



# RIPCORD REPORT



For Friends and Survivors of the Battle of Fire Support Base Ripcord  
Republic of Vietnam 12 March - 23 July, 1970

Issue # 120

December 2019

## Springfield, MO 2020 Reunion News

The 50 year reunion of the Ripcord Survivors will be in Springfield, Missouri from Monday 20 July through Thursday 23 July at the University Plaza Hotel in Springfield, Missouri.

**Do you plan to attend? You should do two things:**  
**#1** Reserve a room at the Plaza or the nearby "Q" Hotel. For the Plaza call 417-864-7333 and use the group code "Ripcord". If they are booked up, which is likely, then call the "Q" Hotel at 417-862-0070 and refer to the group code "Ripcord". Rooms are \$92 per night, breakfast included. \$127 for suites. These hotels are about 1.5 blocks apart so it is walkable for most.  
**#2** Send in your registration form that you have in this newsletter or on the Ripcord website to Lee Widjeskog, 493 Stillman Ave., Bridgeton, NJ 08302.

If you have questions or problems call Lee at 856-451-1108. See you in July!

*See page 12 of this newsletter  
for  
Registration form  
and more information for  
the 2020 Ripcord Reunion  
50th Anniversary*

**2020 Reunion Date**  
*Please note that the normal dates  
of the reunion have been changed  
for this year!*

**Springfield, Missouri**

Monday 20 July

to

Thursday 23 July

*Leave Friday 24 July*

(See page 12 of this newsletter for  
Registration form and more information)

UNIVERSITY PLAZA HOTEL

333 S John Q. Hammons

Parkway

Springfield , MO 65806

(417) 864-7333

or

if the University Plaza is full

The "Q" Hotel  
417-862-0070

## Ripcord on Facebook

by Anthony Chritchlow



[www.facebook.com/groups/ripcordassociation](http://www.facebook.com/groups/ripcordassociation)

HI everyone! I'm writing this on my 71st birthday. I never in my life thought I would get here. Enough said about that. I'm pleased to say we are still growing on our Face Book page. We are now up to 833 members. Most of these new members are family and friends of our Ripcord vets. I am very pleased to know that our families and friends want to know our story. Dennise and I did something different this year; we worked a voting station here in town. It's not hard work but you have to do everything by the rules. I can't say it was fun but very interesting. This summer was not so good for us, Dennise broke her ankle in June. It took 3 months to get back to walking without crutches. She's doing great now. She's down to a cane when walking around town.

I've been working on the trip to the 2020 reunion. I have the route laid out and the stops and hotels for the nights to and from Springfield. I know kind of early hahaha. I think I have enough loyalty points on my credit card to pay for the hotels to and from the reunion. We are looking forward to seeing everyone there. I hope you all can get to this reunion.

Well enough rambling. Be safe for the rest of this year and next year too.



Visit our website at  
[www.ripcordassociation.com](http://www.ripcordassociation.com)

Read the **Ripcord Report** on line  
Daily updates • History  
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*Opinions expressed in submitted material are not necessarily those of the editorial staff. We reserve the right to reject any material deemed to be inappropriate. We also reserve the right to edit all submissions, but we will make every effort to maintain the writer's concept and meaning. Please be brief and concise.*



Join us on Facebook group  
Ripcord Association

Visit our website at  
[www.ripcordassociation.com](http://www.ripcordassociation.com)

Please continue to send your letters and  
send your comments or articles to:

[ltwidjeskog@aol.com](mailto:ltwidjeskog@aol.com)

or

postal mail to:

[Lee Widjeskog](mailto:Lee.Widjeskog@bellsouth.net)

493 Stillman Ave

Bridgeton, NJ 08302

Everyone would love to hear from you.

## RIPCORD REPORT

**Ripcord Report** is a publication of the **Ripcord Association**, and is the authoritative voice of history for the Battle of Fire Support Base Ripcord.

### Ripcord Report

[www.ripcordassociation.com](http://www.ripcordassociation.com)

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Frank Marshall

E-mail: [mail@ripcordassociation.com](mailto:mail@ripcordassociation.com)

## Donations

### *the life blood of our Association*

The following have given donations to the Ripcord Association since the last newsletter:

- Beth Hall & John Yonts
- Leigh Freeman C 2/506
- Michael Heddinger HHC 101
- Ken Hamilton C 2/506
- Robert & Jackie Wallace C 2/506
- Charles Parsons B 2/506
- Cherlyn Burdett :To the memory of
- Randle Dean Burdett A 2/11 FA

