



281st Assault Helicopter Company Association

"INTRUDERS"

NHA TRANG
1965 - 1970

NEWSLETTER
NUMBER 49

Reunion
Special
2012

REUNION 2012

Said by many to be "The Best Yet"!

The Guys



The Ladies



From the Prez....

Our Association just completed its most recent (August 1 – 4) annual reunion, and except for the attendance numbers (down about 15%), it was a great weekend. There were several first time attendees, all of who seemed very pleased and happy with their experience.

Some highlights were: dinner at Charlie Gitto's Italian in Harrah's Casino; a tour of St. Louis Cardinals Busch Stadium; comments from Captain Brian Middleton, the first Company Commander of the G Company Intruders in Afghanistan; a fun filled magic and illusion show; and the guest speaker on Saturday night, Bill Robinson, who as an enlisted man spent seven years in North Viet Nam as a POW.

Former Command Sgt. Major Bob Ohmes was named the "Intruder of the Year". Bob, however, could not be there to accept due to illness. We all hope Bob makes a great recovery, and that we will see him at another reunion soon.

Of interest to many of you is the issue of future reunion sites. The Executive Board announced that the reunion next year would again return to St. Louis. But, a committee was appointed to seriously evaluate new sites for the reunion starting in 2014. The question of scheduling was decided by a vote of the members attending the General Membership Meeting on Saturday morning. The majority vote was to continue holding the reunion during the first week of August. Therefore, the dates of the reunion in 2013 are July 31st – August 4th.

As reunion chairman, I want to acknowledge so many people who help make everything go. Without their dedication and willingness to work, the reunion would not be what it is. They come in early to help set up, and do what needs to be done, often with little or no help. People like Don Torrini, who handles registration, Jay Hays, who sets up the PX and memorabilia room, coordinates the audio/visual presentations and much more, and Paul Maledy who always does an outstanding job in the hospitality room, Fred Mentzer, who is responsible for name tags and T-shirts, and Frank Becker, who can always be counted on to do what ever he is asked. Additionally, people like Joe Boarman, Bill Helpingstine, and others who, when they can make it, do what they can to help out. I must

also mention some of the wives who contribute each year and have become valuable assets in various areas of running the show. Ladies like Doris Hays, Bonnie Maledy, Cheryl Becker, Karen Mentzer, Marilyn Torbert, and her sister-in-law, Marybeth Schmidt, our concierge department, and finally my wife, Joan, a great help to me this year. I'm sure I overlooked someone, but all these people were invaluable and I want to thank them very much.

I hope you can all make it next year, but if not, maybe another year very soon.

Jim Baker
President

The VP's Two Cents....

Once again we had very successful reunion due to the hard work and diligence of Jim Baker. Thank you, Jim for a job well done. You're going to be a tough act to follow.

The reunion started with the group going to Charlie Gittos at Harrah's Casino on Thursday night where a fine meal was enjoyed by all.

On Friday, there was a wine tasting tour as well as a tour of Busch Stadium where the group visited the different eating and drinking clubs, the broadcast booth and finally on to the track behind home plate. "MURRAY STAY OFF OF THE GRASS!" The guides explained how the Kentucky Blue grass, from Colorado, was mowed everyday whether the team was at home or away.

At the Friday evening buffet we had a magician entertain us. If he had made all the people disappear that he was asked to, the room would have been empty! I think BP was the most requested.

Saturday we started the day off with the wives breakfast and the General Membership meeting. In the afternoon the Memorial Service was held in remembrance of our fallen brothers and our MIA's. Our banquet had some very special guest's, Capitan Brian Middleton and his wife Julia. Captain Middleton was the C.O. of the new Intruders, G Co., 2-10 Aviation Battalion. Brian is now an associate member of the 281st. It was good we were able to see he and his wife before they begin their 3 year tour of duty in Germany.

Our second guest was Bill Robinson the longest enlisted POW held in North Vietnam.

His story was one of sadness and humor.

Our Intruder of the Year went to Command Sergeant Major Robert Ohmes. CSM Ohmes has been unable to attend our last two reunions due health reasons and we miss his hilarious skits. Please keep him your thoughts and prayers.

If you haven't been to one of reunions please consider coming. You'll renew old friendships and make some new ones.

Jim Christensen
Vice President.

The Money Man....

Now that the reunion is come and gone I have to start putting together the financial results for the Executive Board and the Reunion Committee. The former wants to see them to make sure we are reasonably in line with the bylaws that the reunion is self-supporting and not a burden to the Association treasury. The 2012 reunion committee is anxious to see them to determine whether they met their budget, whereas the 2013 committee will use them in January for budgeting for the next reunion.

The financial numbers are not completely put together at this time but I can report that by my count we had 51 members present and 40 guests attending this year compared to 53 and 44, respectively in 2011.

