



# 281st AHC 'Intruders' Newsletter

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38 Pleasant Street, Wenham, Massachusetts 01984

February-March, 1987

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## PRE-FLIGHT

Just as we would conduct a pre-flight inspection before taking off for a mission, it is important to mention the purpose of this newsletter so that we may accomplish our new mission.

There has begun a wellspring of interest in communicating and reacquainting with one another. It is obvious now that many people have kept contact over the years with close buddies. While we have found it difficult to find some friends many of us have held fast to the comraderie of the 281st. Without question the 281st AHC represents hard work, dedication and dependence upon one another that few people ever experience or can understand.

In that vein, a group of past members have decided to spotlight that spirit again. In this newsletter, we will bring you up to date on the happenings of the 281st Vets. We will reminisce, learn more about the 281st and plan future activities. This newsletter is also printed to help locate some of our lost members.

So spread the word - the 281st spirit prevails. Pass along the message: the "Intruders" are together again. Give this newsletter to a buddy who has not received it yet. Be sure to receive future issues and information about our planned reunions by responding and noting your desire to receive the next issue.

The 281st Intruders Newsletter is published by the past members of the 281st from donations made at our first reunion. Anyone interested in obtaining this Newsletter in the future should donate \$10.00 to:

The 281st Intruders Newsletter,  
c/o Wesley Schuster, 38 Pleasant St., Wenham, MA 01984.

Material published in the 281st Intruders Newsletter is contributed by past members of the 281st and other interested persons.

The Newsletter does not endorse any organization or person mentioned in this publication.

The 281st Intruders Newsletter welcomes letters to the editor.



## 1986 REUNION

The past members of the 281st held a reunion at Edwardsville, Illinois on October 3rd, 4th and 5th, 1986. What an exciting time for the 30 people who attended!

The reunion officially started on Friday night at 6:00 p.m. in the Days Inn lounge. Everyone quickly got reacquainted and made new friends. A lot of war stories were hashed over and many memories brought back.

Saturday morning, there was a casual breakfast meeting and a committee was formed to plan for future events.

On Saturday afternoon at 14:00, a caravan of cars led by pointman Paul Maledy ("Ratpack" 1969) drove to Scott A.F.B. to visit the 281st. It had been planned earlier in the year to retire the 281st colors and to reorganize as the 62nd Aviation Battalion. The current members of the 281st thought it would be a good idea to invite the old members for this occasion. As it turned out the retiring of the colors has been delayed into 1987. It still struck everyone that the best place to have our first reunion was at the home of the 281st.

So at Scott A.F.B. 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 who had not been on the flight line for a few years, it was the first look at a Black Hawk.

Upon being invited up to the company offices we were pleased to find past awards and memorabilia from Vietnam.

Out on the flight line pictures were taken of the members by platoons: 1st Plt. Ratpack; 2nd Plt. Bandits; and 3rd Plt. Wolfpack; then other members and special guests such as Sam Patellos, 10th Bn.C.O.; Bill Beasley, Avionics; Roger Green, Ex.O. of the 281st and the wives and girlfriends.

Former Warrant Officer, Don Torrini, soon to be Colonel Torrini, landed a Huey during the photo session and joined in. It was of considerable surprise when one of the crewchiefs turned out to be a Ms. Ever the true crewchief, Ron Harkless ("Ratpack" 1968 crewchief) assisted in the blade tie down. Atta boy Ron!

The afternoon was soon over with the current 281st C.O. talking with members and explaining the future of the 281st. As we learned the new 62nd Aviation Battalion Combat will consist of two Black Hawk UH 60 companies.

The banquet that evening was well attended. It was particularly gratifying to have many wives and girlfriends grace the 281st. It was a warm gathering "...to remember all our friends..." and a special roll call was read of "...some who will never be able to join us — our fondest memories are for them."

Following the banquet awards were presented and slides, photos and VCR tapes were viewed.

Awards were given to members who:

**Gained the most weight** went to Ron Harkless (Ratpack '68) who weighs 90 lbs more and is very solid. No pinch an inch on Ron! A dietary silver set was presented to Ron.

**Best groomed Warrant Officer** went to former Warrant Officer now retired, Major Ken Miller (Wolfpack 1969). Ken, upholding a W.O.'s penchant for neatness, has grown a full beard and crop of hair. Ken's new 15 inch comb will be put to good use.

**Most Productive Father** was shared by Charles Althouse (Bandit '67) and Walter Stobe (Wolfpack '69). Charles has five girls and Walter has five boys — now that is an even formation guys! Needless to say a giant cigar was in order.

**Traveled the farthest** award was won hands down by Bill Beasley (Avionics '67-'68). Bill resides in South Africa. He was awarded an airplane — balsa wood — for his efforts.

