



281st Assault Helicopter Company Association

**"INTRUDERS"**

NHA TRANG  
1965 - 1970

NEWSLETTER  
NUMBER 58

August  
2015

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# 281<sup>st</sup> Assault Helicopter Company Association

## **REUNION 2015**



**CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL AT THE AIRPORT  
ST LOUIS, MO  
October 8-10, 2015**

**----- SEE YOU IN ST LOUIS -----**

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### ***From the President***

Well as the song says "summer is almost over and winter is coming on" but we still have October in St Louis. Have you made your hotel reservations with the Crowne Plaza yet? Did you send in your registration to Fred Beck? Time is getting short. I am sure there are a few new stories out there to be told, or at least a new version of the old ones.

I know Ferguson has been in the news again lately, but that is quite a ways down the road from where our Reunion will be. The big shopping centers for the ladies are in the other direction and if you want to go to the boat to gamble that is still further from Ferguson.

I have heard the word is out that a bad bunch of Army fly boy VETS are coming to town the first week of October; might even have a couple of motor cycles with them and plan stay at the Crowne Plaza.

As I am sure you are aware it was 50 years ago this October the Army gave birth to the 281<sup>st</sup>. Fifty years later there is a possibility that a movie will be made about the 281<sup>st</sup> in Vet Nam. A few of those movie people will be at the Reunion this year to do interviews for the film. This, along with the usual reunion happenings should make for a great week end in St Louis. See you there in a few weeks. (a movie?)

It has been a great year serving as your President. You are still a great bunch of people and have brought a better looking group of ladies into the 281st Association.

Frank Becker  
President

### ***From the Vice Prez.....***

We are shaking things up for this year's Reunion and it will be like no others you have attended. It will be more entertaining and informative. On Friday evening during and after our buffet dinner, we'll have a disc jockey playing music from the Viet Nam era. We'll be dancing all evening, if we can last that long.

For the first time in a while we will not have a guest speaker at our awards banquet Saturday night. Instead, we'll have entertainment with MC Scott Arthur from Houston, TX. We may even have additional home grown 281<sup>st</sup> entertainment as well.

We haven't forgotten the ladies. While us guys are having our annual meeting, the girls will have their own fun, frivolity, laughter and prizes (without us). This has been completely planned by the ladies, for the ladies.

Of course we will have our traditional Memorial Service Saturday afternoon where we will pay tribute to our lost, but not forgotten Intruders. Following that ceremony, we will have an informative presentation about what to do when a spouse passes away. Let's face it guys, we're not getting any younger.

If you haven't made your hotel reservations for the Reunion, better hurry because the deadline is

**September 14<sup>th</sup>** to get the special rate of \$99 per night. After the 14<sup>th</sup>, the rate goes up to \$139. Call the Crowne Plaza at 314-291-6700 and mention registration code **ELI**.

Registration materials are attached.

If you plan to arrive early and stay late to explore St. Louis, the hotel concierge will be more than happy to accommodate your requests. Remember, the hotel shuttle will still be available to pick you up at the airport and drive you around town to your favorite places to eat and visit.

Since the Association is a completely volunteer organization, we can also use an extra set of hands in St. Louis. Anyone interested in helping out, please call (843-707-7474) or email me at [donbudlong281@gmail.com](mailto:donbudlong281@gmail.com). Sign-up sheets will be available at the Registration Desk.

For more Reunion information as it becomes available, stay in touch by visiting the Association's rejuvenated web site at [www.281st.com](http://www.281st.com). Also consider joining either of our moderated networks, the HQ or Chat nets.

Don Budlong  
Vice President / Reunion Chair

### ***The Sr. Member@Large.....***

St. Louis, here we come one more time, and it is shaping up to be a pretty good attraction for all of our members. Please do not wait until the last minute to make your hotel reservations. Here is the number to call, **314-291-6700**. Mention Reservation Code **ELI** for the lowest room rate of \$99.00 per night. (we can't remind you enough so get it over with and call the hotel, now)

We need all of you to be there for this might be our only chance to make the big screen. Looks like there will be a team of movie directors there to interview our members in preparation for some type of movie or documentary. (really a movie??)