Fred Beck
Treasurer

The Scribe....

How can you not like reunions? I go to my high school reunions every 2 years or so, we're also a bit unique, having matriculated at Wiesbaden High in Germany. We're almost 100% conservative voters and supporters of the military. That's not surprising since all of our dads were in WWII. We do the same things we do in St Louis, we mingle, we have a room full of booze that we try hard to finish off, we go out to dinner and we have a scheduled dinner in the hotel. 90% of us are repeats and we're all friends, but it is the occasional newcomer who gets the most attention.

So it is in St Louis. Dinner at Kreiss's or on The Hill, lounging in the Hospitality Room, and not 1 but 2 dinners. We used to have regulars but

they seem to be dwindling. We've picked up new regulars whom we previously had trouble connecting with and lost some who were there from the onset. I'm not sure why, I care but can't worry about it. Like my classmates from a high school in Germany our ranks grow smaller every year. When all of your friends are north of 65 you realize each subsequent year is a gift, and at both of my reunions we count heads, reminisce about the non-returnees and have a good time. That's all we can ask for, life and a place to meet long time friends.

When the time comes that I can't come anymore I for darn sure don't want to tell my kids that I wish I had spent more time with friends, I'd rather have my friends be happy to stay away because they had just seen me. And that's one reason I keep coming to St. Louis, so all of you guys can see me.

Jeff Murray
Secretary

The SM@L speaks....

The box is all packed away for another year and the pictures are posted to the web.

Another reunion I believe was enjoyed by all. If you have never made it to a reunion you don't know the good times that you have missed. Also the females of the families seem to have as good of a time as we do.

In fact my wife kept asking in the weeks before was this one coming or that one coming.

My two small parts of the reunion this year were to head up the tour to Bush Stadium on Friday morning. I was very concerned about the weather as it had been 100 + much of the 3 weeks before, and down town St Louis is no place to be in that kind of weather. Well we got a break and was only 90 for the day. We got the tickets on line and took off for Bush. As it was we were in and out of the air conditioning from time to time and there was a nice breeze blowing that day. Tour was very interesting and other than they were about to cut Jeff Murray's toes off to hang on the left field wall for walking on the outfield grass all went well. They had told us we were not to walk on the grass no matter what! Jeff just had to see what it was like to step on there grass. We told them Jeff was always like that 40 years ago and there was not much hope to improve him so they let him go.

My other small job for the reunion was to make sure the guide arms without Intruders who gave

the most, were hung for Friday night and the Sat. meetings, means we must work with the Hotel staff when they have time. As it worked out Friday morning was when they wanted to hang them.

In true 281st. tradition this was not a problem as I had to leave to get everyone together for the Bush Tour. Just turned it over to another of our members. Joe Boarman has helped the last few years so he just took over made sure they were in the right order and helped big Dave get them the right height etc.

The next week after I returned home I had several days of tractor driving, that is when I do my thinking. In thinking about how the reunion went it was much like when we were in Nan. No one person could do all the jobs that it took to keep the 281st. running. No matter who you were or what your job, you were important. From the clerks in the ops office, to the motor pool, to the supply rooms, (and we had several), the wrench benders, or the wire runners as I was. We were all important to keep the ships in the air and the crews and pilots on their way each day so they could take them out and bring them back hopeful in most of one piece it could start over the next day. We did whatever it took maybe with a few not quite in the book modification but the flew and were safe.

Well so much from me, have a safe fall. There is already plans being made for the next two years even as we read this.

Frank Becker
Senior Member @ Large

The Membership man....

To begin, the current dues year is: 1 August 2012 to 31 July 2013. Also dues are now being included on the reunion registration form and has helped immensely! It could be a bit better, but it's pretty darn good. The reunion was well presented and with the interesting folks attending. "CONGRATS" for a job well done!

I have started another Membership Roster which will list Associate Members. It was with pleasure that I added Captain Brian and wife Julia Middleton who were attending the reunion. Brian is the first Associate Member. He was "Intruder 6" when the G Company Intruders deployed to Afghanistan.

I want to thank everyone that has been sending me their new information to update the master

roster, and with me processing the reunion registration forms a lot of changes and corrections have been taken care of, which saves postage and you get your newsletters faster. To up-date your information faster, just send an email to me at: Cooter@charter.net . If for some reason that you do not receive your newsletter by email or snail mail, which probably means that your Address or Email Address are not current. Also you can go to www.281st.com and click on Commo, Newsletters and you can print it off. It also helps if you are a member and that your dues current.

I wish to thank a very fine Intruder Dave Mitchell, Bandit 25, for making a very special delivery for the Association. His feats will be talked about in another area of the Newsletter I'm sure.

