

281ST ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY

"INTRUDERS"

NHA TRANG
1965-1970

Company Newsletter No. 26

Spring 2006

THE 281ST AHC ASSOCIATION



NEEDS

YOU!!

It's YOUR association! And it needs YOUR help and support. Join the association... Renew your dues...

Volunteer for a committee !!

Throw your hat into the ring and

Run For An Office !!

From the Prez & Membership Chair

The 281st AHC Association as we know it today is growing, and it is the intention of your Executive Board to continue this growth and find as many "lost souls" as possible.

Ok, where are we today? Well we are one elite group of veterans, that served together at one time or another over a period of almost 5 years. This was a time of friendships and bonds that formed to make the 281st the unit that each member knew that he could rely upon one or another in the performance of a successful mission. It's the same today as it was over 36 years ago, not everyone saw eye to eye then and it's just the way life is with the many different personalities within the unit.

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 have had some real good luck in helping guys get their records and help them to collect information to help support their VA claims. This year so far we have had one go from 10% to 70% and should hear any day that he has been approved for the full 100%. These are the some of the things that make this unit of men really stand out from other unit's that was in Viet Nam. You don't have to be a member to get assistance in helping you to obtain proper and prompt medical care from your time in Viet Nam.

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. And hear from many of you we did, when you filled out the online survey form reference reunions, EB positions, and reunion sites and helping to host a reunion. It's yours speak up and help us to help all of you. This is the best survey that this Association has ever had that provided so many comments and also the willingness of members to step up and offer to serve on the Executive Board and also to help and/or host a annual reunion.

On a sad note we lost a 66-67, fellow intruder and member, Raymond C. Atwell, 62, of New Gloucester, Maine, who passed away peacefully on Jan. 5, 2006 at his home surrounded by his loving wife, Donna, his cherished daughter, Wendi and his adored sister, Mary, after a long illness. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Atwell family.

I would like to thank each and every one of your for your outstanding support you have provided to me and to your organization this past year. Now is the time to give thanks for our successes and to further build on them in the coming years.

Again thank you for all of the support given to each other and to the betterment of the 281st AHC Association.

Gary Stagman
President

I have been active in the 281st AHC Association since 1999. In looking back thru all the old Membership Articles that I have written since 2000, we have grown each and every year. When I joined I was Membership # 52 and now we are at 328 !! I can only hope that as we continue to grow and contact more Intruders, and that more Intruders will acquire the capability to communicate thru the Internet and be able to have the same experiences I have had by making the connections of so many. These past years have been a great one for all Intruders. We have found more of our brothers and families of the ones that came home and also of those we lost or had to leave behind. With that being said, we are coming together to form a stronger organization. One of the areas most noted, was the amount of new attendees at the reunion in St Louis. Many of those guys I went over with and others were there when I returned in 1970. We had guys that drove in just for a day to visit with old friends.

I haven't had any time to devote fully to the membership job this past year, but that's going to change very soon. I will be doing a very large 24 hour search run, and then the phones will be ringing everywhere in the world. I

figure that I will run close to 200 or more names, so I will have a very large number of printouts to look at and I have found that these printouts I get from this program gives me the best information for my searches. Hopefully I can get the numbers climbing again.

On another note is the annual dues drive that started in January. The dues are due in January of each year, which gives you the status of a Member-In-Good-Standing, so you can participate in the voting procedures for office vacancies and during any voting during the General Membership Meeting held during the annual reunion. The annual dues allows the Association the operating monies for the years expenses and fronts a lot of the costs for the annual reunions.

Ken Smith has offered his services in the annual dues collections. He will handle all renewals. He will be sending out postcards fairly soon to the members that have not sent in their dues. I will continue to accept all new applications for membership and ones that want to convert from annual to life membership. This way I can prepare the certificates and membership cards. Anyone that has sent their dues to me, they have been posted on the Dues roster and have been sent to the treasurer.

Gary Stagman
Membership Committee Chairman

The Senior Member@Large

As of this writing, the reunion committee meeting on March 1, 2006 in St. Louis is only a couple weeks away. I am enthused with the new volunteers who have stepped forward to help with this annual event. The committee was pleased with the info we received from the membership on the recent zoomerang survey. This will help direct the planning for the reunion committee.

