



281st Assault Helicopter Company Association

"INTRUDERS"

NHA TRANG
1965 - 1970

NEWSLETTER
NUMBER 54

Summer
2014



Reunion Time is Here!

IT'S TIME TO GET OFF THE DIME!

DON TORRINI IS WAITING FOR YOUR REGISTRATION

AND

THE CAMDEN HOTEL FOR YOUR RESERVATION



Reservations: 1-800-335-2555
(ask for Renee)

From the Reunion Chairman.....

Hope everyone has their flight plan filed for Branson, Missouri for Sept 25 to 28. Several have already sent in their registration to Don Torrini and the hotel has sent me a list of several who have called. For those of you who had trouble with the number of the hotel the one at the top of the page is right this time.

With the help of all the different members and wives this is shaping up to be an excellent time to get together. The RED MULE EXPRESS will be up and running by Wednesday to help get those who fly into the airports at Springfield or Branson to the hotel, and also around town when time permits. Be sure to e-mail Fred Lewis at Redmule4Exp@gmail.com and Paul Maledy at PMA136@gmail.com with your flight plans as soon as possible. If you are coming in before Wednesday, let them know and we will try to pick you up. If you don't do e-mail, the telephone numbers are: Fred 573-578-3149 or Paul 636-373-0604.

While you are in Branson there are lots of things to do. Of course there are shows morning, noon, afternoon and night. Just go to Branson.com and you will find just about any kind of entertainment you want. A couple of my favorite things to do are the Titanic, Military Museum, and the Museum at The School of The Ozarks. That is what I do while Cheryl is downtown at all the resale, craft, and antique shops. If you didn't get to ride a McGuire rig long ago, they have several zip-lines around. In fact, I hear we will have a video of Gary Stagman taking a ride for the Friday night banquet. For those who are there on Thursday, we are offering at 1700hrs a Dinner Cruise & Show on the Branson Bella. This is a very pleasurable evening on the lake, good food, and a very good show.

On Friday morning Carolyn (the better part of President Jim) did a little recon work back in April, and I think we will have a very interesting surprise for you ladies. Friday night will be a buffet banquet and a fun time.

Saturday morning will be the business meeting, and Ladies brunch. It will be a little different this year as we will have Georgina for the ladies. We met with her in April and I think you ladies will enjoy her program. Don Budlong has taken on the Memorial Service on Saturday afternoon with a little different program this year. We are going to do our own colorguard this year. If you have ever done colorguards before we need your help!! You will not need any equipment. Will McCollum and Don Budlong are in charge of this. Will said something about young, slender, tall, but I think he will take; can walk, and knows right from left. Get with one of the above now, or when you first get to Branson.

Lastly, we have our closing banquet for the 2014 Reunion on Saturday night. Again, good food and a guest speaker.

This information might be covered other places in this newsletter, but I have a plaque on the wall over my desk for Intruder of the Year, Sure would like to leave it there, but need some names so I can pass it along. It has been an honor to have it for the last year. When I look at the names on the plaque and think what I have seen them do over the years to make this association what it is today, I feel very honored to be among them. If you have a name, get it to an Executive Board member ASAP.

So, in closing, get that registration to Don Torrini, call the hotel, and if flying in, get with the Red Mule.

See you in Branson.

Frank Becker
Reunion Chairman/Vice President



And now from the Prez.....

Greetings to one and all. The summer is upon us and it is time to be thinking about the reunion in Branson, Missouri from September 25th through the 28th. The reunion committee has put together a great program for this year.

You'll need to do a few things to get yourself to the reunion:

1. Go to the website and download the reunion package at <http://281st.com/> and follow the directions and fill out the package and mail it to Don Torrini
2. Call and make reservations at the Camden Inn by calling 1-800-335-2555 and ask for Renee Contreras.
3. Make your travel arrangements.

If you're flying in fly into Springfield, MO. we will have shuttle service provided by The Red Mule Express directed by Fred Lewis and assisted by Paul Malady from Springfield airport to the Hotel. When you know your arrival times email Fred @ Redmule4Exp@gmail.com and Paul Malady @PMal136@gmail.com so they can meet you at the airport in a timely manner.

