



281st Assault Helicopter Company Association

"INTRUDERS"

NHA TRANG
1965 - 1970

NEWSLETTER
NUMBER 43

Summer
2010

VAGABOND REUNION 2010



A SMASHING SUCCESS



HOSTED by the 281st AHC

"INTRUDERS"



From the Prez...

I have to tell you that I am a bit intimidated with this first article to all of you; mostly created by the great work and precedence that the past Presidents of the 281st AHCA established with outstanding leadership. It is my goal and intention to fill those shoes and serve the organization as well as my predecessors. It is further my goal to maintain an open door policy not only to my Executive Board but also to each and every member of the 281st AHCA.

I first want to congratulate all of you that helped put the 281st Vagabond 2010 Reunion together and help me look good as the Chair of yet another successful event at our adopted second home: The St. Louis Airport Crown Plaza Hotel. I also want include in this recognition and thanks to all of you who attended the reunion; sacrificing vacation time and money to make your way to yet another reunion. The reunions are only as successful as the participants make them. It is also worth noting that the 192nd, the 155th, the 48th, the 10th CAB & the 92nd all contributed to (I believe this is correct) largest turnout ever in St. Louis.

The first order of business for the EB was a meeting that immediately followed the General Membership Meeting. The sole purpose of that EB Meeting was to give me a chance to exercise my presidential privilege to appoint our new Vice President, Ed Haas, as the 2011 Reunion Chairman. I encourage any member that is interested to join the Reunion Committee for 2011 and give Ed a hand. Ed's job is somewhat complicated by the vote at the 281st General Membership meeting of 2010 to return to a 281st AHC Reunion and not make it a combined effort with the 10th CAB and other AHCs and Support Units.

It is complicated as the members of both the 192nd and 155th approached several of us asking to be included in our 281st Reunion 2011. It is my personal feeling that we can accommodate them as guest and include them, but it must be clear that this is not a Vagabond Reunion and that as guest they will know that it is a 281st Intruder Reunion. Any additional rooms or other things they want should be negotiated separately from our event and at their expense; not to be co-mingled as it was for 2010. Just one other

comment; a former 10th CAB Commanding Officer approached me personally and recommended that we return to a 281st only format: "...before we loose our unique identity as the 281st"

Since the Reunion, I have been approached with two unique activities that I felt warranted the formation of new committees. I convened an electronic meeting of the 281st EB and two motions passed to establish the following new activities:

The Book Committee. Chairman Jack Green will engage in the pursuit of a book to be written & published about the 281st AHC. Bob Mitchell detailed the activities of the new committee in an email to me that follows:

"About a year or so ago Jack Green, Brian Paine, Jack Mayhew and I discussed the subject of writing a book about the 281st. We spoke to a couple of authors, kicked around ideas and ways to make this become a reality and generally started working in that direction. Somewhere along the way we may have drifted off course to the extent that we are still talking about it. We intended to build an outline together, but that outline never moved forward."

Jack Green has met a gentleman who is a published author and is very interested in moving forward with this project. This fellow lives in Baton Rouge as does Jack Green, so it will be much easier for Jack to work one on one with him. We would like to form a committee to run this project and collectively feel that Jack Green should be appointed by the President, in consort with the Executive Committee, to be the Chairman of the Book Committee.

This committee will either interview or have members write stories/narratives that are specific to their particular time in country and supply them to the author who will compile, edit and otherwise form this information into a historical non-fiction type book. The committee will maintain editorial control of the book and will be on top of the content. A draft of the book will be supplied to the EB for approval before it is published.

The folks I named above will all be members of the committee, the Chairman will as he sees fit appoint other members as required to accomplish the goal of collection, editing and compiling raw material for the author.

We suggest that any profits or proceeds that may come from the sale of this book be directed to the Scholarship Fund. Financial arrangements with the author have not been worked out.

The Troop Support Committee. Joe Bilitzke will head this committee. There is a planned activity at Ft. Drum with the Air Assault Helicopter Company on 17 SEP 10, and all Intruders are encouraged to attend, but please RSVP with Joe if you are going to attend so we can let the Aviation Unit know how many to expect in attendance. Jack Mayhew forwarded the following email to the EB and HQ nets which prompted our action in this matter:

“CPT Brian Middleton The commanding officer of Air Assault Helicopter Company (G Co., 2-10 AVN, 10TH CAB, 10TH Mountain DIV (LI), Fort Drum, NY) recently wrote Joe that his company is preparing to meet the needs of their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan in October and that CPT Middleton stated that “Since my Battalion (2-10 AVN) draws its lineage from 10 BN, and our main effort will be to support both conventional forces and Special Forces in the mountains of Afghanistan, we felt it appropriate to draw from the 281ST AHC. **We are inspired by the sacrifices, dedication, and perseverance, which were so greatly displayed by the Intruders that we have chosen that as our call sign.**” (What a tribute to Intruders from all years)

G Company and the 2-10 AVN BN is planning an organizational day on Sept 17, at Fort Drum and they have invited all former Intruders to attend. If you can make it please let Joe know as he is our point of contact.