### **The following donations to the memory of LEONARD MOORE 3rd Bde. Mini Cav.**

- North Central District 4-H Horse council
- Rockingham County Farm Bureau
- Piedmont Horsemen Association
- Oak Leaf Baptist Church
- Anna & Tommy Carter
- Reidsville Bible Chapel
- June & Percy Strader
- Frances Smallwood
- Lucille Blankenship
- Mary & Barry King
- James & Myra Holmes
- Susan Metz
- Robbie Hoskins
- Dennis Loftis
- J. Kenneth Jones
- Gene Sparks
- Ron Pryor
- Claude Pryor
- Journey Hatcher
- Ron McCrory
- Bill Howerton
- Don Wintjen
- Rich Meador
- Venson Reynolds
- Forveson Corp.
- Troy Porter
- Susan Metz

## Signed up for Springfield 2020

*Below are the names of those that have signed up for the 2020 reunion*

- Marc Aronson B 2/319 FA
- Robert & Michele Barrowcliff A 159 ASHB
- Bill Boles D & HHC 2/506
- Frank & Bud Bort C 2/506
- Bruce Brady & Karolyn Kruger A 2/506
- Chris Brady Guest
- Cherlyn, Sue Burdette & Steve Bell Guests A 2/11FA
- Tex Campbell D 2/506
- Tom & Linda Chase 163 ASHB
- Anthony & Dennise Critchlow HHC 2/506
- Michael & Christine Dicken B 2/506
- Jonelle, Troels & Sloan Erichsen Guests
- Mike & Lee Foreman B 2/506
- \*\*Kae, Shirley, Jason, Amy & Aaron Goodwin B 2/506
- Richard & Linda Hawkins Guests
- Elwood & Johnnie Hall D 2/506
- Chuck & Jean Holmen A 159th ASHB
- Buzz Ireland C 159th ASHB
- Bob & Red Judd B 2/506
- Gary Kelly A 2/506
- David & Sophia Kenyon B 326 ENG
- Greg Kiekinveld B 326 ENG
- \*\*Lyle Kohmetscher B 2/501
- \*\*David Lockwood & Ingrid Hietzke A 2/11 FA
- Stephen & Maria Manthei C 2/506
- \*\*Diane & Joe McCarville C 2/506
- \*\*Doug & Mimi McVay A 2/506
- Mary Meagher & John Hoek Guest
- \*\*Mark & Diane Minch B 2/319 FA
- Tim Newman A 2/506
- Tom & Barbara Peacock D 2/506 & A 2/501
- Ray & Sheila Potts B 2/319 FA
- Jerry & Luci Rodgers 326 Med.
- Charles & Joann Schilero D 2/506
- Chuck Shannon D 2/506
- Fred & Micki Spaulding HHC 3rd Bde
- Terry Stanger & Carol Keilman A 159th ASHB
- Robert Tarbuck & Paige Corkhill C 2/506
- \*\*Glenn & Linda Tatsuno C 2/506
- Lee & Kathy Widjeskog A 2/506
- Bill & Sheila Williams B 2/506
- John & Kathy Williams Guests
- Diane Wilson Guest
- \*\* First reunion

# JERSEY RAMBLINGS

by Lee Widjeskog A/2-506



Since the last newsletter in early September a number of events of interest and impact to the association have occurred. The first was the death of Leonard Moore one of our stalwart members who was always present to greet new attendees and old to the Ripcord reunions. He missed it in 2019 having recently had by-pass surgery. He had recovered and was planning to see us once more in 2020 when he was involved in a farming accident and died as a result.

His loss shocked us as we expected him to keep on for many more years. Then on 13 September the Ripcord Association lost one of its founding members when Chuck Hawkins of Alpha 2/506 died of a massive heart attack in the Denver airport as he waited to catch a flight to his home in Alaska. As a member of his company in Vietnam, my shock was complete! We had not heard of him having any medical issues and I knew he was going through an updated clearance for his defense contract. He had recently lost his second wife and was moving on with a move to Alaska. His daughter and he were working together to get the house sold and his move to Alaska completed when he passed away. A memorial service will be held on his birthday on 1 August in Alaska.

All this occurred while Kathy and I were on a traveling vacation to Montana, Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, Utah, Colorado and Missouri. We enjoyed the trip but after notification of the losses we began to wonder if we would keep going. However, we had some commitments and hoped to see others on the trip. We missed Bill and Sheila Williams when we were in Colorado, but will see them once more at the 2020 reunion.

