



# RIPCORD REPORT



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

Number 107

August 2016



**GVSU Veterans  
History Project**

**The Ghosts of  
Ripcord DVD**

At 2016 Ripcord Reunion in MO.

Dr. James Smither of the Grand Valley State University Veterans History Project will again be attending the Ripcord Reunion this year. He has now conducted 84 interviews with Ripcord veterans, most of which are now accessible from the project website ([www.gvsu.edu/vethistory](http://www.gvsu.edu/vethistory)), and Frank Marshall has been putting links to them directly on the Ripcord Association website. He is interested in interviewing anyone who has not yet been interviewed, whether or not they were actively involved in the fighting. The interviews are conducted biographically, following veterans from their life before the Army through induction, training and active duty service whether in Vietnam or elsewhere, and out the other end. We don't expect you to remember all the details of your experiences, and do not pressure people to talk about subjects that they do not want to get into. Our goal is to create as complete a collection as possible of individual histories of participants in the campaign and make it accessible to the public. Dr. Smither is also interested in writing a full history of the campaign drawing on these interviews and other materials that have appeared since Keith Nolan wrote his book, so if you want him to get it right, it will help if he can record your experiences.

Dr. Smither plans to be in Springfield all day on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday of the reunion. and would like to arrange as many interviews as possible prior to the event. To schedule an interview, you can send him an email at [smitherj@gvsu.edu](mailto:smitherj@gvsu.edu), or call him (he's not always in, but has voice mail) at his office at 616-331-3422. Each interviewee will receive a DVD copy of his interview at no cost.  
[www.gvsu.edu/vethistory](http://www.gvsu.edu/vethistory)

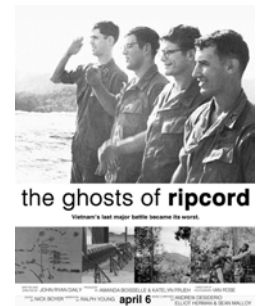
The filmmakers of the documentary entitled, The Ghosts of Ripcord, are happy to inform you that there are still DVDs available of the final film. Many of you probably know that we started selling copies of the documentary several months ago and we are still shipping DVDs at the price of \$10 each.

There is also a one-time shipping and handling fee of \$3 for any orders of 1-4 DVDs, and a one-time fee of \$5 for orders consisting of 5 copies or more. For example, an order of two DVDs would cost: \$23.00 and an order of 5 DVDs would cost \$55.00.

We are only accepting payment in the form of checks at this time. All checks should be made payable to the film's director: John Daily and mailed to the following address:

348 Fountain Street  
Unit 4  
Philadelphia, PA 19128

Please note that the filmmakers are not responsible for checks that are lost in the mail and that it takes 7-10 business days for DVDs to arrive. For more instructions on how to order please visit: <http://www.ripcordassociation.com/c.aspx?n=ghosts-of-ripcord>. Thank you.



**2016 Ripcord Reunion**

**Springfield, MO**

**Wed. Oct 5 thru Sat. Oct 8, 2016**

## Donations

*the life blood of our Association*

The following have given donations to the Ripcord Association since the last newsletter. These donations help keep the website and newsletters published to keep all our Ripcord members up to date.

- John Schuelko D 2/501
- Gary Madsen D 1/506
- Wilburn Wall C 2/501
- Randy House C 158 AVN
- Larry Hulsey 426 S&S BN
- Al Martin A 2/11 FA
- John Fowler C 2/506
- Leigh Freeman C 2/506
- Bill Hand B 2/506
- Fred Shuttleworth E 2/506
- Jim Spilak B 2/319 FA & D 2/506
- Joe Pojedinec in Memory of John Sherba and John Mihalko E 2/506
- Joe & Ann Miller in Memory of Ron Gunyon B 2/506
- Brenda Smith in Memory of Ron Gunyon B 2/506
- Ron & Kathy Smith in Memory of Ron Gunyon B 2/506
- Bill Williams B 2/506
- Barry & Gail Goldman in Memory of Ron Gunyon B 2/506

Checks payable to "Ripcord Association".

Mail to:

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



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

Read the **Ripcord Report** on line  
Daily updates ● History  
and much more



Join us on Facebook group  
Ripcord Association

Please continue to send your letters and  
send your comments or articles to:  
[frank@ripcordassociation.com](mailto:frank@ripcordassociation.com)

or postal mail to:  
**Frank Marshall  
567 Circle Drive  
Surfside Beach, SC 29575**

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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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.