I need three good men to help me with the color guard. I am wondering if there are a few guys out there that could still fit into their uniforms. Please call me if you can help.....1-319-239-5529.

Our book ABOVE THE BEST is close to being finished with about 350 pages and 116 different stories and articles as of the date of this newsletter. Story dates range from 1965 all the way to deactivation at the end of 1970. Below are a few titles and summaries:

Captain Lou Lerda, our first maintenance officer, and his crew fighting for their lives while attending to a sick helicopter.

The USNS Brenton with Captain Lynn Coleman, Sergeant Gary Stagman and their crew aboard broken down at sea. Now what?

A chemist as a door gunner?

Staff Sergeant Willis had a way with words

Unsung Heroes

A PFC with his shirt off ready to kick a captain's @#&

Flying with the bear, my first time in the hole.

TET 1968

Medal of Honor - the only one recommended

Happy Valley, not so happy

Valley of the tigers; the village rescue

The wife

Tent maids and a Buddhist Cross

Waiting, wondering and worrying

The general didn't want to know, so I didn't tell him.

Never, never pee into the wind

... and a 100+ more stories

See you in Saint Louis!

Will McCollum  
Senior Member at Large

## ***The Jr. Member@Large...***

Hello again Intruders - I join the rest of the EB extending a warm invitation to join us as we return to St. Louis for our 2015 reunion. There are many things to see and do in St. Louis October 8-10. The weather is usually quite comfortable this time of the year.

I can't speak for everyone, but I certainly enjoy seeing old friends whenever I can attend our gatherings. Every year more names are listed in the Taps section of our newsletters and website.

Someone told me the other day....."Life is like a roll of toilet paper; the closer you get to the end, the faster it goes." I hope to see you in St. Louis.

Bain Black

Junior Member At Large  
WP-36 May '68-April '69

## ***The Secretary's words of wisdom***

### **ESTATE PLANNING**

With the passing of one of our esteemed members shortly after our last reunion I thought I would revisit a few estate planning tips so that some of you or your spouses / family can avoid some of the problems our member encountered. This is simple stuff, anyone can do it and it makes entirely no difference how much or how little money you have, PPPP will tick off your heirs so just do a few of these and you'll be "Good to Go" (so to speak).

**Will:** If you have one make sure it is up to date and contains the proper info. If you've left all of your possessions to your wife and she is dead, well, off to probate court your heirs get to go. If you are working on wife #2 and wife #1 is still around and is still listed in your will as your heir, guess what.

**Beneficiaries:** If you have retirement accounts, IRA's, Pensions, 401K's still at your employer, check the beneficiaries. Same rules apply, if you are on 2<sup>nd</sup> wife and first wife is the beneficiary guess who gets your money. Consider putting

kids on there as contingent beneficiaries so if the spouse goes and you don't change things it will automatically default to the kids.

**Life Insurance:** Check those beneficiaries.

**Checking Accounts:** If they are in joint names, no problem, the survivor gets control with minimal effort. If your spouse died 5 years ago and you kept her on there for sentimental reasons and all of your liquid net worth is in that account, there is no way your heirs will be able to tap it when you die, meaning the funeral home will keep you on ice until the probate court decides to rule. If you have a lot of money and die like that your real heirs will have fun going to court to contest the other relatives who are coming out of the woodwork. Consider adding Transfers on Death to those accounts, they also bypass probate and may enable you to be buried.

Anything that has a beneficiary on it or is in joint names, such as IRA's, checking and insurance, automatically defaults to the living person. If your will says everything goes to your wife and your life insurance policy names your ex-wife the will doesn't matter, that money goes to the ex.

