

281ST ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY "INTRUDERS"

NHA TRANG
1965-1970

Company Newsletter No. 24

Late Summer 2005

ST LOUIS REUNION 2005



A SMASHING SUCCESS!!

The more than 160 Intruders, wives, girlfriends, children, grand-children, friends, and Honorary Members enjoyed a wonderful three days of stories (lies), tours, booze, stories, comraderie, events, stories, and revelry!!

**From the President
& 2005 Reunion Chairman**

What a reunion!!!! Biggest and best so far!!! What made this a great reunion were all the FNGs and the way everyone pitched in to help. It makes one proud to have been a member of this great unit and our association. A lot of things happened at the reunion starting with my getting pneumonia and not being able to consume my fair share of the class VI goods. The good news is that it helped keep the cost down. Speaking of

cost, our number cruncher has posted his report and as you can see we lost a few dollars but we never intended to make any money and the loss is very small considering the level of activities (tours, etc) that we had at the reunion. If you were not there you missed the Moberg/Bittle Memorial open bar which was stocked with free beverages, snack food and great stories, the PX/hospitality room crew, the free lunch, a rousing gambling night and a memorial service that would have brought a tear to your eye. I would like to thank everyone who pitched in. In addition to the mainstays we had

several new folks that helped out and everyone did a great job. We learned a lot and 2006 will be even better. All you need to do is come back and bring a friend.

Next years reunion will again be in Saint Louis and in 2007 we are going to travel to the windy city of Chicago where Bill Conata and his lovely wife Linda will provide the "boots on the ground" for the reunion. The reunion committee will meet in Saint Louis in early 2006 and will look at sites for 2008 & 9 so if you want the reunion in your home town or have suggestions as to how we can improve it now is the time to speak up while it is still fresh on your mind.

One of the unplanned events at the reunion was your response to one of our fellow Intruders who suffered a catastrophic event this last year. The way each you responded to him and his family speaks volumes for the caring values that your association has developed over its short life. We still have individuals that are hurting. Many of these Intruders need of assistance and we are here to help them in any way we can. If you know of an Intruder or a family member that needs help please contact one of us and we will do everything we can to assist them. We can't help everyone, but we can help those that we know about. If nothing else we can provide a place where they can talk about their troubles.

Again, many thanks for all you help and kind words. We have a few minor challenges facing the association but nothing that we can't take care of. This is your association, so let the members of the EB hear from you.

At the end of the newsletter is a survey form, I ask that each and everyone of you please respond, we as the EB can better serve you and your association. It's yours speak up and help us to help all of you.

Gary Stagman
President 2005-2006

The Chaplain's Corner

Those Intruders who were able gathered at the Vietnam Memorial Wall on Memorial Day 2005. We were asked to write letters to our comrades whose names are inscribed on that wall. Here is the letter I wrote:

Hello fellow Intruders,

I wasn't privileged to know all of you personally but there is a tie that binds all of us together. It can't be seen but I feel it in my heart today. You are as much a part of my life and what I am as my own family even after all these years.

I wanted to write this letter to all of you to let you know how I feel about each one of you. We were

once all young warriors together in a country far away a long long time ago. We came from all walks of life and all different parts of the country. We bonded together and had one common goal. That was to look out for each other as we flew each mission every day.

Now, those of us alive today are once again in all walks of life in all parts of the country. We have been given the time to pursue our lives' vocations and grow older. And most importantly we were able to become fathers and grandfathers because you gave up your right to be all these things.

Today, though, we still have one common goal. That mission is to see that none of you are ever forgotten. We want you to live on in our memories and hopefully we can impart to the next generation through stories and memorials the great service you gave to your country.

Each time we visit this memorial wall we realize that our names could very well be etched here instead of yours. We don't understand God's ways but we know that except for His grace some or all of our names would also appear here.

My prayer today is that you have all found the peace you fought so gallantly to preserve.

Sleep well my friends until we meet again.

