

281ST ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY

"INTRUDERS"

NHA TRANG
1965-1970

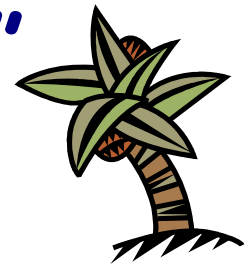
Company Newsletter No. 30

Spring 2007

2007 ANNUAL REUNION



" R&R HAWAII "



St Louis, Mo

1-5 August 2007

Airport Crowne Plaza Hotel

11228 Lone Eagle Dr

Bridgeton, MO 63044

314-291-6700 (direct line) or 800-980 6429

www.stlouishotels.crowneplaza.com



START YOUR PLANS NOW !!

You'll find lots of good information in the following pages of this newsletter.

From the Prez...

Fellow Intruders, the 1st of August is fast approaching so it's time to get the travel bag out and start packing. We have a lot of folks working to make this reunion a great experience for everyone. People have come up with some great ideas. Our reunion planning meeting at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in St. Louis was very successful. I would like to thank all those who came and offered counsel and ideas. I really think you will have a great time. Call your 281st friends and tell them you will meet them in St Louis on the 1st of August for R & R, and be sure to bring their wives as we will have some activities for them. The reunion committee has a great time planned for us.

As for the accommodations, the room rate is the same as last year, \$59.00 per day. The hotel staff has been very responsive to our every needs. We are very fortunate to have a first class hotel to meet and renew our friendships. Jay Hays will have more details about all the things that will happen in his article. He has done a great job and has had a lot of wonderful folks on the team.

The EB needs your ideas on how to make a better association. PLEASE let us know what we can do to make the organization a better one. We are not perfect and do make some mistakes. So help us make it better. I would like to invite you who would like to run for an office in the association to let us know. We need your help. It's your association.

One sad note. The EB has accepted the resignation of Earl Broussard as Junior Member at Large. Earl has been a great asset to the association. He has worked hard for us and has given us a lot of good counsel. Fred Lewis has agreed to fill the unexpired term of Junior Member at Large. The EB unanimously accepted the appointment. Fred will be a great asset to the Executive Board.

Darryl Stevens
President



The VP Speaks...

I want to thank every one in our 281st Family for their support during my surgeries, in August hip replacement and January for knee replacement. I received cards, e-mails, phone calls, personal visits and many prayers. THANK YOU! Now that I am half bionic I am looking forward to our reunion.

If you haven't attended a reunion you just don't realize what you and your family are missing. Unfortunately we are losing more members each year (DAT). The association, and especially Gary Stagman, has helped many members get through the VA red tape and receive the benefits they are so deserving of.

The Intruder of the Year Award (IOYA) nominations are due by the end of April. In accordance to the by laws it must come from a member of the EB. But any member wishing to see a member nominated may contact me or any member of the EB.

See you in St. Louis.

Jay Hays
Vice President

The Senior Member @ Large

Flight, on November 11th I had the honor of riding in the Veterans Day Parade in Birmingham, AL as a Viet Nam Vet. What a feeling I had as strangers, that lined the streets on a cold and blustery day, shouted to me, a total stranger, "Thank You for Your Service to Our Country."

As I looked at the many people waving American Flags, I could easily pick out the VN Vets. Many snapped to attention and proudly saluted, some had on old fatigue tops with the insignia of their respective units, others had caps proudly displaying "Viet Nam Vet", while others just had that look. I can't describe "that look" but as our eyes met, I just knew and they knew I knew, and that was enough. If you were like me and I am sure that you were, you came home, realized no one was really interested in what you had done, so you put all that behind you and went about your life.

Occasionally during quiet times, in private, you revisited that time we all shared together

and to yourself you were proud, even though there were tears and a lump in your throat, you were proud.

We share a common bond in the 281st Association, a bond that is special. The older I get, the more I appreciate what we did. I urge each of you to make the effort required to attend the 2007 Reunion in St. Louis and to contact your buddies from the 281st and urge them to attend also. I can assure you, it will be time well spent.

Frank W. Little
Senior Member at Large

And now the JML...

