



281st Assault Helicopter Company Association

NEWSLETTER
NUMBER 50

Winter
Edition
2013

"INTRUDERS"

NHA TRANG
1965 - 1970

REUNIONS PAST

**ST LOUIS
REUNION 1986**



"The first gathering"

**SAN FRANCISCO
REUNION 1988**



"The last gathering"

**NASHVILLE
REUNION 1999**



"The Association begins"

**WASHINGTON DC
REUNION 2000**



"The first annual reunion"

**LAS VEGAS
REUNION 2001**



"With the SOA"

**LAS VEGAS
REUNION 2002**



"Again with the SOA"

**HOUSTON
REUNION 2003**



"Only time in Texas"

**LAS VEGAS
REUNION 2004**



"Last time with SOA"

**ST LOUIS
REUNION 2005**



"First time in St Louie"

**ST LOUIS
REUNION 2006**



"Second time at STL"

**ST LOUIS
REUNION 2007**



"R&R Hawaii"

**ST LOUIS
REUNION 2008**



"R&R Hong Kong"

**ST LOUIS
REUNION 2009**



"R&R Australia"

**ST LOUIS
REUNION 2010**



"Return to Viet Nam"

**ST LOUIS
REUNION 2011**



"R&R FOB St Louis"

**ST LOUIS
REUNION 2012**



Considered by many as
"The Best Yet"

The Prez Speaks.....

I have a lot to talk to you about in this issue. First, some progress can be reported on the PUC (Presidential Unit Citation) project. The background is that the 5th Special Forces Group and its attached units were awarded the PUC for actions taken during the period of 1 November 1966 until 31 January 1968. The 281st was attached to the 5th SF GP for operational control during that period. However, when General Order Number 45 announcing the award was published, the 281st was not named as an attached unit. A 281st team headed up by Bob Mitchell has been working to get the 281st added to the list of attached units so as to clearly establish the award for the unit and those individuals who served during the time period of the award. The team is making progress and had hoped to have a resolution by the 2013 reunion, but a new hurdle has come up which makes the 2013 date unlikely. Rest assured that Bob and his team would not stop until this issue has been resolved.

No date set yet for the laying of our plaque at the Special Ops Memorial Plaza at Ft. Bragg. The design is completed, and we expect to have more details regarding installation by the next reunion in August.

Speaking of the reunion, the dates this year are August 1, 2, and 3 in St. Louis. I won't get into it here; reunion chairman, VP Jim Christensen, will talk about it later in this issue. Our hotel, the Crowne Plaza, has undergone a 10 million dollar refurbishment since last year. I look forward to getting together again with everyone in the air-conditioned comfort.

Next I have some new items. There will be a change this year in our procedure for selecting the Intruder of the Year. Nominations should go to the EB. The chairman of the Awards Committee, Fred Lewis, the EB President, and last year's recipient, Bob Ohmes, will make the final selection. This change eliminates the SML, Frank Becker, from the selection committee and brings us in line with the By-Laws.

As a result of discovering the discrepancy in our selection of the IOYA, I have appointed a committee to do a complete review of the By-Laws. The committee, consisting of Bob Mitchell and Jack Mayhew, will make recommendations to the EB for any amendments needed where there are duplications, redundancies, or clarifications required. Recommended amendments will be reviewed at this year's reunion, and any final decision will be made by a vote of the membership at Reunion 2014.

The Executive Board (EB) held a meeting in St. Louis on January 23. There were two issues of significance that came out of the meeting. First, is that a new PX policy, establishing specific operational procedures, will be put into place at the next reunion,

and in conjunction with that, a new standing committee, the PX Committee, will be voted on at the next General Membership Meeting. Until then a temporary committee consisting of Jay Hays, Chairman, Fred Mentzer, Fred Beck, Frank Becker, and Ken Smith, was appointed.