**Trusts.** If you paid for a trust make sure you put things in it. Opening a trust checking account and leaving everything in a normal savings account means that savings account reverts to your will or to the probate court.

If you use a CPA on a regular basis, or have a financial advisor, check with them to make sure you've done what needs to be done. I cannot tell you how many people I have seen walk into the bank expecting money and walked out extremely "upset."

Jeff Murray  
Secretary

### ***About that movie...***

Fellow intruders - I was approached a couple years ago by a young man who saw me wearing a SOG T- Shirt. He inquired about it and said he would like to talk to me about it. He set up an appointment and I met with him and a producer

who recorded the interview. She subsequently asked if she could record an interview on film and we set up a date. Five People showed up and recorded the interview with me and Earl Broussard for 8 hours. They left and I heard nothing from them again until January 2015. Mike, the original guy who talked to me had shown the interview to two of his friends, Ben and Trevor and they all agree the story of the Delta and 281<sup>st</sup> teams should be told. They have been working writing, developing and presenting the project to people in Hollywood. They have received so much positive feedback for an HBO series and or a movie; they have been working non-stop on the project. Peter Berg who directed Lone Survivor has expressed an interest in the project. Ben Scott, the lead writer for this will be coming to the Reunion to meet all the guys and conduct interviews for story and character development. This may be the only chance we will have for our story to be told nationwide.

Please make every effort you can to attend the reunion and share your experiences with Ben. These three men believe so much in us they are dedicating their lives to us and our story. Let's give them all the ammunition they need to get it done. They will be at the Reunion.

When you get to the reunion you will get an up to date sitrep concerning, funding, characters, production, and shooting. Let's hope for the best. See y'all in St. Louis.

Brian Paine

### ***Special Operations Plaque - Update***

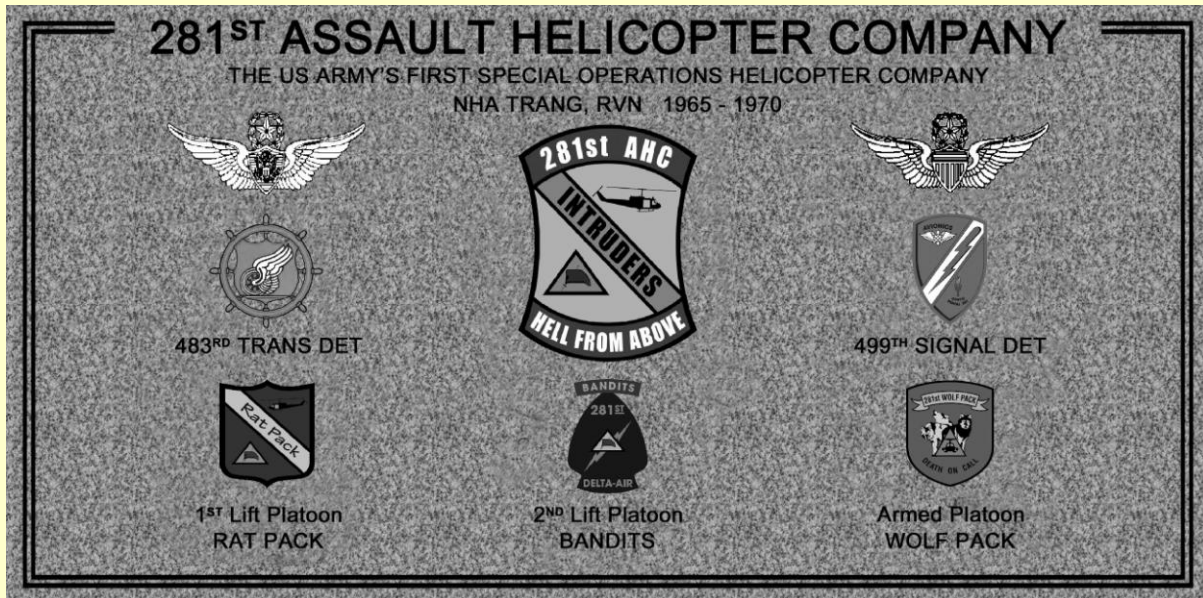
The date for the dedication ceremony of our Memorial Stone is **Friday, October 7, 2016**. The location is the Meadows Field Memorial Plaza parade ground at the HQ of the US Army Special Operations Command at Ft. Bragg in Fayetteville, NC.