The 281st support for P Troop in Iraq has been tremendous. I had the honor of meeting most of the employees of HRI who are our front line in support of P Troup, thanks to Jack Mayhew. As P Troup arrives home we thank Bob Mitchell not only for finding a group

getting ready to deploy, but also for heading up our effort to support them.

At the last reunion I was excited to see new attendees many of whom I served with and had not seen since 1968. Thanks for coming.

As chairman for the Awards Committee I will be accepting nominations for **Intruder Of Year Award**, IOYA, in writing up until June 1, 2006 60 days prior to our reunion, August 2, 2006. You can send nominations to me email jhays@haysenterprises.com or hard copy at my home 7517 Highland SW, Lordstown, OH 44481. I will acknowledge all nominations to the person submitting it. If you send a nomination and do not receive an acknowledgement, please follow up as it might have failed to reach me.

Please continue to pray for our troops in Harms Way. Wishing everyone Health, Happiness and Safe travel. See you in St Louis.

Jay Hays
Senior Member at Large

The Chaplain's Corner

Here is a short story that just might make you smile but think of the deeper implications. If you were on trial for your beliefs would there be enough evidence to convict you?

The Depth of Your Convictions

Rabbi Yaakov Salomon tells the story of the lawyer arguing a case for his guilty client, who was on trial for murder.

The one challenge in the prosecution's case was that the body had never been found. However, the abundance of expertly presented circumstantial evidence was more than compelling. Everyone in the courtroom, jurors included, knew that the man was guilty-so in his closing argument, the clever defense attorney decided to go for broke.

He pointed grandly toward the courtroom doors and declared, "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury: In exactly 60 seconds, the so-called corpse, the man you believe to be dead, is going to come walking in right through those very doors. We can begin counting now.

The time ticked by: one second, two seconds, three seconds, ten seconds, 20 seconds, 45 seconds, 55 seconds, 56, 57, 58, 59 and then, at exactly the one-minute mark, in walked nobody at all. Certainly the corpse did not walk in.

The lawyer addressed the puzzled jury: "Ladies and gentlemen - I apologize. I told you something that obviously did not come true. However the mere fact that you looked at the doors as you did showed me- and shows you- that you had some measure of doubt. And of course, if you have any doubt, any doubt at all, you must- YOU MUST return a verdict of Not Guilty." And with a triumphant flourish, he returned to his seat.

The jury went into deliberations and just five minutes later came back out to render their verdict. The foreman stood up, faced the judge, and said they found the defendant guilty!

The defense attorney was enraged. "How could you?" he demanded. "I saw all of you watching that door!"

The foreman replied, "Yes, sir, you are correct: we were, in fact, watching the door. But we were also watching you and your client- and you did not watch the door. Your client did not watch the door, not even for a moment. And that's because you both knew there was not a chance in the world that anyone would be walking through it."

What is the lesson? Don't expect anyone else to believe something you don't believe yourself!"

Norm Kaufman
Chaplain

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Raymond C. Atwell

28 January 1943 - 5 January 2006

483rd TC Detachment (1/66-5/67)*"Rest in Peace, Brother"*

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From the Secretary

COMMITTEES

And Why They Are Important

Have any of you out there who "subscribe" to this august organization of ours been dissatisfied? Do you get all dressed up to go to one of our functions and dislike the accommodations (been to the Palace Hotel lately?)? Have you paid \$100@ for a smoke-filled room and some rubber roast beef disguised as a steak, even if said steak is straddled by fresh carrot stubs and soupy mashed potatoes? Have you ever wondered what our yearly dues are for? Why do we pay Brian some of our hard earned money simply to have it sit in an underperforming Certificate of Deposit? Well, wonder no more. Take the bull by the horns, grab the throttle and crank it 10 degrees right of center, holler "CLEAR" and pull the trigger. Something will happen if you volunteer yourself and actually take charge of an event, problem, or even something that happens to be going well. That happening will not turn out to everyone's satisfaction, I can guarantee that, but at least you will know who to complain to. And a sense of Personal Satisfaction will probably not come your way but a certain Modicum of Accomplishment will. And that is not all bad.