Ken Smith
President

And now the VP...

We just got back from an extended vacation which began with our 2010 Vagabond Reunion in St. Louis and ended with a visit to my mother-in-law and my money in Las Vegas. Shortly after arriving in Las Vegas Ellen complained of a bad sore throat which she attributed to the dry heat of Las Vegas. It never dawned on her that it might have been caused by five consecutive days of non-stop talking to a lot of great folks at this year's reunion.

Once again the Reunion Committee led this year by our new President Ken Smith followed its motto of being “rigidly flexible” (or was it “flexibly rigid”) and pulled off another masterpiece. The focal point as always was the Intruder Remembrance Ceremony which readily accommodated participation from the other Vagabond units. A new twist was added this year with the addition of a Riverboat Dinner Cruise on Thursday night where a great time was had by all eighty-five (85) attendees. Bob Mitchell assured us all that Jerry Stanfield did take time out from taking the “official” reunion pictures to eat dinner and demonstrate a little two-step on the dance floor. I latched on to Tom Lundrigan (Class of '68) and refused to let him run off on his own to sightsee as he has been known to do. A rather interesting fellow Intruder even if they wouldn't award him the CIB for the month he spent on patrol with a Special Forces “A” Team because he had an Aviation MOS.

Karen and Fred Mentzer's decorations for Friday's Return to Nha Trang were outstanding. Fred even managed (with the help of Brian Paine) to come up with a huge current picture of the Nha Trang Buddha to prove that the damages he and Wolf Pack inflicted during Tet of '68 were fully repaired. The Ohmes family out did itself this year. The family repertory company performed another one of their great skits – but where did they find four (4) Gary Stagman's; and, Bob got his Vets group to bring along their Huey as a static display for all to crawl around in. All this was topped off Saturday with a well-deserved presentation of the Intruder of the Year Award to Paul Maledy. But the fun and camaraderie were made bittersweet this year with the passing of nine (9) fellow Intruders – two of whom, Bill MacHarg and Dale Dunbar, I spent many hours clipping the RVN treetops during 1968. They all will be missed.

While the Reunion Committee finalizes all the numbers and closes the books on the 2010 Reunion our president, Ken Smith, has, against his better judgment, followed recent tradition and appointed me your 2011 Reunion Committee Chairman. I guess he wants to really put that seemingly invincible Reunion Committee to the test. So here goes!

The 2011 Reunion will be held once again in St. Louis at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. **The Reunion will start on Wednesday August 3,**

2011 and end on Sunday August 7, 2011. The Hotel room rate remains at \$60 per night. The 2011 Reunion will be a 281st AHC Reunion. Next year we will not be hosting the Vagabond Reunion. The thrust of next year's Reunion is to get Intruders who have never been to an Intruder Reunion or who haven't been to one recently to attend in 2011. Anyone who wants to join the Reunion Committee is welcome and can contact me by phone @ (860) 677-0748 or email me at haased@ix.netcom.com. Further details will be released as they are developed. **I'll see you and a buddy in St. Louis in 2011.**

Ed Haas
Vice President &
2011 Reunion Committee Chairman

The Bean Counter's two cents...

In the spring newsletter I highlighted the procedures that we use regarding the reunion fees submitted by the members and guests. I'd like to continue that to let you know the treasurer's activities during and after the reunion.

After the Saturday dinner I meet with the hotel banquet manager to verify the hotel charges and authorize payment. In the weeks after the reunion various checks have to be issued, including checks for bills received for PX products and hospitality food and supplies and for scholarship donations. Subsequently, all receipts and expenditures are input to QuickBooks and a report is generated and sent to the Executive Board and the Reunion Committee.

These procedures and those outlined in the previous newsletter are not as time consuming or difficult as they may appear. So in three years when my second three-year sentence is up please consider running for Treasurer.

Fred Beck
Treasurer

The New Guy... JM@L...

