



RIPCORD REPORT

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



Number 61

Fall, 2003

Ripcord Reunion "03" Another Success

RIPCORD REUNION ROUNDUP

by Fred Spaulding

The Charleston, South Carolina reunion was held October 8 – 11 at the town & Country Inn & Conference Center in mild to warm southern weather. The first two days of the reunion had people going every which way, trying to see all that there was to see. The harbor tour, carriage tours of the old downtown, the Old Exchange, the Provost Dungeon, Fort Sumter, Magnolia Plantation, the historic homes, the aquarium and Patriots Point Naval museum were just some of the sights to be seen. I don't think that anyone got to see it all. On Friday we had a picnic at poolside which featured barbecue pork sandwiches, potato salad, coleslaw, baked beans and other picnic fare as more and more late comers showed their faces and were added to the mix.

During the many hours spent in the hospitality room, Martin Hinton, of FOX News, was present, interviewing people for an upcoming segment of Oliver North's War Stories. It will air sometime in the next 3 to 4 months. We also had in attendance, Kevin Richards, President of Dunes Road Group, Madison Ave New York. He is a writer for a movie studio that wants to do a movie about Ripcord. He has to put together a "paper"; then take it to the studio heads and sell the idea. Don't anyone be getting their hopes up, NOTHING IS DEFINITE !!!!!!

It's just an idea.

Saturday morning, Dale Falconer, Paul Jensen and Kent Rowland, were nice enough to take Fred Spaulding, to the local golf course and give him a golf lesson.

The Saturday night banquet presented a lovely array of food including boiled shrimp, deviled crabs, Carolina red rice, carved roast beef, salad potatoes and assorted vegetables. After everyone got their fill General Harrison handed out Ripcord Coins to the first time attendees. This year they included: Theodore Reeves III, Robert P. Pressley, Bob Faddis, Rex Miller, Terry Cowan, Paul Jensen, John C. "Pop's" Hedrick, Greg Pyatt, Jeff Winter, Ernie Claxon, Gary Goulah, Wayne Sinks and "Buddy" Ralley.

A special presentation of a coin was made to Sammie Johnson, sister of Sp4 David Johnson, A 2/11th FA BN, who was killed on Ripcord next to his comrade and friend Bob Kalsu. The Johnson sisters lost a brother on Ripcord but they gained several hundred "brothers", for they are now part of the RIPCORD FAMILY.

The next reunion will be held in October 2004 in Des Moines, Iowa. Ripcordette Bonnie will be happy in



Our new Editor, Frank Marshall with Sammie Johnson, sister of Sp4 David Johnson, A 2/11th FA BN, who was killed on Ripcord.

Des Moines, since they have a horse racing track and a casino, located together.

All subsequent reunions will be held in July, as close to the 23rd, as possible.

Registration Forms, for Des Moines, will be in the next newsletter.....

Reunion 2004

Des Moines, Iowa, Oct 4-7

The Holiday Inn Downtown at Mercy Campus, located at 1050 6th Ave. The phone number for reserving a room is (515) 283-0151.

E-mail: holidayinn@mchsi.com

Rates are \$67.00, and includes a Full Breakfast Buffet, Free Parking, Airport Shuttle...

The Code word for our group room reservations... is "RIP"

More about the activity schedule in the next newsletter.....

FROM THE EDITOR

The newsletter will be published quarterly, with a new look and few new ideas for your reading pleasure. It is very important that I receive input from all that read the newsletter. My goal is to have more about the Ripcord Veterans in each Newsletter.

DONATIONS

Donations are very important! It's how the newsletter gets printed and mailed. Checks should be made payable to: "Ripcord Association". Please send all donations to:

Fred Spaulding
7702 White Dove Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46256-1750

ARTICLES

Please send all articles, photos, incoming mail, and interesting reading to:

DEADLINE FEB 1, 2004

Frank Marshall
224 Derry Hill Ct
Mt Laurel, NJ 08054-3709

e-mail: frankmarshall@ripcordassociation.com

RIPCORD BIOGRAPHIES...THEN AND NOW

Please send us a brief bio on yourself to be included in the newsletter. Include which company you served with, the dates you were in the service, the dates you were in Vietnam, your rank, any interesting facts about your involvement with FSB Ripcord, what you did after Vietnam, career, family, and some comments of your choice. You may include a picture if desired. Send all information to:

Lee Widjeskog
493 Stillman Ave
Bridgeton, NJ 08302

e-mail: leewidjeskog@ripcordassociation.com

IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT THE POSTCARD SURVEY

Please fill out the enclosed postcard survey and return it to us as soon as possible.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

DON'T FORGET TO PUT A STAMP ON IT

You can also reply by filling out the information requested on the Ripcord Association website:

www.ripcordassociation.com.