Norm Kaufman
Chaplain - 281st AHC Association

The Membership Chairman

The reunion gave us good boost in membership activities and if we will all follow through with our commitments to contact other Intruders 2006 will be a banner year for FNG's. To date we have 327 members in the association. However, we still have a large number of Intruders that are unaccounted for. Please take a look at the "Morning Report" at

<http://281stahc-assn.org/MemberArea/MorningReport/Unfound.html> and see if you know any of these folks and if so let me know and we will find them. Remember we always need help in the membership area especially now that I am wearing two (OR MORE) hats. **If everyone will get one new member this year we will be in great shape.** Thanks for all your support.

Gary Stagman



The Remembrance Committee

Since the reunion we have touched up a few of the sketches and put everyone in the same green uniformed. This includes putting the one person that was out of uniform back into the proper uniform. You can check out the completed MIA/KIA sketch project at: http://281stahc-assn.org/remembrance/currently_serving_html/remembrance_index.htm I think we are the only VN unit to identify and obtain pictures/ sketches of all their MIA/KIAs. However, we still have several individuals without family contacts. If you know one or more of these men and would like to work on their bios please contact me.

Jack Mayhew - Chairman
intruder06@comcast.net or 410-451-4087

The Treasurer's Reunion Figures

The following is a truncated rendering of the Reunion expense report. Anyone desiring to see the full report provided to the Executive Board may contact Brian Paine at bpaine@hal-pc.org

2005 ST LOUIS REUNION

	Budgeted	Actual
Revenues:		
Fees 200 @ \$100.00	\$20,000.00	\$16,800.00
Memorabilia sales	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,606.38
Casino Nite	\$15,000.00	\$ 6,800.00
Donations	\$ 500.00	\$ 475.00
Tours	\$ 3,468.00	
Total revenues:	\$37,500.00	<u>\$29,149.38</u>
Expenses:		
Total Expenses:	\$34,965.00	\$29,794.80
Excess Revenues:	\$ 2,535.00	<u>\$ (645.42)</u>

The 2006 Reunion Committee

As Sir Gary the Prez announced in Saint Louis the 2006 reunion will again be held in Saint Louis at the Crown Plaza Hotel. Aug 2-6 are the dates and you can check the web site: <http://281stahc-assn.org/MemberArea> for details as they develop. Right now we are putting the reunion committee together and can use all the help we can get. If you have some free time during the year or will help out at the reunion please contact us. Last years reunion was a big success thanks to all the folks that pitched in. This year we need a new crew so that those that worked last year can enjoy the 2006 reunion. If you have suggestions for events or any part of the reunion please send them along. It is your reunion. Come back and bring an FNG.

Jack Mayhew intruder06@comcast.net

More from the 2006 Reunion Committee Chairman

Folks, I have received several emails and cards reference the 2005 reunion, which thanks to Gary and his team of merry men & women was a great success. However, as you know this is a works in progress and we need your input to make 2006 and all future reunions measure up to the standards set by Gary & company. Please take a moment and reflect on the past reunions and give me your thoughts about the organization, events, things you would like to see changed, additions, cost, PX items, outside vendors, locations and so forth. We are putting together the 2006 team now and will hold our first meeting in a few weeks then our final planning meeting in Saint Louis in March or April of 06.

Some things to think about: River boat dinner cruise? Sight seeing trips in Saint Louis? Did you like the casino night and would you like it improved? Other events you would like to see? Memorial service? A dinner dance? Events for the Ladies? Events for the children? How do we get the children more involved? A computer center where the web site is displayed and there is the ability to copy pictures and other items? Event scheduling? Cost? Cost? Cost? Cost? (it looks like Gary's team was on the mark with budgeting and with the Houston data we now have a good feel for what we can do within our cost boundaries. However, to provide some of the events we need to have one or more revenue producing events.) How do you feel about this????? Would you rather pay a bit more and eliminate the raffles and other money raising events?