Something else you might want to consider is to come a few days early or stay a few days after and enjoy some more of the entertainment.

It seems every year we lose some attendees to the reunion because of something that was said and they were offended by it, thus becoming victims of their own making. This self-victimization serves no purpose. So, suck it up and come join your brothers in arms in Branson.

If you have been following the HQ net you have seen the names of our fellow Intruders who have passed away that no one knew anything about. Without Will Clark's sleuthing skills we probably still wouldn't have known about their passing. Some of us may have served with some of these individuals and would have liked to have seen them once more. The reunion would be a good place for that. At this time in our life we don't know what tomorrow will bring.

Come and join us in Branson.

Jim Christensen
President

The Senior Member@Large....

Branson Is All About Entertainment

Our reunion hotel has reduced rates on the days immediately before and after the Reunion. So come early and stay late to enjoy yourselves in Branson Missouri.

If you like to be entertained, and who doesn't, the city of Branson has something for everybody. Every type of musical entertainment imaginable: 50's, 60's 70's 80's, Doo Wop, Motown, Country, Gospel and The 80's Ladies. Tribute bands are all over town playing music of the Eagles, ABBA, Patsy Cline, Neil Diamond, George Strait, Marty Robbins, the Bee Gees, Conway Twitty, Journey, the Beatles, and of course, Elvis.

If you prefer hearing your favorite artist live and in-person, here is sampling of upcoming performers - Charlie Pride, Bill Cosby, The Charlie Daniels Band, The Oak Ridge Boys, Clint Black, The Village People, Wynona Judd, Chrystal Gayle, Jim Belushi and the Chicago Board of Comedy, Johnny Mathis, The Gatlin Brothers, The Lennon Sisters, Loretta Lynn, Mel Tillis, Mickey Gilley, Roy Clarke, Sawyer Brown Band and Sha na na. Also playing are The Texas Tenors, Three Redneck Tenors, Dublin Irish Tenors and the Celtic Ladies.

Branson has music, magicians, illusionists, dinner shows, comedians, amusement parks and much more; something for everyone – see you there in September!

Don Budlong
Senior Member@Large

Our Treasurer speaks.....

It's Sunday August 4 and normally I'd be driving home from the St Louis reunion on this date, a distance of about 450 miles. The September reunion in Branson increases my driving distance by about 400 miles. Despite the advantages of St Louis central location, flight convenience and great accommodation it will be great to have a change in venue.

Branson has a lot of variety and as I mentioned in a previous newsletter, I would encourage you to plan ahead by checking out Branson websites. It may even make some of

you to think about extending your stay by a day or two.

Currently Don Torrini is anxiously awaiting your registration forms. Don noted that on two of the forms registrants paid for meals in addition to the \$100 fees. Please note that the meals are already included in the \$100 fee. The meal fees are only for anyone that will be attending only the Friday night and/or Saturday meals e. g. if you were bringing along a guest that would not be attending the full reunion. We will be sending refund checks for the overpayments.

Speaking of refund checks, in the past we always had some individuals who had to cancel all or part of their reservation upon which we issued refunds. In some cases they stated that we should treat the overpayment as a donation to the scholarship fund or the Association. It, of course, would be tax deductible. Regardless, please let us know as soon as possible for purposes of meal and other event planning.

In our planning meeting in February, I volunteered to organize any golfing activities. In the past we did not have many participating, which I'm sure was partly due to the St Louis summer heat. Alternatively, Branson, in late September, should have great weather and it appears to have a number of great courses. I will review them for cost etc. If interested see me or the reunion registration desk.

Fred Beck
Treasurer

And now the Past Prez.....

What has happened to our world? Have you ever thought about it? I mean it is really crazy out there these days both domestically and internationally. If you are reading this, then you are in a certain age range, about the same as me, and it is just not the same world we grew up in.

