

# 281st ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY ASSOCIATION

Volume 59

November 2015

## From your Prez – Don Budlong

The holiday season is already upon us and it seems like it was only last month when we met in St. Louis for our Reunion. Oh wait, it was only last month and I think I can speak for all in attendance and say it was a great time! We had great people, great camaraderie, great food & drink, great Vietnam era music, great tall tale telling and great dancing. Well, maybe the dancing was only fair to midland, but we gave it a shot, only to be shown up by a 16 year old girl. Let's do it again next October in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

We had a few first time attendees with us this year; Phil Freeman and Ralph Grigsby (photo below).



This is what first time attendee Phil Freeman said in an email he sent to me about his experience in St. Louis.

Don,

*I just wanted you to know how much my wife Nancy and I enjoyed our First 281st Reunion. We have already started planning our trip for the 2016 Fayetteville, NC reunion and ceremony at Ft. Bragg. I am now sorry that I procrastinated for so long and did not attend a reunion sooner.*

*I told Nancy as we arrived that I probably would not meet a soul who served with me and I was glad she accompanied me so I would have at least one person to talk to. Well . . . that sentiment was put to rest at registration. I immediately felt I was with friends and comrades even though I did not meet anyone I served with until the second day (Marshall 'Hawk' Hawkins). Nancy was warmly welcomed by 281st wives and soon had several new friends she searched for throughout the weekend activities. We both enjoyed the Friday and Saturday evening dinners and ceremonies and Nancy really enjoyed the wives special activities during our Saturday business meeting.*

*Hopefully, the special dedication ceremonies at Ft. Bragg in conjunction with the reunion will be the impetus for more 1st timers to attend in 2016. I know they will enjoy the weekend.*

*Thank you again,  
Ronald 'Phil' Freeman*

## From the Scribe – Jeff Murray

It's November and that means another party at Paine's. Brian has been having these for years; Janie and I have only missed 2 since. Not because Brian's such a nice guy or because Houston is a tourist town, no, we go because it's a mini-reunion and lots of Intruders seem to just "arrive" and most return simply because they had a good time. As you read this, the party is already history for this year so let me fill you in on the highlights:

The Camaraderie. 90% of the people there are either Intruders, Delta or Republicans, except for one lady friend of a friend who is still mad at Brian for some political slight of tongue (imagine that) but likes us so much she keeps coming back. She doesn't talk to Brian but she's there. If you've never sat in the middle of a group of Delta operators talking shop, let me tell you it can be an experience. The Intruders that show are all buddies and as we age it gets a bit more important to me to talk to these guys before I'm not around for them to talk to me. For example, the last time I talked to Jack Green was in Brian's back yard sipping a Jack and Coke at 10 am. Jack Green is no longer with us.

The routine. It's always the same and that's good; I'm not wired for change much anymore. We get there and sit in the yard and insult each other most of Friday afternoon and that night we go eat, usually at Rudi's for German food that is almost as good as the real thing. Rudi puts us at our own table and somehow we figure out the bill. Then we go back to Brian's, drink more then, adjourn to our hotels.

Saturday mornings, Mom Torbert fixes breakfast for anyone that shows up to eat. Then we adjourn to the porch and commence BS'ing and drinking. The ladies saddle up and go shopping. Brian breaks out more food around lunchtime, the stories get better and more people spontaneously appear, most of whom we immediately recognize. At dinner time his house and yard are full but not to worry, he has set up tables and tents and tons of chairs. Chester is usually leading the stories about this time. After dinner the crowd starts to thin out, everyone goes home and the hardy ones meet Sunday for brunch.

The Effort. Marilyn Paine (Brian's lovely wife) puts a lot of effort into this. Brian does as well but Marilyn is a saint. She decorates to the max, breakable stuff is all over the place but rarely gets broken, and she smiles the entire weekend. They feed between 30-50 people, by themselves, and Brian can cook. You'll be in confession Monday morning for the sin of consumption.

It's fun. Why else would Intruders come from all over Texas, Louisiana, Georgia, NC, Tennessee, California and Kansas? Because it's a good time, it's a great way to relax, and you're with Intruders. That's why I show up.

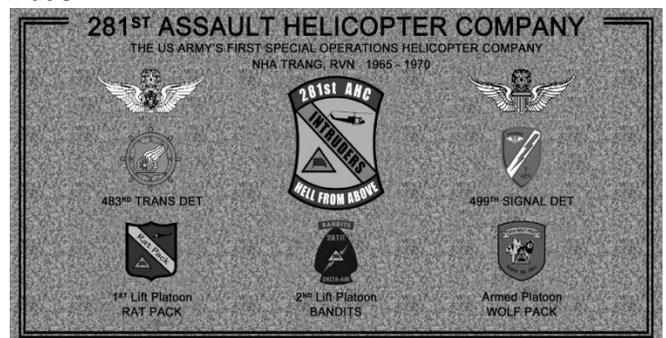
## From Your Veep – Will McCollum, VP

### Reunion 2016

The 2016 reunion is already shaping up to be a very busy and exciting time for all of us. Fayetteville and Fort Bragg, North Carolina is expecting us on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of October, 2016. We checked out the local hotels in the area and selected the Double Tree by Hilton, located at 1965 Cedar Creek Road; just off of I-95. The hotel is easy to find and very accommodating.