Again thank you for your support and have a very Safe and wonderful Summer and Fall season. Be safe and of course "WELCOME HOME"!!

Gary L. Stagman
Membership Chairman
281st AHC 1966-67, 68, & 70

The PX Grunt....

My thanks to the Exec. Bd. for adding Fred Beck and Fred Mentzer to the PX Committee. The help is much appreciated. Just a few notes from another successful reunion.

First, congratulations to SGM Bob Ohmes, well deserved "Intruder of the Year".

I also want to thank all of the volunteers for unpacking, packing and loading PX supplies during and after the reunion. And thanks to the reunion attendees for their welcome suggestions on future PX items. The PX sales were \$1,857 which is down \$1000-1200 from 2009 and 2010. However; in 2011 and 2012 a shirt was given to each attendee with their registration fee.

Because of articles in the last two newsletters we have sold approximately \$1,050. Thank you to Fred Mentzer, Fred Beck and Gary Stagman who arranged for orders and money to come to me. Now I can directly deposit receipts into the association account and cut out some red tape not to mention saving time and postage.

The PX website will now be administered by our Commo Committee; it was previously done by Awards Unlimited. Thank you to Amy Becker who helped set up the slide presentation for the banquet and memorial services. Some slides

were from the 2008, 2009 and 2010 reunions when Bob Ohmes and family entertained. Slides also included 281st license plates from IL, MO, PA, NY, NJ and the Canary Islands and have since been added.

Ken Smith is working on a draft outline for purchases so that the EB will have better control over expenses.

Jay Hays
PX Committee Chairman

REMEMERANCE....

During the reunion Bob Mitchell and I updated the membership on the status of our 10 MIA's (All ten have been changed to the status of "presumed to be dead".) Several individuals ask for the stats that we gave out and I will summarize them for your information and use in contacting your congressional representatives in an effort to make sure that the search activity does not slow down.

The 1st Aviation Brigade was the largest Army aviation unit ever formed and contained all the non-divisional aviation assets in country. At the end of the war the 1st Aviation Brigade, our parent unit, reported that 100 of its aviation crews were still missing. Of the 100 missing from this very large unit 10% were missing from one unit, the 281st Assault Helicopter Company, the US Army's first Special Operations Helicopter Company.

The Current Status of all MIA's is:	<u>Vietnam</u>	<u>Laos</u>	<u>Cambodia</u>	<u>CHINA</u>	<u>Total</u>
Missing	1,971	575	90	102	2,646
Returned	687	252	33	3	980
Still missing	1,284	318	57	7	1,666

The first Intruder missing is WO Daniel A. Sulander. Danny was lost in Laos on 2 December 1966. The other three-crew members were also KIA and their bodies recovered on 15 December.

The second Intruder missing is WO Walter Wrobleski who was lost on 21 May 1967 when the gunship he was crewing was shot down over Thua Thien Providence. The other three crewmembers were recovered. A few months ago the DOD office requested that we help them obtain DNA samples for Walter and thanks to several Intruders that happened. Extensive searches conducted for both Danny and Walter have been unsuccessful.

The next Intruders were lost on 8 May 1968 when their UH-1C gunship was hit and exploded while providing close air support for a troop insertion 35 miles southwest of Danang. The crew consisted of WO Condrey, WO Officer Dayton, SP Jenne and SP Jurecho.

The final Intruders lost and still missing were lost on 4 November 1969 when they were returning to Nah Trang from Duc Lap. The crew of this UH-1H were; WO Alford, WO Cavender, SPC Kilmo and SPC Ware.

The search for both of the last crews continues. The DOD MIA Office has ask for our help in pinpointing the locations of these helicopters and we have assisted them over the past year. They now believe that they have sufficient information to warrant extensive searches of both sites and have scheduled the work for early next year. We will keep you updated on any information we receive from them. In the meantime we have posted extensive information on each of these individuals on the web site. WWW. 281st.com

Please keep after your congressional representatives. Let them know that we care. –

Jack Mayhew
Remembrance Committee Chairman

Notes and Comments

More than just a story, from Jeff Murray....

This is just a feel-good story. My next door neighbor is the terminal manager for a trucking company that delivers new cars from the railhead to the dealers, about 60 big old trucks. One of his employees is a guy named Roger Owens and Roger is dying of cancer. He is homebound now, can hardly talk, and it is only a matter of time. Roger played football in college for OU, Barry Switzer was the coach. They won back to back national championships when Roger was there and Barry was the coach (1974-75). Marshall Hawkins, our

very own Hawk, found out about Roger and gave Barry a call and told him about Roger. Barry called the coach who recruited Roger, Jerry Pettibone, and together they called Roger and reminisced and said their goodbyes. They had to do most of the talking through Roger's son and wife but the message got through. I have never been a big fan of OU football but for some reason I have always liked Barry, the same Barry who has been demonized by the media and held in disdain by other coaches, but Barry always put his players first, NCAA rules be damned, and he showed that this week by making that phone call. There aren't a lot of coaches who would do that and there aren't a lot of organizations that have people like Marshall Hawkins who have the contacts to make something happen that will affect in a positive way a family that hasn't had a lot of positive things happen for a while. If I knew how to forward the phone call, which somehow was recorded, I would, so I will send a second email that has the actual phone call. Thanks to Marshall, he did himself proud.
Jeff

The 281st AHC Association Scholarship Awards Program.....