While attending the Association's "2007 Reunion Planning Committee Meeting" in St. Louis the realization of this year's reunion began to come into focus. I'm looking forward to seeing and visiting with my old friends and comrades-in-arms. These reunions have not only been enjoyable, but they have also given me a sense of inner peace, they mean a lot to me, and after talking with other "Intruders," I realize that some share similar feelings.

The guys on the Reunion Committee are taking action and the reunion plans are starting to fall in place. A part of those plans are "Information Packets" that will be forthcoming to you. Included in those packets among other things will be a form for you to nominate someone to the vacancies of next year's Association's Officers.

When you receive your packet, please complete and return the form ASAP so that we might hopefully have a large selection of nominees to vote for when you receive the ballot from the Election Committee.

You are certainly welcome and encouraged to nominate yourself as well as others. If you would like to nominate someone other than those listed, please feel free to write-in their names.

So please take the time to complete and return the form to me. I'm looking forward to seeing and visiting with you guys in St. Louis this August.

Fred Lewis
Junior Member-at-Large

The Chaplains Corner...

Tomorrow is the first day of spring and as I considered what to write in this newsletter issue's column it took some thought. Here it goes.

After Easter we will celebrate Memorial day, a time to remember those who have given the greatest sacrifice. When I was a boy my Grandpa used to call the holiday Decoration Day. The day we decorate the stone memorials in a graveyard.

When my nephew returned from Iraq last fall my sister had a small family gathering to welcome him home. After some small talk we went into the house and everyone wanted to see his pictures from over there. He sort of migrated to my end of the table with his laptop and after about 20 minutes I realized that he and I were the only ones looking at the pictures. Everyone else had gone back to conversations that interested them. My nephew looked at me and said, "No one else here understands do they, Uncle Norm?"

Then in December we had a man come to our church to present a Gospel concert. During the prayer time he said that he wanted to remember those whose lives had been changed forever because they were wounded. I was ashamed of myself to have to be reminded of that fact. We always remember those who gave their lives but we tend to forget those who have only given part of their lives. The news today shows that I'm not the only one at fault. Our whole nation and the hospital system that should be the main support for our young men and women has let them down.

This "Decoration Day" let us remember all who have sacrificed for this great nation of ours. Maybe we can leave something besides a stone memorial to decorate in a graveyard.

Norm Kaufman
Chaplain



† **LTC Patrick M. Sheley** †
April 1929 - 12 November 2006
Intruder 3 Oct 66 – Nov 67
*Pat succumbed to cancer in Tucson after
a short illness.*



† **Kenneith R. Embry** †
22 March 1947 – 17 December 2006
Bandit CE #227 Feb 68 – Jan 69

†

... **Farewell Brothers** ...

†

The 2007 Reunion Chairman

Mark your calendars for August 1st thru 5th in St. Louis. The reunion committee met in St. Louis March 1st and 2nd. I believe we have more members helping than ever before. Many have stepped up and I really can't thank them enough as I would not have been able to do it myself. Last year we had two great guest speakers and I worried what to do this year. Thanks to Don Torrini and Jack Mayhew we will have S.F. Sgt. Major Don Taylor (Ret.). Rumor has it a former 281st C.O. threatened the Sgt. Major that if he declined the invitation that he would send Air Craft Commander Torrini and a Bandit Crew to bring him anyway. Sgt. Major Taylor is an author and is the person who wrote the letter "Remembering the 281st" on the Project Delta web site. This letter is mostly about Don T and Crew who made the life saving recovery and is what started the process of Don being submitted for the Metal of Honor. You can find S/MAJ Taylor's article at: <http://www.projectdelta.net/history.htm>

This year's cost will be the same as the last two years, and with inflation, I think it speaks well of the members in attendance, the Association and the Crowne Plaza.

Bring your memorabilia as this year we will have all the association memorabilia archived and on display. Again Richard Murry has volunteered to duplicate copies of CD's, pictures, etc. We will not have any raffles but some door prizes have already been donated.

We are planning more activities for the Wives. A Zoomerang survey will be on the net in a few weeks. The next letter (in three months) will have your full schedule and registration form. Those registering will be posted on the web site. Also members in good standing will get an election ballot.