If we do not hear from you, we will assume that you no longer wish to receive the *Ripcord Report* newsletter and you will be removed from the mailing list.

Telling The Ripcord Story

by Ben Harrison

We were most pleased to have join us in Charleston, Martin Hinton of Fox News and Kevin Richards of Flying Tiger Films. Martin has been heavily involved with the Ripcord story doing the Kalsu story and then the reunion story of Bloomingdale and Burkey. A one hour Ripcord documentary for "War Stories With Ollie North" is in the Fox budget for next year. Kevin Richards is working on a more ambitious project for a full-length movie and or TV series. Flying Tiger Films did three of the ten HBO Band of Brothers programs. Kevin is very enthused and dedicated to creating a treatment paper that will sell, as a good war movie usually costs over \$50 million. One or both of these fine gents will be getting in touch with some of you in the future.

Both Martin and Kevin were impressed with our reunion compared to other reunions. They saw strength, warmth, pride, dignity and concern for living and fallen comrades that they had not seen before plus more family involvement.

Donations

Since the last newsletter, the following people have made donations to the RIPCORD ASSOCIATION; Tony Cox, Bill & Sheila Williams, Bill & Lynn Hand, Frank Delfino, Dick Cable, John T. Schuelke, John Knorr (In memory of Edward Stone & Michael Waymire, C 2/501), Bob Morton, John & Bette Serris, Mike & Mary Griffin, Mike & Marti Mueller, Larry Witte, Dale Falconer, Dave Snyder, Floyd & Diane Alexander, George Westervelt, Steve Wallace, Kevin Richards, Ben & Carolyn Harrison. Bob & Redd Judd. A great big thank you, to all those who have so generously donated to the Association.

Association Business Meeting

By a show of hands it was decided that in 2005 we should start holding our reunions as near to the 23rd of July as we can. This is of course when we pulled out of Ripcord ending the siege and the chance for more bodily harm for many of us. Today it makes sense since hotel rates for our type of event are lower in the summer than in the fall. Plus many of us are able to schedule time off more easily in the summer than in the fall or winter. Hopefully we will be able to attract more new and old people to the reunion.

Financially we are OK for the time being. The Ripcordettes rounded up \$1566 for the Association. In addition we received \$136 from haircuts given by Mike the Barber (next year get your grooming at the reunion). The sale of hats, shirts jackets etc. produced \$1991. The lamp, statue and registration raffles yielded \$315, \$170 and \$380 respectively. This plus donations means we will have about \$5000 in the bank to bankroll the next reunion and the costs associated with doing the newsletter.