I don't mean to say that everything is bad; in many ways things are much better. The technology that exists today and the things it allows us to do is unbelievable. But, sometimes I feel that that somehow we have let the life we knew slip away a little.

Not that everything back then was perfect, because it wasn't. There were many issues the country and the world struggled with - one of which led to a little vacation to Southeast Asia for

each of us. But, if you sometimes feel you would like to revisit the good times for a short while with like-minded people – guys you share a bond with, then consider coming to Branson next month for our annual reunion.

Is Branson the best place in the world we could go? I guess not, but the point is we are getting together again for a few days and going back to our world for a while, and it doesn't really matter where that physical location is.

Can we change anything in the country or the world? Will the reports on the evening news change any? No, but at least we can get away from all that, and have some good times with some old/new buddies in a town that really welcomes and appreciates us. I think it will be worth the trip, and you have to ask yourself, how many more opportunities am I going to have to do this?

Come on over to Branson ..., I'll buy your first beer (or iced tea, or decaffeinated diet soda, or what ever – that doesn't really matter either).

See you there.

Jim Baker
Immediate Past President

In Memorium



“An Intruder is not dead until he's forgotten”

† Dwayne “Tubby” Brudwig †
19 June 2014

† Lawrence R. “Larry” Kitts †
12 June 2014

† William H. “Bill” Allen Jr. †
30 December 2013

† Larry L. Ouverson †
13 December 2013



Junior Member@Large.....

Intruder Book - For some time we have struggled with the desire to write a book that would cover the complete history of the unit and through the use of individual remembrances would provide our families and friends with an overview of the accomplishments of the 281st AHC. We are finally on track to complete this project. We have a homegrown author, an advisory board made up of individuals from all phases of the unit's life, and to date, input from several individuals. This is a book about you, written by one of one of you. Therefore, we need your input. Please take time to dig out your best photos, and your best story and send them to the author. Remember it was a team of young men like you that made the US Army's first Special Operations Helicopter Company a success and now it the time to tell your story. Please send your information to the author at:

William "Will" McCollum
(Flight Operations NCOIC 1967-68)
1231 Doreen Ave. Waterloo, IA 50701-3203 Tel: 319-239-5529
WillDanMac@yahoo.com

Remembrance.....

Not much action on locating our ten MIA's. We have added RICHARD (RICARDO) M. GARCIA to our list of individuals who are still missing. Richard was transferred to the 48th AHC when the 281st stood down and was lost in Laos in 1970. We still need to put pressure on our congressmen to fund and demand that the defense department step up their search efforts. As it now stands an in country search crew is funded for a set number of days and when that time expires, no matter what they are finding, they are removed and rescheduled for a subsequent year. As is usual the DOD is undergoing reorganization and it appears that the MIA program will be impacted. Please call, write or visit your congressman to make sure this doesn't happen.

Jack Mayhew
Chairman, Remembrance Committee

Scholarship Committee.....

Thanks to the generosity of our members and our corporate partner we are continuing to provide scholarship support to the families of those who served in the 281st AHC. Dr. Karen has two applications for the coming school year and she will present the results of her evaluation to the scholarship board at the annual meeting, which is held in conjunction with the reunion. If you have questions or wish to submit a request for scholarship assistances (College or technical school) please contact her at: kforcht@elon.edu Tel: 336-638-7544

NOTES & COMMENTS

Sick Call.....

Earl the ""pearl" Broussard the King of the Wolf Pack CE's is back in the hospital, this time to undergo a heart transplant. He is in good spirits but has no idea how long the process will take. He has type O blood and like all Wolf Pack members he taller than the average person so there is some difficulty in finding him a heart. We ask if their search was limited to "Cajun" country but he has agreed to accept a normal heart. Earl can be reached on 719-819-1013. His wonderful wife Darlene can be reached on 713-819-6458. Let's all pull for them. JM

Memorial Stone Project.....

