

May 2017

No. 65

281ST ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



From your President – Will McCollum

On Thursday, the 4th of May, the reunion planning committee and executive board members made the trip to Washington, D.C. We were honored to have five past presidents in attendance (281st past presidents that is). This was not an officer or pilot group meeting; we were equally mixed with former enlisted and officers, and on this occasion, we had one pretty lady with us. This meeting is not all that much different from planning a mission that so many of you took part in about 50 years ago. Our mission commander, vice president and reunion chairman, Bain Black, and also with "excellent boots on the ground man," Jack Mayhew. Both have reconned the area and they are really working hard at making this one of the best reunions ever. And, I think it will be.

Our meeting lasted all day; there is always so much to do; the planning, coordination, finding just the right room for the PX, hospitality, ladies brunch, meeting and banquet area was accomplished. The hotel management and the 281st reunion planning committee worked together to accomplish the mission and I am looking forward to October. We all got a free lunch from the hotel.....who says there is no such thing as a free lunch!

Please make your plans early, the more attendees we have the less it will cost. The hotel rooms are very nice, quiet, attractive and reasonably priced. This is a first class hotel. For those who fly into Reagan National Airport (DCA), the hotel shuttle runs every 20 minutes, it is white and purple with a Hyatt Regency logo.....it really does run every 20 minutes.

I hope to see all of you there in October....have a great summer.

From your Vice President & 2017 Reunion Chairman – Bain Black

Your Reunion Committee attended a planning meeting at the host hotel on May 4th. Claire Shields, events manager for the Crystal City Hyatt Regency, joined us and introduced us to executive management of the hotel. They are very eager to please and grateful for your service to our country.

Our 2017 Reunion will be in Washington, DC from October 13th to October 15th. For those who want to extend their stay in the capital, the hotel will honor the \$109/night rate from Wednesday the 11th through Sunday night Oct 15th. The Hyatt is a premier hotel with free shuttle service to and from Reagan Airport. This Reunion promises to be memorable (without the hurricane). Our boots on the ground is none other than Intruder 6, Jack Mayhew!

Below are the highlights:

Thursday – check in and come to the hospitality suite to quench your thirst and have a light bite to eat.

Friday – In the morning buses will take us to the Viet Nam Memorial. If you have not visited "The Wall", it is exquisite and unforgettable! After lunch (on your own), the buses will take us from the hotel to Arlington National Cemetery. This is one of the most visited sites in DC, and rightfully so. It is awesome. **We will have our 281st memorial service adjacent to the Tomb of the Unknowns.** Then, following the changing of the guard, the 281st will place a wreath at the tomb. This alone would be worth the trip to DC. There will be a little time to relax at the hotel or in the hospitality suite before the buffet and evening festivities. Following dinner, Tom Ross will be our guest speaker and will update us on his film, "The Rescue".



Saturday – very early in the morning, before the crowds show up at the Viet Nam Memorial, we will have the

honor to actually wash the memorial wall! The bus will depart the hotel, NLT 0630. For those who are not physically up to the manual labor, you are welcome to observe and take photos. The park service will provide cleaning equipment and supplies.



Saturday – later in the morning we'll have our General Membership Meeting and the Ladies will have their social fun time as usual. In the evening following our sit-down banquet, our guest speaker will be Joe Galloway, co-author of the book, *We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young*. His co-author was Lt. General Hal Moore (Ret). Joe is a former UPI reporter who accompanied Lt. Col. Hal Moore at the battle of the Ia Drang Valley. Galloway and Moore remained close friends until General Moore's death earlier this year. Joe is a captivating speaker and respected author.

Hotel Reservations – make them NOW! Rooms are limited (only 35 left) and when the \$109 rooms run out, the price jumps considerably. Go to the Hyatt link below or go to our website at www.281st.com and click on the Reunion Tab and follow the easy instructions. <https://aws.passkey.com/event/16117454/owner/10336/home>

Reunion Registration – complete the Registration Form attached (or go to the reunion tab on our website at www.281st.com . Print and complete the Form; select your meal choice for Saturday's banquet; and mail the Form and a check to your Treasurer, Fred Beck.

Your immediate reunion registration and hotel reservation will help us immensely. This is a rare opportunity to visit your nation's capital and experience it as few ever can. I look forward to seeing you there.