GREETING

Greeting was the salutation on the letter I received from President Lyndon B. Johnson in January 1967. That letter led me to eventually enlist in the army. In the ensuing 43 years, that led me to many interesting places

around the world, to undertake many different experiences, and to meet many interesting people. Tonight it has led me to writing this newsletter article.

This summer I agreed to allow myself to be elected to the office of Junior Member at Large (JML) of the 281st AHC Association. That election has made me a member of the Association Executive Board (the EB) for the next year. My term started at the end of the recently completed annual reunion in St Louis.

At the reunion, our new President, Ken Smith, suggested that all new office holders go home and read the By-Laws to learn the responsibilities of our offices. I have now done that, and have discovered that aside from participating in discussions of and voting on Association business matters that come before the EB, I really don't have anything to do - except the following: it is the responsibility of the JML to administer the annual election of officers and present the results at the annual General Membership meeting.

Now all of a sudden I am one of the most important members of the EB! Why do I say that? Here is why. To be successful, meaningful, and rewarding, the Association needs participation from its members. It needs not just your money, and not just a few members doing the lion's share, but it needs broad based participation from the membership, both in attending reunions when you can and a willingness to serve on the EB or one of our committees. Active participation by you guys is the lifeblood of the organization. That is where I come in. The By-Laws state that in addition to conducting the annual election of officers, the JML, as chairman of the Nominations and Elections Committee, will seek members interested in serving as an officer as well as accept nominations from the membership. Before the next General Membership meeting, I will be doing just that, "seeking members interested in serving as an officer". During the next six to eight months, if you haven't yet served, I urge you to consider running for an office or serving on a committee next year. Volunteer (yes you can nominate yourself), or when the call comes, be willing to answer if you can. There really isn't that much to do, and it's not that hard. In addition to doing your share, you will have the opportunity to see behind the

scenes how the Association really works, and lastly, you will feel good about it.

Finally, about the annual reunion: if you have never attended or have not attended recently, give it some thought for next year. Our reunions are really well done – probably the best Company sized reunion out there in terms of activities and agenda. St. Louis is a city with much to do, the reunion hotel is great with very low rates and gives us excellent service, and the reunions are fun. I attended the early, beginning reunions of the current Association in 1998 – 2000, but then didn't come back for seven years. At the last minute in 2008, I decided to attend again, and I am glad I did. I could not believe how the reunion had grown and how professionally everything was done. It continues that way today, and it is really worth coming. So there are many reasons to attend, but the really big one for me is to come back each year and get together with guys I went to war with. Not to talk about how bad we had or have it, but to share that bond again. People who have never been there just cannot understand. Whether we were all there at the same time or not, Viet Nam was a unique war and the 281st had a unique mission. We got through it and we made it back. That is something to feel good about and something worth sharing together while we can.

I hope everyone who can, will try to fit the reunion into their plans for next August, and also will consider volunteering to serve the Association in some capacity. We would love to get together with you again for a few days, and you will be surprised at how much you get out of it.

Jim Baker
Junior Member at Large

Our trusty Membership Chair...

In the years since the establishment of the 281st AHC Association, Inc, our numbers have grown to # **365** members! This past year the dues were coming in slowly. But, having the dues included on the reunion registration form helped immensely! Great! But it could also be better.

The member number 365 above turns out to be an ole Intruder, Wolfpack Emanuel J. Jackson of the 67 – 68 time frame, from New Orleans.

August 1, 2010 was the start of the NEW dues year for 2011. In fact, I've had some that are

catching up on their dues now, THANKS!! So things are now looking up very good in this area. 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 <http://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 email address 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. It still could be better, but Thanks!! I have just completed posting dues roster and making changes that showed up on the reunion registrations. Added item, I took all the letters that were returned (35+), I think I have been able to verify all but 4 – 5. Just need a bit more time.

Thank you for your continuing support, to the 281st AHC Association!!

To repeat, this dues year will be 1 Aug 2010 to 31 Jul 2011. PLEASE send in your dues as in a few weeks on 19 October 2010, I will be having complete right shoulder surgery. Arm must be kept fastened to my chest/belly for a period of 8 weeks. So go ahead in send in your dues, I'll have my secretary fill out the deposit slip and get them in the mail to the bank.... I can trust this secretary to get it done as I've been married to her for 41 years!

Again thank you for your support and have a very Safe and wonderful late summer early fall season.

Gary Stagman
Chairman, Membership Committee

The Remembrance Chairman...