Who Was There, Reunion 2003 Attendance List

Ben Harrison & Carolyn	3 Bde CO HHQ	Bob Wallace & Jackie	C/2-506
Fred Spaulding	HHQ 2-506	Tom (TC) Manbeck & Debbie	C/2-506
Jeff Winter	HHQ 2-506	Charles Tipton & Juanita	C/2-506
Daniel Thompson	HHQ 2/506	Gary Radford & Patty	D/2-506
Ernie Claxon	HHQ 2/506	William Tex Campbell	D/2-506
Lee Widjeskog & Kathy	A/2-506	John Hall	D/2-506
Jim (Tiny) Aanonsen & Irene	A/2-506	John S Mihalko	E/2-506
Frank Marshall	A/2-506	John Schnarr & Sandi	E/2-506
Bill Edmister & Janet	A/2-506	John Sherba & Debbie & John Jr	E/2-506
Martin Glennon	A/2-506	Fred Shuttleworth & Victoria	E/2-506
James Hill	B/2-319 Arty	Wayne Spruill	D & E/2-506
Floyd Alexander & Diane	A/2-506	Gary W Goulah	E/2-506
Bob Faddis & Charlotte	A/2-506	John (Pops) Hedrick	E/2/506
Tommy Webster	A/2-506	James Kilgore & Marilyn	E/2-506
George Westervelt	A/2-506	Jim Neff	E/2-506
Dennis Bloomingdale & Priscilla & Dean	B/2-506	Al Martin & Bonnie	2-11 Arty
Mike Chiarelli	B/2-506	Dan Esposito & Lydia	2/11 Arty
Terry Cowan & Alma	B/2-506	Mike Renner & Lura	2-11 Arty
Dale Falconer	B/2-506	David Snyder	A/2-11 Arty
Bill Hand & Lynn	B/2-506	Ray Williams & Judy	HHC 2-319 Arty
Paul Jenson & Lisa	B/2-506	Retsae (Rex) Miller	158th Avn Bn
Bob Judd & Red	B/2-506	George Stenehjem	158th Avn Bn
Rick (Doc) Kellogg & Betty	B/2-506	Terry Stanger & Susan & Eric	A/159th Avn
Uwe Meyer & Diane	B/2-506	Chuck Holmen & Jean	A/159 Avn Bn
Ben Peters & Lillian	B/2-506	Greg Pyatt	3rd Bde Avn
Robert Pressley	B/2-506	Sedgewick (Buddy) Ralley	3rd Bn Air Cav
Theodore Reeves & Jean	B/2-506	Leonard E Moore & Carole	Mini Cav Thunder ops
Brian Reppe & Susan	B/2-506	Fred Behrens & Mary Jean Terrel	Kingsmen
John D Richards & Joyce	B/2-506	Chuck (Doc) Kerr	C/1-506
Phil Tolson & Sheri	B/2-506	J.W. Pojedinec	Navy
Craig Van Hout & Sandy	B/2-506	Audrey Wrightsell	
Steve Wallace & Susan Huggins	B/2-506	Bob Morton	
Bill Williams & Sheila & Scott	B/2-506	Sammie Johnson	
Tom Rubsam & Janyce	B/2-506	Julie Edminster & Ted Satler	
Chuck Schlueter & Carole	C/2-506	Brian Radford & Sarah O'Shea	
Mike Womack & Liz	C/2-506		

The Ripcord Association: a Brief History

The Ripcord Association and newsletter were the brainchild of Chip Collins (B 2/506). After returning from Vietnam and re-starting his life in "The World" Chip found a need to talk to others who served in the Ripcord AO in 1970. Gradually Chip began to make contact with men he served with during Ripcord. By 1983 he was producing a small, irregularly published newsletter in which Ripcord Veterans related their experiences during the Ripcord siege. He soon heard from others and the newsletter grew in size and distribution. By July of 1985 Chip Collins was putting out a 14-page newsletter on almost a monthly basis. Soon Bill Heath (A 2/506) assisted Chip by taking over the publishing. Through the newsletter Chip met John Mihalko of E 2/506 Recon. John and Chip shared a feeling that there was a story that needed to be told and soon enlisted the aid of Jim Fairhall who offered in the 1980's, to do a book about Ripcord.

Meanwhile other veterans of Ripcord were getting together for reunions in small, scattered groups around the country such as A 2/506, E 2/506 Recon, and D 2/501. Chip Collins and John attempted to set up a reunion at Fort Campbell for 1986 but things did not quite jell and there were concerns the Ripcord guys would get lost among the bigger 101st reunion.

Finally, later that year, John Mahalko organized the first official Ripcord Association Reunion with the help of VFW Post 5351 in Whippny, New Jersey. Thirteen veterans from the Ripcord Battle, along with various wives and girl friends, attended. The veterans included Ray Blackman, Fred Behrens, Rick Blyth, Dick Cable, Chip Collins, Jim Fairhall, Chuck Hawkins, Bill Heath, Frank Marshall, John Mihalko, John Sherba, Tom Sheppard and George Westervelt.

Moving along on the wave of success from the first event a second



reunion was organized by Chuck Hawkins and held during October 1987 at the Westpark Hotel in Rosslyn, VA outside Washington, DC. General Berry and General Harrison both attended and the highlight of the reunion was a very emotional visit to "The Wall".