Rooms at the University Plaza are well booked. There may be a few suites left if you can afford the higher rate (\$127). Elsewhere there is the "Q" hotel about a block and a half from the U. Plaza Hotel and rooms can be had for \$92 if you mention the group code of "Ripcord". Looking at the rooms reserved so far we have over 300 people coming already. There is still plenty of rooms available at the "Q". If it fills we have a third place just opening up that is also nearby. Do not let a room be your reason for not coming.

Speaking of reasons for not coming, let it be that you're not ready! If it is finances call me at 856-451-1108. We have resources available to pay for rooms

and registration if need be. If a survivor of the Ripcord battle from March through July can get to Springfield, we will make certain he has a room. The situation will be known only to him and me. But call me ahead of time so we can plan.

Well, let's get this newsletter out and wait for Christmas! God bless and Currahee!

*Lee Widjeskog*

## Ripcord Association Membership

663 members in our Ripcord Association

550 are Ripcord Veterans

113 are Associate Members

135 receive newsletter via Postal Mail

528 receive the newsletter via e-mail

833 on Facebook "Ripcord Association Group"

## New Members

Melvin	Olsen	2/501
George	Ash	A/101st Avn Bn
Arthur	Schmidt	A/159th ASHB
William	Vessels	A/2-506
Donald	Graff	A/2-506
Joseph	Nieporte	A/2-506
Abel	Garcia	Associate Member
Ralph	Nardone	Associate Member
Joe	Jungles	B/2-506
Glenn	Tatsuno	C/2-506

**If your contact information has changed, please go to our website and update your membership to keep getting important information about our Ripcord Association**

Membership in our Ripcord Association is FREE! Everyone is welcome to join.

<https://www.ripcordassociation.com/membership-form/>

## FSB RIPCORD DIORAMA UPDATE

by Craig Van Hout

Work continues by modelers from the AMPS Central South Carolina “Wildcats” modeling club on the diorama of FSB Ripcord they are making for the Vietnam War exhibit at the South Carolina Confederate Relic Room and Military History Museum, Columbia, SC.

The modelers have been working on the diorama for one year now and there is still a lot of work to do. They are projecting to have the diorama completed in the Jan 2020 timeframe. The Vietnam War exhibit has a tentative opening date of Jun 2020. The opening date is fluid as the Relic Room is a SC Government agency and events beyond their control may affect the opening date. The diorama will be on display for 2-3 years.

The amount of research and work on the diorama is mind boggling. The modelers conducted hundreds of hours researching Ripcord. They scoured numerous sources for pictures and film of the fire base. Even so, they were not able to get a comprehensive view of the layout of Ripcord and, thus, the diorama will be a replica of Ripcord and not definitive work. There are some areas of Ripcord that no pictures can be

found and, therefore, informed decisions will be made. The diorama is a 1/72 scale. The amount of detail is amazing. So far they have molded and painted 1,944 tree stumps to place on Ripcord. They are using 32 gauge wire which will be coiled to represent concertina wire on the perimeter of the base. They will need 6 to 8,000 feet of wire to complete the task. They are using 3D printers to make some of the equipment. A man in Spain is making 200 soldier figures. To date



they are finishing up the top of the hill where the 105 Artillery Battery was located and are working their way down to the 155 battery and Impact Rock.

A model of the Chinook which was shot down and burned on 18 Jul will be hoovering over Ripcord with a slingload of supplies.

There will be many pieces of equipment on the diorama that many of us have forgotten about or didn't realize were there. Generators, fire extinguishers, mermite canisters, a water tank, mailbox, 55 gallon barrels, blivets and much more.

The modelers want to thank everyone who submitted photos and corresponded with them.

## Bob Worrall and Bob Layton DMOR

Ripcord Association members Bob Worrall and Bob Layton were recently inducted as Distinguished Members of the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment—the famed “Geronimo” regiment. Each served as rifle platoon leader of the first platoon, B-2/501. Worrall led the platoon from December 1969 through March 1970 when he became the company XO. He returned to the field in July and led the second platoon during 2/501’s assault on Hill 1000. Layton led the first platoon from April through October 1970 and then was assigned to battalion staff.

Worrall was recognized for his continuing service as a member of VFW Post 688 in Boerne, Texas, where he has organized and led various civic projects bringing together the post and community and local schools. Layton’s introduction noted his work with Habitat for Humanity and tutoring in the Cleveland, Ohio schools. The Induction Ceremony was held at 2:00PM on November 7th in the auditorium of The Airborne and Special Operations Museum in Fayetteville, NC, just outside Fort Bragg—the home of the 82d Airborne Division. While in 1970, 2/501 was part of the 101st Airborne Division, since October 2013 it has been assigned to the 1st Brigade Combat Team of the 82d Airborne at Fort Bragg, NC.