Letter to Fellow Intruders by Dean Roesner **Rat Pack Crew Chief July 1968 – June 1969**

Gentlemen - Sitting here today, chores completed, storms currently abated, I was thinking back to a time long ago when we were all young, energetic, and immortal. I remember the things we did and am amazed still. Coming from a tour on the ground (Combat Engineers) to an aviation unit was a tremendous culture shock. It wasn't just the difference between living and working in the mud, heat, and jungle. In the engineers, the relationship between officers and enlisted was essentially non-existent. Even after I made Sergeant, you did not speak to officers unless spoken to. Needless to say, coming to the 281st, learning about helicopters, maintenance, procedures, etc. was only part of the transition. The fact that I was to initiate conversations with officers to inform them about situations, tell them what to do and literally how to do it during insertions, extractions, and sometimes otherwise, was a mind blowing effort for me. It took me some time to adjust to this new way of being in the Army.

The next thing is what we did. There is absolutely no way someone who was not on the choppers during our maneuvers could understand what could be done with helicopters. No matter how many war movies, books, or conversations someone had, they just would not be able to fathom the things we did. Missing the actual event is missing the whole thing. I know how little the rest of the Army knew of the type of things we did, because I spent 15 months with them and we had absolutely no idea of what helicopters actually did.

I have surmised that there were three reasons we did all those things. One is that we knew it was expected of us. Two is that we knew we had to do it or people would die. Three, we were so young, naive, and ignorant that we didn't know it couldn't be done, so we went out and did it.

I am proud to have served with you, and my life wouldn't be the same if I hadn't, even with my tour in the engineers. I do believe my experiences over there have and still do color my entire life, and for the better.

Dean Roesner

(originally posted to the 281st HQ net on February 25, 2017)

Scholarship News From Dr. Karen Heintz Forcht, Secretary, Scholarship Committee

We currently have seven scholarship students on the scholarship program. They are doing very well with their college studies and will make us proud. The following students have graduated this spring, and moving on to their careers.

J. R. Little, great nephew of Jim Baker, graduated cum laude this month from North Carolina State University with a concentration in Landscape Design and a minor in Biological Sciences. He helped design a garden at the Gregg Museum as part of a class project. (click on the link below to see an article about that project. <https://cals.ncsu.edu/news/horticultural-science-students-design-pollinator-garden-thats-a-workof-art/>



J.R Little at the Gregg Museum, NC State University

Morgan Torbert, niece of Jim Torbert, graduated from Rice University this May with a BA with Honors. She has accepted a one-year fellowship in Texas and plans on attending law school after completion of the fellowship.

Onnie (J.R.) Watson, Fairmont State University, in West Virginia completed his 4th semester with a 3.83 GPA. He spoke at our Reunion in Fayetteville before the lights went out to thank the 281st for his scholarship. We can expect great things from him.

I have not received transcripts from the other students as yet as many of the colleges/universities are just now finishing their spring semester. Will keep you posted on their progress. We have a great group of students that will make all of the 281st proud as they are a shining example of the young people in the U. S. today.

The Scholarship Application Forms that need to be completed and submitted to me by July 15, 2017 can be found on our website, www.281st.com under the Members Area. Just click on the Scholarship Program

icon to get the forms. The completed forms are to be sent to me and reviewed by the Committee at the October, 2017 Reunion in Washington, D.C. Send forms to Dr. Karen Heintz Forcht, 1715 Dunleith Way, Greensboro, NC 27455. Any questions, please call or email me at 336-638-7544 or kforcht@elon.edu.

Please consider making a contribution at the Reunion or on your Reunion Registration Form. Remember, our children are our future. Contributions can also be sent directly to Walt Pikul, CPA, Treasurer, at Post Office Box 41035, Fayetteville, NC 28309 Phone: 910-424-1981.

Hey Ladies, listen up Y'all **from Cheryl Becker**

Good news ladies, the men are making it possible for us to have a wonderful time together again this year. I was privileged to be at the guy's planning meeting earlier this month and we discussed our Reunion Saturday morning social. Jack Mayhew graciously volunteered to help provide the food for our social. So we will have great food and wine again. Since everyone thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment in Fayetteville, our own Theresa Petrevich has agreed to perform her quirky style of New Jersey karaoke again in Washington, DC. Of course we will also have plenty of great gifts to give away.