The hotel room rate for our reunion is \$99.00 which includes an all you can eat breakfast buffet. The hotel has free shuttle service from the airport, plenty of free parking and a really nice **spa** and bar. In addition, the hotel will also allow us to purchase our own food and drinks for the hospitality room.

The keystone event for this reunion will be the unveiling and dedication of a 281<sup>st</sup> memorial plaque (photo below) located in the US Army's Special Operations Command's parade field at Fort Bragg. The plaque is the last of several actions that clearly, for now and forever, designates your unit to be The US Army's First Special Operations Helicopter Company. The ceremony will be organized and conducted by the Special Operations Command and the Intruders and their guest will be special attendees This is recognition of the history you made.

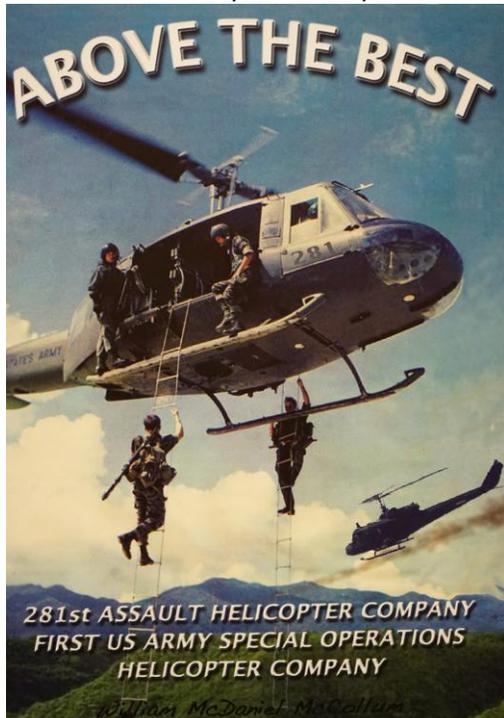


According to a show of hands at our last reunion and the interest shown by others, it appears that we will have a large number of our members attending this event. So start planning now, mark your calendar and plan on being there, our reunion committee will make sure you have a great time. We will post reunion details on the Intruder website: 281<sup>st</sup>.com

### The Book – "Above The Best"

The story of your service in the 281<sup>st</sup>, as told by you and your fellow intruders is now finished. The book is being proof read for the last time and it will be

going to the publisher within the next few weeks. The book, "Above The Best", will have approximately 350 pages, about 90 photographs, and as of now 95 stories written by Intruders and our friends. The Book will be a 6X9 hardback with a dust cover and will cost \$25.00 plus shipping. We encourage pre-ordering as those who do so will be the first to receive it. The more books you order, the lower the shipping cost. The first 125 books received from our publisher will be specially numbered (X of 125). The first 125 Intruders to pre-order and pay for their order, will receive one of them. See attached book "Pre-Order Form". Hurry while they last.



Every man who served in the 281<sup>st</sup> was a hero without regard to his duty position or the time period he served in. You worked with, and flew with, Fifth Special Forces soldiers who were the very best soldiers the US Army had. Jeff Murphy summed it up when he wrote. "Project Delta men were way more professional than I thought soldiers could ever be." We are confident that you and your family will enjoy the book "Above The Best". Watch our web site, HQ and Chat networks for the publication release date.

### **Sr. Member @Large – Bain Black**

Those of us in the Tar Heel State are excited to have the 2016 reunion in North Carolina. Everyone on the EB is looking forward to this special reunion where the 281<sup>st</sup> is again recognized for our contribution to special operations. I always felt it an honor to be associated with the finest soldiers in the world, the members of Detachment B-52, Project

Delta, 5<sup>th</sup> SFG. The ceremony at Fort Bragg on Friday October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016 will again memorialize the relationship between the 281<sup>st</sup> and Project Delta. Start planning now for the reunion you cannot miss.

I find that reunions go by so quickly that I don't accomplish everything on my checklist. Well, one thing you must make time for is a trip to the Airborne and Special Ops Museum in downtown Fayetteville. It is a magnificent museum housed in one of the most architecturally beautiful structures you could imagine. As you approach the facility, to your left you will see the memorial stone of the 281<sup>st</sup>, sitting there among the most celebrated



military units in our country's history. It is humbling. This wonderful military museum is located only 10-15 minutes from our reunion hotel.

Ft. Bragg is the home of the JFK Special Warfare Center. In 1962 the Special Warfare Center established the Special Forces training group. Their mission included exploring and developing methods of infiltration and exfiltration. Sound familiar?

