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# 281<sup>ST</sup> ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



## From Your Prez – Bain Black

Fellow 281<sup>ST</sup> Intruders: Wow, how the seasons fly by. Here in NC our azaleas and dogwood trees are coming into full bloom. Oh, and the pollen count is rising! We were told by our elders that as we age, time passes much faster...and as Cleavon Little said in Blaizin' Saddles, "they was right!"

Unfortunately since the last newsletter, we have lost 3 more of our Intruder Brothers: Bill Abbott, Ken Miller and Kevin Murphy. May they rest in peace. If you read your Headquarters Net mail, you know that we planned a trip to Fort Campbell, KY to visit headquarters of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) and the 5th Special Forces Group (SFG). This idea evolved during conversation with our DC reunion's Friday night speaker, BG Frank Tate. The idea morphed into a 50 year reunion with 5th SFG and a first time meeting with the 160th SOAR, the aviation unit that today continues the mission we had in RVN. They provide worldwide aviation support for special operations from all branches of the military: Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines.

Our reception on Tuesday March 6th by the 160th was memorable. Thanks to CPT Jeff Slinker, who coordinated our trip, including a full day of escorted tours throughout their regimental area. We had up-close exposure to modern aircraft used to fulfill special ops missions. Deputy Commander COL Scott Wilkinson presented a command briefing of capabilities, organization and training. Our 43 Intruder and guests were bussed between locations where we witnessed the intense training required of today's soldiers in the 160th; including map reading, escape and evasion, first aid, hand-to-hand combat/martial arts, and escape from submerged inverted aircraft in stormy seas at night. This training was much more intense than I ever imagined. COL Phil Ryan, Commanding 160th SOAR, sent a very warm letter to our association congratulating us on our contributions and history. COL Ryan was grateful for our visit and for the customized copy of "Stairway to Heaven" presented to him in front of the 160th Memorial Wall. He

promised it would be hung in an appropriate place of honor. COL Wilkinson presented us with a recently developed DVD "A Legacy of Special Operations Aviation Excellence". It is a 20 minute history of aviation and special ops and it includes a significant amount of time talking about the legacy of the 281st.

On Wednesday March 7th, we visited 5th SFG Headquarters, and our thanks to SGM Jon Commean for coordinating details for our visit. Upon arrival, we were escorted into their briefing room where CW5 Tony Goble presented an interesting overview of worldwide deployment and missions. We toured headquarters where we were impressed by the many stories of MOH recipients and the history of 5th SFG. In the commander's office, your EB presented a framed customized "Stairway to Heaven" to Deputy Commander COL John Stahl. He expressed his gratitude and stated that it would be hung in an appropriate place of honor. He then presented us with a black and white print depicting the history of 5th SF operations, including a rendering of one of our 281st helicopters with LRPS on the ladders.

It was humbling to see a framed Delta Flag that once flew in VN. Next to it was a framed photo of 5th SFG HQs in Nha Trang. Intruders participated in much of the history memorialized on these walls. With Brent's help and contributions from attendees, I hope to add a link on the web site that will share this memorable visit to Fort Campbell.



On to the future! I and several other Intruders will represent the 281st at the dedication of the Pilots and Crewmember memorial at Arlington National Cemetery, April 18th. See complete information sent to HQ net. Following this dedication ceremony, I will travel to Bill Abbott's memorial service at the Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly, MI at 1:00 PM, Friday April 20th. Please join me there if you can.

Lou Lerda is working hard to make our first mini-reunion anything but "mini". Gettysburg is an incredible venue and he is putting together a full menu of exciting activities. I will not steal Lou's thunder, but I will say you should attend this mid-September reunion if you possibly can. Dennis Crowe is very fortunate to have such capable "boots on the ground" to orchestrate this reunion. Thank you, Lou.

Without giving away too many details, "boots on the ground" Brian Paine is putting together another "must-attend" 2019 reunion for October in San Antonio. It promises to be exciting! Brian has some real surprises for us, that he is keeping secret. Again, your 2019 association VP, Lou Lerda is fortunate to have Brian as a Texas volunteer! Thanks Brian and Lou!!