Lois Budlong is helping me again to plan this fun event. Anyone else interested in helping, please contact me at 573-470-0734 or cherylbecker38@yahoo.com.

You don't want to miss this ladies only social on Saturday morning. We will have good food & drink, great friendship, lots of laughs, and stuff to give away. Hope to see y'all in October.

Junior Member at Large (JM@L) Lou Lerda

As part of the United States' Vietnam War Commemoration Act to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the war, the History and Legacy (H&L) Branch, Oral History Program will be conducting video interviews of Intruders at our Reunion in Washington, DC.

The primary objective of the Commemoration is to thank and honor Vietnam veterans, for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States, and to thank and honor the families of these veterans. Their goal is to include all ranks, all services, and all experiences to the

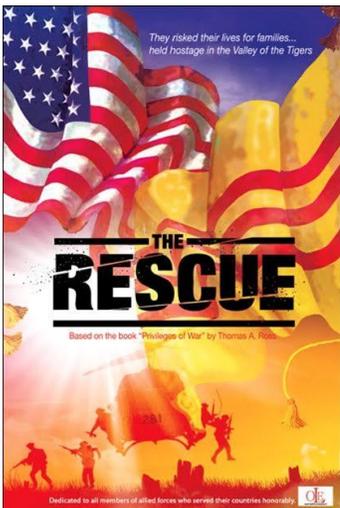
extent possible, to include veterans from all racial backgrounds, women veterans and family members.

The mission of the H&L team is to provide the American public with historically accurate material and interactive experiences that will help Americans better understand and appreciate the service of our Vietnam veterans and the history of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. The Commemoration plans to send the unedited interview footage of each interview to the Library of Congress Veterans History Project, which preserves these accounts and makes them accessible to the American public. Second, they will post interviews that have been edited for brevity and clarity on their website <http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/>.

More information about the video interviews at the Reunion will be forthcoming.

The Rescue - a Movie – From Tom Ross

Never thought that there would be any issues related to finding flying Huey slicks . . . but, that has become a problem. The most I have found in one place is four and they happen to be right here in Atlanta. There are options, but they are very expensive. Everything we need to replicate can be realistically



generated by computer and I have been speaking with studios that can do exactly what needs to be done. They are working on samples of their graphic capabilities now. But, as I said, that work is not inexpensive.

The gunships are another matter. It seems there are only two in the US that are flying. One, in the Indiana and the other

is in California. Luckily, using computer graphics, we only need one and the one in California is outfitted just right with rockets and mini-guns.

Right now, filming is scheduled to begin in Thailand sometime in January, after the rainy season has ended.

Intruder Sick Call

Don Jutz, a/k/a Zorro suffered a stroke last year and is still recuperating in Wisconsin. Don was a pilot in the 281st from 11/66 to 9/67. A card or call would certainly lift his spirits. So would care package. His contact information is:

Room 112 Saint Andrews
3800 North 92nd Street
Milwaukee, WI 53222
Cell Phone: [850-387-4610](tel:850-387-4610)

Bob Urquhart has peripheral neuropathy requiring him to use a walker to get around. His underlying condition is chronic anemia where the bone marrow does not produce sufficient red blood cells and those that are produced are deformed. He has been advised to begin making end of life plans. Bob was a Rat Pack pilot in 1970. His contact information is:

Robert Urquhart
75 Wells Street Apt 320
Greenfield, MA 01303
Phone: 413-325-8117
Email: senachie@comcast.net

Jay Hays this week had his 14th knee operation and is hopefully resting comfortably. If he can stay off his feet and follows the doctor's orders, he and Doris will be dancing the nights away at our Reunion in October. Here is his contact information to encourage him during his recuperation:

Phone: 330-770-2278
Email: Jhays@haysenterprises.com

Bill Abbott had recently been diagnosed with brain and underwent surgery this month. He is now recuperating at home with his wife Marsh and is receiving therapy. Bill served in the 281st from 5/68 to 5/69 and was a maintenance test pilot. You may remember Bill had a very distinctive Australian or British accent.