# FROM THE EDITOR

Frank Marshall A/2-506



## Why I love the Ripcord Association

When Chip Collins contacted me in 1985 that he and John Mihalko were searching for Ripcord veterans to start a Ripcord Association and do a newsletter to tell their perspective stories, I had no idea it would be what it is today.

A few months after I first spoke with Chip, he told me that they contacted Chuck Hawkins. So the four of us met in New Jersey and planned the first reunion. We had 12 Ripcord veterans attend.

I continued to stay involved by helping out in any way I could and meeting other Ripcord veterans as the Association grew. Meeting the veterans that fought beside me was a great feeling. It did not make me relive the experience, it made me relieved of what I was carrying since I been home. The stories we share remind me of the good times we often had and helped me understand the bad times a little better than I remembered.

The best part of helping start the Association is how it has helped all the Ripcord veterans and their families. To see how much they enjoy and how good they feel when they meet someone they spent time with during Ripcord for the first time since they came home.

For all of us, meeting others that may or may not have crossed paths in Vietnam during Ripcord whether those that helped with support or rescue, the cooks, the clerks, the artillery, the helicopter pilots, the grunts, and so on, have the same thing in common. We were all involved in the Battle of Ripcord. We share a bond that will never be broken.

I can recall how some Ripcord veterans would come to the door of the Hotel Hospitality room at their first reunion and wanted to turn around and go home before they even walked in for the fear of bringing back those hard memories. But before they could leave, they met some of the Ripcord veterans going in or out of the big hospility room and they brought them inside. Now these same Ripcord vets are always coming back every year.

I thank each and every one of you for making the Ripcord Association and their reunions what they are today. If you have never been to a reunion, get off your butt now and make that decision to go because you will never forget it.

## Ripcord on Facebook

by Anthony Chritchlow



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ripcordassociation/>

Summer is finally here! Yeaah!. We've been having fun so far. In the second week in June, my wife and I went to the Oregon coast for a week. We had a great week. Any day on the coast is a good day. Now we are back in town.

My part time job has been a full time job since we've got back. There is still time to ride the ATV's and fish. It's going to be a going to be a good summer for sure. WE will miss being with everyone this fall. I know everyone will have a good time. We always do when we get time to be with you guys. We are planning our trip to Nevada next year.

The 4th was very good this year. We had family over. There was a little bbqing and a few fireworks. I'm hoping everyone is enjoying this summer. We have had a mild one here in Idaho so far.

As always keep posting on our Facebook group, pictures of your time in Vietnam. Articles of the Ripcord area would be great. Please be safe. We want to see you at this year's reunion and all the ones coming up in the next few years.

## "Remembering Firebase Ripcord"

### New Ripcord Book



### How to order the book:

**email [rememberingripcord@windstream.net](mailto:rememberingripcord@windstream.net)**  
if you are interested in obtaining a personalized copy of the book.

It can also be ordered online at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)  
or [barnesandnoble.com](http://barnesandnoble.com).

# JERSEY RAMBLINGS

by Lee Widjeskog A/2-506



Here it is August!

For most of the country it is hot as the dickens and the end of summer seems far away. But do not worry, the cooler weather will soon be here and we will once more complain about the cold! Personally, I find the weather OK. Yes, it is hot and humid but I do not have the climb any hills and carry my meals on my back unless I wish to. I get to sleep on a bed and not on the ground. My wife cooks my meals and the selection is great! Come winter it will get cold but so what? I can go inside and enjoy the warm. All in all life is good!!

Kathy and I had originally planned to tour the west this past May. However, a party for my 95 year old mother came up and we had to take care of that with help from my brother and sisters. Then it was watching our grandson in Massachusetts for a week and soon we were in July.

So, rather than not traveling, we took off for South Dakota and points west. Since 1976 we have tried to visit Crazy Horse Mountain and see how the work on the monument is progressing every ten years. This being 2016 we felt we were due to conduct a personal inspection and so we did! Over the past 40 years we have seen some progress. However, I do not believe we will live long enough to see the finished mountain. Maybe our grandson will be around to see it completed! No matter, we plan to check again in 2026.

On our way to Crazy Horse we toured the Badlands National Park. Overlooking one of the viewpoints I met a fellow wearing a Purple Heart hat. He saw my Ripcord hat and remarked he knew of a place called Ripcord. It turns out he was wounded on Ripcord in July 1970 when a piece of shrapnel took a chunk out of his foot and sent him home. I told him about the reunions and he said he might be interested. I gave him my card with Association info and determined he was with B 2/506. His first platoon leader, Robert J. Holland was killed before Ripcord on 20 January 1970. I did not get his name, but I hope to hear from him as he checks out the website.