And anything else that you can think of.

Thanks, Jack Mayhew

IT IS YOUR REUNION. HELP YOURSELF AND US OUT!!



Notes and Comments

An email on the 281st Chat Net from Ray Atwell who was hospitalized with lung cancer. Folks, this is what our family... our Association... is all about. - Fred

Date: Wed, 31 Aug 2005 From: "Raymond Atwell" <raydon@securespeed.us>
Subject: Just To Say Thank's

Hello to all of the 281st,

A special thank you to all of the people who sent me cards and mail. I was just discharged from the hospital this morning and am finally here at my home in Maine. I will be returning to the hospital in Virginia the end of Sept. for more lung surgery, but at least I am able to be home for now. Thank's for helping me get through a tough time.. I feel that you are all very special people, and am proud to be a part of this family.... Thank's again Gary....

Ray Atwell

From Jerry Stanfield to Barc Boyd. Jerry organized Dave Bittle's ceremony and internment at the Punchbowl National Cemetery in Hawaii five years ago. He insures that flowers adorn Dave's resting place each Memorial Day.



To: Barc Boyd (icihicpcl@earthlink.net)
From: Jerry Stanfield (virago90@yahoo.com)
Date: 29May2005

ALOHA Barc,

I have become involved with the Military Vehicle Preservation Association here in Hawaii. Tomorrow we will be at the Arizona Memorial with vehicles to greet guest and answer general questions about military service. Most of us will be dressed in period uniforms. I will be wearing one of my original issue fatigue shirts, still fits, and pants from a surplus shop, the original if I had them definitely wouldn't fit. I will also have the flight helmet with me, though most of the time I will be wearing one of the crappy army fatigue caps. When we return to town, about 1300. I will visit David and take flowers. Please give my ALOHA to every one and ROTOR ON.

ALOHA

Sp4 Stanfield, Jerry L. RA14824940

THANX JERRY! YOU ARE A TRUE FRIEND!
BARC

Another email from Barc. This concerning Lt Jim McMillan, Wolf Pack 33, 1966-67.

From: Barc Boyd
Date: 26Jun2005

THIS JUST IN FROM LT. JIMMY MAC. IT WOULD SEEM THAT IF IT WEREN'T FOR BAD LUCK, HE WOULDN'T HAVE ANY LUCK AT ALL.... BARC

Just got out of surgery for a neck mass that was suspected cancer; turned out negative. Was scheduled for radical neck but only removed portion around suspicious area under left jaw- about 4-5".numbing under chin and lip are leftovers, look OK with teeth in, sags on left otherwise.could have lost use of left shoulder plus some other things if they had done more. Because of the previous radiation it was difficult to rule out cancer with biopsy and catscans,had to get in there, remove the area and then examine it. Was treated as an outpatient ,in and out the same day. 2-3 wks recovery. Everybody here and S.C. very happy--liked the pics of Sgt. Bittle's memorial area; I am planning on a place next to mom and dad, an old church with some confederate graves in it .that will be a good place for me ... Only bldg Sherman did not burn in town, recently restored and a designated historic site. That's enough for now ,hope to go back to work but may lose job anyway, less than 1 year gave me 30 days and hired

someone else .we'll see in a week or 2 ; till then -ride safe - lt. - Mac or as they call me at work--pop--

Jack Mayhew, the esteemed Memorial Committee Chair, sends the following concerning our Support the Troops effort.

Date: Tue, 19 Jul 2005
From: Jack Mayhew <intruder06@comcast.net>
Subject: Troops

Troop Update support. The packages that Mike is referring to were sent by a dear friend and her church in PA. JM

From: Michael Rush <mikerush58d@yahoo.com>
Subject: Troops
To: Jack Mayhew

Jack and Lyda,

Those packages arrived quickly, and the guys loved them. Quite a surprise when the guys keep birthdays and such a secret from one another. I figure they fear their buddies will pull pranks on them on their birthday. Plus, some of us fear we are getting too old for this. Anyway, I wanted you to know that they arrived, and I thank you again for the amazing support. Some of the other troops that I work with (Nomad and Outlaw - also scout troops just like mine) appear envious, but we always have enough to share.

