



April
2023

**281ST ASSAULT HELICOPTER
COMPANY ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER**

No. 83



2022 Intruder of the Year, Wes Schuster

withdrawal penalty. Since our interest is 18 cents a month I am not too worried about any penalty. Now BoA is giving me trouble, and they said we are not authorized a credit card without more EB minutes allowing me to borrow on your behalf...even though the last minutes said I was authorized to conduct banking business. We need a card to pay our periodic internet fee, no card to capture a \$14 fee, no 281st website. The solution? They let me have a debit card. So I can debit as much money as I want out of the account but I can't charge to the account. If that makes sense to you apply for a job as Joe Biden's speechwriter. More later.

From Bain Black, Reunion Chairperson

As mentioned in the last newsletter, during February Jeff Murray and I made the trip to Dayton, OH. This newsletter will confirm that Dayton will be the venue for our 2023 Intruder Reunion. The host hotel is the Dayton/Fairborn Holiday Inn. It is a very nice hotel with all the necessary facilities to accommodate our reunion. Below you will find information regarding reunion registration and hotel reservations. Our hotel rate is \$139/night, plus tax which includes parking and buffet breakfast. They will honor this rate from Sunday 9/10 (early arrival) thru the evening of Wednesday 9/13. The rate is also good for the evening of 9/14 for those who desire an extra day at the AF Museum or other sights around Dayton.

You must make your own hotel reservations by calling: Holiday Inn Dayton Fairborn reservations 937-426-7800. Reference code AHC. Deadline for hotel reservations to ensure the quoted rate is 8/22/23.

From the President by Jeff Murray

Our Intruder Family is contracting a bit, an inevitable event attributable to aging. As a result a few jobs are without leaders and we amateurs are running things. We need a new Treasurer, but seeing as how we most likely won't get one here is the latest update on our banking situation. When Fred Beck, our past treasurer, died, Wells Fargo began treating us like bastard stepchildren. We were not even allowed to pay our bills. Having worked for Bank of America for a long time I stepped in, found a way to get the bills paid and after maybe 2 dozen meetings with WF executives and holding almost as many 281st EB telephone and email and text meetings we managed to gain control of our own money and I transferred most of it to Bank of America. I still have the WF CD to work on, which I will do even though that entails a monetary early



Reunion Registration Deadline is 8/10/23

This year we are using a third party, Armed Forces Reunions (AFR), Inc., to assist with our gathering.

MAKE ALL CHECKS OUT TO AFR

You have four options for registration:

1. Go to www.events.afr-reg.com/e/281AHC2023

Complete the registration form and mail to AFR with your check. \$150/ adult and \$50/ child under 16. \$25 association dues + any donation you may want to make to the scholarship fund. Mailing address:

Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.

322 Madison Mews

Norfolk, VA 23510

Attn: 281st AHC

2. Go to the AFR website above, complete the form, and charge to your credit card online. Print a copy of the registration form for your records.

3. Go to our website, www.281st.com, print the registration form and follow the instructions.

4. Print the registration form at the end of this newsletter, complete the form and mail to AFR at the address above along with your check made to AFR.

Included in your registration fee is:

- Transportation to and from the AF Museum
- Buffet Luncheon at the AF Museum with our MIA/KIA memorial service
- Access to the museum
- Guided tour of the Museum in the morning
- Banquet Wednesday evening (buffet)
- Hospitality Room and PX access

Dayton International has frequent flights from most airports. Cab or Uber rides are about 20-25 minutes. You may want to take a look at the National Museum of the US Air Force website:

www.nationalmuseum.af.mil

This fantastic museum is billed as the largest aviation museum in the world!!

The museum has complimentary electric scooters and wheel chairs for those who need them.

They are available at the front entrance.