There has been a lot of talk these past few reunions of Rule By The Few. The Few are in charge and dictate the events. The Few set the tone for governance of the 281st AHC Association and The Masses have no say in anything.

Well you know..., you are right! Check out the list of attendees at the upcoming Reunion Planning Meeting. It's a short list (I'm not on it). It is, however, a doers list. Those in attendance will get it done, and a percentage of those of us on the outside will find a way to complain. Even when extra effort is expended to ensure encompassing the entire organization in something, like the ownership of the 281st AHC name and website, complaints will run rampant. "You guys railroaded a fellow Intruder." "You guys let the other guys off too easy." "The open meeting was way too short, not all were heard." "The

dinner was too expensive.” “There has to be a fairer way to dole out the raffle prizes.” “There wasn’t enough to do during the day.” “We didn’t have enough free time.”

I’ve heard them all, some from those in my own hotel room. Your leadership has tried surveys and mass emails and snail mails, and the response has been, frankly, underwhelming. And despite it all there is only one way to effect change in the 281st AHC Association, and that is to volunteer. I am the Secretary not because I love the job and the high pay (!) (I’m fixing to buy my third computer trying to keep up with you guys) but for one reason and one reason only...no one wants the job. That has to be the case, no one ever runs for my job. It’s like Brian Paine practically taking over the job of Reunion Chairman. I don’t see a mob of volunteers to do it. It’s hard, yes it is. Lose Brian and lose a lot of institutional knowledge and you can bet the first reunion without him will be both different and deficient. That guy solves more nit-picky details than a whole host of committees, and what does he get for it...Flak. He gets shot at much more than he ever did zipping into a Delta hole picking up Chester and his gang, but he keeps coming back for more.

Some of you have businesses to run (Jack Mayhew has a huge one and I have never seen him slow down), some of us have jobs (I put in about 11 hours a day every day), some of us are in bad health (how about most of us), but all of us should have one goal, and that is to foster the health of the 281st AHC Association. After all, it’s for The Intruders that we come together year after year.

If you can find something to do that helps out, do not hesitate to participate. You will find it is far easier than not participating. And then we can all complain from a position of strength.

Jeff Murray
Secretary



The Reunion Committee Chairman

REUNION UPDATE

The reunion committee will meet in Saint Louis on March 1 – 3 to finalize the 2006 reunion. So far we have five Intruders signed on to attend and help. WE NEED MOORE!!

So join us for 3 fun filled days of work. In March we will take a look at the reunion questions that about 70 intruders responded to and develop recommendations to the Association Executive Board concerning future reunions. It is your reunion and it is not too late to have your voice heard, so speak up. Several individuals have agreed to sponsor and or help with the reunions which is great news in that this is the last year for several of our mainstays. Rest assured we will be in touch following the March meeting.

Contact for input and/or questions is intruder06@Comcast.net or 410-451-4087.

MEMORIAL DAY IN WASHINGTON DC

Again this year we will gather at the Wall on Memorial Day, May 29 to remember and honor our fallen brothers. If you can please join us in the morning when we will again place remembrance plaques at the name of each of the 46 Intruders listed on the wall. At 1: PM (1300 hours) we will lay a remembrance wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery. We have been assured by the Commanding General of the Military District of Washington that we will not have a recurrence of last year’s event and we hope to have the same individuals place the wreath. The contact person for this event is Kelly Mayhew at kellymayhew@aol.com or 703-566-1941.

Jack Mayhew

Membership Update from Ken Smith

This mainly affects those of you who are annual members and not the lifers. I have volunteered to take this burden off of Gary Stagman who has been bugging all you annuals to get your dues in on time for the past three years that I’ve been a paying member. The other factor here is the

intimidation factor from Intruder06 that I should get off my tuff and help the association out. You know he will always be Intruder 06 to a lot of us. Now with that said; let's get on to the business of "**ANNUAL DUES**"!

First off, if you know your dues are up and you need to get current for the 2006 year, please don't make me waste the postage on the post card to remind you. Gary gave me a list and I am checking it twice and I'm going to find out if you are current. Now if you are truly not sure you can have me check it by emailing me at Ken.Smith@fire.ca.gov or calling me on my cell phone at **916-201-6965**.

