

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

## "INTRUDERS"

Company Newsletter No 14

July 2002

# REUNION TIME

# **BE THERE !**

26 - 28 September 2002

SOAR XXVI

Special Operations Association Reunion  
281<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:reservations@plazahotelcasino.com)

<http://www.plazahotelcasino.com>

### **THE 2002 REUNION**

The Reunion will be held in conjunction with the Special Operations Association Reunion, (SOAR). As is their normal practice, the event will be held in Las Vegas at the Plaza Hotel during the last week in September. The specific dates are 26-28 September 2002. This is Thursday through Saturday evening. There are no scheduled events for Sunday 29 September.

The 281st AHC Association voted in its General Membership Meeting last year to hold its 2002 Reunion during SOAR. The 281st AHC is recognized by SOA as a Special Operations Aviation unit which makes it very easy for our members to become members of SOA. Membership in SOA is NOT required to attend this reunion, however, it is encouraged.

Registration Fee for the 281st Reunion is \$20.00 per member which will include:

(1) One Luncheon Ticket (additional Luncheon Tickets may be purchased at \$5.00 ea)

(2) One 281st Coin (additional coins may be purchased for \$10.00 ea)

Registration Fee for the SOA is \$80.00 per person which will include admission to all of their events to include continuous Hospitality Room visits and drinks.

Saturday night banquet tickets are \$40.00 each, one is included with each registration. Additional Banquet Tickets may be purchased separately for additional guests.

### **281st AHC SCHEDULES**

The SOAR schedule will be published at a later date, but our scheduled events are outlined below:

26 SEP 0800-1800	Registration	SOAR Registration Area
26 SEP 1000-1200	281st EB Meeting	Jockey Club
27 SEP 0800-1000	Registration	SOAR Registration Area
27 SEP 1030-1130	281st Mem Ceremony	Turf Club
27 SEP 1230-1800	Registration	SOAR Registration Area
28 SEP 0800-1130	Late Registration	SOAR Registration Area
28 SEP 1200-1700	281st Luncheon-Social	Turf Club

### **281<sup>ST</sup> REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

281st Registration: Deadline for pre-registration is 1 September 2002. Please print and complete the 281st Registration Form and mail along with your check or money order (make checks payable to 281st AHC Assn) to:

281st AHC Reunion  
96 Riverport Drive  
Jackson, TN 38301

### SOA MEMBERS REGISTRATION

A SOAR XXVI packet will be mailed to you in July. Please mail your registration directly to SOA. For NON-SOA Members Registrants: Please print and complete the SOAR Registration Form and mail along with your check or money order (make checks payable to SOA) attached to your 281st Registration Form. (NOTE: NON-SOA members are required to register through the 281st AHC Association) so we can match you up with a SOA Member sponsor.

Should you decide to join SOA before the Reunion please contact John Korsbeck at kcountry@ttc-cmc.net or you may call John at 406-654-2547. Membership dues are \$25.00 Annual. John is on the Membership Committee of both the 281st and SOA and will be glad to assist you. For your convenience you may print the SOA Membership Application and mail it, along with your check made out to Special Operations Association to:

John Korsbeck  
Box 44  
Malta, MT 59538

### ARRIVAL INFO

Upon arrival at the Plaza Hotel follow the signs to the SOAR Registration Area. The 281st AHC Association will have a representative at the registration desk to assist you. You will pick up your SOA Reunion Packet and your 281st Reunion Packet at this point. Name Tags will be provided by SOA with 281st imprinted on them. Additional tickets for the SOA Banquet and the 281st Luncheon may be purchased at the desk if you need extras.

The Hotel rooms are provided by the Plaza at a special rate for this event. You MUST tell them you are coming to SOAR to get the special rate of \$44.00 per night. Deadline for reservations at this rate is 24 August 2002.

Transportation to and from the Airport is readily available at both the Airport and the Hotel. You can choose from the Airport Shuttle, Taxi or Limo. The Shuttle is the lowest priced way to go.

Questions, comments, gripes and complaints should be directed to Bob Mitchell at bob.mitchell@mitchellsbodyshop-inc.com or 731-427-6446 day or 731-424-7276 eve.