One quick announcement: Jim Baker has volunteered to assume the chairmanship of the 281st Scholarship Board. Jim Torbert has held this position for years and has contributed greatly to its success. I am sure those who have received scholarships join me with thanks to Jim and his committee for their work and dedication.

#### **From Awards Chairman about the Intruder of the Year 2018 Award.**

As the saying goes winter is almost over (well here in Missouri they are saying snow for Easter morning) anyway summer is coming I think and it will be time for the reunion soon after that. As awards chairman, I need the membership to get names to me, the president, or last year's Intruder of the Year winner, in order for us to pick years IOY. We will be picking the winner in the latter part of this summer so we can get the plaque ready for the reunion in Gettysburg. If you have someone whom you think has gone above and beyond to help the 281st over the years, please send one of us a short message listing the reason you feel they should

receive this award. See E-mail address below. To see who has received IOY in the past, go to the 281 site.

My other job is helping to get Flag Cases to a member's family upon their death. As for me I have been much too busy doing that job for the last few months. If you know when one of us makes that final flight, please make sure Jack Mayhew or myself find out about it. If there is to be some type of service at a later date, we will do our best to make sure the case, and if possible some of our members, make it to the service. It takes a couple of days to get the plaque with the name and case ready to ship to the family, or for a 281st person to deliver it. Stay healthy out there and see you this fall. Frank Becker (febeck2002@yahoo.com).



**Little Round Top looking northwest**

#### **From Senior Member at Large - 2018 Reunion**

At last, the majority of the arrangements are complete enough to provide information for this year's reunion. The hotel is the Comfort Inn and Suites on Baltimore Pike and the direct phone number to make reservations is (717) 334-6715. Advise the facility that you will be with the 281st AHC reunion and our rate is \$128.75 per night taxes and fees included. Each room reservation will also receive 4 complementary breakfasts and the rate is valid from noon on 11 September to noon 17 September, 2018. The hotel is within close proximity to most activities and provides free parking. Public transportation is being arranged to allow you to visit multiple venues for \$1.50 per trip. Once we fill 50% of the rooms, the hospitality room and PX area are ours for no cost. We have managed to find a facility that will allow us to have our snacks and sandwiches as well as alcohol without

charge or special licenses. Also, if we elect to hold a function requiring a change of arrangements in the hospitality room, there is no charge to rearrange the room. This motel has hosted multiple military reunions and has a good rapport with the military. Because of the range of local activities available on Saturday, all meetings and special events will be held on Thursday evening and Friday. Thursday evening from 6pm to 10pm, we will have exclusive use of the Gettysburg National Military Park Visitors center and will see the movie, the Cyclorama, and have free access to the museum. We are arranging for transportation from the Comfort Inn to the Visitors center to minimize the amount of walking from the parking areas. The ladies brunch will include a special program entitled "1863 Victorian Etiquette" which will include a fashion show of clothing of the times and "the language of the fan". The EB and members meeting will be held Friday morning. Our Remembrance ceremony is scheduled to be held at the combined Rostrum and the Lincoln Address memorial in the National Cemetery.



**Emmetsburg Road 1863-2013**

The evening Barbeque will be catered and entertainment is to be provided by the "Jerry Rigged Band" who specialize in Bluegrass music. All other activities will be of your choosing and we are working with the Gettysburg Tours for three separate two hour tours that will cover each days' battles. Other venues that week will be a special trip (your choice) to the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center at the War College in Carlisle and also on Saturday a WWII reenactment of the occupation and liberation of New Oxford (more

details will be available later) as well as a USO dance Saturday night. The Eisenhower Farm is also open for tours as well as a WWII display on Saturday. I highly recommend that you check on flying into MDT, BWI or IAD airports, as these facilities provide the best schedules and are relatively easy in/out airports. Those of you coming from Florida may want to check out options offered by Allegiant Airlines to MDT and HGR. Those traveling by RV, please contact Lou Lerda at <[marlinlou@comcast.net](mailto:marlinlou@comcast.net)>. More info as we get things nailed down. We are working diligently to keep the individual cost to \$100 per person or less. Lou Lerda, Senior Member at Large, 281st Executive Board