In order to reduce the risk of damage to the plaque between now and next year, it will be installed at Meadows Field once it is ready, but the official dedication ceremony will take place as stated above. The plaque was ordered from Breece Monuments in Fayetteville, and produced at a facility in Georgia. It was produced and

delivered to Breece earlier this summer. However, there were blemishes in the finishing that were unacceptable, and the Association's project coordinator, Walt Pikul, rejected it. Per agreement with both Breece and the manufacturer, the stone is being replaced, and a new one should be ready by the end of next month. We expect the replacement stone to be

ready in ample time for installation, and well ahead of the date of the dedication ceremony.

Jim Baker and Walt Pikul



281<sup>st</sup> plaque to be dedicated in 2016 at Special Operations Command, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina

### ***From the Newsletter Editor***

On June 3<sup>rd</sup> of this year our dear friend and fellow Intruder, Fred Mentzer, was laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery. As you will see from the photo below, Fred was given his "last mile ride" on a horse drawn caisson with friends and family in attendance following the procession on foot. Fred will be missed by all. - Editor



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*"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**  
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Will McCollum  
**Junior Member@Large**  
Bain Black  
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Jim Christensen

**APPOINTED OFFICERS**

**Awards Chairman** – Jim Baker  
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**Reunion Committee Chairman** – Don Budlong  
**Survivor Assistance Team Chairman** - Marshall Hawkins  
**Troop Support Committee** – Joe Bilitzke

# 281<sup>st</sup> Assault Helicopter Company Association

## 2015 ANNUAL REUNION

**Crowne Plaza St. Louis Airport Hotel**  
**St. Louis, Missouri**  
**October 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>**

To: All Intruders, 281<sup>st</sup> AHC Association Members, Honorary Members, Family and Friends

The 281<sup>st</sup> Assault Helicopter Company Association announces its 2015 Annual Reunion. The last time we held our Reunion in St. Louis was the first week in August, 2013 and it was hot. We are returning this year to St. Louis in the cooler and more comfortable 2<sup>nd</sup> week of October.

On Friday we have planned a fun filled evening with a buffet style dinner. Our Saturday evening awards banquet is always the highlight of the weekend. Don't forget the "Hospitality Room" that will be fully stocked with beverages (alcoholic and non-alcoholic) and providing lunches and late night socializing on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. We also have something special planned for the ladies on Saturday morning. All of this is covered by your registration fee, \$125.

The Crowne Plaza has guaranteed us a special 281<sup>st</sup> room rate of \$99 per night which now includes a free breakfast for two people per room, every day you stay there. They will also provide shuttle service to and from the airport and to local shopping and eateries, at no additional cost.

Let's not forget the real reason why we have these reunions – we see our brothers in arms that we haven't seen in decades and renew friendships we've built up over the years. It was 50 years ago that the 281<sup>st</sup> arrived in Vietnam. Five years later the company was deactivated. In that 5-year plus period of time, hundreds of us spent many months doing many different jobs; each and everyone them contributing to the success of the 281<sup>st</sup>. In the last few years we've seen quite a few reunion "first timers". If you've never been to a reunion, this is a great time to start.

Don Budlong, VP & Reunion Chairman

**Make Your Crowne Plaza Hotel Reservations Today!**

Call: 314-291-6700  
Reservation Code: ELI

The Hotel will hold a block of \$99 rooms for us until September 14, 2015. Make your reservations early to guarantee a room and save money.