Prior to the afternoon ceremony, Worrall and Layton met at 2/501 Battalion HQ with the Commander, Command Sergeant Major, and Adjutant. They were then escorted over to Delta Company by its Commanding Officer, for a “Meet and Greet” opportunity with his troopers. For well over an hour, his troops did a “show and tell” exhibition of every vehicle, weapon, and significant piece of equipment used by the rifle company. After each trooper presented and described his weapon/vehicle, the inductees were allowed to ask questions and handle the equipment. Included were rifles, machine guns, shotguns, grenade launchers, helmets, night vision goggles, and much more. The paratroopers were decked out in full combat gear during the presentation, including helmets and camouflage-painted faces. They were awesome!

The Induction Ceremony itself lasted about an hour and was attended by the Battalion staff and about 200 paratroopers. The Battalion Commander spoke glowingly of the history of the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, which was the first American parachute unit created during World War II, and has continued to serve

valiantly through today’s conflicts in SW Asia. The Adjutant introduced each inductee to the Regiment by summarizing assignments with the Regiment, awards earned from Vietnam, and describing their community service work since leaving the military. Each inductee gave a 5 to 10-minutes acceptance speech consisting mostly of remembrances of the Regiment during 1969-1971. Both Worrall and Layton spoke about the Ripcord battles and recognized both the Ripcord Association and Board Officers Lee Widjeskog and Frank Marshall, who attended the Ceremony.

The day ended with a dinner hosted by the 2/501 Battalion Commander, Command Sergeant Major, and members of his staff. At the dinner, the new inductees expressed their gratitude by presenting the 2/501 Battalion Commander with a copy of Keith Nolan’s Ripcord book.



## Ripcord Pilot Passes:

Bob Coder, an A 4/77 Cobra pilot during Ripcord passed away this past month after a long illness. I saw him in Hawaii about 15 months ago. He was weak and not too mobile, but looked pretty good living in his 1-acre compound on Oahu, north shore. His wife was a good care giver. Unfortunately, she had died six months before him of a stroke. That was no doubt a blow to Bob, both emotionally and for her physical support.



Bob has a long and interesting military history. After a year in Alpha 4/77, 1970-71, which included Ripcord and Lamson 719, he extended to the 282nd in Danang and was my roommate three. We were flying Charlie model gunships rather than Cobras at that time. After Vietnam he separated from the Army, went back to school, finished a bachelor's degree and then rejoined the Army. Eventually, he ended up in the 160th which is that Special Operations Command helicopter unit recently in the news. Google it if you don't know of it. I went to his Army "retirement" in 2003 in Virginia. However, he accepted a Department of Defense civilian job with Special Operations Command in Hawaii. He worked there till final retirement in about 2012. A real warrior!

Funny Ripcord story about Bob when he was a newbie. We were orbiting east of Ripcord near Camp Evans the night before the evacuation, just doing donuts in the sky at about 6,000 feet, ready at a moment's notice if we were needed at Ripcord. But, nothing happened and we were getting sleepy and took turns dozing off.

There you are in a droning helicopter in the dark of night at 3 AM and nothing's going on. So we traded back and forth for 20 minute catnaps. As you might remember the pilot and co-pilot in a Cobra sit in tandem and cannot really see one another due to the seat back. During one of my "naps", I noticed that the Cobra had started into a shallow dive and was picking up speed. I called to Bob, "Are you flying?" "No" he answered, "I thought it was your turn!" We had a good laugh about both of us napping at the same time.

The next day I was in the Cobra fire team that witnessed the last guy getting extracted. We were covering the LOH when he said "I see a guy down there!" He swooped down there and got him.

*Vatu Johnson*

### 20 Deadliest U.S. Battles of the Vietnam War

<i>Battle</i>	<i>Deaths</i>	<i>Dates</i>
• Ia Drang Valley	300	Oct 23 – Nov 26, '65
• Khe Sanh	205	Jan 20 – Apr 14, '68
• Dak To	192	Nov 1 – Dec 1, '67
• Cu Nghi	121	Jan 28 – 31, '66
• Hue	119	Feb 2 – Mar 2, '68
• Kim Son Valley	107	Feb 16 – 28, '66
• Con Thien	84	Jul 2, '67
• Nine Days in May	79	May 18- 28, '67
• Dak To	76	Jun 22, '67
• <b>Firebase Ripcord</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>Jul 1 – 23, '70</b>
• Vin Huy	73	May 30 – Jun 2, '67
• Ong Thang	70+	Oct 17, '67
• Hamburger Hill	70	May 10 – 20, '69
• Dong Ha	68	Apr 29 – May 4, '68
• Tam Quan	58	Dec 6 – 20, '67
• LZ Bird	58	Dec 27, '66
• Dong Son	54	Sep 4, '67
• Con Thien	51	Jul 2-3 '67
• Thom Tham Khe	48	Dec 27 – 28, '67
• Tan Son Nhut AB	48	Mar 2, '68

**Note:** Lengthy operations are excluded. Only actions that could be categorized as single or directly related engagements are tabulated.