FUTURE INTRUDER REUNIONS

We will discontinue having formal annual Intruder Reunions after 2023 for obvious reasons, like thinning of our ranks as well as fewer members capable and willing to do the work. **We will however continue having reunions**, but out of necessity, they will be downsized. With that in mind, there is enthusiasm for continuing the tradition of fellowship and remembering our MIA/KIA. My proposal to the board and our membership is that we will select a city for our reunion and negotiate the best possible deal with a hotel. Everyone will pay as they go. No formal banquets or luncheons. No registration fees. We will find restaurants that can accommodate our group and probably have a hospitality suite, but without a PX. The purpose of reunions is to spend time together. Perhaps we can plan the venue around an activity, such as a baseball game at a major or minor league level. Some coordination will be necessary, but no heavy lifting.



Where Were You October 3, 1986? by Wes Schuster, Immediate Past President

If you were lucky, you were in Edwardsville, Illinois. 30 Intruders gathered for our first reunion for three days October 3rd 4th, and 5th. The accommodations weren't fancy, a Days Inn, but the beer flowed, and the camaraderie renewed.

Paul Maledy (Rat Pack 67-69) led a caravan of cars to Scott A.F.B. to visit the 281st which was still an

active unit then. We went there for the retirement of colors of the 281st. As it turned out the ceremony was delayed for another year, but we got to see some of the 281st past and present. Everyone wandered through the hanger looking for familiar tail numbers. Some grasped the cyclic stick or sat in the gunner's well again. For those of us who had not been on the flight line for a few years, it was the first look at a Black Hawk.

On the flight line we took pictures by platoon and as a company. Former Warrant Officer, Don Torrini, soon to become Colonel Torrini landed a Huey during the photo shoot and joined in. It was a surprise when one of the current crew chiefs turned out to be a Ms. This was the new Army.

That evening we had a banquet. We had our first memorial "a special roll call was read to remember all our friends who will never be able to join us". Following the banquet, awards were presented, slides, photos, and VCR tapes were viewed.



The First Intruder Reunion, 1986

Awards Presented Were:

Gained Most Weight (all muscle) Ron Harkless

Best Groomed (full beard and crop of hair) Ken Miller

Most Productive Fathers, Charles Althouse, five girls and Walt Stobe, five boys

Traveled the Farthest (South Africa) Bill Beasley
Special Plaque (could have been the original IOTY) went to Duane "Tubby" Brudvig for contacting everyone and creating interest in forming the first reunion. Those involved in the first committee were Wes Schuster, Charles Althouse, Joe Blitzke, Tubby Brudvig, and Dean Roesner

For photographs of the first reunion and names of the attendees check out 281st.com.

More importantly, don't miss September 11, 12 & 13th for our last formal reunion in Dayton, Ohio and the National Museum of the USAF.

SCHOLARSHIP REPORT by Jim Baker, Chairman

As you know, some of the activities of the Association are changing, however, the Scholarship Fund will continue to operate as in the past. Currently you are all supporting nine great students who are attending some of the strongest, largest, and finest universities in the country. Each student is strong academically, and together they are making us and their families proud.

The Fund itself is still strong financially and enjoying support with donations from our membership and private donors. Interest from students and families is still active. A copy of our book "More Than a Name On The Wall" is now being sent to each new awardee so they can learn about the man their award is honoring.

It will soon be time to start accepting and reviewing student applicants for the 2023/2024 academic year.

If you have a high school senior or graduate in your family who is considering entering college this fall, please go to our website: 281st.com for program details and an application. Remember, this also applies to those who may be considering an approved technical or trade institution instead of college.

Applications will be reviewed by our Board of Directors this summer, and we will do everything we can to get your student some money to help with their college expenses this fall.

Please plan to continue your Scholarship Fund donation as we move on, and remember new student applications are due by June 15. You may contact me or the Fund Secretary if you have any questions. Contact information is at the end of this newsletter.

NOTICE: Due to the loss of our Treasurer and Membership Chairman Fred Beck, please send anything concerning membership or treasurer responsibilities to our President at:

Jeff Murray

**6904 Vista Ridge Drive West
Ft. Worth, TX 76132**

INCIDENTS I REMEMBER by Jack Mayhew

My recollections of Ft. Wolters are mostly the large multi-legged insects, with big teeth and stingers, found in the bath tub and or shower each morning. Most, if not all, of the classes were Q (Qualification) courses. The best memories of the area were created at the great bar in the Baker Hotel where we spent a lot of time.