After visiting Mount Rushmore, Kathy and I headed to Montana to visit some friends. From there we drove through the northern Washington mountains and landed in Auburn to visit yet other friends. We spent a quick four days with them and toured Mt. Rainer and Mt. Saint

Helen on our way to Long Beach on the Washington coast. It is amazing how quickly the vegetation has recovered around Mt. Saint Helen after the eruption in 1982. The trees that were planted are now over 30 feet tall! As in most cases, if the devastated area is left alone, time and natural events will cover the traces of man's efforts as well as natures. Mans impact is really quite temporary in the grand scheme.

From the west coast we headed east once more and stopped at The Craters of the Moon National Park. For our next stop we traveled to Yellowstone National Park to view the hot springs, geysers and scenery. The Old Faithfull geyser still spouts on a fairly regular basis and is impressive no matter how many times you view it!

On the other side of Cody, Wyoming there is the Heart Mountain Japanese Internment (Concentration?) Camp Museum. It tells of a dark period of our history when we took over 100,000 US residents and put them behind barbed wire and armed guards because they were of Japanese heritage. These citizens lost their homes and possessions in an effort to protect the west coast and the USA from sabotage. This was done by the president in spite of recommendations by the FBI and the Secretary of War. During the war only ten people in the USA were convicted of spying for Japan and all were Caucasian. It seems the wrong people were behind wire! This period in our history should not be forgotten. Today there are people who want to do the same to people who practice the Islamic religion. What was done in 1942 was unjust and it is still unjust to do something like that in this century!

As an aside we are pleased (?!?) to report that there is road construction going on everywhere! We were delayed a little, but no big deal since we were on vacation! Many roads will be better next year!

Get your registration in and we will see you in Springfield in October!



## Springfield Sign ups

Floyd & Diane Alexander B 2/319 & A 2/506  
Lin, Pinkey & Kurt Bashford D 2/506  
Dan & Carol Bohan Pathfinder Fam.  
Timothy & Elaine Bohan Pathfinder Fam.  
Bill & Linda Boles D 2/506  
Bruce Brady & Karolyn Kruger A 2/506  
Paul Buhr A 2/506  
Tex Campbell D 2/506  
Dale & Sue Cooper C 2/506  
Tommy & Judy Counts D 2/506  
Ken & Maryann David D 1/506  
Merle & Ruth DeLagrange D 1/506  
Russ & Maryann Dixon B 2/319 FA  
Rudy & Linda Forsman D 2/506  
John & Debbie Fowler C 2/506  
Leigh Freeman C 2/506  
Rick & Janet Hahn E 2/506  
Elwood Hall & Johnnie Patterson D 2/506  
Bill & Lynn Hand B 2/506  
Paul & Laura Hansmann B 2/506  
Lisa Hill Guest D 2/506  
Charles & Jean Holmen A 159 AVN  
Don & Linda Holthausen C 2/506  
Ronald & Linda Hudson A 1/39 FA  
Bob & Red Judd B 2/506  
Don Kiefer A 2/506  
Dale Lane & Dianne Grote A & HHC 2/506  
Bob Leibecke C 2/506  
Charles & Janet Leib C 2/506  
Murphy & Phyllis Majoria Guests  
Steve Manthei C 2/506  
Gene & Star Marshall B 2/319 FA  
Fred & Sondra Martin A 2/11 FA  
Jim & Michelle McCoy D 1/506  
Ron & Linda McCrory E 2/506  
Peter & Chris Meloro C 2/506  
Uwe & Diane Meyer B 2/506  
Leonard & Carol Moore Mini Cav  
Mary Murphy B 2/320 FA  
Clem Neiderer HHC 2/501  
Bruce & Ramona Nelson B 2/319 FA  
Ulla Nolan Guest  
Robert Pagano & Rachel Springer B 2/506  
George & Sheila Potts B 2/319 FA

Doug & Iris Puffer D 2/506  
Fred Shuttleworth E 2/506  
Jim Smither, Grand Valley State Univ.  
Dave & Lisa Snyder A 2/11 FA  
Fred & Micki Spaulding 3 BDE  
Terry Stanger & ? A 159 AVN  
Bob Tarbuck & Paige Corkhill C 2/506  
Bob & Jackie Wallace C 2/506  
Steve & Susan Wallace B 2/506  
Lee & Kathy Widjeskog A 2/506  
Tommy Wilcox, 101st  
Mike & Liz Womack C 2/506  
Audrey Wrightsell A 2/11 FA Fam.