The other significant item is that after a strong report from an exploratory committee consisting of Frank Becker and Fred Lewis, the EB voted to move the site of our reunion in 2014 to The Camden Hotel and Conference Center in Branson, Mo. Room rates are higher, but certainly affordable, and there are many other advantages at the Camden over the Crowne Plaza that help offset the rate increase. The dates have yet to be determined, but we have asked for rate info for the first week of August, our usual time, and a weekend in late September (remember we are asking them to quote on dates more than a year away). A move to late September may mean more comfortable temperatures than early August, however, Branson is located in the Ozark Mountains, and the higher elevation there may give us nice temps anyway. Branson has many attractions, and much more about it and the Camden Hotel will be available at this year's reunion.

Finally, I want to remind you about our annual elections for the Executive Board. As always we will elect a new Vice President and Junior Member at Large, plus this year the terms of both the current Secretary and Treasurer expire-so those offices too will be open. Please step up if you can and either volunteer, or agree to run if someone asks to put your name on the ballot. Who knows, you may get lucky and lose.... Seriously, we need you. Information and ballots will be coming this spring. Contact Don Budlong donbudlong281@gmail.com to volunteer or nominate someone.

That's it for now. I look forward to hearing from you or seeing you at a reunion as we continue to evolve.

Jim Baker
President

The Veep sends.....

The reunion committee held meetings in St Louis on January 23 for the sole purpose of planning this year's reunion. We managed to get the reunion planned within a reasonable amount of time. In other words, we didn't have to stay after school.

I would like to thank Ed Haas, Jim Fisher, Jay Hays, Don Torrini, Paul Malady, Jim Bishop, Fred Lewis and Frank Becker for their time and energy.

As we have elections coming before the reunion please consider placing your name on the ballot. We haven't had much response in our past elections and

we need people serve in these seats. This is your association please participate in the process.

Be sure to invite another Intruder who hasn't been to a reunion to attend this year's reunion.

Jim Christensen
Vice President

And now the SM&L.....

Well here I set in good old Missouri with the hope that winter is over the top and on the way to spring. We had a good time in St Louis at the planning meeting in Jan. About the coldest days yet in the last 2 years. Kind of like last August reunion were the hottest days we had all summer. Don't let that stop you from coming next August because this in the mid-west and I can promise that there are no two times the same year to year. I feel that there is a good reunion planned for 2013. As it was at the January planning meeting, where ever there is a bunch of Intruders in one place the weather is always right and the stories from the time when we were young are flowing like prop wash.

Just this winter one of the ladies who we Intruders have been able to get to follow us to our reunion wrote Cheryl that she almost came to last year reunion by herself, when her Intruder for whatever reason didn't want to come. So any of you better half Intruders out there who haven't come, and who don't know if an Army reunion sounds like much fun, come on, the women seem to have as much fun as anybody.

Oh yes Doris Hays and Cheryl have already said that Jay and I need sum refinement and are taking us to the Munny again on Thursday night. The musical Mary Poppins is playing that week. If anyone else is interested just let me know and if we could get 20 people together we could get a discount. The cost is in the \$25 to \$35 depending on where we sit and how many go.

That is enough prop wash from here for now, see you on the flight line at first light.

Frank Becker
Senior Member@Large

A word from the JM&L.....

As the Junior Member at Large, I am tasked with overseeing the annual election of officers to our Association's Executive Board (EB). In doing so, I will be seeking members to volunteer and serve on the EB. Each year we must elect a new Vice President (VP) and Junior Member at Large (JM@L). This year however the positions of the Treasurer (3-year term) and Secretary (2-year term) will both expire and be on the ballot as well.

The VP position is a consecutive 3-year term which progresses from VP to the position of President

then Past President. The primary responsibility of the Veep is to chair the Annual Reunion Committee.

The JM@L is elected to a consecutive 2-year term on the EB. First year as the JM@L and the following year as Senior Member at Large (SM@L). The primary responsibility of the JM@L is to chair the Nominations and Elections Committee.

The Treasurer is elected to a 3-year term on the EB. The Treasurer is responsible for collecting money, paying expenses and maintaining the Association accounting books.

The Secretary is elected to a 2-year term on the EB. The Primary responsibility of the Secretary is to record the minutes from all EB meetings and the General Membership Meetings and maintain the Association records.