Changes were occurring in the newsletter. By 1987 Chip had Ray "Blackie" Blackman (D 2/501) on board as the co-editor. In 1989 Ray assumed the duties of editor as Chip moved on to another stage of life. Late in 1989 Chuck Hawkins (C, A 2/506) assumed the mantle of editor. In 1994 Frank Marshall (A2/506) assumed the duties of publisher and John Mihalko and Ray Blackman assisted Chuck as Contributing Editors.

Try as Ripcord Association members might, the next reunion did not happen until 1995 and finally took place in Golden, Colorado. Again John Mihalko, who had recently moved into the area, organized it. We think he held the event just so he could make everyone jealous of where he now lived (It's not like Whippny, NJ).

Since the Colorado reunion the events have become annual affairs. The next was Fredericksburg, Virginia (1996) with another visit to the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial. Mobile, Alabama (1997) was where Frank Marshall revealed that his hair was new. The reunion of 1998 in Atlantic City, New Jersey came with a floorshow and all the gambling you could afford. The Savanna, Georgia 1999 event proved to be the home of the tour that never ended. Shreveport, Louisiana (2000) included a moving dedication ceremony, excellent speakers and a lot of hard work by Jim Campbell and Fred Spaulding. The following year (2001) Carlisle, Pennsylvania included a tour of the Gettysburg battle grounds which made us once more realize every war is hard on the participants and even the folks back home. In 2002 we returned to Colorado this time to Colorado Springs where a demonstration



of the new equipment carried by the grunts made us wish we had most of it in Vietnam. The most recent reunion was of course in Charleston, South Carolina (2003) where Fort Sumter and the naval ship displays were visited by most.

While Chuck Hawkins, Jim Campbell and Frank Marshall have been involved in setting up some of these events, Fred Spaulding (HHC 3RD Brigade) has led the charge most times and done most of the hard work and organization.

Today the newsletter has yet another changing of the guard. Frank Marshall has taken the reins of editorship with Lee Widjeskog (A 2/506) as Contributing Editor, Pattie and Gary Radford (D 2/506) handling the mailings and Dennis Bloomingdale (B 2/506) taking care of the publishing. The plan calls for the newsletter to get out quarterly and reunions to be held annually for the time being.

From the rather small beginning we have seen our mailing list go from 40 plus members to over 600 at this time. The goal of getting a book written about our shared experiences has become a reality thanks to the efforts of Chip Collins and Jim Fairhall who started the project to get everyone thinking along those lines. Keith Nolan, at the urging of Chuck Hawkins and Sid Berry, whom Keith got to know while writing his first book, *Into Laos*, took the shared remembrances of the Association and put it into book form. The reunions have gone from a group of 13 guys to over 250 attendees in Shreveport. Each year new faces show up and the results always seem to be positive. Soon there may be television history show (see... we really are getting older) of our story and who knows, maybe a movie. However, the best part of the association is remembering friends you made during the tumultuous times of FSB Ripcord and the new ones you discover at the reunions. CURRAHEE !!!!

INCOMING MAIL

FSB Ripcord

16 October 2003

I remember receiving the phone call on a Friday evening sometime in late June 2002. A voice I didn't recognize began the conversation by introducing himself as Craig van Hout.

Was I Dale Falconer? – Yes.

Was I in Vietnam in 1970? – Yes.

Was I on FSB Ripcord? – Yes.

He had been "*looking for me*".

Did I know that there was an association and that there had been a book written about the siege of Ripcord? – No.

(To be honest, I hadn't thought too much about my time in Vietnam as it had been of short duration and 32 years was a long time ago. I had heard nothing about any book.)

We talked about a number of people, many of whom I did not remember. But there were some:

Captain Williams, SSgt Rubsam, and Sgt Finney, another "shake & bake" with whom I had gone to jump school, OJT at Fort Polk and finally to FSB Ripcord. (He was a nice young man from New York. I knew that he had been killed but didn't know the details.)

During our conversation, Craig mentioned that there was a reunion of the Ripcord association being held that October in Colorado Springs and if I were interested he would forward the information and registration.

We talked a little more, exchanged addresses and email and I began to think about that time in my life; a lifetime ago.

Within a week I had received the information. In filling it out, I told myself that attending once might be cathartic and if it were too depressing I wouldn't need to attend again. I'm proud to say that I've just returned from my second reunion held in Charleston, SC and eagerly await the trip to Des Moines, IA next year.