## 2016 Ripcord Reunion

### Springfield, MO

Wed. Oct 5 thru Sat. Oct 8, 2016  
with check out on Sunday 9 Oct.

The University Plaza Hotel  
333 John Q. Hammons Parkway.

The rooms cost is \$82 per night  
before taxes.

Breakfast is included.

### Upcoming Ripcord Reunions

2016	Springfield, MO
2017	Laughlin, NV
2018	Myrtle Beach, SC
2019	Indianapolis, IN
2020	Indianapolis, IN

## INCOMING MAIL



Frank,

I am one of your FNG's to the RC Assoc. I was assigned to the 101st Aviation Group, the Hqs for all the aviation assets in the Northern part of I-Corps.

Could you put be in touch with anyone on record with A-B-C 159 ASHB (Chinooks) or perhaps you can tell me. I was flying OH-6's during the Ripcord ordeal on purely ash and trash missions like a taxi driver.

All these years I can remember low level flying into what I thought was Ripcord but I might have been breathing too much Av Fuel. I rounded a good size hill on my way into "Ripcord?" and damned if there weren't 2 Chinooks on the hill being striped down for extraction (sling load) by either another Chinook or a Crane CH-54 from Da Nang. Do you remember anything like this on "Ripcord" .....if not it might have been Bastogne.

In reading up everything I can on Ripcord.... I haven't seen anything in print about 2 chinooks parked on the hill at the same time. Most of the maps I have located tell me that Ripcord was not big enough for all that.

Another Chinook took a mortar or rocket hit where the left door gunner would be .....that one rolled down the hill into a fuel storage area and promptly burned up. Four crewmen got out but the left gunner was vaporized.

On one of my sorties out after picking up several KY-28 secure como box's....I was loaded with 2 body bags. As I was lifting off I observed 2 obviously older (25-30yo) NCO's saluting apparently one or both deceased troops I now had onboard. Could one of them been LTC Lucas?

*Thanks Frank*

*Jim Bauer 101st AVN GRP*

*jim\_bauer78248@yahoo.com*



I was a flight medic with the 326 dust-off and made many trips to the ripcord area to get the wounded out.

On my 5th trip in I was off the helicopter helping get patients on litters when the helicopter came under heavy fire and I had the radio man tell them to depart and come back to get me later. That later was two days. Couldn't get another dust-off in, and me and another medic cared for the wounded. We ran out of medical supplies and when the dust off came back in we loaded the wounded

and just before we departed the LZ, I threw my medic bag out of the helicopter to the ground medic. May God bless all the living and departed men of Ripcord.

*Harvey Fisher*

*326 Dustoff*



I was the Commander of D Co. 101st Avn Bn (Hawks) during the siege of Ripcord. We flew AH-1G Cobras out of Hue-Phu Bai near Camp Eagle. We were honored to provide close-in fire support with rockets, 40mm grenade launchers and machine guns. We salute all of you heroes who served on Ripcord.

*Ron Richtsmeier*

*D/101st Avn Bn (Cobra)*



I was a recon plt. leader for my battalion on FSB Birmingham. One night we were loaded onto hueys and set out on an hour ride going in circles. We were told onboard that we were going to relieve a unit in trouble. After a while we returned to Birmingham. It wasn't until the next day that I learned of the siege.

I lost an OCS classmate, Lt. Terry Palm, on Ripcord that night.

*Dick Nolte*

*101st ABN, 2nd Brigade, 1/502 Inf.*

*nolte@toledovietnamvets.com*



My Name Is Tony Liston, I Have an Uncle by the Name Donald Ray Orville Ragsdale. He Was a Pathfinder, I believe attached to Company C/2-506. Don was KIA on FSB Ripcord during the April Fools Day Combat Assault.

I did not know much about Don's death until I read Kieth Nolans book about Ripcord.

I believe All Americans should Hold You All In The Highest Regards For Your Service. I Hold You And Your Loved Ones Up In Prayer.

*THANK YOU*

*Tony Liston*

*tkcjjc@yahoo.com*



# INCOMING MAIL



I served as battalion surgeon for the 2/506 until probably June when I was moved to Charlie Med. I remember seeing the remains of LTC Lucas there when the firebase was overrun. Without his vibrant life, I didn't recognize him. One of my former medics had to tell me. Horrible day.