**From Junior Member at Large, Wes Schuster**

As the old saying goes, "what goes around comes around." In 1986, my old friend and door gunner, Dwayne "Tubby" Brudvig, called me to tell me the 281<sup>st</sup> AHC colors were going to be retired at Scott AFB in St Louis. He also said he had collected addresses from letters and telephone conversations with 281<sup>st</sup> members. He wanted to let them know what was going on in St Louis and he thought it would be a good idea to get everyone together. However, he wasn't quite sure how to go about it. Having some organizational skills I told Tubby I would help. I assigned myself as president (it looked good on the newsletters) and Tubby was vice president. That was our first reunion. It was a great success. We thought we should follow up by getting more guys together for another reunion but we decided we might run out of war stories and decided to include our families. With the help of Joe Bilitzke we held the second reunion in San Francisco. We didn't have By Laws, web pages, committees, scholarships nor duly elected officers. Fast forward 30 years, I am sitting in our general membership meeting for the 281<sup>st</sup> AHC Association Inc. in Washington D.C. Our new president Bain Black is making an appeal for someone to step forward for the position of Junior Member at Large. In a room full of at least 75 members there is dead silence! I look at the executive board on the stage and there sits two of my former hooch mates, Jeff Murray and Dennis Crowe. Both have worked tirelessly to maintain our association. What the hell, the 281<sup>st</sup> is not going to slow down yet. So, I



raise my hand for the position of Junior Member at Large. In four years, god willing, I will be president ... again but, this time officially.

### Traveling

We're all getting older and traveling gets less fun even though we have more time to do it. Here are my suggestions to make things easier.

**-Reunions.** You need to make each one of these. Why? Because it seems every year we lose someone and you really don't want to say to yourself "You know I haven't seen that guy in 10 years and now he's gone?"

**-Flying.** Now this is something that really sucks so how to make it better? Go first class. Not every time, unless you aren't worried about money, but maybe 1 round trip a year, like to and from a reunion. After all, do you really think your kids are going to make good use of their inheritance?

**-Auto.** With the # of cars on the roads these days driving seems like a trip around the bumper car track at Disneyworld. But if you plan well and drive at or slightly below the speed limit, driving can be fun. We drove to Ft Bragg for the 2016 reunion and planned it out fairly well. There was a Civil War battlefield along the way, we stopped at an Intruder's house coming and going which got us free lodging and a meal, and we had a car at the reunion which meant we could ferry around all the folks who really like flying. After all, very few of us have jobs to get back to on Monday morning, take a long drive to Gettysburg next September, I might need a ride to the battlefield.

**-Trains.** If anyone knows how to do this, keep it to yourself, this isn't Europe.

**-Buddy Up.** I travel all the time with my brother and sister in law. The women sit in the back and yak, we drive. Do that with another Intruder, the women in back would love to hear 8 hours of war stories per day, plus you can split the cost of gas. Finally there was a Facebook picture of Marshall Hawkins sitting in an overseas commercial airplane headed to Thailand a few weeks ago. He was up front in the expensive seats but he said Not to Worry, someone bought the ticket for him. Being curious I asked him who. "My kids" he said, "it's their inheritance." Smart guy.

Jeff Murray, Scribe Emeritus



**Deactivation of 281st AHC at 10th Bn.**

**Ken Miller** was an original. He was like no other person I have known.

For those of you who didn't serve in 1969 but, may have seen a guy at reunions with long hair and a full beard may have asked, who the heck is that? Yes, he was a retired major gone "Grizzly Adams". Ken and I served as fire team leaders in the Wolf Pack. We were also hooch mates. In living together, and having the same leadership responsibilities we closely shared our experiences, feelings and thoughts about just about everything. One of the first things I learned about Ken was that he learned Polish as one of his skills in the Special Forces. That was impressive! This was my first inclination that he was a guy with a special aptitude and a high level of intelligence. After Vietnam, Ken attended language school and learned Spanish before being stationed in Panama. His last assignment was teaching at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California.