If you are receiving the Ripcord association's newsletter but have been uncertain about what might be in store at a reunion, I would urge you to attend. I believe that you too will enjoy the camaraderie of people with whom you shared a turning point in all of our lives.

Dale E. Falconer
B/2-506

Wondering

I attended my first Ripcord Reunion in Carlisle, PA in October 2001. The only association with veterans that I had up to that point was as a member of the Vet's Club at the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point. I had enrolled at UW-SP upon my discharge from the Army. The main focus of my fellow Vet's Club members was cold beer and where was the next party. After I graduated from UW-SP my affiliation with veteran's groups had ceased and I never expected to attend another the remainder of my life.

That all changed in July 2003 when I read the Sports Illustrated article about Bob Kalsu. I searched the internet and found out about Keith Nolan's book and discovered that there was a Ripcord Association. I guess the timing was right and I was curious about what had happened at Ripcord and what had become of the others I had served with. I called one of my old company commanders, Ben Peters, to get the scoop on what goes on at one of these reunions. With some trepidation, I decided to attend. It was one of the best decisions I ever made. It was both emotional and enlightening. I met ten other men I had served with in B 2/506th. I

"found" friends I didn't know I had. I learned that a special bond is formed between men who are in combat that lasts a lifetime.

One of the primary activities at a Ripcord Reunion is "wondering". It has nothing to do with Alzheimer's Disease. Conversation continuously returns to the topic of "I wonder what happened to...?" Being a crack investigator for the Defense Department along with an inability to keep quiet, I offered that it shouldn't be too difficult locating former members of B 2/506th. We had copies of orders with names and Social Security Numbers so the hard part of finding someone had been accomplished. Someone in the group, I think it was Bill Williams, suggested that I should start looking as soon as I got home.

So I returned home with a newly acquired hobby. Much of my spare time has been spent searching the internet for Ripcord Survivors from B 2/506th. In the past two years I have located 54 men who served with B 2/506th. I have also determined that another ten men have passed away in the interim.

The initial call I make to an individual to ascertain they have served with

B 2/506th is a unique experience. First, with the advent of telemarketers, all sense of telephone etiquette has disappeared. In the initial five seconds I try to identify myself and insert the words "Army" "Vietnam" "101st Airborne" and "Ripcord". If the person on the phone is a former member of Bravo Company, I've got him hooked at that point. The initial reaction I receive is a stunned silence. I have called this person out of the blue and, in most cases, brought up a topic they had tried to forget for the past 30 years. I then pass along information about the book, the Association and the reunions. I try to ascertain who the individual remembers serving with and provide updates on their friend's current status if possible. After five minutes or so, I stop talking and begin to listen. A free flow of memories usually begins. The phone calls last anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour. (I use a long distance calling card that cost 3.5 cents a minute to keep phone bills reasonable.) The men I have called are grateful that I took the time to "find" them and express interest in getting in contact with their long, lost buddies. One of my initial fears was that someone

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THEN & NOW

Jim Aanonsen, 1st Platoon, A 2/506

Jim (known by his buddies in 'Nam as "Tiny") was raised in West Brighton a town on Long Island New York. In 1967 he graduated from Port Richmond High School. By April 1969 he was drafted and shipped to Fort Gordon, Ga. for Basic Training and Advanced Infantry Training. October 1969 found Tiny Aanonsen in Vietnam assigned to the 101st and more importantly to Alpha Company 2/506. Here he served in the First Platoon as a machine gunner under the direction of Lieutenant Joliet.

By March 1970 Alpha Co. was under the leadership of Capt. Burkhardt and First Platoon had a new LT in Dudley Davis. Under these leaders, Jim participated in the first attempt to secure Firebase Ripcord on 12 March 1970. It was a bad day for Alpha with the loss of Lt. Davis and his RTO Dan Heater as well as numerous others wounded.

"After Ripcord was secured in April we didn't see a lot of contact till we hit the hot LZ in May," remembers Aanonsen years later, "By this time my platoon leader was Lt. Wilcox."

On May 13th Alpha Co. combat assaulted onto a hot LZ southeast of Ripcord. The firing had quit by the time the last choppers came in. After securing the area, hot chow was flown in for the evening meal.