Pre-Wolters, in the test activity at Ft. Rucker, we had all kinds of helicopters from the first Hughes LOH (Loach), to the first Sky Crane. We also had several experienced WO's, with years of experience, whose job was to put time on the aircraft to determine component life. Literally fly them until something either failed or was about to.

As the Assistant Operations Officer, I was in charge of flight scheduling. Therefore, like Will McCollum in VN, I had lots of friends. To break up the boredom of hovering and flying around the airfield in a H-13 for two hours, my new found friends would invite me to go fly with them where they would teach me the finer points of hovering and helicopter flight in general. Hovering the Sky Crane from the third seat (facing backward) was a real thrill.

Arriving at Wolters a couple of years later I was prepared for the Q course, had a great instructor, and a lot of time for the Baker Hotel Bar. I later served with a chap named Ron Baker, whose family owned the hotel.

You have not flown a helicopter until you have flown right seat (over the exhaust) in an H-19, at night, over the Mojave Desert.

In the 1st AD at Ft. Hood, we had 3 helicopters in the company and one Captain, one Lieutenant. and one Chief Warrant Officer 3. We flew all three helicopters to the Mojave for a big exercise. The Lt. (Lou Lerda) flew the H-13, I flew the H-19, and the CWO-3 (Johnny Sandage) flew the almost new Huey UH-1B. I always thought there was something wrong with that line up.

**WISE ASS #1 by Thomas Lundrigan, Pilot 68-69**

I had just come back out of the field from Delta and was back in Nha Trang getting nightly maintenance done, and flying "ash & trash" during the day. That night the "O" club had a band. They were pretty good. When they finished they announced they were going over to the other side of the base to play at the NCO club and being a Warrant Officer that meant I could double dip. I could go to the Officers club and the NCO club. So I and several other Warrants "borrowed" some jeeps and went to the NCO club. After the show was over, I went to hit the head and I told the guys to wait. When I came out they were gone. "Very funny guys". So, there I stand at the NCO club with an aircraft runway between me and my bunk. The runway was a couple of thousand feet in each direction, but I could see the barracks on the other side of the runway. Soooooo, I started walking across the runway. As I was crossing, I yelled "Ratpack one zero crossing runway one two". I then heard "Woof, Woof, Grrrrr". Not good. Two APs with a dog show up and are relieved it's just a GI, but since they had already reported the incident, they needed to bring me in. They loaded me up in their jeep and took me to jail. At the jail, I met a very unhappy lieutenant. Very intense. He tells me I'm in a lot of trouble. I can be locked up, reprimanded, article 15 etc. Here's where the wise ass comes in. What can they do to me? Send me to Vietnam to fly helicopters and get shot at. Would they lock me up on a nice secure base in an air conditioned building with three decent meals a day. Throw me in that briar patch. I figured the next day I'd be in a Huey flying a mission. The lieutenant calls the 281st and after a while says I'm being released to Major Moberg and I'm to report to him first thing in the morning. Once again the wise ass comes out when I ask "could someone drive me back to the barracks because that's what got me here in the first place". The lieutenant rolls his eyes and walks away. The two APs and dog loaded me up in their jeep and took me back to the barracks. Evidently, the guys that left me at the NCO club found out what happened. When I arrived at the barracks they jumped out of the barracks with fire extinguishers and doused me down with water. The two APs couldn't leave fast enough. The next morning after talking with Major Moberg, I went out to the flight line, strapped a Huey to my back, and flew a mission.

499 SIGNAL DETACHMENT AVIONICS by Wayne Sellers 68-69 What was the daily routine as a member of the 499th Signal Detachment (Avionics)? The detachment test equipment and spares were housed in the typical mobile van which would normally be mounted on a 2 ½ ton military vehicle for mobility purposes. Our shelters (3 each) were ground mounted with a wooden shed. The wooden shed was approximately 40 to 50 feet across the front and maybe 25 feet deep. There were two vans where technicians could repair equipment and one storage van where serviceable items could be stored until needed.