The Remembrance Committee has moved into a new era by working with the membership committee chairman in an effort to honor those intruders that we are losing by presenting an engraved flag case to the surviving family member. Gary Stagman has taken on the task of purchasing and individualizing the cases and insuring that they get to the family member as soon as we get the word. In that regard we need

your help so please let Gary know if you hear of an Intruder that has passed on or is in serious danger of doing so. We have been fortunate to have assistance in this effort from several folks and we thank them for their support. It means a lot to have a lost one remembered by his fellow Intruders.

Between last year's reunion and this years, the remembrance guide-on for WO Bishop was lost. We also need a new one for LT Thorne who we now have on the web site. We are searching for Bishops flag and will be purchasing new ones for both of these 145th individuals. Let us know if you would like to assist.

If you are attending the funeral of an Intruder and would like to have a guide-on to take to the event you can contact me, Gary or Jay Hayes and we will do everything we can to get one to you.

Thanks, for your support.

Jack Mayhew
Chairman, Remembrance Committee

281st AHC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The 2010 scholarship board meet in Saint Louis on August 5, 2010 with Chairman Marshall Hawkins presiding. The board reviewed the financial status of the scholarship fund and based on the treasure's report given by Brian Pain, concluded that thanks to the generous contributions by the membership and our corporate sponsor the fund is in good shape and can support our scholarship commitments. The board discussed the creation of "Project 281" in which each family that contributes \$281 or a greater amount will be listed on a contributor's page on the web site.

The board discussed providing scholarship support to individuals and family members that are enrolled in skills training programs and upon review of the current by-laws agreed that such support was currently covered and that any request would be processed for review in accordance with the current schedule and guidelines.

The board reviewed the applications of the three existing students and approved extending their current scholarship support through the 2010/11 school year. All three individuals are honor roll students and one is headed to England as an Oxford student for the 1st semester of 2010.

The board reviewed two new applications and awarded scholarships of \$1,000 per semester to both applicants. They are: Shenna Ariel Riley, Freshman. Granddaughter of Jerry Montoya and Grace Becker, Senior, Niece of Frank Becker.

TROOP SUPPORT COMMITTEE

G-Company of the 2-10 Aviation Battalion of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade has informed Joe Bilitzke that in honor of the 281st history in combat they have adopted the Intruder call sign for their unit and that they will soon deploy to Afghanistan in support of the Special Forces and other ground troops in country. This is a great honor to all Intruders and in turn we have proposed that we adopt them during their deployment. The EB is working through the process and have asked Joe Bilitzke to chair the troop support committee for this next year.

In addition, G Company and the 2 of the 10th BN are holding an organizational day on Sept 17th at Fort Drum and have invited all former Intruders to join them. If you can do so it will be a great way to show our support for these young Intruders. If plan on attending please let Joe or I know so that we can inform the G Company Commander of the number that will be attending.

(Posted by Jack Mayhew for Joe, who is currently red X'ed awaiting hip replacement and has commo problems, but should be up and about soon.)

Random Reunion Pics...



Notes and Comments

A remembrance from Jack Mayhew....

Flight, we have lost another national hero and one of the remaining few. On July 13 Mrs. Willie Irene Purdy Stephens left us at age 87. Most of you know her son and our fellow Intruder Bill who is an active supporter of the Intruder Association. I doubt that many of you know that Bills mother was a member of the 82nd Airborne Division and served as a parachute packer during the war. Following her service with the 82nd she became a nurse and followed that profession throughout her life. I had the pleasure of speaking to her on numerous occasions and found her to be a wonderful person with great stories to tell. I know that she was proud of her WWII service and that she was an example for the ladies that followed her in the service of our country.

Irene will be laid to rest in Georgia with full military honors on Friday the 16th. May She Rest in Peace. - JM

From Joe Bilitzke, Chairman, Troop Support Committee....

Intruders~

Per my status report on 24 August, attached is the registration form for the Ft. Drum G Company Intruders Family Day. Since this is a no fee event, including the morning golf, the form is informational only. Completing the questionnaire will help the Troop Support Committee to better coordinate our participation with the host unit, Task Force 2-10 at Ft. Drum.

Please open the attached document. Fill in your answers to the questions, and e-mail back to me as an attachment. If you are having problems with this procedure, please advise me at JoeB2@mindspring.com.

Thanks for your participation and support of our newest Intruders, currently deploying to Afghanistan in October.