See you in ST. Louis and call the member friends you stay in touch with to make sure they are planning to attend.

Jay Hays
Reunion Chairman

Notes and Comments

This group of 281st stalwarts met at Ft Bragg back in January and held a "Mini Reunion". They got together at the behest of Dave Dosker to bid farewell to Dustin Dosker who was shipping out for Afghanistan. The only missing sole was Fred Funk who unfortunately had suffered an incapacitating stroke and was unable to join in. It's been subsequently reported that Fred is recovering nicely. – Fred M.



This from Jack Mayhew to Dave with regard to Dustin over there in Afghanistan along with an excerpt from a February email by Dave.

25 February 2007

Dave, we will add him to our company support list and will see that he gets "Adopted" by the lovely ladies who have

sent over 1,000 individual packages to Iraq & Afghanistan. I am in contact with one of the Ops officers in the 10th and will check and see if he is close by. Send pictures and info as you get them and we will post them on the web as soon as the currently serving page is up. JM

Mailing Address for Justin

Posted by: "David Dosker" ratpack13@sbcglobal.net

Sun Feb 4, 2007

Friends and family,

Here is a good address for Justin. He is getting settled in at FOB Salerno in Afghanistan. Called me the other day reporting their first rocket attack. Says they were playing basketball in full Battle rattle while waiting for the alert to be lifted. Ah the American GI !! Don't have a feel yet for the conditions.

SPC Dosker Justin
FOB Salerno
Bco 122 TF Freedom
APO AE 09314

I gave him a computer but he has not been able to get online yet. More as I hear. Thank you all for your good wishes. Keep them all in your prayers. - Dave

And now a word about our latest Life Member, Jerry Stanfield over there in Hawaii. Jerry was the "main man" after Dave Bittle passed away. Visit the Wolf Pack website at: <http://281stahc-wolfpack.org>, click the In Memorium link. The ceremony was arranged for and pictures shown were all done by Jerry. If it had not been for Jerry, Dave would likely have ended up in a potter's grave. Jerry visits the Punch Bowl each Memorial Day and sends photo's of Dave's resting place. The email is from Jerry to Barc Boyd back in December.

From: Jerry Stanfield <virago90@yahoo.com>

Date: December 16, 2006

To: Barkley Boyd <icihicpl@earthlink.net>

ALOHA Barc! Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year, or as we say in paradise Mele Kalikimaka and Hauole Makahiki Hao! Your card evokes a very warm feeling of a time I think I would have enjoyed.

If you would send me your phone number I would like to talk to you about talking to Jack about the loss of the 632 Mardigras and crew. - Jerry

PS - "Holiday traffic at the mall, NO PROBLEMA!!!" Yep that's me with the M3 on the M5A1.



Jerry is a member of a restoration group.

Its seems that January was not a good month for our intrepid Intruders. Another of our flight was laid low besides Fred Funk. Lee Brewer, of the famed Wolf Pack, was dragged into the Krankenhaus for his ticker to be tinkered with. Now he's as good as new and ready to attack the booze and grub at St Louis.... true Wolf Pack style!

Wednesday January 24, 2007

Good Afternoon to my 281st family,

Guess I had better let you know my status. The very capable heart surgeon Dr. Jimmy Howell at Methodist Hospital in Houston replaced my aorta valve and did one (90% blocked) bypass on me Monday the 15th. Surgery lasted about 6 hours with the best results I could have hoped for. The valve (sorry I don't know the name of it) is a 25 year one and no blood thinners required. How about that. I returned to my home yesterday the 23rd and am starting the recovery process. My great wife Mikki, is steadily controlling my every move. While I am very sore, the recovery should be a good one.

Thanks for all your prayers, thoughts and concern during this time. I look forward to seeing all of you in St. Louis this year and yes put me in the golf match.

My best regards to a great family - Lee Brewer WP 32 (To Earl Broussard a special thanks to you for bringing me a great headgear; Wolf Pack Cap.)

A side note - I heard they put my aorta valve in a pig and it died immediately.