As dawn edged its way over the trees, the troops loaded with three days worth of food and water prepared to head out. For the morning of the 14th Captain Burkhardt had First Platoon lead in column towards the southwest.

Bob Lowe of Ohio and Jim Aanonsen had become friends on the flight over to Vietnam. As luck would have it they ended up assigned to the same company and platoon.

That morning Bob was the point man with Jim following behind the slack man as they moved down the trail. They hadn't gone 200 yards when an enemy sniper in a bunker shot and killed Lowe. In the ensuing firefight Tiny brought his machinegun to bear on the enemy fire and in the process mowed down trees and bushes through out the area while his comrades moved behind him. He continued to provide continuous suppressive fire as Sgt. Koger crawled up to retrieve Lowe. In the short but furious battle shrapnel wounded Jim in the arm, shoulder and leg.

When the fight was over he was medevaced back to Camp Evans then to the USS Sanctuary, a hospital in Japan and finally, ended in the St. Albans Naval Hospital in Queens, NY. His courage and gallantry under fire, in spite of his wounds, earned him a Silver Star. After a lengthy recovery he spent his last 8 months in the service on an honor guard at Fort Totten also located in the Queens.

Following his Army tour he joined the New York City Police Department where he served 12 years at the Midtown North Precinct and another 11 years in the Manhattan Emergency Service Unit. This final assignment dealt with rescues, hostage situations, jumpers, and assisting the bomb squad. Finally after 23 years he retired in 1996.

When he reported for duty, Irene Hyde (his future wife) spotted him and decided this might be a guy she wanted to know. Since she also worked for the police department she had an easy time checking him out and after that he was hers even if he did not know it at the time. They have been married for over 25 years, still live on Staten Island and have two grown daughters.

Wondering

(continued from page 5)

I called would get ugly and tell me to take a flying leap. That has not happened. I usually mail a "new" Ripcord survivor some articles, pictures, a couple copies of the Ripcord Report and a list of names and phone numbers.

Just finding a "new guy" provides a sense of satisfaction in completing the puzzle to locate him. Some have responded by sending an email or calling back to thank me for "finding" them. They relate that after some



Joe Evans, Jim Aanonsen, Frank Marshall and George Westervelt.



Jim and his wife Irene at the 2003 Ripcord Reunion.

reflection they are glad I enabled them to get back in touch with their buddies and how their lives have changed since they were informed about the current Ripcord activities. I must be getting soft in my old age as those messages usually bring a lump to my throat.

The ultimate sense of satisfaction I personally receive from my "hobby" occurs when a "new guy" comes to a Ripcord reunion for the first time. Finally seeing the individual after swapping emails and phone calls is a

pleasure. Seeing the "new guy" meet his buddies he has not seen in over 30 years and watching him thoroughly enjoy himself for several days is truly special. If a spouse accompanies the "new guy", there is a look in her eyes that expresses she is discovering a side of her husband she has, in most cases, never known before. To know I had a small part in that process is a special reward for me. It also provides the inspiration to continue the search.

Craig Van Hout B/2-506

From Blue Fox

by Ben Harrison

After enjoying such a fine reunion in Charleston, there is a compulsion to say "thank you" to the many people that made it happen (even knowing that I probably will miss a deserving soul). It's easy to pick number one—Fred Spaulding. You located the place, got good rates, arranged a fun, relaxing, flexible program and honored our Ripcordettes. Fred, you keep track of everyone, counseling and coaching their registration, keeping the books, paying the bills, much more, and planning for the future. In addition to putting up with Fred, Micki again contributed the beautiful etching of Ft Sumter on our wine bottles. From all of us, to you both, A GREAT BIG THANK YOU!

Red (Bernice) and Bob Judd kept the check-in straight and exercised careful control of sales, tickets and auctions. Bonnie and Fred Martin were right in there helping Red. Heavy lifting was strong-armed by Charlie (Bill) Tipton aided by Juanita and the Tipton boys and girls. Fred Martin and Bob Judd also played key roles in the lifting and transporting

work. Dan Thompson was a big help to Fred in the hospitality room.

