

August 2017

No. 66

281ST ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



From your President – Will McCollum

Usually, the Lazy, Hazy days of summer come about this time of the year here on our farm. August is a good month to go swimming, eat sweet corn, watermelon, and BBQ. They say here in Iowa you can, if you listen closely, hear the corn grow, but even with my VA hearing aids, all I hear is the humming sounds of a battalion of Minnesota Skeeters invading our back yard. But that is okay, I can stay inside where it is cool and help Bain Black if he needs me for anything. This year's reunion is shaping up to be one exciting event. If for some reason you have not made reservations by now, time is quickly running out, the hotel is about out of rooms for us. Bain is a busy Reunion Chairman, along with our boots on the ground soldier Jack Mayhew, who is working overtime. The larger the event, the more activities scheduled, the more involved it is. It takes a good operations officer to make sure it goes smoothly. We are so fortunate to have Bain in that position. As a former 281st Ops Officer, "He has been there done that." We are in good hands.

This is for some of us a once in a lifetime event. There is so much to see in Washington, DC; so much history just up the street from where we are staying. Our reunion event calendar is full; there is no wasted time from start to finish. This is a very well thought out reunion, you will never for the rest of your life forget this one.

One last comment, if you have never served on the Executive Board for our association, please consider coming aboard, we need you; for me personally it has been an honor.

From your Vice President & 2017 Reunion Chairman – Bain Black

Although we continue to have personnel changes at the Crystal City Hyatt, our reunion planning continues on schedule. Our newly assigned event planner is Jacquelyn "Jacki" Olavarria. She sounds very capable and enthusiastic.

At the time of this writing (8/14) there are only 10 rooms available at the contracted rate of \$109/night. If you know of anyone who has not made a room

reservation, tell them to do so. Links to the special hotel reservation site as well as the 281st reunion registration form are available at www.281st.com top of the page. Do it now.

"Boots on the grounds", Jack and Cindy Mayhew, are meeting with hotel staff tomorrow (8/15) to discuss final plans for the Ladies' event to be held on Saturday morning 10/14. This is always a great get-together for the ladies. Jack also has a list of other details to confirm with the hotel. Thanks to both of them!!

Well, summer will soon be over and football season is just around the corner. The nice thing about this time of the year is that all our teams have a chance to be champions.....Carolina Panthers, NY Giants or even the Jets. And we all have hopes for our collegiate teams as well.....we in NC know that NC State Wolfpack will beat Texas A&M or Ohio State for the national championship!!

If you do not know this bit of information, our esteemed President, Will McCollum just participated for his 12th year in the bicycle ride across Iowa. That's the RAGBRAI event that covers around 500 miles over a week-long period. Way to go Will!! Now get ready to harvest the corn!!

Washing the wall update - Every Saturday morning a group of veterans washes and shines the Viet Nam Memorial. This was started around the first of this year when it was noticed that the practice of washing the wall once a month was inadequate.

Well, several months ago Jack Mayhew contacted the person responsible for scheduling and the 281st was put on the calendar for 10/14, or so we thought.

Last week Jack reached out to work on details for our Saturday morning cleaning; low and behold, that person was not around and he was directed to someone else who was in charge. He regretted to inform Jack that we were not on the schedule and all slots to wash the wall were taken through the end of 2017.

Your reunion team is disappointed that we will not be able to wash our memorial, but I am quite happy that

this program is so popular that there is a long line of vets wanting to participate.

For a complete list of activities at the Reunion, please see our last Newsletter #65.

Reunion Registraion – complete the Registration Form attached (or go to the reunion tab on our website at www.281st.com . Print and complete the Form; select your meal choice for Saturday's banquet; and mail the Form and a check to your Treasurer, Fred Beck.

Memorial Day Address by Al Cartwright

I had the privilege and honor to be the guest speaker at a Memorial Day Observance at a large church in Lakeland, FL. There were about 1,000 in attendance. The church has been hosting the Memorial Day event for the past twelve years. On the past two Memorial Days they have remembered and honored the men and women who gave all during World War II and the Korean Conflict, respectively.

This year we paid tribute to the 58,000 + who served and sacrificed their lives during the Vietnam War. I was able to briefly tell the audience about the mission of the 281st AHC and to tell them during the day of the bravery of the 281st pilots, crew chiefs and gunners. I got to give my testimony and speak about the true cost of freedom that was paid by those whose names are engraved on that black granite of the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, DC. We honored those who died too young, too soon, and too far away, stealing happiness from their loved ones for all these years.