It saddens me to inform the flight that Buddy R. "Ray" Chambers passed away in Mesa, Arizona, on February 20, 2007 following a long struggle with the aftermath of a massive stroke. Ray, a long time member and past president of the Special Operations Association was instrumental in our partnership with the SOA. We Rotor On... - Fred

A message concerning the upcoming reunion from Jack Mayhew.....

Congratulations to our 2007 Reunion team who under the able guidance of Jay Hays met in Saint Louis last month and finalized the 2007 reunion plans. Jay is assisted by Don Torrini, Frank Becker, Fred Lewis, Fred Mentzer and Frank Little. Gary Stagman provided advice and assistance as needed. Fred Lewis displayed his masterpiece locker which houses the association's reunion materials and is stored at the hotel. It is a magnificent piece of work. (see pictures) The president, Darryl Stevens kept everybody on track and seriously limited the "hanger flying." The schedule is set and the reunion will kick off on Tues July 31 which is set up day. Registration will open on Wed. morning and the reunion will run through Saturday the 4th. The committee has a full agenda with interesting workshops tours and events. In addition there will be time to get reacquainted with your old friends and make new ones.

NOW IS THE TIME TO GET YOUR BUDDIES COMMITTED TO JOIN YOU IN SAINT LOUIS IN AUGUST. GREAT HOTEL, GREAT ROOMS, FREE BEER, A FULL AGENDA AND A GREAT TIME TO BE HAD BY ALL.

Thanks Intruders, for a job done well. JM



Gary-Jack-Fred M-Frank B-Fred L-Frank L-Darryl-Don



Frank L Fred L Frank B Don T

The following are some emails extracted from the 281st YahooGroups chat nets written after the Walter Reed brouhaha hit the media. These email and others prompted a series of mailings from Robin Hicks. I selected these particular mails as perhaps the most immediately helpful. Robin along with Don Torinni and Jack Mayhew will be presenting a series of workshops at the Reunion on Friday, August 3rd. I urge you to attend. - Fred

From: Jack Mayhew (intruder06@comcast.net)

Sent: 2/20/2007 **Subject:** Forced to battle the system at Walter Reed....

The DD214 is the basic document that is needed to do anything with the VA. The issue here is one of who can be treated at a military facility rather than at a VA facility. The answer is that only active duty and retired individuals can be treated at a military facility and in some cases the military facility is too small to accommodate the retired community. Therefore, they must either go to the VA or another military/civilian facility. If anyone is missing their DD214 please contact Gary or me and we will do our best to get you a replacement through our Saint Louis contact who is fast, but charges a small fee. You can also go online to the records center and request one but it may take several months to get it. For VA benefits: http://www1.va.gov/OPA/vadocs/current_benefits.asp & for your records: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/> - Jack M

From: ROBIN HICKS [rkhicks@mindspring.com]

Sent: Wed 2/21/2007

In Viet Nam there were thousands of soldiers that were drafted and sent straight to Basic and then Viet Nam. They did not want to be there, they hated the Army for sending them there and all they could think about was

servicing their tour and getting out. I have talked with people that were pulled out of the field, put on an airplane, still in their dirty fatigues, flown to California and were discharged the day they got back. They were herded through like cattle and if they had a question about benefits or anything to do with a possible medical condition, they were told that they would have to stay another week or two to get someone to look into it.

Most of these guys just wanted out, so they signed on the dotted line which in effect said that they were all right and did not have any medical conditions that were caused by their enlistment. These guys were angry, fed up with the system and just wanted to get out of there as fast as possible, they were fed up with the military and never wanted to have anything to do with it, ever! They were told that before leaving the base, that they should go buy some civilian clothing and get rid of anything that would tie them to the military. There were gangs and demonstrators near all the gates and you were not safe, even in a cab. They would throw things at the cab and if it stopped at an intersection, there was a chance of someone trying to pull you out of the cab and physically assault you. These guys threw everything in the trash; all they cared about was being out.

Now 25 or 30 years later, they are getting sick with all sorts of things as a result of their tour in the Military. Major things, cancers, physical disabilities, mental disabilities, all sorts of things that have been directly linked to service in Viet Nam. These guys in desperation finally go to a VA facility for help and hit a stone wall of paperwork and dead ends. The ones that make it through, in general receive outstanding care and treatment. The ones that do not make it, go away bitter and resentful and attack the system pointing out all its faults. In an emergency, you will be given priority, moved ahead of others and be taken care of. The system is overwhelmed with the number of people seeking help and it is not unusual to have to wait 6 months to a year to get an appointment for regular health care.