## 281<sup>st</sup> Assault Helicopter Association 2015 Reunion Schedule

<u>Day and Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>
<u>Wednesday 10/7</u>	1:00 pm – 5:00 pm 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Reunion Set up Drinks and snack at hotel bar compliments of the hotel
<u>Thursday 10/8</u>	9:00 am – till closing 10:00 am – 5:00 pm 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Hospitality Suite open Registration in hotel lobby Executive Board Meeting
<u>Friday 10/9</u>	9:00 am – 5:00 pm 9:00 am – 11:00 am 11:00 am – 12:00 pm 10:00 am – 4:00 pm 6:00 pm 7:00 pm – 11:00 pm 10:00 – till closing	Hospitality Suite open Scholarship Committee Meeting Book Committee Meeting Registration in hotel lobby (last day) Cash Bar opens prior to dinner Buffet Dinner & cash bar Hospitality Suite re-opens
<u>Saturday 10/10</u>	9:00 am – 5:00 pm 9:00 am – 11:00 am 10:00 am – 11:30 am 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm 2:30 – 3:30 6:00 pm 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm 10:00 – till closing	Hospitality Suite open Annual General Membership Meeting Ladies Fun Time Memorial Service – open to everyone Survivor Awareness Program Cash Bar opens prior to dinner Awards Banquet & cash bar Hospitality Suite re-opens
<u>Sunday 10/11</u>	9:00 am - ?	Tear down and pack it up – we'll need volunteers – Please sign up.



**Registration Form**  
**281<sup>st</sup> AHC Association 2015 Reunion**  
**October 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> at the Crown Plaza Airport Hotel**  
**St. Louis, MO**

Member #	Last Name	First Name	MI		
Street Address		City	State	Zip Code	Phone #
Unit	E-Mail	I Will Arrive on	10/	/2015	
Name for Nametag		Dates in Country	Nick Name or Call Sign		

**Is this your first time to a 281<sup>st</sup> Reunion**    Yes    No    (please circle)

**REGISTRATION FEES:**

281<sup>st</sup> AHC Assn. 2015 Annual Membership Dues: \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Fee \$25 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Member Reunion Registration: \_\_\_\_\_ Member @ \$125 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Guest Fee (16 years old and up) \_\_\_\_\_ # Guests \_\_\_\_\_ X \$125 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Children's Fee (11-15 years old) \_\_\_\_\_ # Guests \_\_\_\_\_ X \$80 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Friday and/or Saturday Night Meals Only \_\_\_\_\_ # Meals \_\_\_\_\_ X \$40 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(For Children under 11 or non-registered Adult Guests)

Scholarship Fund: My 2015 TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION IS: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL CHECK IS: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENTS:** Make check or money order payable to **281<sup>st</sup> AHC Association**. Mail Payment and the registration form no later than **September 14th** to:

281<sup>st</sup> AHC Association  
c/o Fred Beck  
205 Carey Ct.  
Neenah, WI 54956-9208  
Tel: 920-558-4127 / email: [JJB@new.rr.com](mailto:JJB@new.rr.com)

Please bring your photos, DVDs, books, maps and other memorabilia for sharing and/or display.

VOLUNTEER: Registration \_\_\_\_\_ PX \_\_\_\_\_ Hospitality Room \_\_\_\_\_ As Needed \_\_\_\_\_

# MEAL SELECTION AND INFORMATION SHEET

## Member and Guest Information

List below the names of all attending along with their Saturday evening banquet meal selection. The meal choices for Saturday evening are below. For ladies only, please indicate whether you will be attending the free ladies brunch on Saturday morning.

1. Savory Pot Roast (Beef)
2. Boneless Breast of Chicken Marsala (Chicken)
3. Vegetarian Chef's Choice (Veggie)

### NAME

### MEAL SELECTION

### LADIES BRUNCH

	<u>Beef</u>	<u>Chicken</u>	<u>Veggie</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>

Please Note any special dietary requests