On the surface, Ken liked to display his wit and fun. One habit Ken had was that whenever we had a chance to go to the officer's club he ordered Chivas Regal and root beer. Instinctively we all cringed, as we knew he was ruining a perfectly good scotch. To this day I am not sure Ken really enjoyed that drink. I think he was just trying to get a rise out of all the guys and have a little chuckle to himself. And his laugh was unforgettable. The first time I truly remember it was on Thanksgiving Day 1969. Ken and I were based back in Nha Trang. All pilots tried to get back to home base before dark. But on

that night, it was very dark and getting later and later. Finally he showed up in our room. I asked him what the hell happened to him for getting in so late. It was then he gave that laugh which was only Ken's and he said, "I got shot down". Not many of us could laugh at a day like that.

After retiring from the Army, Ken decided to become a farrier. His business plan was simple. He looked up in the yellow pages that there was one farrier in the area and he charged \$15 per horseshoe. Ken decided to charge \$10. He said he had plenty of business from that day on. Oh yes, he wrote a book about his work, "Have You Kicked Your Horseshoer Today?" Actually a horse did kick him and he had to begin a new career.

So, one day he was reading an article about Sylvester Stallone and how he had begun screen writing. Right then and there Ken said, "If that dumb son of a bitch can write screen plays, then I can too." That is just what he did. He wrote seventeen and had one produced called "Missing in America" starring Danny Glover and Linda Hamilton.

Later in life, Ken wore monkey shirts! What were they about? They were about loyalty. Bob George saved Ken's life in Vietnam on that Thanksgiving Day in 1969. Ken never forgot that. Ken also liked to give some people nicknames. As a result, Bob George's wife became "monkey." After that, Linda sent Ken shirts with big monkey faces. He was having a good time but he was also being loyal to Bob's memory and his love for Linda.

There is no doubt that Ken enjoyed life to the fullest. Whether it was eating desert before his meal, drinking Chivas and root beer or wearing monkey shirts, it was living life and enjoying every minute of it. To many people, Ken might have seemed to be bit of a character. But, if you really knew Ken he had many dimensions. He had a special skill for languages, he could write screenplays, he could shoe a horse and he could fly a helicopter with the best of them.

After Vietnam we always kept in touch and saw each other whenever we could. I have great memories of those times. We met at reunions, had dinner together when my business travel got me close to where Ken lived, visited his home, met his family and took a RV trip to Canada with our wives

and friends. Whenever we parted, I got a big bear hug. I will miss those bear hugs.

He will be deeply missed.

Wes Schuster, March 16, 2018



Original reunion in St Louis, 1986

#### VA PHOTO ID CARDS FOR VETERANS

All honorably discharged veterans of every era will be able to get a photo identification card from the Department of Veterans Affairs due to a law passed in 2015. The law, known as the Veterans Identification Card Act 2015, orders the VA to issue a hard-copy photo ID to any honorably discharged veteran who applies. The card must contain the veteran's name, photo and a non-Social Security identification number, the law states. No details were released on when that application process will open, what information veterans will need when applying or the web address they will use. Although the law states that the VA may charge a fee for the card, the official said no fee is planned. The change is coming as the military exchange stores prepare to open online shopping to all honorably discharged veterans starting Nov. 1. Veterans who wish to use that new benefit must be verified through [VetVerify.org](http://VetVerify.org). Congress passed the ID law as a way to help veterans prove their service without showing a copy of their DD-214. "Goods, services and promotional activities are often offered by public and private institutions to veterans who demonstrate proof of service in the military, but it is impractical for a veteran to always carry Department of Defense form DD-214 discharge papers to demonstrate such proof. Some veterans already carry such proof of service. Those who receive health care from the VA or have a

disability rating can get a photo ID VA health card, also known as a Veteran Health identification Card. Military retirees also hold an ID card issued by the Defense Department.

Veterans are also able to get a proof of service letter through the VA's e-benefits website. And some states will include a veteran designation on driver's licenses if requested.

### Interview of Brent Gourley by Will McCollum

In 1965 while stationed in Korea with the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, I applied for Warrant Officer Flight School. I had been in the army for seven years, I was twenty-four years old and was a staff sergeant. President Johnson was getting our country more involved in the Vietnam conflict. The helicopter had been tested at Fort Benning, Georgia. The 11<sup>th</sup> Air Assault was now the 1<sup>st</sup> Air Cavalry Division. The army needed helicopter pilots. My GT score was 112, the requirement for Warrant Officer Flight School was 116. My company commander wanted me to go to OCS first, then to flight school. To go to OCS, you only needed a GT of 110. I decided to retake the battery of tests, hoping I could raise my score some. When I got the results back, my GT was now 119. After completing all the requirements my WOC application was processed and, I was accepted. Now I was waiting for a class date. More about this later.