*Walter Brooks*  
2/506 Medical



Seeking information related to 1st Lt. Gerald Hauswirth (Alpha 1/506). KIA March 14, 1970 around FSB Granite, grid co-ordinates YD 464156. I am the nephew of Lt. Hauswirth.

*Sincerely,*  
*Mark Kapocius*  
*kapocius@uwalumni.com*



I happened to see the Oliver North show about Ripcord. Brought back memories. Thought I'd reconnect with those times.

*Ian Hailstones*  
*A Company 2/506 Medic*



Thanks to the association I was able to reconnect with my C.O.

*Raymond Hudzinski*  
*HHC 2/506*



Robert Mason Journell

I am a former Marine that served in I corps Viet Nam in 69-70. My best friend Robert Mason Journell was killed in the battle of Ripcord. He went by the name of Sparky to all of us in Salem Va. I have tried to find anyone that was with him when he was killed. I have heard conflicting reports about his death. After all of these years of visiting his grave on 7-22, I really would like to know the details. Any help would be appreciated.

*Thanks so much.*  
*Stephen W Grubb*  
*glide3@verizon.net*



I am writing this to you with a broken heart. My husband of almost 46 years passed away on June 6th, 2016. He was surrounded by loved ones when he passed. We are positive he is now surrounded by angels. Our lives changed in one heart beat with his passing. He was a great husband, father, and grandfather. He will be loved and missed for the rest of our lives. We could not of ask for anyone better to have shared our lives with.



He not only fought in Viet Nam for his country. He has been fighting the worst battle of his life for the last ten months, with cancer. I am sorry to say it was a battle he could not make it through. He was a hero in our lives and the lives of many, as are all our veterans.

He is one of the RIPCORD members: RONALD GUNYAN JR. B2/506. Ron loved the Ripcord reunions and all the members he was able to visit with at the reunions. We had plans to attend next year, if he was up to it. Myself and our children would still like to attend the reunion next year for him. Ron thought the world of all you guys, he had great respect for each and every one of you. He was proud to be a veteran!

At Ron's request we asked that instead of flowers at his funeral, please make a donation to the Ripcord Association in his name. I do hope that was ok.

*All our respect, love and wishes for good health*  
**THE GUNYAN FAMILY**

Send your letters to:  
[mail@ripcordassociation.com](mailto:mail@ripcordassociation.com)

# INCOMING MAIL



Hi Lee,

I enjoyed our phone conversation a few weeks ago. You were the first person I talked to in 45 years that fought in the A.O.

As I said on the phone, after the evacuation of Ripcord when I was back at Camp Even's, I received some negatives of the destroyed 105 howitzers and had them developed. You can keep all the pictures I have sent. On the back of the each copy I wrote a few lines about the picture.

If you would like to display the pictures at a Ripcord Reunion or in the Ripcord Report that would be great!

I would like to thank-you for all the hard work you do for the Ripcord Association.

*Sincerely,  
Mark Minch  
B/2-319th*



Dear Lee

Sorry I haven't donated or written sooner, but I enjoy the Ripcord Report I receive in the mail. My tour ended with a bang. I left sunny Vietnam 26 July 70.

Thanks for all you do

*Jim Spilak  
B/2-319 Arty & D 2/506  
JimSpilak@gmail.com*



Dear Mr. Widjeskog,

My wife and I went to high school in Ohio with SPC4 Robert William Zoller II (KIA, 02 July 1970), and Leslie worked in Cleveland, Ohio, in the mid-1970's with Sgt. Frank Bort (Florida resident) both of whom fought valiantly in the Battle of Firebase Ripcord.

Enclosed is a donation for the Ripcord Association in remembrance of and to honor their service to our Country.

I served in the US Army from April 29, 1969 to April 29, 1971. I took my basic training at Ft. Campbell, KY, but was not sent overseas.

Leslie and my heartfelt thanks go out to all who have and do serve.

*Sincerely  
Joe Stamm*

Sir

I have no e-mail, so donation is for mailing the newsletter. I was 1st Sgt od D/2-501, Hill 805 during Ripcord.

*John T Schuelke*



## 2016 DMOR Ceremony

Ripcord Association members Chuck Van Cleve and Robert Leibecke are pictured after receiving their 2016 Distinguished Members of the Regiment award from the 506th Airborne Infantry Association. Both men were with C Co 2/506 on Hill 902 on 2 July 1970. Chuck was the 319th FO and Bob was leading 1st platoon.