Over the course of the next few months, we will be accepting nominations for these four (4) positions on the EB: Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Junior Member at Large. I know many of you already volunteer for various committees and help at the reunion each year; here is an opportunity to take your volunteerism one step further and participate on the EB of YOUR Association and see how things work on the inside.

The only eligibility requirement to serve on the EB is that you must be a Regular or Life Member of the Association in good standing. Think about it and call or email me.

Don Budlong
Junior Member@Large

A request from the Scribe.....

Instead of an article this month I am going to insert a request. Everyone knows we're all getting old, each year the DAT list grows and we're all probably wondering when we'll join those who are already there.

Well, there is an Intruder in New York who is not doing well. He won't tell you that, he's tough. His name is Walt Stobe and Walt is as fine an Intruder as you will find. He came to the 281st a few months after I did, he always smiled, worked his ass off, was a good pilot and was just fun to be around. He came to the Houston reunion and I recognized him from a hundred yards away, and then he proudly showed me his Wolf Pack tattoo. That's dedication.

He hangs around with others from his time, most of whom have come to various reunions but not regularly, but to me they are the epitome of friends as they apparently spend many months of each year traveling together. Walt, Ken Miller, Wes Schuster, Tubby Brudvig, Daryl Evanghelo, Beetle Bailey & Linda George. One of the most endearing pictures I have ever seen is of Walt on his knees praying at the grave of Bob Gardner.

I called Walt up when I was at the Brian Paine mini-reunion but I have trouble doing that, and once I

do I have trouble finding things to say. If some of you are better at that than I am why not give Walt a call. His wife Barbara will probably screen the call, just mention the 281st and if he's there she'll put you through.

Walt spends his day either with doctors or at the local Vet Center. I'm told, he isn't looking for sympathy or favors but he sure likes talking to Intruders. A phone call just might make his day. Call: 516-266-5043.

Jeff Murray
Secretary

Membership man speaks.....

With the dues being included on the reunion registration form has helped immensely! It could also be a bit better too, but I was pretty darn good. "CONGRATS" for a job well done!

The current dues year is: 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013.

I want to thank everyone that has been sending me their new information to update the master roster, and with me processing the reunion registration forms a lot of changes and corrections have been taken care of, which saves postage and you get your newsletters faster. To up-date your information faster, just send an email to me at: Cooter@charter.net . If for some reason that you do not receive your newsletter by email or snail mail, which probably means that your Address or Email Address are both not current, you can go to www.281st.com and click on newsletters and you can print it off. It also helps if you are a member and have your dues current.

Again thank you for your support and have a very Safe and wonderful Spring season. Be safe and of course "WELCOME HOME"!!

Gary Stagman
Membership Chairman

From the Bean Counter.....

During the last few reunions we had instances of members and/or guests not being able to attend after paying the fees. In most cases we merely issued a refund. However in some cases the member would tell us to keep all or part of the fees, sometimes specifying that they should go to the scholarship fund or donate to the Association. In either case the member would be entitled to a deduction on their income taxes just as they are able to deduct their yearly dues.

Those of you who have made contributions to the scholarship fund are sent a receipt from the fund. According to the IRS the receipt must state the amount and date received and also a statement that the donor did not receive anything of value from the fund. Such a receipt is only required if the amount is

\$250 or greater. The Association would also have this requirement.

In situations where the donation is less than \$250 and no receipt was received, the donor would have to retain some evidence of payment. In the case a donation of the dues, a copy of the registration form and/or cancelled check would probably be adequate. In the future we will issue the required statement if the amount is \$250 or greater. The IRS is vigorously enforcing this rule since they recently won the issue in court.

As long I'm on a roll regarding taxes any member who incurs expenses on behalf on behalf of the Association would be able to deduct such expenses, just as a volunteer for charitable organizations would be entitled to do. These could include travel expenses and would obviously not include that for reunion attendance. For more details check with your tax preparer.

Happy tax filing.

Fred Beck
Treasurer

From Jack Mayhew.....

Scholarship Awards

It is that time again. Each year the scholarship committee ask you to remind your family members who are attending or planning to attend college or an approved technical school that there is scholarship assistance available to them. Information and forms for applying are on the web at 281st.com.