Please mail your **\$25 annual 281st AHC Association Dues** to the following address:

**Ken Smith
3939 Fair Hill Road
Fair Oaks, CA 95628
Attention 281st AHC Association**

Checks should be made out to the **281st AHC Association**.

That gets me to the next point; I will be mailing postcards to all of you Annuals in March to either remind you that you have not paid for 2006, or to let you know that you are close to being overdue. The current system for Annual Members is based on a calendar year from when you either paid you last dues or when you originally joined the 281st AHC Association. The latter is the case if you have kept your dues current and on time each year.

The third and maybe the most important thing to let you know is that the Executive Board (EB) decided to allow Annual Members become current by paying the dues in the year they want to be a "*member in good standing*". In short, it means if you failed to pay last year or in years before and want to renew your membership, you only have to pay dues for the current year to be considered a "*member in good standing*".

The final thing that I want to let everyone know is that I will propose to the EB that we should set up annual dues to coincide with each year's reunion. It will greatly streamline the work load for me and simplify it so one of you can take this job when I get tired of it or

the EB either promotes me or fires me. I will recommend that this take place for the 2007 Reunion and that all 2006 dues be good until that time. Some people will benefit from getting more than a year for their \$25.00, but others will be benevolent donators to the 281st Surplus Fund. Just kidding..., that doesn't exist. Don't make me bug you; *send those dues now!* : =)

Ken Smith
Bandit – 68 Jan 1969

The Junior Member@Large

Flight,

Below you will find everything you ever wanted to know about the Junior Member-at-Large of which I have the honor of serving as for this great association of ours. My prime responsibility is the conduct of the annual election. Our Reunion will be here before you know it so please study our election of officers' process and if I can answer any questions please feel free to contact me. Please take note of Section 2. Our GM Meeting will be held at the Annual Reunion in St Louis. That means I will need your input, whether a declaration or nomination, by May 7, 2006. More details will be forthcoming regarding the election. Until then,

Welcome Home My Brothers
Frank W. Little
Junior Member-at-Large

Art III, Section-3. The Junior Member at Large shall be elected to a consecutive 2-year term on the Executive Board. The first year he shall be the Junior Member at Large. The second year he shall succeed to the office of Senior Member at Large. Junior Member-at-Large: Shall perform such duties as the President may direct.

ARTICLE V - NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Section-1. The Junior Member-at-Large (JM@L) shall be responsible to receive all declarations from members who wish to

submit themselves as a candidate for an elective office in the Association, and shall co-ordinate with the Treasurer in order to determine the eligibility of each request for candidacy prior to its acceptance.

Section-2. All declarations and nominations of members in good standing who are interested in serving the Association in an elected position must be forwarded to the Junior Member-at-Large, not less than 90 days prior to the date of the next announced General Membership meeting (GMM), in order for the Junior Member-at-Large to act in a timely and proper manner to execute the election process.

Section-3. The Junior Member-at-Large shall be responsible for conducting an election of officers prior to the annual General Membership Meeting of the Association in accordance with the provisions of this Article. Additionally the President shall appoint no more than three members in good standing to serve as a Nominations and Elections Committee to assist the JM@L in the election process. The JM@L will serve as the chair of this committee. The committee will seek members in good standing who are interested in serving as an officer in the Association as well as accept nominations from the membership. Should an individual be nominated by the committee or any other member of the Association his name will not be placed on the ballot without his consent.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Time to go to the movies! "MISSING IN AMERICA". - Fred

Our very own Ken Miller, Wolf Pack 34 (1969-70), has written the screenplay for a major film that is now out and available at most rental stores, Hollywood and Blockbuster in particular. The star is none other than Danny Glover. When you rent the film be sure you review the credits. There is an interesting segment at *The Wall* where you'll see Ken and also Honorary Member Linda George. It should go without saying that your association wholeheartedly indorses *Missing in America*!! Ken is "the man"!!



Ken Miller

Teenie weennie Mini Reunion

Marshal "Hawk" Hawkins and Fred Mentzer got together in Norman, OK for some yuk-it-ups and stories the weekend of 11-12 January. Here they are comparing hairlines..... Yuk yuk !!