**Source:** From VFW magazine, November 2001; reprinted from Sigler, David B. Vietnam Battle Chronology; U.S. Army and Marine Corps Combat Operations, 1965 – 1973.

## A War Horse Remembered

It was with great sadness that I received notice of the sudden death of Captain Chuck Hawkins on September 13, 2019 from a heart attack while en route to his home in Alaska. It caused me to recollect my own times spent with Chuck when we were both young platoon leaders in C/2/506th.



Chuck was a lover of the great outdoors as he was raised in the little town of Ninilchik, Alaska. Chuck's parents were both school teachers. His father had been an infantry officer and served with distinction in the 10th Mountain Division during World War II. The example of his father gave Chuck the impetus to become a combat infantry officer. He applied to and was accepted to West Point. He graduated from West Point as a member of the class of 1968 and selected infantry as his branch in the army. After completion of the Basic infantry course, Airborne school, and Ranger school, he was assigned to Germany where he served as a second and first lieutenant prior to his assignment to Vietnam.

Chuck joined Charlie Company in Mid March of 1970 soon after his arrival in Vietnam. Captain Vazquez was the then Company Commander, and the company was comprised of four platoons. Chuck initially replaced Charlie Lieb as the second platoon leader. The company was then operating in the Rocket Ridge area. Not long afterwards, Captain Vazquez reorganized the company into three platoons with Bob Wallace commanding the first platoon, myself commanding the second platoon, and Chuck commanding the third platoon.

In late March of 1970, Charlie Company combat assaulted in to a hilltop and commenced building Firebase Gladiator upon which a 105 battery was placed to support the Bravo Company April Fool's Day attack on Ripcord. After the failure of that attack, Charlie Company was ordered to combat assault into the LZ just east of Ripcord. Chuck was the acting Company Commander during this attack as Cpt. Vazquez left to go on R&R the day before the assault. After completing this assault, one of the other Charlie Company platoons engaged in an intense fire fight with the enemy in the valley due east of Firebase Ripcord. After this firefight ended, the next day Charlie Company assembled in the jungle to prepare for a ground assault of Firebase Ripcord up the eastern slope of the firebase. Chuck and

I were discussing our ideas about the best way to assault the hill, when I looked up off in the sky to see a cobra gunship shooting off to the east of our location. We had not called for the use of gunships at this point and didn't know why the gunship was so close to us or who the pilot was firing missions for. Soon after, the pilot of the gunship begins to position himself for an attack on our position and commences to dive on our location. We immediately threw out some yellow smoke grenades to warn the pilot that we were friendly's and scrambled for the radio to call the pilot off from shooting us up. The gunfire from the gunship went right through the middle of Charlie Company's perimeter not more than five meters from Chuck and I. Chuck got on the radio and raised holy hell with the TOC about what had happened, while I checked to see if we had any injured soldiers. Miraculously, no one in Charlie Company was injured.

The next day Charlie Company assaulted Ripcord from the east side and secured the hilltop. Chuck, Bob Wallace and myself split the perimeter of the Firebase into three sectors, each sector to be covered by each of the three platoons building fighting positions with interlocking fields of fire in each sector. Cpt. Vazquez soon returned from R & R and Charlie Company slaved like dogs to get the defensive installations in place to his satisfaction.

After 30 days of working on the firebase, Charlie company was inserted well to the southeast of Ripcord and operated back toward the area south of Ripcord. Chuck was soon promoted to Captain and was then assigned to be the Company Commander of Alpha Company just before the company returned for the June standdown.

Alpha Company returned with the rest of the battalion to the Ripcord AO in mid June, and it was not long after that Alpha Company was given the mission to secure Firebase O'Reilly. On or about July 10, 1970 a full strength Alpha Company assaulted into the little LZ just east of Ripcord with orders to move down the ridgeline toward Hill 805. I spoke briefly with Chuck on the LZ as what was left of Charlie Company was being extracted to secure Firebase O'Reilly. I told him the situation had changed radically in the AO and that the enemy was everywhere. I remember saying to myself that Chuck was as eager as anyone I had ever seen to get in the fight. He was superbly trained for his job by the army and together with the combat experience he had acquired under the tutelage of Captain Vazquez, Chuck

*(continued on page 9)*

*(A War Horse Remembered, Continued)*

was extremely confident that he and his men could perform the missions given to them.