I was able to pay special tribute to SGT Henry Leonard (gunner) and 1Lt Paul Hess (SFC-2 Supply Officer), who were KIA on UH-1D 65-09711, on an

emergency ammunition resupply mission, that fateful Veterans Day, November 11, 1966. Just as their names are engraved on the Vietnam War Memorial Wall, theirs will be etched in my memory forever. Read Al's account of this day in *Above The Best*, page 57.

The photo in the bottom left was taken with "Sea Cadets", who were in attendance at the ceremony; they wanted a picture with me. The "Sea Cadets", is an equivalent to the Air Force Civil Air Patrol. These guys are only 12 to 15 yrs old. The tall guy just to my right is 6' 5" and only 14 years old. I was surrounded by so many "Sailor Boys", I think I was getting sea sick. In case you don't recognize me, I'm the short "Soldier Boy" in the middle.

It was a great day and a great tribute to the United States Military.

Lost But Not Forgotten By Cindy McVicker

I am the cousin of Daniel A. Sulander (MIA) who served in the 281st Assault Helicopter Company, U.S. Army, in the Vietnam War. WO-1 Daniel Arthur Sulander was the Aircraft Commander on UH-1D 65-088 that was lost on December 2, 1966.



My husband Michael and I attended the annual MIA conference in Washington DC on June 21 - 24th, 2017. We had been asked to go as "designees" by Gary Sulander, Danny's brother. I was hoping that the 281st would have a representative at the conference to participate with the military in our "one on one" talk with the military. Danny's best friend, Don Michel, attended the 2014 reunion in Branson, Missouri and encouraged us to go. I was really glad we went.

I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate your efforts and diligence in keeping the memory of these soldiers in the minds of their families and friends.

**Once an Intruder
always an Intruder.
We will never forget.**

Scholarship News From Dr. Karen Heintz Forcht, Secretary, Scholarship Committee

The following note was received from one of our recent college graduates:

Dear Dr. Forcht,

As you know, I have officially graduated from Rice University. I worked really hard for my degrees and I appreciate your support and encouragement every semester.

Thank you to you and the rest of the 281st Memorial Scholarship Committee for granting me this amazing scholarship. I can't express all the ways the scholarship has helped my family and myself during my Rice journey. I want you to all know that I am endlessly grateful to each of you,

Morgan Torbert

Please consider making a contribution at the Reunion or on your Reunion Registration Form. Remember, our children are our future. Contributions can also be sent directly to Walt Pikul, CPA, Treasurer, at Post Office Box 41035, Fayetteville, NC 28309 Phone: 910-424-1981.

The Rescue - a Movie – From Tom Ross

As many of you know, Tom Ross has spent the best part of the last 2 years on a project to bring his book, *Privileges of War* to the big screen. Finding operable UH-1's has not been easy and the cost for computer generated scenes is very costly. Production costs along with issues with distribution of the film caused Tom to withdraw from his agreement with Ole' Entertainment.



Tom is now working with an agent/manager in Los Angeles and before long, the project will be moving forward again. A complete update of the movie will be presented at our Reunion in Washington.

Statue Honoring Special Operations Aviation Unveiled at Ft. Bragg

Those of us that were in Fayetteville last year remember the ceremony dedicating the 281st monument outside of U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command Headquarters. On the other side of the Memorial Wall, a sculpture depicting the Greek god of war, Ares, riding a Pegasus centaur was unveiled this summer.



Brig. Gen. John R. Evans Jr., the Commanding General of ASOAC (in photo above), said the statue was a tribute to the unit and its soldiers. "It stands as a personification of man and machine, of skill and courage and of duty and sacrifice," he said.

The statue was cast in bronze, save for the tip of the drawn arrow, which was forged from steel taken from the wreckage of a UH-60 Black Hawk that crashed during the Battle of Mogadishu in 1993.

To read to full story, click on the link below.