I found some of the information above as well as the following in Wikipedia:

Special operations forces (SOF) training is grounded in the SOF Truths:

- Humans are more important than hardware.
- Quality is better than quantity.
- Special-operations forces cannot be mass-produced.
- Competent special-operations forces cannot be created after emergencies occur.
- Most special operations require non-SOF support

Don't miss the opportunity to participate in this momentous occasion.

## **The PX Grunt - Jay Hays**

**A**nother great reunion, this year celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. All registered attendees received a gold stylist / pen, now available through the PX at \$2.00 or 3 for \$5.00. The Anniversary Tee Shirt was yellow, the color of the Intruder background on our patch. We also had additional black Tee shirts; both are available from the PX. (see photo to the right) All went well with our new shirt and ball cap vendor. We were able to reduce the ball caps from \$20.00 to \$15.00. PX sales were above expectations thanks to the members in attendance. Inventory is still available for the Holiday gifts, please email me [jhays@haysenterprises.com](mailto:jhays@haysenterprises.com) or call [330-770-2278](tel:330-770-2278) to place an order.

My Brother in law Dave Hartong took photos, some appear in this newsletter; all others can be seen on our Association website at the following address. [http://www.281st.com/281MemberArea/assn\\_reunions/2015reunion/index.html](http://www.281st.com/281MemberArea/assn_reunions/2015reunion/index.html). Dave, a former Army Captain served in Korea and is a retired Pharmacist who enjoys photography. You will see on our website he took several couples photos then photo shopped them into scenes from Viet Nam.

Scott Author did another great job as MC entertaining after the banquet. Richard Murray was there after back surgery that kept him from attending the last couple years. Richard feels we should change the reunion name to annual therapy, many agree as it is wonderful to see our comrades and wives.

Our new book "Above the Best" will be available through the PX and I have already received pre-order deposits. At the reunion surveying attendees we had informal orders for 400 copies. See article in this Newsletter by Will McCollum.

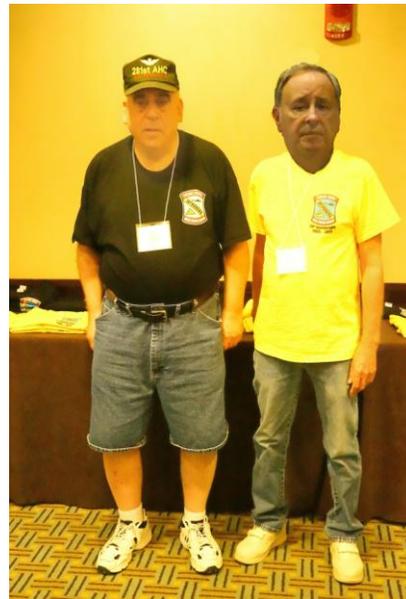
Have a Happy Thanksgiving and a Blessed Merry Christmas.

## **From the Editor ....**

**T**his year's Intruder of the Year was Ed Haas. He is a past president of the Association and still remains very active. At our last two reunions Ed had made sure that our hospitality suite was fully

stocked with food and drink. He can't dance, but Ellen sure can. Congratulations to Ed!

Ed is seen in the photo below (on the left) with Jack Mayhew (right). Both are sporting this year's new t-shirts. You will notice that the "yellow" actually makes Jack look slimmer. So if the slender look is what you want, buy yellow.



Many of our members are still receiving this Newsletter via regular mail and that's OK. However, the Newsletter is "printed" in black & white for mailings. The above photo of Ed and Jack say it all "in color"? Also, when you receive this Newsletter in the mail, you can't click on the live links to the internet. For example, the link on the left side of this page connects you directly to our Association website where the 2015 Reunion Photos are posted. Lastly, the email version allows you make the photos larger; that helps if you can't find your glasses when reading the newsletter.

If you want to continue receiving the Newsletter by mail, that is fine. If you would like to receive it by email, please just let me know by email [donbudlong281@gmail.com](mailto:donbudlong281@gmail.com).

## **Aircraft 113 Restoration Update**

Ed Duke had received the remainder of the parts needed to complete the restoration project. He now needs help with final assembly. If you can spare a few hours or days, please call Ed (936-291-9229 or 936-661-1516). The aircraft is at the H.E.A.R.T.S. Museum in Huntsville, TX. If you near that area, stop by and lend Ed a helping hand.



# “Above The Best”



## Book Pre-Order Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Assn. Member No. \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address (No P. O. Boxes): \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

How many copies of the book do you want? \_\_\_\_\_ X \$25.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

Postage via UPS ground delivery\* \_\_\_\_\_

Total cost for your book order \_\_\_\_\_

\*To calculate postage: Each book weighs 1.8 lbs.  
multiply 1.8 by the number of books and you have  
the total shipping weight. Call UPS and ask how much  
it costs to ship books from zip code 44481 to your home.  
Enter this amount on the line above for postage.

Mail a check payable to the 281 AHC Association, in the amount of your total order, to:  
Jay Hays  
1901 Bailey Road  
Lordstown, OH 44481

If you have any questions, please call or email Jay at 330-770-2278 or  
[jhays@haysenterprises.com](mailto:jhays@haysenterprises.com)

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