Another very important responsibility was the daily (12 hours per day) of the company switch board, SB-22. This switch board was also taken on deployment and connected all the functional elements of the 281st AHC, and the 483rd Transportation Detachment (Aircraft Maintenance). We also interfaced with the 5th Special Forces Communicators.

We were the 281st AHC “nerds”. No one never/hardly ever came to visit our shelter/location. The crew chief would call one of the repairmen when they had a communication issue. The aircraft communications consisted of FM, UHF and on-board intercom system. There was “flight following” navigational aids too but they were not used for voice communications. We always had serviceable radios and other replaceable components on hand. The technician would walk to the flight line, check out the aircraft communications systems with the crew chief, and replace the defective major component or fix the wiring, etc. Technicians like Sp5 Garner spent a great deal of time on the flight line with the crew chiefs just like so many of the other technicians. We were always doing things to maintain rapport to make sure the pilots and crew had a high level of confidence with our capabilities.

The only bad story was when someone hit our HF equipped commo jeep and bent the fender. Major Ellis thought it was me. He couldn't prove it but put a great deal of pressure on me. I was able to get it repaired without an accident report thanks to Larry Salzman. I understand Larry isn't with us anymore. There are a few non-mission specific incidents that really stick out in my mind.

First, were the incoming mortars. When Charlie would attack our compound with mortars and/or rockets, at first, I would run out of the barracks with the other pilots and take cover in the bunkers. After I

heard about the Warrant Officer who lived on the second floor, that while running down the steps for the bunker, got wounded by shrapnel when a mortar exploded in a 55-gallon drum we used for trash, I just rolled out of my bed on the floor and covered up with my mattress until the incoming stopped. Once the incoming stopped, I ran to the bunker. Sometimes a second attack would occur, so it was best to stay in the bunker until the “all clear” signal would sound.



The second incident was when the artillery base on the other side of the Nha Trang Mountains was attacked. They would call in for “Puff the Magic Dragon” support. This was an Air Force C-130 equipped with mini-machine guns and tons of ammo. When they fired their guns, a stream of tracers could be seen and it looked like a long finger of death was raining down on the enemy. Many times, there were a great deal of enemy killed, but a body count was difficult because the enemy would remove their dead before an accurate body count could be made.

Anyway, it was an amazing sight to see and hear. The third item was the way the 5th Special Forces cared for their own. The Officer and Enlisted Clubs were awesome. Friday nights was steak and lobster. The lobsters were extremely fresh. I was told the Green Berets, while scuba diving training off Hon Tre Island, would catch the lobsters throughout the week so we would have them on Friday.

Cockroaches: These pests were all around. In the barracks, they would crawl on the walls and ceiling, especially at night after the lights were turned off. We didn't sleep that well at night due to the threat of incoming mortar fire or other enemy aggression. These large cockroaches were between 2 and 2 ½ inches long. They would crawl on the ceiling at night and sometimes fall onto our beds. You can imagine how fast we got out of bed. Many times, when

possible, we would nap during the day and stay up late at night, so the cockroaches couldn't fall on us from the ceiling. Down days were also a time to catch up on sleep.

I also flew gunner in the A Shau Valley but Major Miller, the Company Commander, stopped me because I was the Avionics, Communications and Crypto officer for the 281st AHC and assisted the 5th Special Forces Commo guys with their communications and crypto needs and knew too much the NVA could get out of me if captured. Major Miller came to this decision after the Delta guys captured a NVA Lt. Communications officer who gave them a great deal of information about the NVA troops doing Rest and Recuperation (R & R) in Da Nang and the communications stream from Da Nang to Hanoi. I wasn't even permitted to fly with aircraft maintenance because they were always under possible enemy fire.

During this deployment with Delta Project, we would look out across the rice paddies perimeter and watch male Vietnamese clothed in black PJs, and wearing their straw hats walking down the trails. I was told that these guys may have been Vietcong, but we couldn't shoot them unless they were aggressive towards us. It did appear that there was a slight bulge under their PJs, signifying that they may have had an AK47.