## THE NEWSLETTER

### The Membership Committee

**D**uring the months since the reunion of 2001, we have gone from 171 members to 223!! Also, there is a long list of ones that have been contacted, but haven't joined as of yet. So we are growing and making more contacts. We have a pretty well rounded group now in the membership from just about every area of the 281<sup>st</sup> AHC and associated units.

We still have several 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.

We presently have sent Honorary Membership Cards and Certificates of Membership for Next of Kin of Intruders families. We at the present time have 32 Honorary Members.

Membership recruitment has slowed somewhat, but so has the economy!! There still are many of the guys out there just waiting for someone to contact/find them. Remember if you have contact with a buddy that is not a member, pass his information on, so we can contact him, or better yet you talk to him and convince him to join.

Thank you all for supporting your 281<sup>st</sup> AHC Association.

Gary Stagman – John Korsbeck

### The Election Committee

**T**his year's election will have to be similar to the first election held by the Association by the General Membership. Single candidate positions will be by acclamation at the General Membership Meeting in Las Vegas. Currently only the Treasurer position will be contested by ballot.

The following have indicated they will be running for the open offices as indicated below.

**President:** John W. "Jack" Mayhew

**Vice-President:** Lynn F. Coleman

**Senior Member @ Large:** Jack S. Interstein

**Junior Member @ Large:** Gary L. Stagman

**Secretary (1 Year Term):** Jeffrey R. Murray

**Treasurer (2 Year Term):** Fred Mentzer  
Brian W. Paine

**Immediate Past President:** Robert W. "MOP" Mitchell will remain as IPP until the President Elect this year moves to the Immediate Past President position in 2003.

Great job to all of you "INTRUDERS" out there for all of your great continuing support. With out that, we would not be where we are.

### "WELCOME HOME INTRUDERS"

Gary Stagman – John Korsbeck

### The Memorial Committee

**F**light: We are pleased to inform you that thanks to the combined efforts of Bob Mitchell, Brian Paine and your memorial committee, your 281st AHC Association Web site is up and running with several improvements to include an on-line memorabilia store. (Get your hat for Vegas in time to put all the pins on it) To visit the site please go to: [http://www.angelfire.com/tn3/281stahc\\_assn/index.html](http://www.angelfire.com/tn3/281stahc_assn/index.html)

When you visit the site please go to the Members section and then to the Remembrance section of the site and there you will see a complete listing of our MIA/KIA, those "Books of Remembrance" that have been completed, along with pictures and information that we have collected for the individuals we are working on, and the DAT listing, which now has a picture album attached. We need Photos of both our MIA/KIAs and the individuals listed on the DAT listing. If you happen to have a photo of any of these individuals please send us a copy, or the original, which we will copy and return to you the same day. We will then publish it on the site. (Pause at the MIA/KIA index listing long enough to hear the complete playing of "Taps" and you will find a great feature after the 21 gun salute.)

Now the rest of the good news. For some time Corky Corkran has been constructing a "Morning Report" roster for the 281st AHC and to date he has compiled over 1200 names. These are now shown in the morning report section of the remembrance site. This is a "works in progress" and we need your help in completing the information for those individuals shown and adding those those still missing from the listing. Our goal is to ID all the former members, find them and if they are alive, get them into the 281st AHC Association. To do this we need your help.

On a different subject. We have had some success in helping individuals who are applying to the VA for medical assistance by providing them with a letter of explanation as to the nature of the duties that the members of the 281st performed in country. If you, or some one you know, are in this situation we will make ever effort to assist you. Just call or email us.

See you in Vegas in September.

Corky Corkran, Jack Serig & Jack Mayhew

^ **Paul Swol** ^  
Bandit 923 (8/69-5/70)

Paul passed away on 19 May 2002 at Santa Rosa, California, of cancer attributed to Agent Orange. Our heartfelt condolences are extended to his family.

"We Rotor On"

May 21, 2002

Santa Rosa Press Democrat Editorial

### Value of a day

Vietnam vet passes away just hours after receiving medal

Anyone who is unsure of the value of a single day should remember the story of Paul Swol.

Swol served as a door gunner with the 2nd platoon Bandits, 281st Assault Helicopter Company during the Vietnam War. Some time after the war, he moved to Fort Bragg where he met his wife and worked for Georgia-Pacific Corp. His was a full life -- with a gap. He mentioned to friends that although he qualified, he never received the U.S. Air Medal for valor.