The details of Alpha Company's magnificent performance in the Ripcord battle have been recollected on numerous occasions, and I will not reiterate them again in this writing, except to summarize my feelings about the Alpha Company fight and its Company Commander.

Chuck Hawkins was given the toughest mission in the Ripcord battle when he was ordered by his commander to take his Company down into the valley from the Hill 805 area after several days of fighting there. This movement evolved into the fiercest fight of the Ripcord battle. This kind of fight was a classic battle for survival requiring first rate leadership to address the total chaos that results from only a battle of this sort. For Chuck it was a battle of wills and who could soldier the best. Chuck knew his Alpha company soldiers would fight to the end. Chuck utilized all the tools he possessed together with his iron will to withstand the fierce and repeated enemy attacks. He continually moved his men to realign them in positions to best meet the enemy attacks and protect his wounded soldiers. His direction and use of artillery and fire support was text book and close in. Chuck directed all of the air strikes in the lengthy fight and had the balls to call in danger close missions which eventually broke the enemies back and saved the lives of many of his men.

General George Patton once said "to be a good leader, you must understand history." Chuck had studied military history with a passion and was familiar with the tactics used by commanders in past battles. Chuck analyzed the battle of Ripcord in all respects and knew all the nuances of the battle .He saw the battle as a replica of the tactics utilized by the enemy in defeating the French at Dien Bien Phu. When I first saw him 27 years later at my first reunion to attend, Chuck pulled out the Ripcord AO map and we spent four hours one evening as he related to me the graphic details of the big fight. Chuck could be an intense man when the occasion called for it. He was that night as intense and emotional as I had ever seen him, as he explained the sequences of the battle and what went on at different stages of the fight. He could not be prouder of his soldiers who fought so hard against the enemy.

Chuck returned to the States after his tour in Vietnam



and served on active duty for several years before resigning from the active duty Army and enlisting in the Georgia National Guard and later in the Virginia National Guard. After retiring from the Guard, Chuck found his calling as a defense analyst and consultant working for the Defense Department and other contractors. He would travel two or three times a year to China and Korea as part of his duties. Chuck became one of the foremost senior policy analysts addressing Chinese military policy and their professional education and training. He thoroughly enjoyed this kind of work.

Chuck was one of the early founders and organizers of the Ripcord Association, a gathering point for the veterans of the Ripcord campaign. His sincere commitment to these veterans was a key factor in the growth of this association which earnestly reaches out to veterans and their families. For many years Chuck was the chief editor of the Ripcord Newsletter.

Chuck was predeceased by his wife Glenda who died earlier this year. He is survived by his daughter Jonelle Erichsen and his granddaughter Sloane, and by his brother Richard and his family, and a host of collateral relatives. In his later years. Chuck enjoyed regular visits back to the old homestead in Alaska reconnecting with his relatives and friends there. He was on his way back to the land he loved so much to establish a permanent residence there when he crossed over.

Chuck loved coming to the reunions and visiting with everyone. After a few pops, he would come up to me and say "Jim, let's go outside for a smoke and a drink and enjoy some good BS".

Chuck should be remembered for being a hardcore combat leader (1) who remained steadfast in the performance of his duties in the face of the enemy, (2) who retained a deep commitment and admiration for his Alpha Company soldiers, (3) who maintained the mental flexibility under fire to positively adjust to the chaos of battle, and (4) who endured the rigors of the campaign trail with great enthusiasm and without complaint. He fulfilled the oath he took on the plain of West Point to defend the nation against its enemies and his courageous performance on the battlefield brought great honor to himself, West Point, the Army, the Nation and his soldiers.

God bless this gallant cavalier and comrade who now rests in the Valhalla section of the Heavenly Kingdom reserved for "Magnificent Warriors".

*Currahee,  
Jim Campbell*

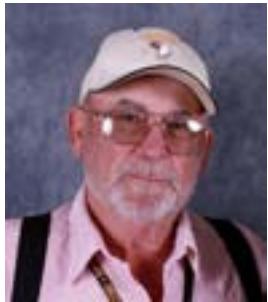
## OUR MOST UNFORGETABLE CHARACTER CROSSES OVER

Our dear friend Leonard Moore died on September 9, 2019 at his home in North Carolina due to injuries sustained in a farming accident. Leonard was a man who was devoted first to his wife Carole, and then to his children and many grandchildren and great grandchildren. Leonard was a farmer, a bear hunting guide, a coon dog breeder and guide, a carpenter, a farrier and a jack of all trades. Beyond that, he was also a dedicated member in good standing with all of the members of the Ripcord Association.

