORIST GROUPS
IN CHURCH**

(Con't)

Latest news reports are that five terrorist cell groups have been operating in many of our churches. They have been identified as: Bin Sleepin', Bin Arguin', Bin Fightin', Bin Complainin', and Bin Missin'.

Their leader, Lucifer Bin Workin', trained these groups to destroy the Body of Christ. The plan is to come into the church disguised as Christians and to work within the church to discourage, disrupt, and destroy.

However, there have been reports of a sixth group. A tiny cell known by the name Bin Prayin' is actually the only effective counter terrorism force in the church. Unlike other terrorist cells, the Bin Prayin' team does not blend in with whoever and whatever comes along.

Bin Prayin' does whatever is needed to uplift and encourage the Body of Christ. We have noticed that the Bin Prayin' cell group has different characteristics than the others. They have Bin Watchin', Bin Waitin', Bin Fastin', and Bin Longin' for their Master, Jesus Christ to return.

NO CHURCH IS EXEMPT!

(However, you can spot them if you bin lookin' and bin goin'.)

*Norm Kaufman
Chaplain*

The Scholarship Fund...

Over the past years we have on various occasions discussed the feasibility of operating a scholarship program and we often wondered if we could financially support one on a continuing basis. We are pleased to tell you that we are going into our third year and thanks to the generous support of the membership and our corporate contributors we have to date supported 4 young honor students, and the fund is solvent.

We will review this year's applications at the scholarship board meeting to be held in conjunction with the annual reunion in August. From time to time we receive questions as to the eligibility requirements for scholarship support and they are simple; Anyone who is member of the family of a individual who served in the 281st is eligible to apply. This includes children, grand children, nieces, and nephews. However, our experience is that only one of four individuals who request scholarship applications take the time to complete and submit them. We have simplified the process to the point that most of the work is done by the individuals providing references and we would like to hear from anyone with suggestions as to how we can improve the application process.

For the record I believe that we are the only company size association to offer a scholarship program which speaks volumes as to the makeup of the association membership.

*Jack Mayhew
Fund Secretary*

Notes and Comments

Hq Net message from Bob Mitchell, 11 Feb 10, Tennessee survivor of the recent floods....

If there is anyone on the net who was flying in A Shau Valley the day this fellow was wounded, he would like to know who you are. This happened during Operation Cass Park I, 1-69, FOB Phu Bai 29 Mar-25 Apr 1969 as he was MEDEVAC'd on 19 April 1969. Please respond and I will get you hooked up.

...The mission into A Shau was a real bad one. Many NVA at base camp we located, the 1st picku ship was badly shot up and had to return to Phubai, 2nd one with Ted Aslund as bellyman was hit 56 times, Ted had his aviation helmet shot off. The three of us that survived were extracted out by McGuire rig and flown to an area where a company from the Ranger BN was operating, SF medic hit me up large dose of morphine. Four Rangers picked me up and threw me on shot up slick like a sack of taters. Medc climbed in and we took off for Phubai field hospital. The rest I was told later, as I was out from the morphine. The crippled bird didn't make it back to Phubai. They flew another one out and transfered us to it, with Cobra support. Then we went to field hospital. Chinook picked the valiant wounded helicopter and flew it back to Phubai. What could be salvaged was, the rest was blown up. It never flew again, it gave its life for us. When we in recon were in the thick of it, the sound of cavalry coming to do their best to save us, was a blessed sound I still remember today...

An email back in January from our official photographer Jerry Stanfield, shown here with an “ancient” M-16 gun system.



So you don't like my tubes??? Well XIN LOI!!!

Jerry

HAUOLE MAKAHIKI HOU

25 April 10 - A chat message from “on the mend” Frank Becker....

Hi Guys, Thought I might bring you up to date on things here in Mo. Thought the cow and the ribs were on the mend, went to the Dr. a wk.ago thur. things seemed to be going good. and fri and sat. after that feel the best I had in 2 wk. Last mon. morning got up out of my easy chair I have slept in for 3 wks. Went up stairs to get dressed for the day. By the time I made it to the top of the stairs I could not breath. Took me a good 10 min. to get where I could breath. Got dressed and back down, called my son on another farm to come take me to the ER as the Dr. had said that was what to do when I got out of the Hosp. before if I couldn't breath. When we got to the ER about 5 miles away they said my blood oxygen level was 70% need to be 90%+. Long story short sent me to the Hosp. in Hannibal and that afternoon, Monday, they took 3 qt. of stuff out of the left chest. Put in drain tubes and kept me till Fri. The stuff was around my lung and I was only able to use about 1/3 of my left lung. From what they tell me this should have happen the first wk. or so. It was blood from the broken ribs and bruised lung.

Things are looking up the pain pills are working, brother and son are getting the corn planted along with few of the friends around us. I might have been trying to do to much and brought some of this on so it looks like I will have to lay low for a while. The rest of you have a good wk.

Oh yes, JM and Gary if I live through all this I know I will be around to help you with that bottle of Scotch.
Frank Becker

The Editor Speaks...

OK folks, that's it for this newsletter. As always I remind you that this publication is your newsletter. If'n ya wants somethin' in it, or disagree with its content, just let me know. My job is to serve you. Fred Mentzer



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Historical Memorabilia Chairman – Fred Lewis
Internet Groups Administrator – Bob Mitchell
Communications Committee Chairman – Fred Mentzer
Reunion Committee Chairman – Ken Smith
Survivor Assistance Chairman - Marshall Hawkins
Memorabilia Sales Committee Chairman – Jay Hays
Chaplain - Norm Kaufman
Newsletter Editor/Public Relations
Fred Mentzer
ffmentzer@comcast.net

281st ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY ASSOCIATION



"OFFICIAL BALLOT"

2010 EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTION

For Association Jr. Member at Large

(A 2 Year EB Term - Succeeds to Senior Member at Large for year 2)

Vote for One:

David "Dave" Mitchell - Bandit 25 11/68 - 11/69

or

James W. "Jim" Baker - Rat Pack 11/68 - 11/69

Uncontested Positions

(Should a position to be filled be uncontested, the individual who declared for or was nominated for the position shall be considered to be elected by acclamation.)

Association Treasurer:

Jerome "Fred" Beck - Rat Pack 6/67 - 6/68

Association Vice President:

Edward "Ed" Haas - Rat Pack 10/67 - 10/68

**Completed Ballots should be mailed or e-mailed to: **

Frank Becker
17952 Hwy 54
Bowling Green, MO 63334
febeck2002@yahoo.com

** And must be postmarked NLT 9 July 2010 **

Member Name

Membership #