The end is in sight for the placement of a memorial stone in the Special Operations Command Headquarters Plaza at Ft Bragg. This project has from the get go been sheperded by member Walt Pikul of Fayetteville, NC. President Jim Christensen has signed the final paperwork which is now

being processed by appropriate military authorities. Hopefully by the time of the Reunion we will have final approval. Walt Pikul has done a fantastic job for the 281st AHC Association. Thanks, Walt!

Missing Intruders.....

Intruders all: As you know over the past several years we have made an effort to find our brother Intruders who are listed as unaccounted for. That list is still way too long! However, the good news is, over the past few weeks, thanks to the energized efforts of Sir Gary Stagman and the king of the chat net, Will Clark, several of our missing have been found. The sad news is, all of them went on the DAT roster.

You can find both the DAT roster and the unfound roster on the web at http://281st.com. For the unfound roster click on Member Area and then Morning Report. You will see that the roster is still too long and we need your help in finding these folks before they are added to the DAT roster. Please take a few moments and review the roster for individuals that you served with and that you might have had contact with after Vietnam. If you can help us with this effort please contact Gary Stagman at cooter@charter.net or 618-797-1336. Each small bit of information helps. – Jack Mayhew



281st Assault Helicopter Company ***"The US Army's First Special Operations Helicopter Company"***



**499th Signal
Detachment**



**483rd Transportation
Detachment**



1st Platoon



2nd Platoon



3rd Platoon

From Jack Mayhew.....

Each day I reflect on the many wonderful individuals that I served with in the 281st and those that I have been privileged to know and work with that came before and after me. I especially hold the 46 individuals that gave their all and within that group the 10 Intruders still there, close. I know that most all of my fellow intruders also do so. So to all of you, thank you for your contributions that made our unit one of, if not the best. I know for me my time in the 281st was the most memorable of my career and working with our association has been a pleasure. Please take a moment to remember our MIA & KIA s and their families and especially our own families who also gave so much. Be well. - JWM

From the Editor - An Email of Special Note.....

Following is an email I received a year ago this August. I had meant to publish it earlier. Here it is:

From: John Gachich [<mailto:jgachich@gmail.com>]

Sent: Friday, August 30, 2013

Subject: Newsletter #51

Fred,

It is absolutely true that one never knows what tomorrow holds. After more than forty four years since returning from Viet Nam, I thought that the connection to that time had diminished and waned to a very distant blurred memory.

Then I read the newsletter and the tribute to "Tubby" Brudwig. I didn't meet "Tubby" while in Viet Nam and none of it really registered until I read the words ..."his ship 004 "Death Merchant" ... that a slew of memories came gushing forth. I suddenly felt an enormous kinship and closeness with this man I had never met.

You see, "004 Death Merchant" was my ship also, I flew on it some ten months, if memory serves me right, I named it and I painted it. It was a great ship as it pulled us out many scrapes and always brought us home safely. Judging by the dates, "Tubby" most likely was my successor in the right rear seat, as I left in early May of '69. I am glad and proud that a man of that caliber continued our fight and brought such honor to the 281st.

If you can, please relay my message to him along with my best wishes in his latest battle. All the best.

Regards,

John Gachich

"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

President
Jim Christensen
Vice President
Frank Becker
Secretary
Jeff Murray
Treasurer
Jerry "Fred" Beck
Senior Member@Large
Don Budlong
Junior Member@Large
Will McCullum
Immediate Past President
Jim Baker

APPOINTED OFFICERS

Awards Chairman - Fred Lewis
Book Committee Chairman - Bob Mitchell
Chaplain - Norm Kaufman
Commo Committee Chairman - Fred Mentzer
Historian - Bob Mitchell
Historical Memorabilia Chairman - Fred Lewis
Internet Groups Administrator - Brent Gourley
Membership Committee Chairman - Gary Stagman
Memorabilia Sales Committee Chairman - Jay Hays
Newsletter-Public Relations Chairman - Fred Mentzer
Remembrance Committee Chairman - Jack Mayhew
Reunion Committee Chairman - Frank Becker
Survivor Assistance Team Chairman - Marshall Hawkins
Troop Support Committee - Joe Bilitzke