<http://www.fayobserver.com/news/20170523/statue-honoring-army-special-operations-aviation-unveiled-at-fort-bragg>

Ladies – It is all about YOU at the Reunion

Ladies, don't forget to sign up for the Ladies Social on Saturday morning at 10:30. When you or your husband send in the Registration Forms, (see the end of this Newsletter), be sure to check off that you will be attending the "Ladies Brunch". We will have wonderful entertainment, great food, adult refreshments and really neat door prizes. We will be meeting in the beautiful Chesapeake Room on top floor of hotel. The view is spectacular from up there. You can see all of Washington, DC. Hope to see you on Saturday at Ladies Social. - Cheryl Becker

Wrong Valley – Wrong LZ

Recently Don Taylor posted a story on the B-52 Project Delta web site entitled The Wrong Valley. If you remember at last year's reunion, Don Taylor gave the key note speech at the dedication ceremony of the 281st Monument at Army Special Operations Aviation Command HQ. To read Don's story, clicking on this link http://www.projectdelta.net/wrong_valley.htm.

The story is well written and offers an insight as to what Project Delta was about. The setting for this true story is FOB Phu Bai in April 1969. Although many Intruders were on this field operation, it is known that at least the following Intruders were involved with this particular mission in the "wrong valley". Those Intruders are: Dave Dolstein, Les White, Jeff Murray, Alan Johnson, Daryl Evangelo, Dave Mitchell, Rick Galer and Don Eliff. If, after reading the story, you remember participating on this mission and your name is not listed above, please let the Newsletter Editor know who you are.



As you will find when you read the story, an emergency extraction was required using McGuire Rigs. The photo above was taken by Jim Torbert of 3 team members of the 6-man team rescued, returning to Phu Bai dangling from the end of the McGuire Rig.

In Memoriam

Albert G. Rampone, II passed away on July 23, 2017 at the age of 71. Al was a 281st pilot from March 1967 to March 1968. He later served another year in Vietnam in 1970-1971. He is survived by his wife Barbara, whom he married 5 days after returning from his duty with the 281st. Al was also survived by 4 children, two of which also served in the military. Al will be remembered for writing the first book about the 281st, *Silent Birdmen* which chronicled his service as a 281st pilot. May he rest in peace.



Intruder Sick Call

Don Jutz, a/k/a Zorro suffered a stroke last year and is still recuperating in Wisconsin. Don was a pilot in the 281st from 11/66 to 9/67. A card or call would certainly lift his spirits. So would care package. His contact information is:

Room 112 Saint Andrews
3800 North 92nd Street
Milwaukee, WI 53222
Cell Phone: [850-387-4610](tel:850-387-4610)

Jay Hays is recovering from heart surgery and knee surgery. He is recovering well although still wheelchair bound. If he continues to stay off his feet, listens to his doctors and follows Doris' orders, we will see him at our Reunion in October. Here is his contact information to encourage him during his recuperation:

Phone: 330-770-2278
Email: Jhays@haysenterprises.com

Bill Abbott recently underwent brain surgery this month. He is currently undergoing physical therapy in Michigan. Bill served in the 281st from 5/68 to 5/69 and was a maintenance test pilot. At this time we have no contact info for him in Michigan; his home address is Post Office Box 23, Centennial, WY 82055.

Bob Urquhart was a Rat Pack pilot in 1970. He has peripheral neuropathy requiring him to use a walker to get around. His underlying condition is Myelodysplastic Syndrome (MDS) or chronic anemia where the bone marrow does not produce sufficient red blood cells and those that are produced are deformed.

He has been advised to begin making end of life plans. Bob could use a call, an email and/or a prayer.

75 Wells Street Apt 320
Greenfield, MA 01303
413-325-8118
senachie@comcast.net

Note: If you know of other Intruders who are experiencing health issues, contact the Newsletter Editor at donbudlong281@gmail.com

History & Legacy

As part of the United States' Vietnam War Commemoration Act to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the war, the History and Legacy (H&L) Branch, Oral History Program will be conducting video interviews of Intruders at our Reunion in Washington, DC. The video interviews are scheduled as follows:

Wednesday Oct 11 – Dean Roesner, David Vincent, Jack Mayhew & Bain Black; Thursday Oct 12 – Jeff Murray, Jay Hendrix, Jay Hays & Frank Becker; Friday Oct 13 – Lou Lerda, Jack Interstein, Earl Broussard & Lance Ham.