Joe Bilitzke
Chairman, 281st AHC Troop Support Committee

Ed Haas
Vice Chairman, 281st AHC Troop Support Committee

(Note: The above mentioned registration form can be copied or saved from the 281st Website Bulletin Board. The form will open in your Adobe Reader. Just save it to your computer.)

Following are the email exchanges that resulted in the creation of the Troop Support Committee...

Capt. Brian Middleton....

Mr. Bilitzke,

Sir, my name is CPT Brian Middleton. I am the company commander of an Air Assault Helicopter Company (G Co., 2-10 AVN, 10TH CAB, 10TH Mountain DIV (LI), Fort Drum, NY). My company was stood up to meet the needs of our upcoming deployment to Afghanistan in October.

Since my Battalion (2-10 AVN) draws its lineage from 10 BN, and our main effort will be to support both conventional forces and Special Forces in the mountains of Afghanistan, we felt it appropriate to draw from the 281ST AHC. We are inspired by the sacrifices, dedication, and perseverance which were so greatly displayed by the Intruders that we have chosen that as our call sign.

We wish to celebrate in your accomplishments and would like you and the original Intruders to share in our upcoming successes. We will be organizing a family organizational day here at the airfield in August and will be truly honored if some of the original Intruders would be able to show some support.

I would love to hear from you and any of the original Intruders. This is a good contact email for me, and my work cell is (315) 405-6800. Thank you Sir, for your service.

Jack Mayhew....

Folks, as you can see from the letter below sent to Joe, G Company of the 2-10 is getting ready to deploy again and they have honored us by choosing the Intruder call sign as their in country call sign. I suggest that we respond by visiting with them at Fort Drum in Sept. (Date to be announced) and that we adopt them as we have done for other units in the past. I spent some time with CPT Middleton a few days ago and he sounds like a true Intruder and an individual that we can all be proud of. He ask some great questions and truly wanted answers as to our experience with the SF troops in VN. Please let me know if you are up to another rewarding project as we have now supported three units so far. As of next Wed I will be out of the country for 3 weeks and Joe Bilitzke has offered to be our liaison with the unit when he is not in the hospital for a hip replacement. Sorry Joe, they do not have a Hog Frog. - Jack, for the Remembrance Committee.

**“INTRUDER OF THE YEAR”
PAUL MALEDY**



Prez Mom presenting award to Paul

Paul Maledy is the well deserved Intruder of the Year for 2010-1011. From the beginning of the reunions in St Louis Paul has managed and maintained the Hospitality Suite. All who have attended the reunions can attest to the success of his efforts. He has been untiring and uncomplaining, never faltering in tripping off to purchase replenishments, restocking the free grub, playing janitor, and even finding time to occasionally sit down and enjoy a brew with the rest of us. Congratulations Paul, you be “The Man” !

From the Editor...

A few words on the decision by the General Membership to return our reunions to be 281st AHC only. Although the past two joint “Vagabond” reunions have been enjoyable and well attended (especially the 2010 reunion with over 250) it was the feeling of many of us that we were in danger of losing or weakening the “glue” that brought about the formation of the association. I think it was best said by Don Torrini at the general membership meeting; “We are family”. And when put to a vote, a large majority raised their hands in agreement with Don, therefore next year, it’s 281st only. Others desiring to attend will be welcomed as guests.

I would like to devote a bit of this newsletter to inform you of the terminal illness of one of our originals, Bill Perren. Bill first arrived in-country in 64-64 as a gunner from the 25th Inf Div. In those days helicopter companies were organized as Air Mobile Light’s and did not have TOE gunners. Troops from the 25th would volunteer for TDY platoons sent to VN to provide gunners. Bill was initially

assigned to the 6th Platoon “Fangs” which later became one of the 281st platoons. He served continually until March of 1968. When I was Wolf Pack 36 in 67-68, Bill was one of the “stalwarts”.

Early this year Bill was diagnosed with terminal cancer. When this became known a number of those who served with Bill journeyed to Tennessee to spend some time with him:



Wolf Packers Bill & Frankie Esquilin



Barc Boyd WP36 Bill John Hyatt “Fangs”



Wolf Packers Bill and Joe Corney

Bill & Rhonda Perren
 2234 Valley View Hwy
 Jasper, TN 37347
 (423) 942-9048
rpbp1979@gmail.com

That concludes this Newsletter. As always, anyone wishing to post an article or to comment on content, please contact me: mentzer0191@comcast.net. Oh yes..... Reunion 2010 photo's are posted on the 281st website and can be accessed through the Bulletin Board. Take a gander.

Fred Mentzer
Newsletter Editor and Webmaster



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