John Mihalko, E/2-506 recon was also given posthumously the DMOR award for all his efforts in the VFW and the Ripcord Association. His wife Kathy Mihalko, accepted the award on his behalf .

Ripcord Association members John Fowler, Dale Cooper, and Randy Parmley attended the ceremony.



Our members enjoy reading letters to the Editor, so why not take a few minutes and send us a letter to let other members know about you, your thoughts about the Ripcord Association, our reunions or anything you like to share.

Send your letters to:  
[mail@ripcordassociation.com](mailto:mail@ripcordassociation.com)



## Ripcord Association Newest Members

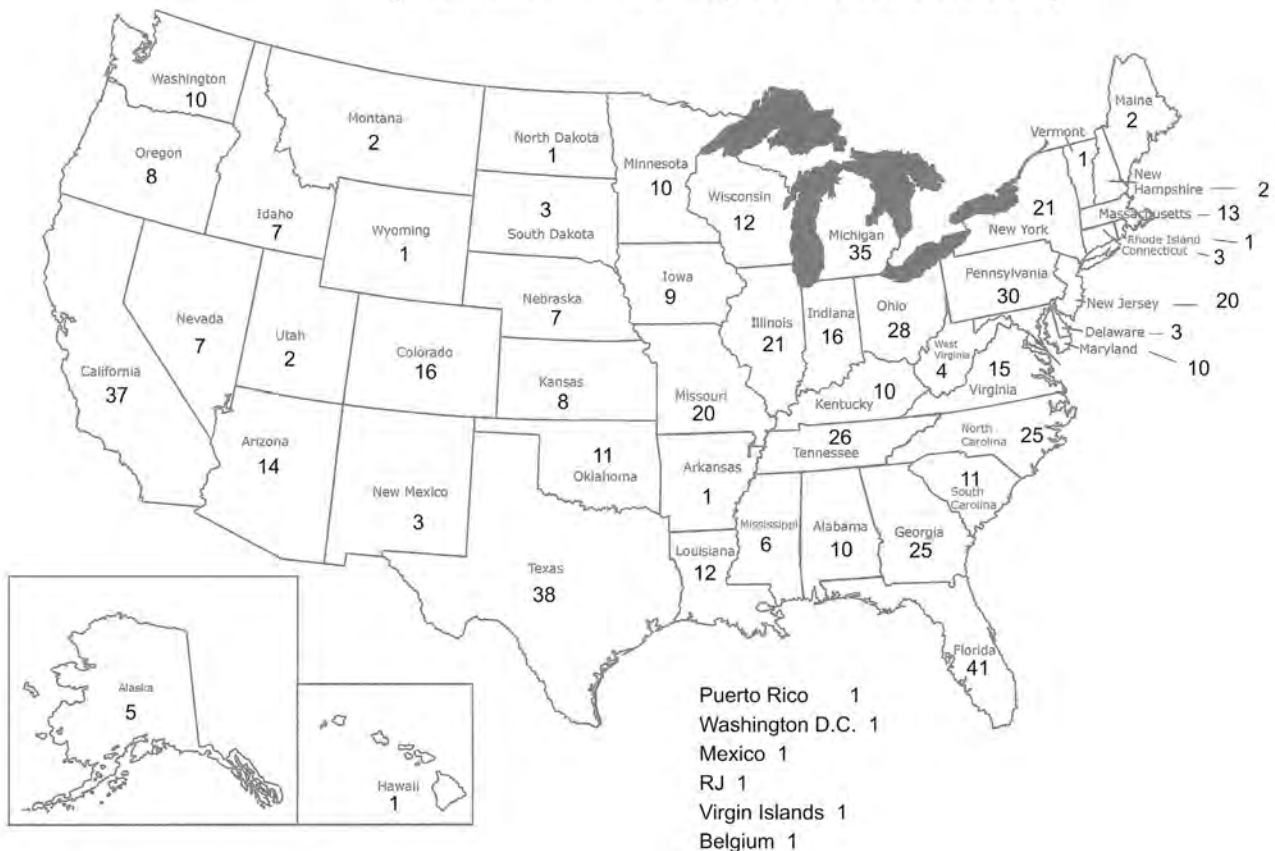
Hudzinski	Raymond	HHC 2/506	Liston	Tony	Associate Member
Beverburg	Stephen	HHC 3BDE AVN	Richtsmeier	Ronald	D/101st Avn Cobra
Hailstones	Ian	A/2-506	Historical Society Wisconsin		Associate Member
Olson-Stephen	Doug	E/2-506	Kapocius	Mark	Associate Member
Buffington	Jerone	C/2-506	Gardner	Conrad	Pathfinders
Conner	Fred	HHC 2/506	Nolte	Dick	Associate Member
Brooks	Walter	2/506 Medical	Figley	Dennis	C/2-506
Davis	James	C/1-506	Wilcox	Tommy	D/2-506 Assoc Member