A special award was then presented to Duane (Tubby) Brudvig (Wolfpack 1969). Tubby had spearheaded the reunion with his tireless efforts in contacting people and creating interest among everyone. For his efforts Tubby received a plaque signed by all who attended.

Sunday was departure day. While it was difficult to part our ways again, there was a good strong feeling. We had seen some friends again, we met some others who had a common bond and most importantly, we revitalized the 281st spirit.

### 281st AHC Committee Chairmen

*President/Treasurer*  
Wes Schuster

*Vice President Communications*  
Duane (Tubby) Brudvig

*Rollcall/Reunion*  
Joe Billitzke

*Historian*  
Dean Roesner

*Newsletter Printer*  
Charles Althouse





*Editor's Note: One of the main objectives of our reunion at the 281st at Scott A.F.B. was to ensure the company flag was not inadvertently lost when the company colors are retired. You can imagine our great surprise when the following story was told by Dean Roesner, company historian, at the awards banquet.*

### THE COMPANY FLAG CAPER by Dean Roesner

Sometime in the Spring of 1969, a mutual challenge was issued among three crewmembers of Rat Pack. Steve Wood, Paul Malady and myself shared a room upstairs in the Rat Pack barracks. One evening after returning from the NCO Club, in a possibly less than sober state, we decided that someone should steal the company flag for a souvenir. The discussion of how to do it didn't proceed too far before the standard challenge was issued which went something to the effect that you didn't have any hair on a certain part of your anatomy if you didn't do it. In those days that was a very serious challenge and not to be ignored. However, the flag was always standing right outside the orderly room during the day, and at night it was inside where the duty CQ could watch it.

A couple of months passed. Then one night I was returning to the company area, and as I passed the orderly room, I saw the flag had been set outside while the floor was being mopped. There were two or three people in the room, but no one else in sight. I walked on past to the first barracks, got out my pocket knife and doubled back. When I reached the flag, there was still no sign of anyone outside, so I grabbed it, cut it off the pole and put it inside my shirt. I hurried back to my barracks and hid it overhead inside one of the hollow ceiling beams. The next morning the First Sergeant was somewhat upset at formation and mentioned something about going to jail if you were caught. So, I left the flag in the beam for about a month and mailed it home the day before I left the company, with the idea that if it should be found by some type of mail inspection, I would already be a civilian by the time they tracked me down. Anyway, I've kept the flag now for 17 years and brought it to the 281st AHC reunion with the idea of returning it since they were supposed to phase out the unit and retire the colors.

However, it was suggested that I keep the flag and bring it to all future reunions, which I fully intend to do.

*(When Dean told this story he received an ovation. Atta bc Dean!)*

### OUR HISTORY IS IMPORTANT — LET US RECORD IT NOW AND LET IT BE A SHINING EXAMPLE FOR THE FUTURE.

#### TO ALL THOSE INTERESTED IN THE 281st AHC:

As a part of our reunion gatherings, I am writing a unit history of the 281st and thought I would mention what I need from everyone.

I already have some written unit history from some members and the official history for the year 1969. I expect some more official history to be coming in from the 281st in St. Louis.

*However, I would like some personal experiences and remembrances from individual members of the unit. If you remember a funny instance, or tragic one, please put it down.*

I am not going to slant this pro-military or anti-military or pro-war or anti-war. I am going to simply write a factual account of what happened. If you can remember the date and names of crew members and tail numbers in these accounts, please include them since the official history simply states that an aircraft was lost or damaged but do not give tail numbers or crew names.

If you don't like to write, how about sending a cassette

Mail to:

Dean Roesner  
494 Woodcliff Drive  
Redding, CA 96003

P.S. If you have any material that would help me but you want to keep, just make a note of it and I will copy it and send you back the original.





# CAMPAIGN PARTICIPATION CREDIT OF THE 281st AHC

Vietnam Counteroffensive ..... December 25, 1965 - June 30, 1966  
Vietnam Counteroffensive  
Phase II ..... July 1, 1966 - May 31, 1967  
Vietnam Counteroffensive  
Phase III ..... July 1, 1965 - January 29, 1968  
Tet Counteroffensive ..... January 30, 1968 - April 1, 1968  
Vietnam Counteroffensive  
Phase IV ..... April 2, 1968 - June 30, 1968  
Vietnam Counteroffensive  
Phase V ..... July 1, 1968 - November 1, 1968  
Vietnam Counteroffensive  
Phase VI ..... November 2, 1968 - February 22, 1969  
Tet '69 Counteroffensive ..... February 28, 1969 - June 8, 1969  
Vietnam Summer-Fall 1969 ..... June 9, 1969 - October 31, 1969  
Vietnam Winter-Spring 1970 ..... November 1, 1969 - April 30, 1970  
Sanctuary Counteroffensive ..... May 1, 1970 - June 30, 1970  
Vietnam Counteroffensive  
Phase VII ..... July 1, 1970 - June 30, 1971

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PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

**TO:**