Thanks, Mike

From: Jack Mayhew <intruder06@comcast.net>
Subject: Troop support update

Hello All:

Here is Mik's latest update. The package support is dropping off so please take a moment to drop these young heroes a note of thanks and if you can a package of goodies that will tell them how much we appreciate their sacrifice. Lyda, please thank the young folks for us all they have done and if you will send me an address I will write them a letter of thanks. Howard, great new church project now that you made the move so easy. Thanks everyone, Jack

From: Michael Rush <mikerush58d@yahoo.com>
To: Jack Mayhew <intruder06@comcast.net>
Subject: Hello

Jack,

The Troop is doing well, and as of late, the temperature seems to be coming down ever so slightly. Yeh, we still have our 125 degree days, but it seems cooler at night, and some days only reach 105. A sign of fall, hopefully. We are quite busy, as we have seen the flight tempo jump up recently. The guys are staying safe, but the environment certainly makes that a challenge day in and day out.

Day to day living continues as normal. We did recently receive an influx of the mobile housing units we live in, so hopefully, I will be able to spread the troop out soon. We currently have 4 people in every container, and they were built for a max of two per. Either way, the container holds the a/c in, and that is something not many army tents can do. Plus they are easier to keep clean, as the dust can get in unless you bring it in.

We recently received packages from a Youth Group in PA. I split them up between the hanger and the command post, and the guys loved them. I know they appreciate the support, and hopefully, the youth will receive some thank yous from the guys. I know they enjoy writing back.

All in all, not too bad. We have had some trying times as a Squadron, but luckily, we have yet to suffer a fatality among the 850 or so soldiers we deployed with. Quite a stat when you consider the sheer number of hours the aviators spend above hostile areas / situations. When you stack that on top of the average number of fatal aviation accidents per flight hour, we are doing quite well. Our Squadron Commander was forced to leave theater, but it really hasn't affected the unit. The XO took command and has done a great job. We are expecting a new O-5 to be assigned soon, but we do not know when we will see him.

Hope all is well in the States, and I trust you guys had a great time at the reunion. The fact that you are able to still pull guys together is a true testament to the bond that war creates between men. I would love to see the bond remain that strong amongst these guys, but only time will tell.

Thanks Again, Mike
Capt Mike Rush - P Troop, 4/3 ACR - FOB Sykes - APO AE 09379

A message from Kelly Mayhew, this years" Intruder of the Year". Kelly richly deserved this honor. She's been a "driving force" behind our reunions as well as the prime mover in organizing each years Memorial Day remembrances at the Wall.

Date: Tue, 9 Aug 2005
From: KellyMayhew@aol.com
Subject: Thank you



Kelly & Dad

Hi, I have to tell you I'm still in shock over receiving "Intruder of the Year." I wish I could find the words to thank you. I'm so proud to be part of the 281st family.

Thank you for sharing your stories. I know how hard it is for you talk about the war. All I can say is Thank You. I'm so proud of each and every one of you!

Thank you !!!! Kelly Mayhew

I can't wait for next year!

This from Gary Stagman. Doyle Creed's home burned down earlier this year. He and his Mom escaped the flames with literally "the clothes on their backs"! When Lance Ham heard about this at the Reunion he organized an "on the spot" contribution of funds from all those attending the Reunion Banquet on Saturday evening while Doyle and his Mom were out of the room..

Date: Mon, 22 Aug 2005
From: "Gary Stagman" <COOTER@Charter.Net>
Subject: Doyle Creed

I just got off the phone with Doyle:

He bought a refrigerator, a stove, stack washer and dryer, and a laptop computer. He will be up on the internet in a day or so hopefully!!!