## Membership Status

772 members in our Ripcord Association  
 623 are Ripcord Veterans  
 149 are Associate Members  
 203 receive newsletter via Postal Mail  
 566 receive the newsletter via e-mail  
 594 on Facebook "Ripcord Association Group"

## Ripcord Veterans by State (that are in The Ripcord Association)

Updated 7/18/16



## Conference for Global Transformation

*Jeff Wilcox*



In May I attended the Conference for Global Transformation in San Francisco. It was a gathering of over 800 Landmark Education graduates. Everyone there is either up to something big or intend to be. It was a very powerful and moving experience.

I presented a Poster Display for a project I'm involved in - Veterans Creating New Futures. This is a group of volunteers who have guided conversations with veterans to cause empowering shifts. They learn a simple method which can be used with anyone, and to build a supportive buddy network.

During the Poster Display session people were invited to write a note to post on the "Participation Board". The question asked was "How could you connect with a vet?" Many said they know veterans and would look for opportunities to take a conversation beyond "Thank you for your service" and to listen to whatever the veteran said. They said they'd ask how the vet is doing, or ask about what service means to them. Some said they'd go to a vet center and see what they could contribute. Others were interested in participating with Veterans Creating New Futures.

The flyer included a quote from one of our early veteran guinea pigs for the project. "As a combat veteran, I see Veterans Creating New Futures as a powerful tool to bring the possibility of engaging in a life of contribution and peacefulness." James A Williams, Founder/CEO, Delores Galvan-Williams Veteran Organization. The quote got a lot of attention.

Wearing my 101st hat with various pins and flair, plus my Veterans for Peace T-shirt, I met many vets and made a lot of great connections. Met a Canadian vet. (Did you know in Canada Vietnam veterans don't call themselves veterans? That is a term for WWII!!) She works for their version of Veterans Affairs and wants to build a US-Canadian network. Again I am impressed with how many people have deep respect for veterans and are looking for ways to connect and be at service to them.

I've got a lot of follow-up to do. Please check us out on Facebook: Veterans Creating New Futures. And if you'd like to participate or want to learn more, let me know.

*jeff@jeffwilcox.com,  
616.566.7854.*

## Anna Britt Nolan Trust

*by Mary Murphy*



Hello,

It is with a heavy heart that I am reporting on the Anna Britt Nolan Trust Fund. As you may or may not know, my husband George Murphy passed away April 2nd from ALS and cancer.

One of his final requests to me was to see that I followed up with the Nolan family and reports on Anna Britt's progress. This Scholarship Trust Fund for Anna Britt was very near and dear to George's heart and his dream was to see that Keith's Nolan's daughter would get a college education.

I spoke recently with Ulla Nolan, Britt's grandmother, and she proudly told me that Anna Britt has finished her second year of high school with honors. Her counselor told Ulla that if they could give a 5+ or more to a student, Anna Britt would be the one to get it. She continues to pursue writing and Journalism at school and through her extracurricular activities.

Writing this, I cannot help but think that George is up there with Keith now and the two of them are smiling down on us, so happy that the Ripcord members are making Anna Britt's future brighter. Now is a good time to start thinking about items you may wish to bring for the Trust Fund Raffle at the reunion in October. I am looking forward to seeing you there.

*God Bless,*

*Mary C. Murphy*

The address where donations may be sent  
for the trust fund is:

**Anna Britt Nolan Trust  
c/o First Bank  
6211 Mid Rivers Mall Drive  
Saint Charles, MO 63304-1102**



Join us on Facebook group  
Ripcord Association

## Captain Thomas Hewitt

by Tom Weides

On July 2nd, Leigh Freeman, Rolland Christiansen, his wife, Pam, Ken Pitetti, my wife, Cheryl and myself, Tom Weides met in Belleville, Kansas. We were there to visit the gravesite of Captain Thomas Hewitt. Leigh Freeman had suggested July 2nd as it would be the 46th anniversary of the day Capt. Hewitt was killed on Hill 902 near Ripcord.