Old Guys Question by Jeff Murray

We're all getting older, that's good. But as we all know that brings problems that we may not be able to help with unless we plan ahead. Has anyone out there thought thru the assisted living steps? Two of the people I work with had to take time off last week to help their "suddenly old" parents. Except between them the parents are only 5 years older than I am. Both are lucky that they have money, but there is a downside to having money they are finding out, the problem being their siblings can't and don't want to help.

Assisted living starts at about \$3-5,000 a month for no frills dormitory like living. Nursing homes are easily double that. Medicare doesn't pay for old folks homes, Medicaid does but you have to get rid of all your other assets five years before entering a home if you want Medicaid to pay. If you've ever been in a Medicaid-level nursing home you won't go back. You can stay home and bring in a nurse, that'll set you back at least \$3200/month for day only. Double it and then some for 24 hour care. Need someone to give you pills, that's about another \$15/day, shots, bandage changing, none of that is included in the assisted living facility's basic charges.

Remember those Powers of Attorney I told you about a few newsletters ago, you may want to get those written before you decline too cognitively or your kids may have trouble paying your bills. If you're worried about their financial abilities hire a lawyer that specializes in that stuff. The big kicker in all of this is time. If you stay in assisted living for 5 years or more the costs will go up. If you don't have the money to continue to pay, you are out.

Nobody wants mom and dad to go until they are in some home somewhere not communicating with

anyone for years; that does a job on both the family finances and the family psyche. The best solution is to be rich. The second best solution is to buy insurance. There are lump sum policies out there that you cannot lose money on, however you have to be healthy enough to qualify. The third solution is to lay out your wishes legally, designating a child to spend your money and his/hers if needed and pay that child back out of the estate when you pass away. So if you die with a \$350,000 house and one of your kids can document they spent \$25,000 keeping you alive, when the house is sold he or she gets \$25,000 more than the other kids. From experience I can tell you that mightily ticks off the other kids but it's absolutely the right thing to do.

GO ARMY BEAT NAVY!!!! - AGAIN

The Association was contacted by Josh Christian-Young, the Cornerbacks Coach at Army West Point. Coach Christian-Young said this season the Cornerbacks will be wearing 281st Intruder wristbands. Last season a cornerback Brandon Jackson passed away in a car wreck and his number was 28. This off season we had another cornerback get sick and won't be able to play this season and his number was 1. So we have combined this to not only honor those two but also the 281st AHC.



July 28th was report day and guys were presented their wristbands and given an introduction to the 281st! I read them part of *Above The Best*. They were all extremely excited and turned our break to "Intruders"! Above is the band they are going to wear! On the reverse side it says 281st Intruders.

August 2017

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No. 66

REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

281st AHC Association 2017 Reunion
October 12th - 15th at the Hyatt Regency Hotel

Hotel will honor \$109+ / night rate w/ check in as early as Oct 11 and depart as late as Oct 16
Crystal City (Arlington), VA

Member # Last Name First Name MI
Street Address City State Zip Code Phone #
Unit E-Mail I Will Arrive on 10/ /2017
Name for Nametag Dates in Country Nick Name or Call Sign

Is this your first time to a 281st Reunion Yes No (please circle)

REGISTRATION FEES:

281st AHC Assn. 2017 Annual Membership Dues: Annual Fee \$25 = \$
Member Reunion Registration: Member @ \$139 = \$
Guest Fee (16 years old and up) # Guests X \$139 = \$
Children's Fee (11-15 years old) # Guests X \$80 = \$
Scholarship Fund: My 2017 TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION IS: \$
TOTAL CHECK IS: \$

Guest Name(s):

Saturday Banquet Meal Selection: indicate number for each choice

Beef Chicken Seafood Vegetarian
(Roasted Sirloin Loin of beef) (Herb Roasted Chicken Breast) (Dill & Citrus Cured Salmon) (Vegetarian Lasagna Roulade)

LADIES' BRUNCH (Saturday Morning) Yes No (please circle)

PAYMENTS: Make check or money order payable to 281st AHC Association. Mail Payment and the Registration Form no later than September 15th to:

281st AHC Association
c/o Fred Beck
205 Carey Ct.
Neenah, WI 54956-9208

Fred Beck Contact Information
Tel: 920-558-4127
email: JJB@new.rr.com

VOLUNTEER: Registration PX Hospitality Room As Needed