My separation from the Army was easy; I stayed in after coming back from Nam and had all my records. In my effort to get my disability rating I still had to challenge the ratings given to me twice and then request that my case go before a review board (you can only challenge the ruling twice, then it has to be a more formal and risky procedure). It is risky because the review board can lower your rating as well as increase it! I kept after them, even though the representatives from the State and VFW were telling me not to. I ended up going all the way and hired an attorney and had to go before an administrative Law Judge to get my disability approved.

What we have been talking about is an extremely complex issue that is easily confused because of the general lack of knowledge of which agencies are involved, who has responsibility for what, and the individual circumstances surrounding each case. Keep an open mind, ask questions and learn about the different systems. They all have flaws and need improvement and everyone needs to know more of the facts so that they can contribute in a positive manner and help these improvements get implemented. We need to challenge some of the people writing these articles; are they trying to tell us what is really happening or do they just want to distort things to make their article get more attention and publicity! - Robin

Here's a couple of heavy words to the Intruder Weight Loss Club members from the intrepid Intruder Norm Kaufman weighing in to offer an an'ounce'ment concerning Friday night at the Reunion.....

Hey, IWLC members it looks as if the Reunion Committee is working on a "weigh" to honor all our hard work of pushing ourselves back from the table. The biggest loser will be crowned King Kame'a Weight'a and the rest of the competitors will be his royal court.

Now who wouldn't go AWOL to see 10 Intruders in grass skirts? Or maybe that would be too much of an intrusion for one night! Barc, I hear they ordered all 34 slim grass skirts. - Norm Kaufman, Secretary IWLC

Editor's Notes: And now to wrap up this newsletter I'd like to make a number of comments and observations.

Firstly, you should know that Anheuser Busch has again come through for us in magnificent fashion. Gary Stagman initiated contact with 'Bud' back in '05 for our first St. Louis reunion and has maintained contact with the brewery since. Military Sales Manager Rocky Sickman has indeed been a "rock" for us! From the beautiful artwork to the free (and seemingly endless) beer and other Busch products for our 2005 and 2006 reunions. Again this year Anheuser Busch is providing us with free beer as well as posters and even a banner depicting our R&R theme. We are deeply appreciative for the generosity extended to us by Rocky, his staff, and the Anheuser Busch Corporation.

Next, many of you may have noted that the 281st Website has been taken down and the old version temporarily re-installed. This was due to tech problems with the new website. The Commo Committee hopes to have the new website back up and running by 1 April 2007. The committee invites comments and recommendations.

With regard to membership, the Association continues to grow at a moderate pace. We need to bring more of our veterans into the family. Gary Stagman and his Membership partner Ken Smith would like to invite members to join in their efforts to bring more of our vets into the fold. One idea is to have state rep(s) directly contact, either by phone or email, to join the association and to attend the reunions. If anyone would like to volunteer, Gary and I have Excel rosters, broken down by state that we would email or snail mail to you, either as a computer file or printed out. The roster has the full address details of over 800 vets that Gary has identified in the years he has headed up the membership program. If you want to help promote our association, just let us know.

Lastly, this year's reunion promises to be a fun time indeed. And informative as well, especially the workshops to be presented by Robin Hicks, Jack Mayhew and Don Torrini. Robin is particularly knowledgeable of VA matters, through experience, perseverance and study.

OK folks, that's it for this newsletter. There will be another before the reunion, the Summer Edition. In the meantime.....

START YOUR REUNION PLANNING NOW !