### Warrant Officer Candidate Flight Training in 1966

In 1966 Warrant Officer Candidates, after passing all the tests, a flight physical and had been accepted into the Army Flight Program were sent to Fort Wolters, Texas for 16 weeks of basic flight training. After successful completion at Wolters, the WOC was then sent to Fort Rucker, Alabama for 16 more weeks.

Brent Gourley was accepted into the WOC flight program and was sent to Fort Wolters in 1966 for the basic flight program. Class number 66-15.

### 1966 at Fort Wolters.

Will - How were the WOC's treated?

Brent - We were treated kind of like what I have heard the OCS candidates were, it was not too bad, we expected that.

Will - What type of helicopter did they fly?

Brent - We flew the TH-55.



Will- What was the base pay of a WOC, did they get flight pay?

Brent - We received E-5 pay of \$200.40 per month plus \$60.00 flight pay.

Will - What was the typical day like?

Brent - After four weeks of basic, we flew in the morning and had classes in the afternoon for one week; then the next week we would have classes in the morning and fly in the afternoon. This changed every week.

Will - Were commissioned officers treated the same?

Brent - They were in different classes.

Will - What were the barracks like?

Brent - Fort Wolters used to be an Air Force base, the barracks were pretty good.

Will - Could married candidates live off post?

Brent - No, we all had to live in the barracks.

Will - Generally speaking what was the hardest part of training at Wolters?

Brent - I think most will say it was learning how to hover.

Will - If you failed, did you get a second chance?

Brent - If you were failing there was a procedure to help you.

Will - Did they help with a candidate who was struggling to get through?

Brent - Yes, the school wanted you to pass; again there was a procedure in place for those who needed a bit more help.

Will - Were IP's military or civilians?

Brent - We had both. Southern Airway pilots for the first two months.

Will - After the evening meal were you busy or did you have the rest of the evening free.



Brent - Yes, for the most part, we had free time, at times some of the senior WOC would come around and harass us.

Will - Could you get a weekend pass?

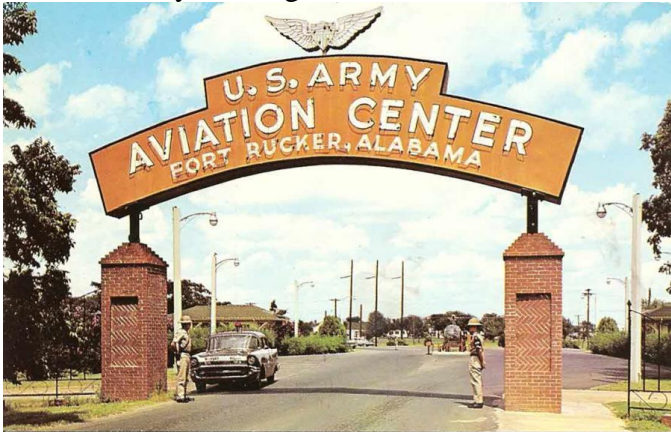
Brent - Yes, later on.

Will - Fort Wolters closed in 1974, what do you think the army did with all the TH-55s? Is there a boneyard for all old helicopters, and if so, where is it?

Brent - All the TH-55s were sold I believe.

Will - How was the town of Mineral Wells? Were there lots of tall, good-looking Texas ladies wanting you to buy them a drink?

Brent - We called it Miserable Wells, I don't remember any good looking tall Texas ladies, but I do remember the Dairy Queen, an ice cream cone on a hot and dry Texas day was about as good as it gets....that's what I remember. Mineral Wells, Texas was about two miles from Fort Wolters; I remember walking there a couple of times. Don't know why I did that. I don't remember anything from those days to brag about.



**1966 at Fort Rucker**

Will - Was the treatment of candidates different here?