His contact information is:
Post Office Box 23
Centennial, WY 82055

If you know of other Intruders who are experiencing health issues, contact the Newsletter editor at donbudlong281@gmail.com

**Share a room at the Reunion w/ a buddy?
You get a great room for half the \$\$**

Of course it is twin beds

**We shared tents together in the field, why
not share a nice room in a fancy hotel.**

**Interested? Contact Bain Black at
BainB@roadrunner.com**

OR

Post to the HQ or Chat nets

Where in the World is Brian Middleton?

You may remember some years ago the 281st adopted a helicopter company that was sent to the Middle East war zone. That company was in the 10th Air Assault Battalion and their CO was Brian Middleton, Intruder 6.

Presently Major Brian Middleton is enroute to Honduras, his next duty station with the 1-228 Aviation Regiment where he will be the Battalion XO / S3. Previously he had been at Ft. Sill, OK for 7 months and 3 years in Germany before that. Upon his return from Honduras in a year, he will reunite with his wife Julia and family at Ft. Drum, NY. He is hoping to attend our Reunion next year, wherever it may be. Brian, see you again at the Reunion in 2018.

Brian may be contacted by email at
brian.m.middleton.mil@mail.mil.

Do Your Home Smoke Detectors Work? Maybe Not!

How do you know if your smoke detector is detecting smoke? Is the green light lit? When you press the test button does the unit emit a warning sound? Even if the answer to these two questions is yes, the smoke detector may NOT be detecting smoke.

Many people are not aware that smoke detectors have a limited life. There are special materials in the smoke detectors that sense smoke. Those materials have a useful life of 10 years. After 10 years, they can't sense smoke. So even if the green light is lit and the test button sounds the alarm, if your smoke detectors are more than 10 years old, they probably don't work anymore.

How do you know if your smoke detectors out-of-date? If your house is more than 10 years old and the smoke detectors came with the house, they are out-of-date. If you are unsure of the smoke detectors age, take them down and look at the side facing the ceiling or wall. The "born on" date should be stamped on the unit. If the date is before May 2007, it needs changing. New smoke detectors are not very expensive; I recently purchased new ones on sale at ACE for \$15 each and that included the 9v batteries. If you are unable to check your own detectors, ask a friend or neighbor for assistance. It is better to be safe than sorry.

Putting Up the Flag

In our neighborhood, almost half of the houses on my street display the American flag. On Memorial Day and other holidays, a small American Flag is placed by each mailbox. Why, because we can. Click on the following link that was provided by Harry Wetmore for a 3 minute video with one man's explanation of why we can put up the flag.



<http://puttinguptheflag.com/>

What to Bring to the Reunion Checklist

Your:

- Photos ✓
- DVD's ✓
- Books ✓
- Maps ✓
- Memorabilia ✓
- A 281st Buddy ✓
- Old uniform that fits (ha, ha) ✓
- Dancing shoes ✓
- Sense of humor ✓

May 2017

281st ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY ASSOCIATION

No. 65

REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

281st AHC Association 2017 Reunion
October 12th - 15th at the Hyatt Regency Hotel

Hotel will honor \$109+ / night rate w/ check in as early as Oct 11 and depart as late as Oct 16
Crystal City (Arlington), VA

Member # Last Name First Name MI
Street Address City State Zip Code Phone #
Unit E-Mail I Will Arrive on 10/ /2017
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. 2017 Annual Membership Dues: Annual Fee \$25 = \$

Member Reunion Registration: Member @ \$139 = \$

Guest Fee (16 years old and up) # Guests X \$139 = \$

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

Scholarship Fund: My 2017 TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION IS: \$

TOTAL CHECK IS: \$

Guest Name(s):

Saturday Banquet Meal Selection: indicate number for each choice

Beef Chicken Seafood Vegetarian
(Roasted Sirloin Loin of beef) (Herb Roasted Chicken Breast) (Dill & Citrus Cured Salmon) (Vegetarian Lasagna Roulade)

LADIES' BRUNCH (Saturday Morning) Yes No (please circle)

PAYMENTS: Make check or money order payable to 281st AHC Association. Mail Payment and the Registration Form no later than September 15th to:

281st AHC Association
c/o Fred Beck
205 Carey Ct.
Neenah, WI 54956-9208

Fred Beck Contact Information
Tel: 920-558-4127
email: JJB@new.rr.com

VOLUNTEER: Registration PX Hospitality Room As Needed