



RIPCORD REPORT

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



Number 76

Spring, 2008

REPORT FROM NEW JERSEY

by Lee Widjeskog

With this newsletter you get your first shot at signing up for the reunion in Laughlin, Nevada. As we have in the past, we get things rolling for the early birds on Wednesday 8 October and wrap things up with a banquet on Saturday night 11 October.

I've looked into reserving a boat for dinner, but they are not able to handle our crowd. So, we will leave dining on the river to the individuals to make their own arrangements when they arrive.

The town is not old. It was laid out and built in 1996 by Don Laughlin. All but one casino sit on the banks of the Colorado River. For \$4 you can get a water taxi which will take you to any casino you wish to visit since they all have their own docks. Another option is to walk from one end to the other and that can be done in about an hour (the time may depend on your age and wounds from war or life).

We will plan on having the Ladies Chinese Auction (raffle) on Friday night as usual so think about gifts you can donate to help raise a little money and add to the fun.

In talking with Fred Spaulding, it looks like there are changes afoot for the location of the 2010 reunion, but the time frame is still for October. For 2009 the plans are still good for Myrtle Beach, South Carolina so plan accordingly.

Lastly, George Murphy (B 2/320) is setting up a trust fund for the Ripcord Association for the benefit of Keith Nolan's daughter. A number of our members have felt that it is the least we can do for the man who took Chip Collin's idea and wrote about our adventure in Vietnam. The book and things that have come from it have helped many of us get together each year for the reunion. Telling the story as he did has helped the association bring together many more soldiers than we could have in any other way. Many of us feel an

attachment to Keith for his efforts. The trust fund will give members a way to honor Keith by donating to help his daughter get an education in the future. As we get more details from George, we will let the membership know how they can help.

Get you registrations in as soon as possible!!! A good time will be had by all who attend.

CURRAHEE !!!!!

Welcome New Members

Blake	Albert	B/2-319
Lane(Maj)	John	C/2-11 Arty
Goff	Michael	B/2-17 Cav
Cole	Gary	2/319
Poloski	Stanley	2/319 Arty
Vraniak	Terrance	3rd Bde Avn Co
Gagnebin	Leland	HHC 3rd Bde Air Cav
Best	William	501st & 502nd
Hadfield	Michael	101 Pathfinder Det
Thomas	Grady	D/2-506

New Associate Members

Spruill	Mike
Patterson	Robert
Meyer	Donald
McDonell	Gregory

Ripcord Reunion October 9 – 12, 2008 River Palms Resort & Casino

2700 Casino Drive - Laughlin, NV 89029

1 (800) 835-7904

Don't Miss This One!!!!

Registration forms are in this newsletter and
on the Ripcord Association website.

FROM THE EDITOR

We are getting more and more new members from our website. We now have 537 members, there 445 Ripcord veterans and 92 associate members.

A lot of new faces will be at this year's reunion in Laughlin. I sure hope you can make it. A lot of important issues, new ideas and suggestions will be discussed at this reunion's business meeting. We need your input.

Also, very important! I need your e-mail address. If you are not receiving updates and information about the Ripcord Association via e-mail, you may be missing out on a lot of news. Please go to our website and update your information.

ARTICLES

Deadline for the April issue will be June 1st 2008. Please send all articles, photos, incoming mail and interesting reading to:

Frank Marshall
224 Derry Hill Ct
Mt Laurel, NJ 08054
or e-mail to: frank@ripcordassociation.com

DONATIONS:

Checks payable to "Ripcord Association".

Mail to:

Lee Widjeskog,
493 Stillman Ave.
Bridgeton, NJ 08302

Donations, the life blood of our Association

came from the following generous members during the past three months:

Bill Williams
Paul Buhr
Rebecca Thompson
John Lawrence
John Marlowe

Fred Edwards
Robert Anderson
Bob Wallace
George Westerfelt

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.

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INCOMING MAIL

I found your information about Sparky on the Ripcord Association website. I grew up in Salem, Virginia with Sparky and we attended Andrew Lewis High School together. We also played baseball together in little league. I am one year older than Sparky. My dad and Sparky's dad worked together and knew each other through our baseball teams. I understand Sparky's dad almost lost his mind when Sparky was killed. I still have my old high school year books and I was thinking if you would like I could scan his pictures and mail them to you.

My name is Harold Criner and I have been living in Marietta Georgia since 1977.

God bless you and thank you for your service to our country.