Fred Mentzer
"Wolf Pack 36"
Editor
Commo Committee Chairman



See you in St Louis

"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
Darryl Stevens
Vice President
Jay Hays
Secretary
Jeff Murray
Treasurer
Butch Jones
Senior Member@Large
Frank Little
Junior Member@Large
Fred Lewis
Immediate Past President
Gary Stagman

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Awards – Frank Little
Membership Committee Chairman - Gary Stagman
Remembrance Committee Chairman - Jack Mayhew
Historian - Bob Mitchell
Internet Groups Administrator - Brent Gourley
Commo Committee Chairman – Fred Mentzer
Legal Advisor - Brent Gourley
Reunion Committee Chairman – Jay Hays
Survivor Assistance Chairman - Marshall Hawkins
Memorabilia Sales Committee Chairman – Jay Hays
Chaplain - Norm Kaufman
Newsletter Editor/Public Relations
Fred Mentzer

**ANNUAL MEMBERS TIME TO GET YOUR TAX DEDUCTION BEFORE THE
2006 IRS FILING DEADLINE**

Membership Renewal Update from Ken Smith, Bandit Pilot, JAN 68-69

Current Job:

TAX COLLECTOR - 281ST AHC ASSOCIATION

Annual Members Only: I volunteered last year to relieve Gary Stagman of his drudgery duties as tax collector. **ANNUAL DUES ARE NOW DUE!** This is true unless you are among those who paid 2007 Dues at the 2006 Reunion in St. Louis or you have paid either Gary Stagman or me recently.

It may surprise a lot of you (and it did me) that annual dues, according to the 281st AHC Association "By Laws" (available online at our website), are due on January 1st each year. So, if you know your dues are up and you need to get current for the 2007 year, please mail me a check ASAP. If you are not sure, you can have me check your status by emailing me at Ken.Smith@fire.ca.gov or calling me on my cell phone at **916/201-6965**.

Please mail your **\$25 to the following address:**

**Ken Smith
Membership Renewals 281st AHC Asso.
3939 Fair Hill Road
Fair Oaks, CA 95628**

Checks should be made out to the **281st AHC Association**, and please include **your member number on the "For" or "Memo" line in the lower left corner of your check.**

Last year I said that I would propose to the Executive Board (EB) a request to change so that annual memberships could be paid at the time of registration for the annual 281st Reunion. That did not happen, but I still want to pursue that for next reunion. I want to remind everyone that may have missed a year or two or more of paying dues that the Executive Board decided to allow Annual Members to become current by paying the dues in the current year without making past payments for years that they missed.

Thanks for your cooperation, and I look forward to receiving your checks or money orders in the mail soon.

Ken



**REUNION 2007
"R&R HAWAII"**

281st AHC Association Reunion Registration

Reunion Form Must be Mailed No Later than 30 Jun 2007

1 – 5 August 2005, Crowne Plaza Airport Hotel, St Louis, MO (Room Rate \$59.00 nightly)

"Host Hotel reservation deadline is 1 July 2007 for reduced rates"

Call direct at 314-291-6700 Ask for " In House Reservations " Reservation Code AHC

Mem #	Last Name	First Name	MI
Address		City	State
		ZIP	() Home Phone

Current EMAIL Address: _____

INFORMATION FOR NAME TAG: Name _____

Dates in country with the 281st AHC (or an associated unit): _____

Guests' Name Tags: #1 _____ #2 _____

(Please list additional guests on the back of this form)

ATTENDING 281st Reunion: Registration Information

Member:	Reunion		\$ 100.00	\$ _____
Guests: (16 & up)	Reunion	#Guests _____ X	\$ 100.00	\$ _____
Children (11-15 yrs)	Reunion	#Guests _____ X	\$ 50.00	\$ _____
My 2008 Annual Membership Dues are enclosed			\$ 25.00	\$ _____

Registration for children 10 & under not required but encouraged. Parents responsible for meal costs.

TOUR: Must have 35 or more to book the tour. (Bus holds max 48 persons)

5 Aug 07 – Busch Garden Tour \$15.00 (for bus-not included with registration)

TOTAL DUE ----- \$ _____

PAYMENTS: Check or Money Order made payable to "281st AHC Association" and mail this form with your fees to:

281st AHC Association
c/o Don Torinni
1 Biscayne Drive
Edwardsville, IL 62025
Tel: 618-656-4555 Email: donaldo12@aol.com

HELP: Yes, I wish to volunteer !!!! I will be happy to do my share and assist with:

Registration _____ As Needed _____ Other _____

Please use the area below for specific comments or requests:
