



281st Assault Helicopter Company Association

“INTRUDERS”

NHA TRANG
1965 - 1970

NEWSLETTER
NUMBER 57

May
2015

281st Assault Helicopter Company Association **REUNION 2015**



**CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL AT THE AIRPORT
ST LOUIS, MO
October 8-10, 2015**

----- SEE YOU IN ST LOUIS -----

From the President

Our weekend newspapers magazine cover story was about the movie “Jaws”, which came out 40 years ago in 1975. Ten years before that in October 1965, the U.S. Army created the 281st Assault Helicopter Company, 483th Maintenance Detachment, and reactivated the 499th Avionics Detachment. To us, that was a big deal. Even though our history only lasted 5 short years, from the number of flags hanging on the end of the

Guidon and honors still coming today, it has been a very big deal for us. We were the young men who gave of our time, and the 52 men who gave their lives, that put the 281st into the history books as the Army's First Special Operations Helicopter Company.

This year's reunion will be October 8-10, 2015, only a day or two after the 50th anniversary that the 281st was brought into existence by Army's orders, at Ft. Benning, GA. At the Reunion we will be toasting that anniversary.

In April this year we had our mid-year Association meetings. The Executive Board (EB) met and dispensed with all of our administrative issues as need be. The Reunion Committee met under the direction of Chairman Don Budlong as they ironed out almost all of the details of our October Reunion. The "281st Book" Committee met and discussed the book's progress to include the book's name and artwork. Will McCollum is the "compiler-in-chief" of the book. I would also like to thank several of the wives for joining us in St Louis; that's probably why we accomplished all that we did.

We also need nominations for "Intruder of the Year Award" for 2015. If you have any nominations, please contact Jim Baker (336-288-6659) or myself (573-324-2692) ASAP.

Frank Becker, President

From the Vice Prez.....

This year's Reunion will be like no other! We are again meeting in St. Louis, no longer in the dead of summer, this time in the cooler month of October. We are planning more entertainment and fun in the friendly confines of the Crowne Plaza Hotel. We will have "dancing girls", although they will be our wives and/or girl friends. If you plan to explore St. Louis, the hotel concierge will be more than happy to accommodate your requests. Don't forget, the hotel shuttle will still be available to pick you up at the airport and drive you around town to your favorite places to eat and visit.

At last year's Reunion in Branson we had quite a few "first timers" and are hoping for many more this year. We may even have a special gift for "first timers" this year. If you have never been to a 281st Reunion, what the heck are you waiting for? If not NOW, when? We're getting old.

Don't forget to bring your wives, girl friends, significant others or whatever you call your gal pal (we need the dancing girls). We have a special brunch planned for them as well.

Since the Association is a completely volunteer organization, we can also use an extra set of hands in St. Louis. Anyone interested in helping out, please call (843-707-7474) or email me at donbudlong281@gmail.com.

For more Reunion information as it becomes available, stay in touch by visiting the Association's rejuvenated web site at www.281st.com. Also consider joining either of our moderated networks, the HQ or Chat nets.

Don Budlong
Vice President / Reunion Chair

The Sr. Member@Large.....

Next year lets go to Washington,DC, no, lets go to Nashville, we have never been to New Orleans, what about Charlotte North Carolina. Can't we just stay in St. Louis? Each of the places have lots of good points. For our Association members it is good that we mix up places to have our annual meeting. We need to make it easy for everyone, reasonable prices, lots of options for airline flights and most of all attractive for our ladies.

Bain Black and I have talked about a number of places to have our next two maybe three association gatherings for 2016, 2017 and 2018. It takes a lot of time, planning and someone close by to check things out and to make it all happen. We have talked about Houston, Dallas, Atlanta, Minneapolis and Indianapolis. Last year at Branson, Missouri we had a good turn-out, the weather was perfect and it was a pretty good place to visit. Now back to St. Louis for this year's Reunion, easy to get in and out of by airline, great hotel, plenty of room for meetings and banquets, free shuttle and trolley to just about any place you need or want to go, and lots of things to do.

The Executive Board (EB) will decide on the next years' locations. It is never to early to start thinking and planning. Your ideas are welcome in fact we need them. Give us ideas on how to make our Reunions better, attractive and fun. This year's Reunion is shaping up to be one of the best ever, make sure you get your reservations in early.

The book, "**Above The Best**" manuscript will be available for your review, also there is talk about possibly a movie or documentary being filmed about the 281st; you need to be in St. Louis this year.

This is a great time to be a member of the Executive Board, if you know of a member who has the time and is willing to serve a few years, let us know. The pay is good and the rewards are numerous.

Will McCollum
Senior Member at Large

This from our Bean Counter.....

We had an Executive Board (EB) meeting in St Louis on April 29th wherein we addressed the financial statements for 2014. Generally this is done at the EB meeting at the reunion and thereafter presented to the General Membership meeting. We currently are in good financial condition with about \$34,000 in the bank. Our largest recurring outlays each year are for the newsletter printing and mailing and for flag cases for member funerals (purchase and shipping). In 2014 we donated \$2,000 to the Hearts Museum in Texas, which will be displaying our own Huey #113. In 2015 we will be incurring the cost of our memorial stone at Fort Bragg and part of our book publishing costs.

Fred Beck
Treasurer

The Membership guy says.....

Please let me know if you had any changes to your address, email or phone numbers. I'd prefer that you use email to contact me regarding changes (jib@new.rr.com). Otherwise call me at 920-558-4127. Like a lot of people these days I often don't answer unknown numbers on my caller ID, so please leave a message and I will call back ASAP.

Mailing address for Dues and New Membership:

J. Fred Beck
Membership Chairman
281st AHC Association, Inc.
205 Carey Court
Neenah, WI 54956
Phone: 920-558-4127 E-mail: JJB@new.rr.com

Fred Beck
Membership Chairman

The Sec'y gasses.....

So in October the 281st will once again gather in St Louis for our annual Reunion. I kind of like St Louis for a number of reasons...airfare is reasonable because it's in the middle of the country. The trip from the airport to the hotel is short and easy, at least when the shuttle driver is awake. The hotel is very nice and there are a few things to do in St Louis, even if I have already done most of them. But a lot of folks want change so consider this a request for ideas. I have a few, feel free to add more.

Fort Worth. I live close enough to be in charge of a reunion here but the airport location is a major problem. There are a number of ways to get to and from the airport but they cost money, the cheapest I found was \$22@ each way and that was in an old van that reminds me of the type of wheeled transportation the Army gave us from time to time. The average for shuttles appears to be \$50@ each way and I have no idea how reliable they are if one is on a schedule. Car rental is probably \$25/day and they'll charge you to park your car, but there are a ton of things to do in the DFW vicinity.

NYC. We could have a great time there; a lot to do that anyone can walk or take a subway to; the problem will be hotel cost. Same with Washington DC, the cheapest close hotel for Fred Mentzer's funeral is \$229, that alone may scare off some people. California, SF or LA. Again, great venues, we may be able to book a hotel for under \$200 but the airfare for those on the east coast may be prohibitive. Florida, same problem but lots of us have grandkids and can maybe couple a Florida trip with a Disney trip with them. Montana or South/North Dakota. There isn't a lot of night life up there, is there? I

have no idea but there are parks and trails and there are worse things to do at our age than sitting in lawn chairs and staring at stars.

OK, I have no idea obviously, give the EB your input, better yet volunteer to help if you know of a good place to meet.

Jeff Murray
Secretary

Words of Wisdom from Jack Mayhew..

Funeral Services for Major Fred Mentzer, USA Retired



Fred's service will be held at Arlington National Cemetery on Wednesday, June the 3rd, 2015 at 3PM Sharp. Fred will be laid to rest in a formal ceremony with full military honors. He will be given his "last mile ride" on a horse drawn caisson with

those in attendance following the procession on foot. Fred will then receive the standard in ground burial service. Please plan on meeting Karen, his widow, and his many friends and family who plan on attending the service, in the administrative building no later than 2:30.

There is a room block for those planning on staying over at the Residence Inn Arlington at Rosslyn.. The hotel is in walking distance to the Cemetery. However, you will need transportation to get to the starting point for the last mile ride.