Brent - It was for the first few weeks lots of harassment by senior WOC's and tack officers. But after that, it was pretty much business of learning how to fly the Huey. We lived in the two-story barracks that were built during WW-II, and they were not bad.

Will - What was the typical day like?

Brent - Pretty much like Wolters, flying in the mornings and classes in the afternoon, then it would switch to classes in the morning and flying in the afternoon.

Will - Did you train in different types of aircraft?  
Brent - We flew the TH-13T for instruments, then UH-1

Will - Did you get more pay at Rucker?

Brent - No it was still E-5 pay of \$200.40 and \$60.00 flight pay.

Will - Could you live off post at Rucker?

Brent - Yes, I think so, some of the married candidates lived off post, or maybe their wives came, and they lived in town, I am not sure.

Will - Did you receive instrument training here?

Brent - Yes but only the very basic training and it was called "Tactical Instrument."

Will - Could you get a weekend pass?

Brent - Yes.

Will - What type of manuals and or equipment were you issued?

Brent - It was a stack of books and manuals when stacked all on top of each other they were about four feet high.

Will - Generally speaking what was the hardest part of training at Rucker?

Brent - By now it was not all that hard for most of us. We wanted to fly, we wanted to pass, and the school wanted us to graduate.

Will - Was the Link trainer (Blue Canoe) used much, was it helpful?

Brent - Well, yes, it was somewhat helpful.

Will - What were "PINK SLIPS?" What did you have to do to get one?

Brent - The pink slip was given to you when you failed a test or a procedure.

Will - Could you retake the procedure if you failed?

Brent - Yes, in most cases.

Will - How many pink slips could a student get before he was released from training?

Brent - Three

Will - Did you ever get a "pink slip?"

Brent - Yes, I got one.

Will - Tell me more.

Brent - A Specialist Four, gave me a "pink slip" when I was in the "Link Trainer," because I did not follow his instructions. I had figured out how it worked and I took a short cut. He was pissed.

Will - Did anyone get to choose to fly fixed wings or other types of helicopters after graduation?

Brent - No, we were going to fly Hueys and then go to Vietnam

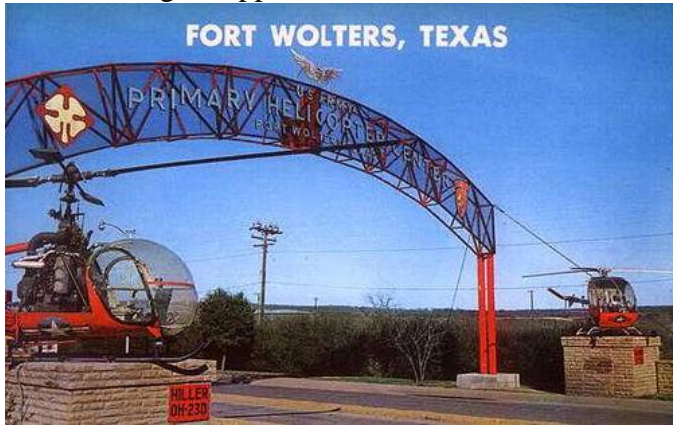
Will - Did you have any time off in evenings or weekends?

Brent - Yes.

Will – Where did you go and what did you do on the weekends? How were the towns of Ozark, Enterprise and other towns? Tell me about those southern ladies that wanted to dance with you?

Brent – Well, I didn’t dance, but a pretty southern lady latched on to me, that’s all you need to know.

For me flight school was easy, I had no problems with any of the classroom subjects. Learning to fly was fun, I wanted to know everything I could about the Huey. I knew where I was going after graduation, and I wanted to be prepared for whatever might happen.



**Warrant Officer Flight Training in 2017**

Will - Do all the WOC’s go to Fort Rucker now?

Brent - Everyone goes to Rucker for all flight training.

Will - Is it all in the same area at Rucker?

Brent - Yes, all flight training is there.

Will - What are the WOC’s paid, still E-5 pay?

Brent - No, today after four weeks of basic the WOC is promoted to W-1, the pay is \$2,966.30 and \$120.00 flight pay.

Will – WOW....

Will - What are the items issued to the Candidates?