Also please remind those students now in the program that they need to submit their grades and intent to continue ASAP to collect their next payments.

For more information or assistance please contact DR. Karen Forcht <kforcht@elon.edu> Scholarship Program Secretary.

Jack Mayhew
Scholarship Committee

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"An Intruder is not dead until he's forgotten"

† William A. James, Jr †
21 Aug 12

† Paul Hull †
10 Dec 12

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UH-1H 67-17146 Restoration Project Committee Report

Just a recap of former 281st AHC Helicopter: UH-1H, tail number: 67-17146. Solano Community College (SCC) in Vacaville, CA owns the aircraft. A student, Art Lauth, contacted me in 2010. He asked for our assistance in learning the history of the aircraft & the 281st AHC as well as any interest the 281st AHC Association (281st AHCA) had in helping to restore the aircraft to an airworthy, flyable condition. The Executive Board established, in 2011, a Committee to work on this. NO 281st AHCA funds have been asked for or otherwise expended on the project and no funds will be requested from existing Association money.

I visited the class several times in 2010 – 11; I took the class on a field trip to CAL FIRE Aviation to view UH-1H depot level maintenance of UH-1H “Super Hueys”. Joe Bilitzke, Philip Copenhaver & I gave a slide show and presentation on the history of the 281st AHC. However, the project was put on hold when the SCC instructor that was supporting the project retired in 2011. Art Lauth informed me that the new instructor was no longer interested in supporting the project. In August 2012, Jim Baker received the following email:

“My name is Arthur Lauth and I am a Army Veteran who Attends a local community college in the Fairfield, California. I am writing you requesting information regarding a Huey Serial Number 67-17146, This aircraft has been listed as being attached to the 281st AHC in country from November of 1968 until October of 1970. I am interested in documenting the history of this aircraft in its entirety, as it is a wonder that it still exists at all. For the last 18 years it has sat on the tarmac of a small airport without much care or attention, my concern is to tell the story of this dependable warbird from the time she was built until present day and the men attached to its history.”

Jim asked me as committee chairman to contact Art. I attempted several times with the contact information that he provided (same as in my “Contacts”). I got no return on emails or phone messages to Art. In the past we have provided him with most of the details he requested in the email to Jim. Most of the information about the bird’s history was provided in 2011 by Gary Stagman, Walt Pikul & Jeff Murray, whose pilot’s logbook shows he flew it.

As a member of the Northern California Chapter of VHPA, I have solicited their interest in the project, but they declined. They have a UH-1C Model static display (no engine) that they continue to upgrade and use in veterans events and local parades. The interest of other 281st AHCA members here in the area has also not taken off. It is therefore my intention to make one more attempt at visiting the classroom in the next few weeks to see if there is still interest in this project. I will report any changes as soon as I can contact them again.

Comments and continued interest is solicited, please contact me directly by phone (916-201-6965) or email (ksmith9146@sbcglobal.net). The project is too big to be carried by me alone.

Ken Smith
Chairman

This from Scholarship Fund Secretary Karen Forcht

Thank you’s from Scholarsip students (mostly hand-written).

Grace Becker:

Once again, thank you so very much for supporting me in my education. I am sorry I was unable to attend the reunion in August, but I was working at the college. I have been very busy with studies and figuring out the next chapter in life. Thank you again

Sarah Hager:

I am writing to thank the scholarship committee for my studies at George Mason University’s School of Nursing. I have been planning a career transition into the nursing field for several years and receiving this scholarship will certainly help with the cost of this phase of the transition.

I am honored that the scholarship I received was named for a fallen 281st AHC service member, Tommy Condrey. As you know, I attended this year’s reunion in St. Louis and had the opportunity to meet many people involved with the 281st organization. They all remembered Mr. Condrey fondly and held the highest regard for his service and sacrifice. I will keep his memory alive as I embark on a career dedicated to the service of others.

Again, I would like to thank the scholarship committee for recognizing my previous academic and professional achievements and for believing that I am capable of doing more. To me, this scholarship is symbolic of the value that you place on service and sacrifice for the greater good of one’s community, and I will strive to reach the highest standards in my nursing career.