For these many years, I have forgotten as much as possible about this assignment as well as my second Vietnam tour of duty, 18 months later in 1971-72, with the 1st Signal Brigade Long Bien, Vietnam. It wasn't until I read the well written book "Above the Best" by William McDaniel McCollum that all these memories returned. I can tell everyone that the comradery within the 281st AHC in support of the 5th Special Forces and especially Project Delta was beyond the call of duty in every aspect. I am so very proud to have served with these professionals. When I read about the loss of men and aircraft, it brought back memories and tears to my eyes. The reading also tied locations, names and events together too. It makes me as the Avionics and Communications unit officer, 1968-69, very proud of all pilots and crew when I hear or read about their missions accomplished and think about the team effort it took to make a unit like the 281st AHC great. Besides the pilots and crew there were the aircraft mechanics and test pilots who made sure that the helicopters were going to be reliable when on mission and the avionics

and communications technicians who made sure that the men who flew these missions could count on their command and control commo to work without an issue.

The mission support of the 5th Special Forces, South Korean Army, and others never questioned the bravery of the 281st AHC men, because they knew they would always be there for them without hesitation or reservation. It feels good that our service is recognized now after so many years later, because there was a time when we weren't so appreciated.

To all: **"Thank You for Your Service"!!!**

INCIDENTS I REMEMBER While flying along single ship, at altitude, from one place to another, we observe another single Huey (not with us) a mile or so away suddenly drop rapidly in an autorotation. Now an autorotation is not a normal flight maneuver, it's performed only when there is something wrong, usually with the mechanical operation of the ship, such as an engine failure, or when out of fuel. So to see a ship that looks OK suddenly autorotate is an attention getter to anyone watching.

While the pilots are debating about it having an engine failure and whether or not to call it in, I immediately called on the intercom "look for a high performance at our level inbound." The phrase "high performance" is an all inclusive term to mean any jet aircraft, as they move so much faster than everything else in the air. All four sets of eyes of the crewmen immediately scan the sky and sure enough, at 9 o'clock level was an F-4 Phantom jet inbound. So we quickly autorotated also to get below his level, as they fly so fast that it's not wise to always assume that if you see them, they also see you. I knew to call the check because an incident like that had happened months before when I was a gunner and the lesson was learned. Lots to learn to stay alive over there.



INFO by Brent Gourley aka bgrly

Filed your taxes yet? April 18th approaches quickly. I finally converted most of the Wolf Pack page to more modern code; in the process, made the names and photo lists more readable with a lighter background. The internet masters "deprecate" older methods. That saves your browser from remembering methods it may never use again; I think the web browser may be the most complex software in your computer, other than Windows. I have made my first inquiry to a web page service business with the idea of finding a way to keep it online for perhaps a decade after we can no longer perform that task. I really don't expect a reply (that we can afford). Does anyone have a kid or in-law in the business that would take over ownership of a static website? Look for reunion data on the page soon.



Mitigating circumstances

Both optimists and pessimists contribute to society. The optimist invents the airplane; the pessimist, the parachute.

FROM JOE BOARMAN & HIS FAMILY

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the 281st assoc. for all the calls, cards, messages, and flowers during this most difficult time with the loss of my wife, Angie's mother, and her children's grandmother. We appreciate everything that all of you in the 281st have done for us. PS: We want to thank Lou and Linda Lerda for everything they have done for us, especially for Dad, it means more than you know. Sincerely and ever so grateful, Angie Watson



Cheryl and Frank Becker (left) present Will and Peg McCollum with his Quilt of Valor.

OBITUARIES

Sandi Ruskauff, wife of Don Ruskauff, Maintenance Officer, and 281st Commanding Officer 6/68-6/69, died on 3/28/23 after a long illness.