His friends took it from there, and on Saturday, with 35 friends, family members and former Army buddies looking on, Rep. Mike Thompson, D-St. Helena, a Vietnam vet himself, pinned the bronze compass rose and eagle medallion to Swol's shirt. Said Thompson, "One of the reasons I'm here is because of guys like you who flew support for guys like me."

The medal came 32 years late -- but not a minute too soon.

Swol, 51, passed away the following afternoon. He had been fighting a losing battle against cancer, which his family believes was caused by exposure to Agent Orange.

Thanks to the efforts of many people including Thompson, Swol received the honor he deserved in time to appreciate it -- and show his appreciation.

Playwright Robert Bolt once wrote that "Even at our birth, death does not stand aside a little." In this case, it was just long enough.

*Photo in Warrack Hospital, Santa Rosa 17 May 2002*



Bill Henderson - Fred Mentzer - Paul Leonard - Brian Paine Jack Mayhew - Ken Smith - Hawk Hawkins  
(masks and gloves were due to presence of staph infection)

We presented the attached photo to Paul on Saturday and I believe that it reflects our feelings for a brother who showed so much courage and is so doing became an inspiration for all who knew him. The ceremony was done in typical 281st AHC first class style. Marshall Hawkins put together a great group of individuals who performed magnificently. Ken Smith carried the ball as the front man and adjutant and is ready for recall as a PIO or Adj. Brian Pain was his usual jolly self as the official photographer and entertainer of small children and cute older ones. (MOP, if as he believes, your comment on the dignity of the event were for him, we need to talk.) Fred Mentzer served as the local tour guide and keep us from being lost most of the time. The capping event was the fact that Dean Roesner, who brought the guidon home to us, served as the official 281st guidon bearer and did a super job working with the color guard. Dean was accompanied by his lovely wife who brings dignity and warmth to any event. Paul Leonard, the last of four individuals who formed a close bond while in the 281st and continued their close friendship, had the honor of assisting Congressman Mike Thompson in the presentation of the award of the Air Medal to Paul.

Marshall and company are all to be congratulated for a job well done in representing the flight under very stressful circumstances. I for one was very proud of each of the team and it was an honor to be to be there with them and to see what a great job you association is capable of doing.

Paul, we shall miss you smile and your strength, but you shall not be forgotten.

Jack Mayhew



*To Paul: A top gunner and  
a great friend to all.  
From the 281st Flight.*



**PAUL SWOL, DG  
KONTUM 69**

For the Record. Per his typically modest self, Jack Mayhew neglected to mention his involvement in this event. Jack was who we turned to in times of need. Upon learning of the screw up (No Air Medal) from Gary Stagman, I contacted Jack and asked his assistance in rectifying a wrong that was committed so long ago. (dumbass Plt Leader not doing his job) Jack quickly got a handle on what needed to be done, had Mop and I write statements, prepared a packet and forwarded it to

the correct person. Admittedly he was aided tremendously by Kendall Smith (not to be confused with Ken Smith, Kendall is a local staff person for Paul's Congressman. She is a Supertroop and Jack recognized her talents immediately and has her working on a couple of other projects for Paul's family) but the expediency in receiving the award in what turned out to be just in time was allowed by Jack Mayhew's concern and work ethic. He was not obligated to perform

this function but did so because he had the knowledge and the desire to assist one of our brothers-in-arms.

I also wholeheartedly agree with his assessment of Ken Smith's involvement. As most of you know, we had originally planned to have the award ceremony in the Botannical Gardens in Ft Bragg. Ken had done a great job of organizing it and was in the final coordination mode for that location when we informed him that Paul was in the hospital and we may have to change the location from an outdoor ceremony to an indoor event. After coordinating with the different parties for that change, we then informed him that Paul was being MediFlighted to a location 3 hours south of Ft Bragg. In true Bandit fashion, he adjusted "during the heat of battle" and put together one helluva fine ceremony. You guys would have been as proud of him as I am!