Residence Inn
1651 North Oak Street
Arlington, VA 22209
703-812-8400 (Main)
703-812-8516 (fax)

Directions for on-line Bookings for Residence Inn Arlington at Rosslyn

1. Visit the hotels website:
www.residenceinn.com/wasrr

2. Look for the section titled "Check rates and availability"

3. Enter your arrival date and departure date

4. Under Special Rates and Awards, enter your group code: **FMMFMMC** One Bedroom Suite Rate \$229.00

5. Follow prompts until you receive a reservation confirmation number

Reservations using Toll-Free numbers for Residence Inn Arlington at Rosslyn

1. Dial 1-800-831-3131

2. Give the agent the Hotel name, "Residence Inn Arlington/Rosslyn"

3. Give the arrival and departure dates

4. Give the group code: **FMM**

The 281st book Project

Will McCollum, the author, reports that the book project is on schedule and on budget thanks to the many Intruders and their wives who have made significant contributions by submitting stories of their experiences related to the Vietnam War. Will is still scheduled to present the final manuscript to the publisher this year and should have a good draft by reunion time. It is still not too late to send Will the story you would like to see in the book. We especially encourage all Crew Chiefs, the Door Gunners, the Maintenance folks and the administrative guys to submit your stories to Will soon. Call him and he will assist you in developing your story He is at 319-239-5529 or WillDanMac@yahoo.com Many thanks to Joan Baker for taking on the mission of designing the book cover.

The Intruder Scholarship Program

All around us young folks are graduating from college this time of the year. Most of them will have huge loan to face over the next several years. We cannot cover all the college expenses for all of your grandchildren, nieces and nephews, but we can help. If you have a current college student or one starting

college, please have them contact Dr. Karen Forcht at kforcht@elon.edu or 336-639-7544 and she will walk them through the process of applying for assistance from the Intruder Scholarship Program. This is a “**do it now**” opportunity as time is running short for them to submit an application.

Jack Mayhew
Remembrance Committee

Special Operation Plaque - Update

Here is the current status of the memorial stone dedication ceremony at Ft. Bragg. The ceremony is now scheduled for Friday, **May 6, 2016**. The reason for the long postponement has to do with scheduled renovation work that was to have been done this spring on the Meadows Field Memorial Plaza. However, weather problems in February delayed completion of the work, and the Army then canceled our original date scheduled for this June.

Our options for rescheduling this year were, therefore, complicated by several factors. First, many people are traveling to Arlington in early June to attend the Memorial Service for Fred Mentzer. Attending a second event on the east coast within months of that would have been difficult for most. Second, summer heat and humidity in Fayetteville is very uncomfortable, making a summer date very undesirable. Third, scheduling a fall date would conflict with our annual reunion in St Louis, which is October 8 – 10. Finally, planning a date after the reunion would again mean having two trips very close together for some, plus put us into the cold weather months.

Therefore, it was felt that the best option was to move the ceremony out to the spring of next year. The Army has remained committed to it, and the stone has now been made and delivered to Fayetteville where it will be kept in protective storage. Details regarding lodging, and etc. will be provided after the first of the year. The committee will stay on top of everything, and alert you should any other problems or changes arise.

Jim Baker for Walt Pikul

What's on Jay Hays' Mind...