More from Jack Mayhew concerning our support for the troops.

Captain Mike Rush, Commanding officer of "P" Troop, has returned to the states after completing his tour of duty in Iraq and will serve as the advance party for the unit when it arrives at Fort Carson in the next few weeks. Bob Mitchell has volunteered to head up the support team for the next unit that we will support which will arrive in country in the next month or so. In the meantime thanks for all your support and get ready for the next round under the capable leadership of Bob. Details to follow. - Jack

Here's some more from our esteemed leader, Gary Stagman.

Fred, while I was in Chicago this past week, I got to spend some time with Lindy Paschall, sister of Les Paschall who was KIA on December 21, 1967 at Polei Kleng, Project Delta forward operating base. Lindy has put together her own remembrance case to hold hers and Les's time in service. Also attached is be a picture of Lindy at the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum in Chicago, Illinois. I also included one with me in it. We had a great time just shooting the bull and talking of times a long time ago. - Gary



Also I received the following thank you notes from Mrs. Donna Atwell and Ray's sister Mary.

Dear Gary and the 281st,

Thank you for the flowers. Thank you also for all the support. I am pleased with being an Honorary Member of the 281st. - Donna

Dear Gary,

I can't begin to find the words to thank you for my Honorary Membership in the 281st. I can not tell you how much it means to me to be given this honor. It is with great pride that I say THANK YOU from the bottom of my heart. I will never forget this, and I know if Ray were here he would also thank you. You all are in my thoughts and prayers. God Bless, - Mary

Some comments from the Editor.....

By now most have noted that the theme of this newsletter is "Support Your Association". Each of you are aware that for a veterans organization such as ours to survive requires participation. Not only as dues paying members but as elected officers and or working on a committee. In order for the 281st Association to indure we must have folks willing to "pitch in".

At present our association is healthy and vibrant. We have a few bucks in the bank, an active executive board and solid committee's. But, I must point out, most of those those who constitute the official side of the organization have been so involved in one way or another since the association was founded. WE NEED NEW BLOOD!! Fresh folks are needed to step up to the plate and take the reins.

I've heard from more than one source comments and even complaints that the leadership of the Assn is an "old boys club". This is patently unfair to those who have given so unselfishly of their time and even treasure. Any and all of the current leadership who have served you for so

long would be overjoyed to see other members run for office or to volunteer for or head a committee.

You might take some time to go online to the 281st website and check out previous editions of the Newsletter, taking note of the officers and committee heads. You'll find the same names peppered throughout, year after year. "Give these guys a break"!! Take their jobs away from them! They'd love it, believe me! And at this years reunion? Seek them out and apply a well deserved pat on the back.

Speaking of the reunion. Make every effort to attend. You'll find it a very worthwhile experience. And not for just the joy of meeting old buddies you haven't seen and have maybe wondered about for over 30 years, but also their wives and families. Some even bring their grandkids!

And let me tell you that the reunion committee does and is doing an encredible job in putting together these occassions. You'll be moved to tears by the "Remembrance Ceremony"... I can guarantee you that! Next week the committee is meeting in St Louis from 1 to 3 March at the Plaza Hotel to finalize plans for this years gathering. This is not a "closed session". If you'd like to participate contact Reunion Committee Chairman Jack Mayhew at (410) 451-4087 or intruder06@comcast.net.

So that's it for this newsletter..... I hope you found it informative and worthy of a read. If you have suggestons, ideas or complaints as to content please don't hesitate to contact me.

After all, its YOUR newsletter!!

And don't forget, **"It's YOUR association! And it needs YOUR help and support. Join the association... Renew your dues... Volunteer for a committee... Run for an office !!"**

Fred Mentzer

As Barc Boyd says;

"Just another old Wolf Pack 36"

"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

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Vice President
Darryl Stevens
Secretary
Jeff Murray
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Senior Member@Large
Jay Hays
Junior Member@Large
Frank Little
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APPOINTED OFFICERS

Awards – Jay Hays
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 – Jack Mayhew
Survivor Assistance Chairman - Marshall Hawkins
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Newsletter Editor/Public Relations
Fred Mentzer