Of course all the guys attending pitched in and helped in anyway they could. Fred M. assisted Ken by drawing up the basic ceremony to be used (as admonished to do so by Mop), Bill Henderson presented a copy of AI Rampones book (AI donated), Paul Leonard presented some flowers to the ladies,

Ken got in the act by presenting some letters and tokens from a 2 star and a 3 star for Paul Swols contribution of a painting to the Special Forces Museum. Me, I got to present JK's Honorary Ratpack 17 certificate (shows my true devotion to Paul, how revolting!). I also assisted in rolling the cake and coffee tray out and getting it set up. I thought it particularly ironic that Dean was pressed into service as the guidon bearer for the guidon he "appropriated" so many years ago. (Don't worry Dean, the statute of limitations has expired) Dean was the only guy that didn't get the word about location change and had to drive all the way back to Santa Rosa. I didn't hear one negative word about the additional trouble we put him through. BP was too busy taking pictures and flirting with the nurses to be much good as a presenter. Jack Mayhew's picture of Paul went over bigtime with all the family and friends who saw him as he looked 32 years ago. It was truly an inspiring event.

Paul told me that the ceremony was, in fact, a surprise to him. Although not able to raise his voice beyond a whisper and heavily sedated from his pain medication, he was fully aware of everything that was happening. His smiles, although weak, were perceptible and his eyes were alive with interest. He knew everyone present and even told me that the picture of a huey sitting on its belly was one that he took, not JK! He tired quickly from all the excitement but still didn't want to go in until he finally told the nurse that he had to pee. We

told him we would see him at the reunion but I believe everyone present knew it wouldn't be the one in Vegas, including him. He has now joined his buddies Hank Harpster and Richard Baker as well as all the other Intruders who have gone before us and I would bet my bottom dollar they are having one heck of a party right now.

Marshal "Hawk" Hawkins

## The Editor

This has been a busy, tumultuous and exciting year for the 281st Assn. Gary Stagmans efforts as Membership Chairman has been "hurclean", to say the least! Through his drive and devotion to duty the Assn roster has grown by better than 25% this year alone and by more than 50% during his year and a half on the job. Great, great job Gary.

Your Association has proven itself to be a growing, vibrant, and solid entity which was demonstrated by the recent turmoil in leadership. In spite of a rash of resignations the organization survived and continues to forge ahead in seeking out veterans of the 281st, reviving memories, friendships and comraderie.

This years reunion will undoubtedly be our finest to date. In the last newsletter I estimated that we would have in excess of 150 attending. I now believe that figure will be exceeded by our veterans alone! With families and guests included I'll bet we will be close to 300! Now won't THAT be something! Its going to be a fantastic time.

See you there.

Fred Mentzer  
Editor

## Notes and Memo's

*(The following is an email letter to Jack Mayhew from the sister of Tom Condrey about the KIA Wall of Remembrance)*

It is wonderful!!!! Love all the pictures as well as your words. Thanks again so very much. I know you have struggled with all of this and your efforts are very much appreciated. I feel I have had a visit with Tommy this morning. We love the music. "Wind Beneath My Wings" is perfect. We're off to visit family in VA and MD and have a picnic at Camp David tomorrow (grandson-in-law in navy works there) so we'll have a good 4th. You know that I will be introducing everyone to Tommy's site.

Have a happy 4th.

Mary Ellen and Jerry

*(From Joe Garst, 160 SOAR)*

From: "Garst, Joseph, CPT" <garstj@soar.army.mil>  
Good Morning,

I tried to track some of this down this week. An officer who returned last Thursday said they had not received any packages from you or the other various organizations. The address below is still current despite the rumor of possible changes. The problem may lie in the rotation of the various "commands" who control the support side of the house. I did ask how normal mail was flowing and he stated that a letter takes about three weeks and packages somewhat longer.

As for Mike not getting back with you I am surprised. I am attempting to contact him through other means. The new push there is for SIPER (Secure E\_mail) so I don't know if he still checks his unsecure account. We

## The Survivor Assistance Team (SAT)

The Survivor Assistance Team was formally established in May 2002 to assist families of recently deceased 281st AHC crewmembers.

Upon notification of a passing, a SAT member will contact the family and offer our assistance in any matter that we may have expertise in.

Since May we have assisted surviving families on a wide range of financial, legal and congressional issues. Depending upon the expressed need, our services have ranged from simply sending flowers for the funeral to contacting the Veterans Administration and a Congressman's office on behalf of a widow seeking AO determination.