I well remember meeting Leonard for the first time at the Shreveport reunion. He was introduced to me by my old machine gunner Layne Hammons, who had met him a day or two earlier. Layne brought him up to meet me and said "LT, I finally met a guy here who can drink almost as much beer as me." Talk about two peas of the same pod. They both became inseparable and bonded like twin brothers. They both were country boys and loved hunting and hunting dogs. Leonard raised prize coon hunting and bear hunting dogs, and Layne kept a pack of 26 beagles and hounds in his front yard to hunt deer.

One day about a year after Layne died, Leonard called me up on the telephone and told me he had been working on a project the last three days and wanted to share the results of his findings. He tells me that he decided that he wanted to calculate the number of beers he had consumed in his life. He had procured calenders for the years since he was 12 and first started drinking beer. He had gone through each calender day by day since he drank more after working hours than during the day and more on weekends than working days. He then says I have determined that I have downed 205,800 beers in my life. He then says to me "Lt., how many beers do you think Layne drank in his life before he died. Ya know he drank a lot more beers than I ever did."

If you were a smoker and enjoyed drinking you were destined to know Leonard and Layne as they sat outside the hospitality suite all day and night chain smoking cigarettes, drinking beer and telling stories. Leonard was the great story teller and would have you howling all night.



About 6 years ago, one afternoon while working in my office, my secretary comes in and says you have a Mr. Moore on the phone who says it is urgent that you talk with him. I pick up the phone and it is Leonard who is all upset and ranting and raving. He finally says to me "Lt. my prize coon dog got on the trail of a coon last night who ran off on my neighbors property. My dog treed the coon in the neighbor's front yard about 1:00 o'clock in the morning and was howling. I went to get my dog and the neighbor came out of his house and said he was going to shoot my prize hound if he ever saw it again on his property. Leonard wanted to know from me whether it was legal for him to shoot the neighbor if the neighbor shot his prize dog.

Leonard loved coming to the Ripcord reunions and visiting with everyone as he was the kind of guy that never met a stranger. I never met a more friendly or funnier person in my life.

Leonard served in the Third Brigade Mini-Cav during the Ripcord battle. He absolutely revered Ben Harrison, as Leonard served on numerous occasions as the door gunner on Ben's Charlie Charlie helicopter. He would say Ben loved flying his chopper and would take it where no one else would go. Leonard would sometimes join the mini-cav on the ground in operations and had a deep admiration and respect for the line soldiers fighting the war. He was proud to have served in the war and enjoyed spending time with his Ripcord buddies that he met at the reunions.

Leonard was the quintessential citizen-soldier of the Ripcord battle. A product of rural North Carolina who answered the call of his nation in time of need, he served gallantly in battle against a determined enemy. He was a "fighting man" who excelled at what he did, and returned home to a life of joy spent with his beloved wife Carole and his growing family. Leonard was a patriot all his life and could always be easily identified as the man wearing red, white and blue suspenders attached to his jeans, the front pocket of which was filled with his most prized possession, the bone of a coon pecker that he had skinned out.

We all will miss Leonard terribly in the future. Reunions will not be the same without him. It is people like Leonard that are the backbone of this nation. God bless them for their magnificent service to the country and God bless them for being magnificent human beings.

*Currahee,  
Jim Campbell*

## INCOMING MAIL



Dear Lee and Kathy,

It's been about 10 days since we left Myrtle Beach and I think I have processed enough that I can put some things into words.

It's been 48 years since the terrible day I got the news about Pat (DeWulf). It would be over 40 years, and largely because of Mr. Nolan's book, the article written by Jim (McCoy), and the efforts of people like you, I and others would finally get the truth of our loss - information that I had given up learning a long time ago. I KNOW how much work is involved in putting together an event like the Ripcord Reunion, and because of your continued willingness to help - so many of our lives have been changed forever in ways we never thought possible.

After I sent in our registration, you called me Lee. I was so surprised - it was so unexpected. But during that short call, although you had no idea who I was and didn't really know for sure what my connection was to Pat, I really felt you CARED - that I mattered. And that was the feeling I had at the reunion each time I met another one of the guys, or one of the wives. It's so difficult to put into words. I would call what you both do more of a ministry - you care so deeply, you work so hard and it was apparent from your talks Lee, that a big part of your ministry is working to connect and contact with as many guys as you can so they too can share in the blessings this reunion offers every year.