Thanks, to your generous contributions, one of our brothers has been helped in a great way. Thanks to you Intruders out there.

Gary

Following are emails regarding our 2005 Reunion. It was a fantastic event. Don't miss it next year!!

Date: Wed, 10 Aug 2005
From: Jack Mayhew <intruder06@comcast.net>
Subject: 2005 Reunion

I would like to express my appreciation to everyone who planed, organized and worked so hard to make the 2005 reunion a reality. First we all owe Sir Gary a great debt of gratitude for all the hard work that he put in as the reunion chairman and for putting up with all the different strong personalities that were constantly pulling him in different directions. Next Brian Paine, Jay Hayes, Fred Lewis, Frank Little (& Margaret who took over the casino night) Ear "the Pearl" Broussard, our new association Medic Harry Downs and his lovely wife Carole who lived at the reception desk and last but not least Nicki Stagman and all of the reunion staff "widows" who go these events each year and are left alone while their husbands work the event. In Nicki's case she, along with Carol Downs, lived at the reception desk and the two of them did a magnificent job of insuring that everyone was greeted in true Intruder fashion. I am sure I have missed some one as there were several others who chipped in as needed and everyone was willing to help at any time. Cliff Wheeler's sketches were magnificent and we owe him a big thanks for all his work. Thanks to him I think we are the only unit association that has Identified and obtained pictures & sketches of all their MIA/KIAs. This was a true team event. OH! I forgot Kelly who thanks to you guys insisted on two first class seats on the flight home so that she would have room for her big head and the heavy plaque. (She came back to earth when she had to ride in the back with me). By the way we are working on a T-shirt that says "I survived the 2005 "Whacking" reunion". We need a bit of help getting the true Bronx tone to it.

I have seen and received several emails about the reunion and all of them have been very complementarily to each of you that contributed to its success. As you know our main goal is to provide a event where the membership can get together with old friends and make new ones in a social environment. In addition we have from day one

strived to make this an organization event where each person is recognized as a brother Intruder and sometimes we get lucky and help one or more individuals cope with the after effects of the war. It appears to most of us who have worked on these events from day one that we are making good progress in both of these areas. Two messages that I received in the past few days makes this point. (I have taken the liberty to edit the messages a bit in that I have not ask the senders for permission to post them.) Thanks to all who helped and to all who came this year, come back next year and bring a FNG. JM

Emails:

"I know that the remembrance ceremony is difficult for most of you but I want you to know that it is very important to those of us who lost loved ones to know that they are not forgotten by their comrades. For a few minutes it allows us to be with them again and to let them know that we still love and miss them."

"I came away from the reunion with a strange feeling of relief and happiness, it's as though a burden I've carried for many years has been lifted from my shoulders. As I listened to my former crew chiefs and gunners talk of our missions together, of how I flew and conducted myself, I finally got a sense of how those guys felt about me as a person and my abilities as a pilot. I never really knew those things. Those guys and their stories instilled in me a great feeling of accomplishment and pride and I guess I also came away from the reunion with a feeling of closure for the war. But whatever it was, it was great."

From: Robert L Ohmes [rohmes@kc.rr.com]
Sent: Friday, August 12, 2005
To: Gary Stagman

Gary: You and all those who helped you plan and work at this reunion did a fantastic job----there were no flaws at all. Much better than any we have had. The one in Houston was good too but we both got sick and didn't enjoy it as much!

Thanks to you and your helpers---we look forward to St. Louis next year. We can't imagine what you can do to improve it any at all. We hope there will be many new folks there next year.