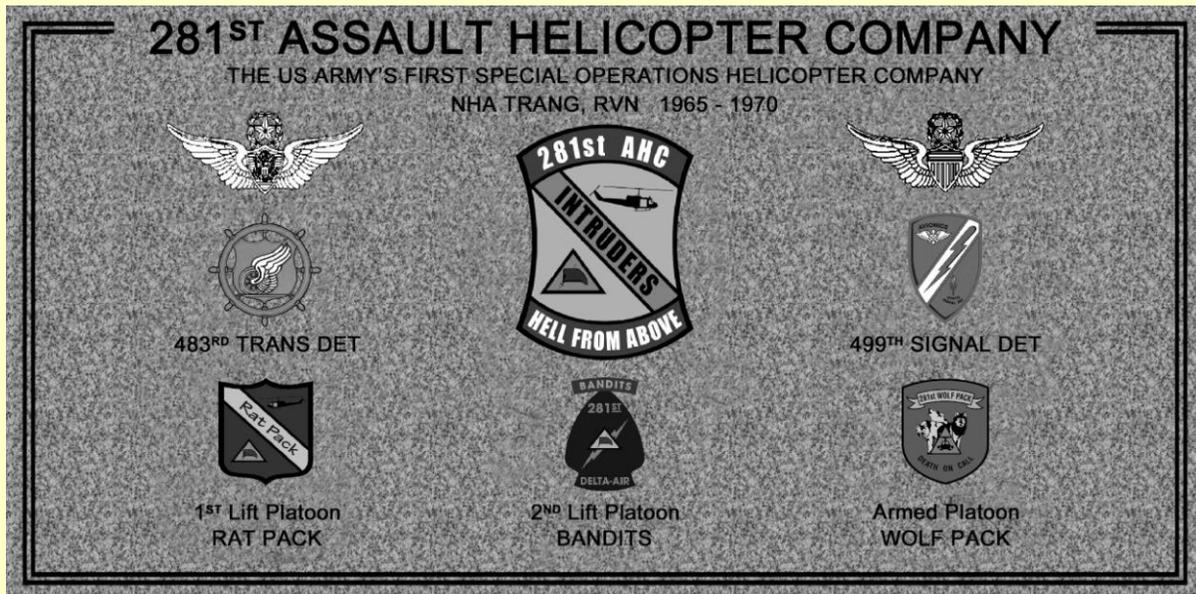
Reunion 2015 is very special! It will be 50 years since the formation of the 281st AHC. The PX will also have something special.

Last month the reunion planning meeting was attended by more than ever before. Don Budlong did a great job keeping everything focused and on schedule. The wives who attended were very helpful in several areas including the banquet menus.

Will McCollum has been working at full collective on “our book”. I had the opportunity to read 120 pages. There are stories I had not heard even though I've attended every reunion since 2001. Don't miss this one and please submit your story for “our book”.

The PX inventory is computerized for invoices and orders are normally shipped within 24 hours. The PX grunt will see you in St. Louis!

Jay Hays
PX Grunt



281st Plaque to be dedicated later this year at Special Operations Command, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina

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

281ST AHC ASSOCIATION, INC.

Established 4 July 1999



EXECUTIVE BOARD

President
Frank Becker
Vice President
Don Budlong
Secretary
Jeff Murray
Treasurer
Jerry (Fred) Beck
Senior Member@Large
Will McCollum
Junior Member@Large
Bain Black
Immediate Past President
Jim Christensen

APPOINTED OFFICERS

Awards Chairman – Jim Baker
Book Committee Chairman – Bob Mitchell
Chaplain - Norm Kaufman
Commo Committee Chairman - Bob Mitchell
Historian - Bob Mitchell
Historical Memorabilia Chairman - Fred Lewis
Internet Groups Administrator - Brent Gourley
Membership Committee Chairman - Jerry (Fred) Beck
Memorabilia Sales Committee Chairman - Jay Hays
Newsletter-Public Relations Chairman – Don Budlong
Remembrance Committee Chairman - Jack Mayhew
Reunion Committee Chairman – Don Budlong
Survivor Assistance Team Chairman - Marshall Hawkins
Troop Support Committee – Joe Bilitzke

281st Assault Helicopter Company Association

2015 ANNUAL REUNION

**Crowne Plaza St. Louis Airport Hotel
St. Louis, Missouri
October 8th – 10th**

To: All Intruders, 281st AHC Association Members, Honorary Members, Family and Friends

The 281st Assault Helicopter Company Association announces its 2015 Annual Reunion. The last time we held our Reunion in St. Louis was the first week in August, 2013 and it was hot. We are returning this year to St. Louis in the cooler and more comfortable 2nd week of October.

On Friday we have planned a fun filled evening with a buffet style dinner. Our Saturday evening awards banquet is always the highlight of the weekend. Don't forget the "Hospitality Room" that will be fully stocked with beverages (alcoholic and non-alcoholic) and providing lunches and late night socializing on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. We also have something special planned for the ladies on Saturday morning. All of this is covered by your registration fee, \$125.

The Crowne Plaza has guaranteed us a special 281st room rate of \$99 per night which now includes a free breakfast for two people per room, every day you stay there. They will also provide shuttle service to and from the airport and to local shopping and eateries, at no additional cost.