Brent – No more books or manuals, everyone is issued a computer.

Will - How are WOC’s treated, is it the same now as it was in 1966?

Brent - I think so.

Will - What types of aircraft do they fly now?

Brent - The TH-67 (on the way out) and UH-72 (Eurocopter now Airbus)

Will - Is the Link trainer still in use?

Brent - Oh no, now they use a flight simulator and inside it looks just like the UH-72, a very good simulator.

Will - What type of instrument training do they receive?

Brent – Currently, primary, instrument, and combat skills are all in the same type, UH-72, with one section flying TH-67 until that aircraft goes away this fiscal year.

Brent - It is now two months of instruction and when successfully completed the WOC has a full instrument rating.

Will - After graduation do they get to choose the type of aircraft to continue?

Brent - All students choose a preference for aircraft; actual selection goes by class standing and army needs.

Will – Does the WOC time and grade start when he is promoted to W-1 in training?

Brent – Yes.

Will – Looks like the pilots have received much better training today than back in the 1960’s, is that correct?

Brent – I think generally speaking, yes.

Will – Do you know how many of your flight class were lost in Vietnam?

Brent – I do not know, but our Wroblewski lived in the next room to me at Rucker.

Will – While you were teaching at Rucker did you run across anyone that you served with in Vietnam?

Brent – Yes, from time to time.

Will – Have you, over the years, gone back to Fort Wolters or that area?

Brent – No, I did not lose anything there, but I just went to Google Earth and can see there are two helicopters on display a TH-55 and an OH-23 at the entrance of Wolthers.

Will – Sir, if you had to do it all over again what would you change?

Brent – I would go back to Mrs. Stanley in 4<sup>th</sup> Grade and scream ADHD.

Brent Gourley retired as a CWO W-4.

He practiced law for 11 years after retiring.

He then taught instrument flight training at Fort Rucker. He retired in 2017. He owns a glider and goes flying every chance he gets.

What a great guy, It was fun talking to him. Brent finishes up with this, “The hardest thing to learn, from a poorer background, is how to make things



happen. Reading is key to everything. **Everything.** School was a lot more fun after high school.” Thank you, army education assistance, and the VA. Brent over the years has studied French, German, Russian, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, literature, and has read hundreds of books. Brent, when I grow up, I want to be just like you. Will McCollum

**The Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument Dedication Ceremony** is scheduled for 4:00 PM, April 18, 2018 at the Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Amphitheater (located directly behind the Tomb of The Unknowns. No tickets are required, and there are no fees. The public is warmly invited to attend.

The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) Legacy Committee strongly recommends all attendees arrive at the ANC Welcome Center by 2:30 PM to allow time for the required airport-style screening at the cemetery entrance and travel to the site. Private vehicles are not permitted in the cemetery. The walk from the Welcome Center to the Memorial Amphitheater takes about 20 minutes. The Legacy Committee is coordinating bus/trolley transportation from the Visitors Center to the amphitheater for those unable to walk the distance to the Tomb of The Unknown Soldier.

At 4:50 PM following the retiring of the colors, a wreath-laying ceremony will commence with flowers carried from the amphitheater to the nearby monument located on Memorial Drive in Section 35, a short 75-yard walk. Those wishing to honor their lost loved one with flowers are welcome to join the procession with their wreath or bouquet. Following the dedication ceremony, a reception will be held at 5:30 to 7:00 PM at The Women In Military Service For America Memorial (WMSAM) located near the Visitors Center at the west end of Memorial Avenue. All VHPA members and their families, Vietnam Veterans, Gold Star Families and distinguished visitors are invited to attend the post-dedication event.

The VHPA North Carolina Chapter will provide a combat UH-1 for display in front of the WMSAM for the April 18th ceremonies. The helicopter is the perfect symbol to complement the event and will remind all visiting ANC of the courage and sacrifice of those who operated rotary-wing aircraft in the

Vietnam War. Our thanks in advance to the North Carolina Chapter for this worthy contribution. Funding for the April 18th activities must be paid for with private donations and contributions. Although the VHPA has paid for the construction and installation of the monument, the day’s events still need funding. We ask for your financial support. Please consider donating to cover the expenses of complementary souvenir programs, transportation, and reception expenses. All donations are tax-deductible, and any funds remaining after expenses are met will go to the VHPA scholarship fund.