Your blankets Kathy, are another indication (to say nothing of everything else you were doing the entire time). I am a knitter so I truly can appreciate the time and effort it takes to create what you do every year. EVERYONE talked about them. I know you are thinking of not doing it because there are others, but I got the distinct impression that yours are very special, to everyone (not trying to guilt you into continuing to make them! just sayin' ....

I would like to "give back" in some way, so I have decided to make a contribution to Mr. Nolan's daughter. I did not know who to make the check out to, so I just made it out to you Lee. I hope that's ok. Thank you for getting the money to her.

I have a little "request" that I'm hoping you can help me with...I spoke with a couple guys who, because they really knew Pat, are constantly on my mind and have become special to me. I would love to drop them a note.

Unfortunately I don't have their addresseses or any way to get in touch. I'm sure you can't give that informaiton to me, but do you think it would be appropriate to send the note to you to be forwarded to them? If you would rather not, I totally understand. Or if you have a better idea?

So again, thank you both for an incredible 3 days that touched my heart in ways even I don't fully comprehend yet.

*Blessings and Peace -  
Mary Meagher*

A horizontal line of 20 black dots, evenly spaced, used as a visual separator or decorative element.

Dear Frank and members of the Rincord Association

It is with great sadness that I inform you all of Tom Austin's passing in Sept of 2018

Thank you for the friendships over the years.

*Betty Austin  
(Tom's wife)*

Frank:

Charlie Company will be having a reunion in DC in April, 2020, and I will be working with Jim Campbell to give a presentation on Hill 1000 at our memorial Dinner. I am looking for photos of Hill 1000 and any photos that were taken of guys in Delta and Charlie Company at the time of the assault, July 6-8th. I would appreciate an assistance you might give me. I will be as judicious in this presentation as I was for Hill 902 presentation that you have on your website.

*Ken Pitetti,*

*Ken.Pitetti@wichita.edu*

A horizontal line of 20 black dots, representing the 20th row of a 4x5 grid.

## To All members,

Please continue to send your letters and comments to: [mail@ripcordassociation.com](mailto:mail@ripcordassociation.com)  
Everyone would love to hear from you.

# RIPCORD REUNION2020 SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI

[ ] I have not received a Ripcord Coin.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ UNIT IN 'NAM \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Will a family member(s) be attending? If yes what are their names? (For name tag purposes only).

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Arrival Date \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date \_\_\_\_\_

**THE HOTEL PROVIDES FREE TRANSPORTATION FROM THE AIRPORT.**

Registration fee of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed for # \_\_\_\_\_ Adults and # \_\_\_\_\_ children under 18.  
\$35 for children under 18. For adults see discounts below!

## **DISCOUNTS FOR EARLY REGISTRATION:**

Before March 1 2020, \$75 per adult  
Mar. 1 through May 9, 2020 \$80 per adult,  
May 10 through June 20, 2020 \$85 per adult.  
After June 20, 2020 \$90 per adult.

Your registration fee covers the cost of the snacks, beverages, hot hors doers on Wednesday night  
and dinner on Thursday.

## **Registration fee due no later than July 14, 2020.**

Make your check payable to "RIPCORD ASSOCIATION"

Mail your check with this form to:

**Lee Widjeskog, 493 Stillman Ave., Bridgeton, NJ 08302.**

Questions? Call Lee at 856-451-1108 before 14 July 2020. (After call 609-774-6951)

## **AGENDA**

**Monday, July 20:** Hospitality suite opens at 1200 hours. (Self guided tours and shopping)

**Tuesday, July 21:** Hospitality suite opens at 1200 hours. (Golf in the AM) (Self guided tours)

**Wednesday, July 22:** Hospitality 1200 Hours. Hot hors doers 1730 hours

**Thursday, July 23:** Business meeting for association business in Hospitality room (1100 hrs)  
Dinner with cash bar starting at 1700 hours done by 2200 hours.

**Friday, July 24:** Homeward bound

**Thursday golf outing (a separate fee). Check if you will play [ ].**

**HOTEL RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE SEPERATELY  
BY June 18, 2020  
CALL 417-864-7333 for Univ. Plaza Hotel**

**If the Univ. Plaza is full call 417-862-0070 at the "Q Hotel" a block away  
Ask for HOTEL RESERVATIONS and mention the  
GROUP CODE: RIPCORD**

**(Price is \$92 per night plus tax: breakfast is included.)**