Criner, Harold
Harold.Criner@infocrossing.com

Frank,

It's been awhile since we talked in Indianapolis about Doc Draper, but I thought you might be interested in seeing what the Westlake High School in Austin, Texas is doing. You may already be aware of it, but I just wanted to let you know.

The project involves putting together a video clip that is available on the school web site, <http://whs.eanes.k12.tx.us/virtualvietnam/>. I'm not sure how they pick the individuals to research, but it is worth a look.

Since I have posted memorials on virtualwall.org, I have been contacted by 3 of the students that are researching different Vietnam casualties. I was only able to provide info on Mike Ebert. The common thread on the 3, is that they were all from Charlie Company, 2/327th Infantry, and were killed in action on 21 March 1968.

I'd be interested in knowing what you think.

Dave Hine
Dlhaujanfan@aol.com

Great edition, Frank.

Excellent news/comment from Lee and interesting article by Charlie. Keep up the great work. I am very much tempted to be with you all in Oct 08.

All the way,
Sonny
arkangelc@gvtc.com

Greetings Frank,

I hope this finds all going well in your AO. Below you will find a link to a video I am working on. Keep in mind it is a work in progress. I intend to start work on another video of in country "Places", LZ's, Firebases, living conditions, anything historical to help record our history. What I

INCOMING MAIL

need is photos. I have but a few left as many of mine did not make it through the past 37 years with me. If you feel this is something you could help with feel free to post a link to this video and or a call to the Ripcord membership for photos. I hope to meet you in Laughlin if I can pull off a trip to Nevada. Thanks for all the work you do on the web site.

<http://myspacetv.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=vids.individual&videoid=30025068>

John Lawrence
SP/5 Flight Platoon 69' - 71'
62nd Avn Co, 212th CAB, 1st Avn Brigade
Phu Bai & Marble Mt
lzflatfish@gci.net

Frank,

Just wanted to make sure you knew about this project:
<http://www.sftt.org/phpbb2/viewtopic.php?f=15&t=11950>

Mikel Dawson
Mikel Dawson [beslagsmed@hotmail.com]

This Website Is Outstanding...

My nick name was "Alaska".
MICHAEL K. MUELLER
E.CO. C.CO. 2/506 101ST.
MULEHUNTER39@YAHOO.COM

Hello, Frank.

I just read the "Ripcord Report" on the web site and am distraught over the news about Keith Nolan. He is too young a fellow to be going through what he is experiencing. He has brought extraordinary honor to those who served on Ripcord and has chronicled their heroic exploits for all time. I think It goes without saying that we must support him in his special time of need.

One matter about which he has expressed genuine concern is that about the future care of his daughter, Britt. What could we in the Ripcord Association better do to recognize Keith's literary contribution to our organization and honor Keith's legacy than to create an educational scholarship for his daughter. If the Association goes along with the idea, I would be honored to make the first \$101.00 contribution.

Best regards,
Otis "Driver" Livingston
Col USA Ret.
Former CO, 2/501st
hootl3@alltel.net

(Editor's note: The idea of a scholarship for Keith's daughter is in the works. I will keep you informed of the progress. Thank you)

Dear Frank:

Wow! David Fawver's letter about the 51 Cal machine gun really brought back some memories. Why, because I am honored to have been the pilot on the Eagle Dustoff crew that became the proud recipients of that weapon, presented to us by the wounded grunts that we spent the afternoon extracting from that well-described log landing platform. Looking through the chin-bubble as we hovered over that platform, I noted the nametags of some of the strangers below—"Hawkins" and "Rollison." After we got back to the Dustoff hooch at Camp Evans we received a surprise visit from some of the troops we had supported, dragging the components of that 51 Cal behind them.

Aircraft Commander CWO Bob Pascoe and I flew the machine gun back to Camp Eagle and Headquarters, 326th Medical Battalion, our parent unit. We didn't know about the broken firing pin, so we had the motorpool weld the breach, and we reassembled it as best we could. Then we proudly sunk the tripod legs in concrete at the entrance of our club where it constantly reminded us of the brave troops we supported on and around Firebase Ripcord throughout the Spring and Summer, as well as several of our own men who were killed and wounded in the battle. Attached is a photo of me hammering it up behind that 51 Cal. at Camp Eagle. I never knew what happened to the weapon after I left there in January 1971—hopefully someone was able to secure it for its proper place in a museum—preferably an American museum.