The 281st Memorial Scholarship Board of Directors is pleased to announce the selection of Sarah Hager and Logan Little as the 2012-2013 awardees. Logan is the nephew of Jim Baker and Sarah is the granddaughter of Jack Mayhew. Both of these individuals are honor students and show great promise of keeping up the high standards of excellence the students previously selected have set.

We can all be very proud of these outstanding young people who represent the 281st.



The four students currently in the program, Grace Becker, Sheena Ariel Riley, Elena Casey, and Jessica Jean Barker, continue to maintain high grade point averages (well above the required 3.0 GPA) and were approved for continued scholarship support for 2012/2013. These four individuals make all of us very proud of today's outstanding young people.

Thanks to the generosity of the reunion attendees, the scholarship fund grew by over \$6,000. In addition, there was a generous contribution from Human Resources, Inc. of \$5,000. To help the children of the families of those who served, it is not too late to make a tax-deductible contribution in any amount. Simply make your check out to the 281st AHC Scholarship Fund and mail to:

Brian Paine, CPA, Treasurer, 281st AHC Scholarship Fund, 22407 Rippling Shore Court, Katy, TX 77494

This year, we selected a new Chairman and added three new Directors to the Board. They are: Walt Pikul, CPA, Chairman, Mrs. Joan Baker, Mrs. Marilyn Paine, Mrs. Cheryl Becker, Directors. A sincere thanks to Marshall Hawkins, Chairperson, and Bob Mitchell, Board Member, for their years of dedicated services as they continue to serve the 281st in other capacities.

If you have any questions about the 281st Scholarship Fund, please send them to Dr. Karen Heintz-Forcht, Secretary. Her contact information is:

Dr. Karen Heintz-Forcht, 1715 Dunleith Way, Greensboro, NC 27455, kforcht@elon.edu, 336--638-7544

A sincere thank you for making this scholarship fund available and aiding our students success in their career endeavors.

Some chatter off the Chat net....

From: Jeffrey Murray
Sent: Sunday, August 19, 2012
Subject: [CHAT_281AHC] Weatherford

I know none of you guys remember Weatherford but aside from a ton of new houses and wider streets it is almost the same city we used to drive through on our way to Ft Worth back in the day. It's where Janie grew up and where we got married (that was for Dave Mitchell), but there never was much to do there aside from a Sonic or a DQ. Last night we ate dinner on the town square in what used to be an old hardware store and it was great. I had venison and blue cheese polenta and it was actually pretty darn good. If anyone ever gets a hankering to wander over the old haunts just let me know. <http://fireoakgrill.com/>
Jeff

From: Fred Mentzer
Sent: Sunday, August 19, 2012

I remember that hardware store back in the Camp Wolter's days. I was in there one day, found what I was looking for and while waiting to pay at the old fashioned register an older gentleman ahead was talking to who I assume was the owner. When his purchases were tallied up he decided he'd pay by check. He grabbed a yellow lined pad of paper off the counter, headed it with the name of the Weatherford bank, wrote out what he owed, signed it, tore off the excess, handed it to the owner, said a genial goodbye, and left.

Just another day in old time Texas.....

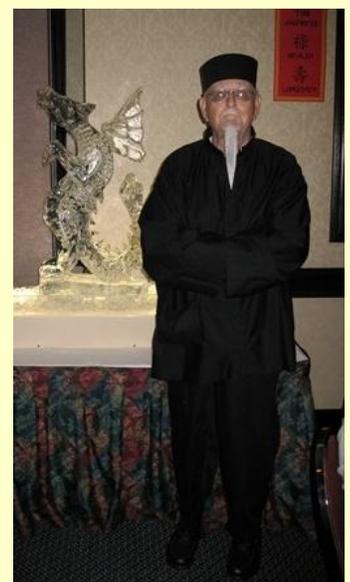
Congratulations to the "Intruder of the Year" 2012 – 2013



Command Sergeant Major Robert L Ohmes



Bob & Bonnie



**As many remember Bob
CHOU LEE'S
NO 1 LAUNDRY
HONG KONG**

"Sure the LZ is secure, I'm whispering because I have a cold. Trust me."

281ST AHC ASSOCIATION, INC. Established 4 July 1999



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