Kenneth Donald Served in 3rd Platoon (Wolf Pack) as a Pilot **4-67 to 4-68**

281st AHC Association Contact Information**THE EXECUTIVE BOARD (Elected)**

Jeff Murray, President Tamu73@sbcglobal.net

George Dossett, V Pres. georgedossett@att.net

Dave Mitchell, Secretary djmitch0470@gmail.com

TREASURER – POSITION OPEN

Bain Black, Reunion Chair kbainblack@gmail.com

APPOINTED OFFICERS (Abbreviated list)**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN – POSITION OPEN**

Brent Gourley, Internet Groups Administrator

bgrlyy@gmail.com

Will McCollum, Assoc. Resident Author

wilddanmac@yahoo.com

Jim Baker, Scholarship Committee Chairman

Bakerjw@icloud.com

PX Store Donna@haysenterprises.com

Jack Mayhew, Remembrance Committee Chairman

intruder06@me.com

Dean Roesner, Newsletter deanroesner@aol.com

281st AHC REUNION ASSOCIATION – SEPTEMBER 10-14, 2023

HOLIDAY INN DAYTON FAIRBORN – 2800 PRESIDENTIAL DR, FAIRBORN, OH 45324 – (937) 426-7800

Listed below are registration costs for the reunion. Send the total amount payable to **ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.** in the form of check or money order, your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. You may also register online and pay by credit card at www.events.afr-reg.com/e/281AHC2023 (3.5% will be added for credit card charges). All forms and payments must be received by August 10, 2023. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form.



Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.
322 Madison Mews
Norfolk, VA 23510
ATTN: 281st AHC

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Check # _____	Date Received _____
Inputted _____	Nametag Completed _____



REUNION TOUR

CUT-OFF DATE IS 8/10/23

REUNION TOUR	Price Per	# of People	Total
Tuesday, Sept 12: Bus to AF Museum – Tour Bus departs hotel promptly at 8:45 AM for the Museum. 9:00 – 11:30 Guided Tour			
11:30 – 2:00 Lunch/Memorial Service			
2:00 – 5:00 Tour Museum on your own			
5:15 – Bus departs for hotel			
AGENDA (Hospitality Suite is in the Kitty Hawk Room)			
Sun Sept 10 – Early-bird Registration, Hospitality Suite open 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM			
Mon Sept 11 – Registration, Hospitality Suite open 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM			
Tues Sept 12 – AF Museum 8:45 AM, Hospitality Suite opens 6:30 PM			
Wed Sept 13 – Meetings – Executive Board @ 9:00 AM in Columbia Boardroom			
– Membership @ 11:00 AM in Amphitheater			
– Hospitality Suite open until 3:00 PM			
– Banquet Cash Bar 6:00 PM			
– Buffet Dinner 6:45 PM			
Thurs Sept 14 – Check Out			
REGISTRATION FEES			
281st AHC Annual Membership Dues	Annual Fee	\$ 25	\$
Membership Reunion Registration	Member@	\$ 150	\$
Adult Guests	Each@	\$ 150	# \$
Children under 16 years old	Each@	\$ 50	# \$
SCHOLARSHIP FUND DONATION	THE DONATION IS 2023 TAX DEDUCTABLE		\$
	Total Amount Payable to Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.		\$

PLEASE PRINT NAME AS YOU WOULD LIKE IT TO APPEAR ON YOUR NAMETAG

FIRST _____ LAST _____ PLATOON _____ YEARS _____

SPOUSE, SIGNIFICANT OTHER (IF ATTENDING) _____

GUEST(S) NAME(S) _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PH. NUMBER (____) _____ - _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____ @ _____

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME _____ PHONE _____

Hotel Reservations must be made directly with the hotel. Room Rate \$139/night + tax. Free parking and breakfast buffet. Hotel Phone (937) 426-7800 Use Code "AHC"

Registrations received after the cut-off date will still be accepted on a space available basis, we will contact you immediately with any restrictions.

CANCELLATIONS WILL ONLY BE TAKEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 9:00am-5:00pm EASTERN TIME (excluding holidays). Call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Cancellations prior to August 10, 2023 will receive a full refund less the non-refundable AFR registration fee (\$15 per person). After August 10, 2023 please contact the association directly for refunds.

For Reunion, register online and pay by credit card at www.events.afr-reg.com/e/281AHC2023

Please bring your photos, CD's, books, maps and other memorabilia for sharing and/or display