I also enjoyed Chuck Hawkins' "Then and Now" story. I am fortunate to live just across town from Chuck, close enough to keep in touch with him. We share not only our barely believable war stories, but also share professional articles, briefings, and "intellectual" conversations. I even had him out on Ft. Myer a few years ago to give one of his outstanding China lectures to my professional logistics association. If you haven't had the opportunity to listen to one of his China lectures and slide shows, you are missing the real deal—insist on it at a future reunion, you won't be disappointed.

Thanks again for the fond memories about the machine gun.

Jerry Rodgers
Eagle Dustoff 1970-71
Burke, VA
rodgersjd@earthlink.net

Frank

I served in 69-70 at Camp Eagle HQ 501st Signal. I used to repair and deliver ComSec equipment to 101st bases and FBs in the AO. I remember Birmingham, Bastogne, Carroll, Sally, Evans, Phu Bai etc, but I don't remember ever going to Ripcord, but as the memory fades, I may or may not have been there.

I am enjoying the site and its contents and I noticed a

(Continued on next page)

INCOMING MAIL

blurb from Gen Hennessey - I have a funny story about how I first "met" him, if you would like to hear it.

Welcome Home !
Bob Staranowicz
bobstar101@comcast.net

I'm looking to find any one who was with my brother. His name was William Kohr known as hardkohr. He was in the 101st airborne pathfinders. He was also there from start to finish. He help on the choppers to evacuate at the end. If you can tell me were to look it would be very helpful. Email me at sureshot1950@hotmail.com

Thank You very much
sureshot1950@hotmail.com

About National Geographic "*Inside The Vietnam War*"

Very well done although I did see footage from other documentaries included. Hoping to see more of the Ripcord battle and the 1970-1971 operations for the 101st Abn. Div.

William D. Bridges
bman817@sbcglobal.net

I was on hill 805. I carried platoon sergeant Hembree's radio. He was killed the night of the 14th helping our third platoon.

D/2-501st
ripolicz@yahoo.com

Earlier I was on No.4 gun nearest the dump and looking to find where the hook crashed if anyone knows?

Albert Blake
B/2-319
charger_69_500@yahoo.com

Hell of a fight for a short time. I took over C Battery 2/11 Arty when Bob Kalsu was killed by a mortar round.

MAJ John W. Lane
C/2/11th Arty
jwlanecat@aol.com

I was a Thunder White Team Scout Pilot-Call Sign Thunder33 with my wingman Thunder22 that worked the area prior to extraction and after doing BDA's etc. We located the quad 37 set up with .50's just to the NW and had to take the Brigade S-3 in to prove our findings at which time we came into heavy fire and took one hit to prove our point. I carried Col Lucas many times and once brought him out with an NVA prisoner that was captured in the field that we hovered down to get. Col Lucas was sitting in the back seat of my LOH with his loaded cocked 45 on the pris-

oner all the way back to Evans. Often wondered why, since the guy sure wasn't going to jump out. We also found a company of NVA in US fox holes about 300 meters off the perimeter and from a high hover had my door gunner shoot the enemy, while taking several hits to our aircraft. One through the main rotor mast, and one round that penetrated the armor plating around the engine compressor section. Luckily, the round had lost all it's power and was touching the compressor housing, but only dented it. We worked extensively with and for the troops in the field and shuttled replacement troops in Loaches at height of the battle due to the high concentration of enemy fire when huey's came close to the base. I was wondering if it would be possible to be a member of your organization?

Terrance M Vraniak
3 rd BDE AVN Co
Coho33@alaska.net

Frank,

A friend of my wife sent her this link. Some people might find it interesting.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/23817516/>
Bill
bboles6166@yahoo.com

Vietnam memorial wall now online. Every name on real-world wall is viewable online, linked to service record

I do have a lot of pictures of Fire Base Ripcord. Before the actual battle. If anyone is interested, please email me, I would really like to get info of what became of my friends.

Stanley A. Poloski
2nd 319th Artillery Battalion
Benster07@gmail.com

I was the acting 1Sgt for D-Co from 30 June 1970 until 30 July 1970, I was than assigned as the Bn Operation Sgt. I was at the Bn TOC when LTC Lucas was killed on the fire base, and Cpt Vasquez the Bn S-4 Officer completed the evacuation of the fire base.

Grady Thomas
D Co 2-506
csmgt@earthlink.net

Thanks for this site - it means a lot to me personally.
Michael Hadfield
101pathfinder@gmail.com
101 Pathfinder Det

Read Kieth's book and Ben's as well and loved them both. Very accurate from my stand point.

William J Best
Wb200346@yahoo.com