Our offer of assistance, if nothing more, expresses our appreciation to the family of our crewmembers service to both the 281st and the nation.

To date we have contacted and offered assistance to families of the following:

Paul Swol, Bandit Door Gunner, 69\_70

Joe MacCartney, Bandit Crewchief, 68\_69

Eugene Baxley, Service Platoon, 66\_67

Many Thanks to all members volunteering to assist in these activities.

Contact Marshall Hawkins (gfo@coxinet.net) for more information.

Hawk

## Bean Counter Statistics

*(from Brian Paine, our trusty CPA)*

As of June 30, 2002 records indicate the following:

### Checking:

Balance 01/01/02	\$ 3,639.45
additions	6,432.92
subtractions	(1,829.51)

Balance 6/30/02	\$ 8,242.86
restricted (life dues)	( 5,001.99)
restricted (memorial fund)	( 196.55)
Available cash 6/30/02	\$ 3,044.32

### Savings:

Balance in savings account	\$ 8,423.01
restricted checking funds	5,001.99
Balance savings (Life memberships)	\$13,425.00

Fred Mentzer  
Treasurer

have a variation of our system that allows for the secure connection.

Working it all believe it or not, and I apologies to everyone who is still providing such wonderful support.

On a side note, the regiment is planning on sending some aircraft, or at least that is the rumor, to the convention out there. I am working on getting some of my guys out there on the Army's dollar. I am planning on being there either way.

Will call very soon.

Joe

**(Here is a letter from the Swol Family)**

Open letter of appreciation to all members of the 281st AHC group

Our family wishes to express our utmost heartfelt appreciation for the efforts and accomplishments completed by the members of the 281st ahc group on behalf our husband, father, grandfather and brother (Paul Swol) on saturday, May 18th, 2002 at Sutter Warrack Hospital in Santa Rosa, Ca.

Words cannot express our thanks for such a heartwarming tribute to such a great guy.

Sincere thanks to all members of the 281st for their kindness thoughtfulness, especially to:

- Col. John W. Mayhew (Ret.)
- Brian Payne
- Marshall Hawkins
- Paul Leonard
- Fred Mentzer
- Bill Henderson
- Al Rampone
- Ken Smith
- Dean Roesner
- Fred funk
- John Korsbeck

For all their efforts far and above beyond the call of duty.

**(More on the Paul Swol Ceremony)**

Date: Tue, 21 May 2002

From: "Kenneth D. Smith" <kendsmith@earthlink.net

Subject: Paul Swol Ceremony Take 2

The hospital staff was incredibly cooperative and tolerant or the last minute nature of all this. It could not have been done without Nancy (next to BP, Oh my god) and Karla the new Administrator. Nancy found out about our needs on Friday as she was trying to take an early departure for her weekend. She dropped everything; got their PR Dept. right on top of it. Mitch in PR hired a photographer and assigned him immediately. These folks were great.

Date: Tue, 21 May 2002

From: "John W. Mayhew" <jmayhew@huntwood.net>

Subject: Re: Paul Swol Ceremony Take 2

There is a note that needs to be added. These folks are the doctors and nurses at this small hospital and

they came out and ask to have a photo taken with the 281st troops. Kinda brought a tear to my eye.

However, BP screwed it up by trying to cop a feel from the lady next to him. So you can imagine what Hawk & I put up with trying to get him home with all of his body parts intact. JM



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

**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

**Committee Chairmen**

- Membership**  
Gary Stagman
- Memorial**  
Jack Mayhew
- Legal Advisor**  
Brent Gourley
- eGroup Administrator**  
Brent Gourley
- Reunion & Historian**  
Bob Mitchell
- Awards**  
Steve Matthew

**THE OFFICIAL WEB**

- 281st AHC \_ [http://www.281stAHC\\_Assn.org](http://www.281stAHC_Assn.org)
- Members Only Chat Net \_ [281AHC\\_HQ@yahoo.com](mailto:281AHC_HQ@yahoo.com)
- Informal Chat Net \_ [281AHC\\_CHAT@yahoo.com](mailto: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/mitchellr/index.html>
- 3rd Platoon "Wolf Pack"  
<http://Wolfpack36.org>

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