Sheena Ariel Riley:

Thank you so much for the financial aid this semester. It was greatly appreciated. In the Fall 2012 semester, I completed another season of volleyball as a junior with a good contribution to the team. We finished the season without making it to conference but with hope for the next season. I also completed the semester with one of the highest GPAs of my team and eligibility for an associate degree in science. As I go into the next semester, I plan to continue on my path to a bachelor's degree in business administration. I also plan to send letters of intent, including my graduation date and resume, to prospective companies that I would like to work with upon graduation. I hope the next semester will be as promising as the ones past have been. I am so grateful for your support throughout these years, and I hope to make you all proud with my academic and life achievements.

Elena Casey:

My past three years as a student of Messiah College have been replete of changes with developments, some expected and others fortunate, and I appreciate your support through each of them. After completing most of my Spanish major in Spain, I crossed the pond once more to fulfill my English major in Oxford, England. Studying at the University of Oxford not only gave me a deeper understanding of Shakespeare, 14th Century English literature and a new academic system in which students meet individually with professors and evaluation is based upon essays and discussion, but also gave me invaluable skills for independent living. Now, after returning to Ithaca, I have divided my summer between tutoring, working at Wegmans, and studying for the GRE. Through Tompkins Learning Partners (a local literacy organization), I tutor Hispanic students for citizenship, thus far with my first student eagerly awaiting his citizenship ceremony this fall. And, having taken the GRE, I have begun pursuing Linguistics programs for my post-baccalaureate career.

For these opportunities and many more, I must recognize the pivotal role your organization has played in my collegiate life. So, to the members of the 281st AHC, I am extremely grateful for your sacrifice and support helping my fellow scholarship recipients and me to achieve our goals. Many thanks for best for the coming year.

Jessica Barker:

It is officially the summer! I just had my commencement ceremony on May 12th, and I feel very accomplished with what I have done and learned thus far in my scholarly journey. I graduated Magna Cum Laude, with a Bachelor of Science in Human Biology, and a minor in Chemistry. The past four years have flown by, and I cannot believe that I am finished with my undergraduate degree. It is strange to close that chapter of my life, but now I am off and running into the next one—Concordia University Wisconsin, School of Pharmacy. Orientation is August 13th, and I know that the summer will go by quickly and that time will be here soon! In the meantime, I am searching for a fellow pharmacy student roommate, an apartment, and getting all of my necessary paperwork together.

Thank you for the past scholarship, and I am also very grateful that you have decided to continue supporting me in my graduate studies.

Guidon Presentation

In January member Harry Wetmore (Wolf Pack 37, 1967-68) presented a replica of the 281st AHC Guidon to the Living Military Museum at Richard's Coffee Shop" in Mooresville, NC. Don't be fooled by the "Coffee Shop" in the title. This Welcome Home Veteran's museum is quite impressive as can be seen at this weblink: <http://welcomevets.com/>. Thanks Harry.



**A Message of Appreciation from
Command Sergeant Major Bob Ohmes
2012 Intruder of the Year**

I am still sitting here in a daze! Never in my wildest thoughts had it ever occurred to me that I could be considered for this award by the 281st---we all spent our time there in Nam and all did what we had to do! Now, in our Veteran days, we do what we can and are grateful to have been part of such a unit and bless the fact that we were lucky enough to survive---and, we thank those who went before us without the pleasure of non-violent days.

So, I thank you all for this honor you have presented to me---I have always believed we all needed a little humor to get through the "remembering" of those days in Nam---and, gratitude for bringing us home. So, I offer congratulations to a unit that could NOT have been possible or successful without every individual doing his part.

With a humble heart, I accept this award to honor ALL the Intruders-----God was good to us!

My best to a great bunch of guys!
Bob Ohmes

And now the last from the Editor

So that's it for this newsletter. As always, I remind you that this is your newsletter. Let me know if you would like to include an article, publish a picture, have a complaint or even want to let me know that you appreciate it.

By the way, I'm also the webmaster for our website and I would welcome your comments.

Fred Mentzer
"Wolf Pack 36"
Editor

"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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