Thanks for your hard work. Hope your pneumonia is better. You are right, everyone did have lots of fun there. It was great to see everyone. - Bob and Bonnie

From: Jeffrey Murray <tamu73@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Tue, 9 Aug 2005

For the past 4 years I have been trying to get Dave Mitchell to come to a reunion. Under duress he showed up this year. He called me today vowing to return next year, and he had just gotten off the phone with Paul Esser, Wolf Pack 36 from 1969 time, and has him committed too. Just thought I'd let you guys know that these things are fun. Janie had a great time, she especially enjoyed making BP mad. - Jeff

From: Karen Forcht
Sent: Tuesday, August 09, 2005

Way to go, guys

I can't tell you how wonderful it was to see everyone in St. Louis. These Reunions just keep getting better. I know the Remembrance Ceremonies are very emotional for all of you, but the families of the names on the banners appreciate all of you remembering. For a brief period, we can see and touch our soldier that was left behind. See all of you next year. What a special group. - Karen Heintz Forcht

From: "Earl Broussard" <ebroussard7@houston.rr.com>
Date: Mon, 8 Aug 2005

To all who planned and executed the past reunion, you did a tremendous job. I know for myself and Darlene we had an outstanding time. Thank you all who put so much into the outcome of the Reunion, you did a fantastic job. God Bless You All. - Earl (EJ) & Darlene Broussard

From: "Ken Hamilton" <hamilton.ken@comcast.net>
Date: Mon, 8 Aug 2005
Subject: What you missed

Well I know there are reasons many missed the reunion but this is what you missed. Especially JK & OXLEY.

Leadbottom showed up. I have about 150 pictures from the reunion that Ill give to BP to do what he wants with from the reunion but I thought I would put these two up. Just got home and still have a head ace from yesterdays picture of Margaritas. - LaRie

From: RON JAVINS <jron007@yahoo.com>
Date: Tue, 9 Aug 2005

As an FNG, my 1st reunion, I will say it was great. Many thanks to all those involved in the process. I will definitely be there next year if the Lord's willing and the creek don't rise! Again I salute all of those involved in putting on such a great event! - RonJ

A word from the Editor.....

This years reunion was our best and most well attended to date. I personally heard nary a complaint of any kind. The organizers did a truly fantastic job. Next years reunion bodes to be even better! If you're close by and if you can make the time please answer Jack Mayhew's call for assistance. There is a lot of work involved in preparing for these events and it frequently falls of the shoulders of "the few" to carry the event off. "Give your Reunion Committee a hand!" Step up t the plate! It will be appreciated and most of all..... rewarding!

There are loads of pictures of the various reunion activities to be viewed on the 281st Website. Just go to: <http://www.281stahc-assn.org/> , click "Member Area", then click "Annual Reunions" and then click "2005 St Louis". These photo's were taken and posted to the web by our own "Jack of all Trades" Brian Paine. If you'd like a CD containing all the photo's contact Brian.

Finally, we'd like to hear from you regarding the 281st Website. Send any comments or suggestions to me at ffmentzer@comcast.net. I "will" respond. Also at the end of this newsletter is a survey form, Gary Stagman and Jack Mayhew ask you to fill it out. It will help in the planning for next years reunion.

See you next year in St Louie!!

Fred Mentzer
"Wolf Pack 36"
Editor
Commo Committee Chairman

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

281ST AHC ASSOCIATION, INC.
Established 4 July 1999



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2005 ASSOCIATION / AFTER REUNION SURVEY

Please help us grow the association by responding to each of the following:

1. Does the association respond to your individual needs?
2. How can the association better serve the membership?
3. What changes would you like to see in the association?
4. Do you surf the assn web site and if so what changes would you like to see?
5. Would you willing to serve on an association committee and or the EB?
6. What changes or additions to the reunion would you like to see?
7. Would you be willing to host or work on the annual reunion committee?
8. On a scale of 1 to 10 please rate this reunion. (10 being the best.)
9. Would you be willing to help locate other Intruders?
10. What can the association do to increase membership?

Please feel free to make any additional comments and or suggestions on the back side of this survey. The EB thanks you for your support

Name _____ (Optional) Please forward Comments to:
Gary L. Stagman, 2525 Reveres Route, Granite City, IL 62040 or at Cooter@charter.net