Let's not forget the real reason why we have these reunions – we see our brothers in arms that we haven't seen in decades and renew friendships we've built up over the years. It was 50 years ago that the 281st arrived in Vietnam. Five years later the company was deactivated. In that 5-year plus period of time, hundreds of us spent many months doing many different jobs; each and everyone them contributing to the success of the 281st. In the last few years we've seen quite a few reunion "first timers". If you've never been to a reunion, this is a great time to start.

Don Budlong, VP & Reunion Chairman

Make Your Crowne Plaza Hotel Reservations Today!

Call: 314-291-6700
Reservation Code: ELI

The Hotel will hold a block of \$99 rooms for us until September 14, 2015. Make your reservations early to guarantee a room and save money.

281st Assault Helicopter Association 2015 Reunion Schedule

| <u>Day and Date</u> | <u>Time</u> | <u>Event</u> |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| <u>Wednesday 10/7</u> | 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm | Reunion Set up Drinks and snack at hotel bar compliments of the hotel |
| <u>Thursday 10/8</u> | 9:00 am – till closing 10:00 am – 5:00 pm 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm | Hospitality Suite open Registration in hotel lobby Executive Board Meeting |
| <u>Friday 10/9</u> | 9:00 am – 5:00 pm 9:00 am – 11:00 am 11:00 am – 12:00 pm 10:00 am – 4:00 pm 6:00 pm 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm 10:00 – till closing | Hospitality Suite open Scholarship Committee Meeting Book Committee Meeting Registration in hotel lobby (last day) Cash Bar opens prior to dinner Buffet Dinner & cash bar Hospitality Suite re-opens |
| <u>Saturday 10/10</u> | 9:00 am – 5:00 pm 9:00 am – 11:00 am 9:30 am – 11:30 am 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm 2:30 – 3:30 6:00 pm 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm 10:00 – till closing | Hospitality Suite open Annual General Membership Meeting Ladies Brunch Memorial Service – open to everyone Survivor Awareness Program Cash Bar opens prior to dinner Awards Banquet & cash bar Hospitality Suite re-opens |
| <u>Sunday 10/11</u> | 9:00 am - ? | Tear down and pack it up – we'll need volunteers – Please sign up. |



Registration Form
281st AHC Association 2015 Reunion
October 8th – 10th at the Crown Plaza Airport Hotel
St. Louis, MO

| | | | |
|------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Member # | Last Name | First Name | MI |
| Street Address | | City | State Zip Code Phone # |
| Unit | E-Mail | I Will Arrive on | 10/ /2015 |
| Name for Nametag | Dates in Country | Nick Name or Call Sign | |

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

REGISTRATION FEES:

281st AHC Assn. 2015 Annual Membership Dues: _____ Annual Fee \$25 = \$ _____

Member Reunion Registration: _____ Member @ \$125 = \$ _____

Guest Fee (16 years old and up) _____ # Guests X \$125 = \$ _____

Children's Fee (11-15 years old) _____ # Guests X \$80 = \$ _____

Friday and/or Saturday Night Meals Only _____ # Meals X \$40 = \$ _____
(For Children under 11 or non-registered Adult Guests)

Scholarship Fund: My 2015 TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION IS: _____ \$ _____

TOTAL CHECK IS: _____ \$ _____

PAYMENTS: Make check or money order payable to **281st AHC Association**. Mail Payment and the registration form no later than **September 14th** to:

281st AHC Association
c/o Fred Beck
205 Carey Ct.
Neenah, WI 54956-9208
Tel: 920-558-4127 / email: JJB@new.rr.com

Please bring your photos, DVDs, books, maps and other memorabilia for sharing and/or display.

VOLUNTEER: Registration _____ PX _____ Hospitality Room _____ As Needed _____

MEAL SELECTION AND INFORMATION SHEET

Member and Guest Information

List below the names of all attending along with their Saturday evening banquet meal selection. The meal choices for Saturday evening are below. For ladies only, please indicate whether you will be attending the free ladies brunch on Saturday morning.

1. Savory Pot Roast (Beef)
2. Boneless Breast of Chicken Marsala (Chicken)
3. Vegetarian Chef's Choice (Veggie)

NAME

MEAL SELECTION

LADIES BRUNCH

| | <u>Beef</u> | <u>Chicken</u> | <u>Veggie</u> | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--|-------------|----------------|---------------|------------|-----------|
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Please Note any special dietary requests