Besides Red, Bonnie and Micki, other Ripcordettes: Sandy Van Hout, Diane Alexander, Lura Renner, Lydia Esposito, Betty Kellogg, Carolyn Harrison, Debbie Manbeck, Janet Lewis, Lilian Peters, Judy Williams, Kathy Widjeskog, Mary Jean Terrel, Jean Reeves, Susan Stanger, Carole Moore, Liz Womack, Sheila Williams, Patty Radford, Diane Meyer, Marilyn Kilgore, Lisa Jensen, Audrey Wrightsell, Victoria Rayle, Susan Huggins, Shari Tolson, Janyce Rubsam, Priscilla Bloomingdale, Jacque Wallace, Debra Sherba, and Carole Shoup, all contributed to the success of the auction and fund raising. Many, many thanks. (The ladies whom I missed listing, please forgive me.)

It was great to have the following FNGs join us: Paul Jensen, Theodore Reeves, III, Robert P Pressley, Terry Cowan, John C. "Pop" Hedrick, Chuck "Doc" Kerr, Greg Pyatt, Ernie Claxon, Jeff Winter, Bob Faddis and Rex Miller. We hope you will now join us each year and also help us locate and bring in other Ripcord vets.

As we think about getting more of our old comrades to our reunions, please be alert for the newbies as they arrive. They see folks in small groups

in animated conversation, laughing, back-slapping, drinking and genuinely enjoying each other. The newbie probably does not recognize a soul. Please be on the lookout for these guys and make sure they are brought into the fold and help them find old buddies. (You know, some of you guys don't look exactly like you did 33 years ago.) Unfortunately, this year we had one guy who never made contact and as I looked for him Thursday night and Friday morning, I found he had checked out and returned home. I deeply regret that I was too late.

Thanks in advance to Frank Marshall, Lee Widjeskog and Dennis Bloomingdale for putting together this and future newsletters. And a very special thanks for all the work and personal expense that Gary and Patty Radford contribute to get each of the newsletters in the mail to you.

We especially missed two guys who have done so very much for our association in the past: Chuck Hawkins and Jim Campbell. Don't miss another one guys!!

It was a special treat to have three sons of Ripcord vets who now are veterans themselves: Scott Williams, Brian Radford, and Eric Stanger. Well done guys and a big HOOAH!!

RIPCORDETTE'S CORNER

We would like to start our first column in the newsletter by thanking all the women who donated their time, talents and time to make our first raffle event a complete success.

For those who have not yet had the fun and privilege to attend a reunion let me tell you a little about the Ripcordettes. We received the name from Fred Spaulding who has gone out of his way to make all the women attending the reunions feel a part of the Ripcord Association. We officially met as a functioning group last year at the Colorado Springs Reunion when we held our first formal meeting (without the men). It had become obvious to us that one or two of the guys were doing all the work at the reunions and not necessarily enjoying it at all times. Being women, we cannot stand by and see things left undone by men. We decided to help the men of the Ripcord Association even if they didn't think they need help. (Sort of like getting your fellow to ask directions when you know he's lost). To help keep the reunion going on a sound financial footing we planned to hold raffles or auctions of items donated to the Association by the ladies.

At the Charleston reunion we received many wonder-

ful hand crafted and other items from ladies of the Association. These were used in a Chinese Auction (raffle) held on Saturday afternoon. From this first attempt we made \$806. Carolyn Harrison donated membership rosters, which we were able to sell for \$5 each. This surprisingly produced \$125. At the dinner we held a 50/50 raffle and raised an additional \$150. A beautiful hand made quilt, donated by the Tipton family, returned \$485 from yet another raffle. This gave the Ripcordettes a grand total of \$1566 raised for the Association. This money will be used help keep the costs of running the event down so attendees may not have to pay more in the future.

Finally, Bob and Redd Judd would like to thank everyone for the wonderful surprise cake and card they received from the Association in celebration of their 5th wedding anniversary. For new comers, Bob and Redd got married on the way to the Ripcord Association Reunion in Atlantic City in 1998. This year they got to celebrate with all of the attendees and thus the cake and card.

If anyone would like to contribute to the *Ripcordette's Corner* or would like to be added to our contact list please contact Juanita Tipton at cwtip@msn.com or (910) 436-4667.

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Please Don't Forget...

If we don't hear from you, you will be removed from the mailing list. So fill out and mail the enclosed postcard survey. You can also reply by filling out the information requested on the Ripcord Association web site: www.ripcordassociation.com. **Do It Today!**

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

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