Accommodations in the immediate area of Arlington National Cemetery are likely to be expensive due to cherry blossom season and Congress being in session on April 18th. For those on a tight budget, we suggest considering hotels away from the downtown district having access to the great Washington Metro system (ANC has it's own station stop). The closer to the Washington Mall, the more expensive hotels become, most near ANC are all well over \$200 a night. The best locations found under \$200 are:

1. Marriott Courtyard Springfield, 6710 Commerce Street, Springfield, Virginia 22150
2. Falls Church Marriott, Fairview Park 3111 Fairview Park Drive, Falls Church, Virginia 22042
3. Fairfield Inn & Suites, Alexandria 6421 Richmond Highway, Alexandria, Virginia 22306
4. Residence Inn Alexandria Old Town/Duke Street, 1456 Duke Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314
5. Courtyard Arlington Crystal City/Reagan National Airport, 2899 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, Virginia 22202
6. Holiday Inn Express Springfield, 6401 Brandon Ave, Springfield, VA, 22150
7. Courtyard Potomac Mills Woodbridge, 14300 Crossing Pl., Woodbridge, VA 22192 USA
8. Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites Woodbridge 14030 Telegraph Road, Woodbridge, VA 22192

It would be an honor to have you join with us on April 18, 2018, as we conclude the four-year effort to build and place the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument within the nation's most hallowed ground: Arlington National Cemetery. All are welcome to join us as we honor the young men who gave "...the full measure of devotion" operating rotary-wing aircraft in the Vietnam War.

#### SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

We presently have five students receiving funding of \$1,500 per semester. Several of these students will be graduating this Spring. They will automatically be refunded if their GPA is 3.0 GPA or better. Right now, all five students are maintaining their required GPA. The Scholarship Committee voted and approved funding as of October, 2017 at our reunion in DC to one student per year. The students not chosen are able to reapply for October, 2018. This year's recipient was Abigail Blessing, University of Texas San Antonio, she is the granddaughter of Marshall Hawkins. The application forms are quite extensive and must reach me by mail, not online, as the signatures of recommending people must be in hard copy. The forms are available on the 281stAHC website under Scholarships (281st.com/MemberArea/Scholarship). The completed packet must be received by Dr. Forcht by July 15, 2018. The packets are then sent to the committee members for review. Please remember that teachers are usually not available during the summer months for signatures. A sincere thanks to all the 281st AHC members for their generosity in contributing to this most important program. All contributions can be sent to: Walt Pikul, Scholarship Committee Treasurer, at 1000 Hope Mills Road, Fayetteville, NC 28304 or include your contribution in your registration packet for the reunion in Gettysburg, VA in October, 2018. Jim Baker has kindly agreed to Chair the Scholarship Committee for this coming year. Our thanks to Jim Torbert for his outstanding leadership on the committee for many years. The other officers are Jack Mayhew, Advisor; Karen Heintz Forcht, Secretary, Walt Pikul, Treasurer. Please address any questions to: Dr. Karen Heintz Forcht, 1715 Dunleith Way, Greensboro, NC 27455, 336-638-7544 or [kforcht@elon.edu](mailto:kforcht@elon.edu)

#### LOST AND FOUND - Jay Hays

The PX has been designated the lost and found. At Ft. Campbell I was given a canon IXUS digital camera in a black with orange trim case. This was left at the reunion in DC. No one has claimed it, no name so I took the liberty to view photos to see if I could identify who it might belong to. It appears most photos were taken on a European cruise. Mostly architectural, art. Flowers, acres of tulips windmills possibly Holland. Possibly boat trips in Venice and great looking pastries. A tour of a castle. Whoever it belongs to has a great ability to catch the beauty that is present. If yours, contact Jay at [Jhays@haysenterprises.com](mailto:Jhays@haysenterprises.com)  
One photo below.



#### 281st AHC Association Contact Information

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Many thanks to Don Budlong, the past newsletter editor, for all his work the last 3 years in writing and editing the newsletter, and for his tremendous help in getting me started in this new job. Dean