We originally contacted the Belleville Chamber of Commerce simply to locate the cemetery as it is listed as St. Katharine's cemetery, Republic County, Ks. In about a day, Melinda Pearson at the Chamber had located the old family cemetery caretaker/owner, Vince Pachta (somewhat of a local historian) and Sandy, who was the Maid of Honor in Thomas and Diane's wedding. We then received calls from both and also Captain Hewitt's widow. Then was contacted by Deb Hatacheck, the Editor of the Belleville Telescope. Things expanded at that point.

On July 2nd, we met in Belleville with Diane and her husband of 44 years, Joe McCarville. Joe was an officer with the 1/506th and was in country after Ripcord also. Diane says she and Joe were each others support group. As we all know, vets were not treated very well in the 60's and 70's. Joe is now a District judge in Reno County Kansas.

We were met at the cemetery by about a dozen people under a small tent. It was drizzling and the predicted weather forecast for that Saturday was 3.85 inches, up to 6 inches. Monsoon weather. Ken introduced himself and us to the group. We all then spoke with the crowd on who we were and our Vietnam role. We shared stories from you, our Brothers, who were there and information we had. I found out that Lt. Bob Leibecke and Chuck Van Cleave, with others, carried Capt. Hewitt's body to the L.Z. Then Lt (?) Randy House was piloting the bird that carried the Capt. out of the jungle on his huey.

Rolland and Ken arrived at the Company just shortly after Capt. Hewitt was killed. Leigh was just getting back and was at Camp Evans on July 2nd. He had been to a Cam Rahn Bay hospital with severe jungle rot on his leg. I wasn't in Company until late November. Ken gave the group a short history speech about the situation in the Ripcord area. Leigh had brought a beautiful red, white and blue flower arrangement with Company/Division logos and that he placed that near the headstone. We also left a 5x7 inch curved glass plaque. I read the etched inscription as Rolland held

for the group to see. Rolland then placed the plaque on Captain Hewitt's tombstone. Lt. Pitetti then called us to attention and we preformed a 'held' salute. The salute ended our Ceremony. We then left coins on his gravestone, signifying our visit.

At this point, Diane wanted to address those in attendance. She gave a synopsis of her meeting and life with Tom Hewitt. July 4th, the day she was notified of his death. Life as a 21 year old widow along with the hardships from being attached to a Vietnam soldier. She spoke of meeting/marrying Joe McCarville and where she is now in life. She was filling in a lot of the blanks the community likely had, due to family moving from the area.

We continued talking with those attending for another ten minutes and they were appreciative for doing this. We had no contact with Tom's family but learned from Diane that Tom had a twin brother. The brother was a Marine in Vietnam and suffered a head injury about 30 days before Tom's death. The brother has moved to Alaska. Vince Pachta, the owner/caretaker of the cemetery said someone was there from Alaska a few weeks ago. Since the cemetery is in the country and Vince lives close and looks after it, he went to see what they were needing. It was a nephew of Tom's from Alaska visiting his uncles grave. As Diane's family had also moved to Hutchinson, Ks., I think those that attended had limited knowledge of who Tom was or the story behind him and Diane. Diane also thought it was so nice we did this on the day Tom was killed.

Joe and Diane (Hewitt) McCarville and our group then met for lunch to continue exchanging. As we were just leaving town, the heavy Monsoon rains opened up making it difficult to drive. A very fitting ending for the day.

*For more photos and story, go to our website [www.ripcordassociation.com](http://www.ripcordassociation.com)*



# RIPCORD REUNION 2016 SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI

Yes, I'll be there!

I have not attended a Reunion since 1997 and 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 June 30, 2016, \$75 per adult**

**July 1 through 31, 2016 \$80 per adult,**

**August 1 through September 6, 2016 \$85 per adult.**

**After September 6, 2016 \$90 per adult.**

Your registration fee covers the cost of the snacks, beverages, hot hors d'oeuvres on Friday night and dinner on Saturday.

## **Registration fee due no later than September 29, 2016.**

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 29 Sept. 2016. (After call 609-774-6951)

## **AGENDA**

**Wednesday, October 5:** Hospitality suite opens at 1200 hours. (Self guided tours and shopping)

**Thursday, October 6:** Hospitality suite opens at 1200 hours. (Golf in the AM) (Self guided tours)

**Friday, October 7:** Hospitality 1200 Hours. Ladies raffle 1800 hours (6PM)

**Saturday, October 8:** Business meeting for association business in Hospitality room.

Dinner with cash bar starting at 1700 hours done by 2200 hours.

**Sunday, October 9:** Homeward bound

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

## **HOTEL RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE SEPERATELY**

### **BY September 2, 2016**

### **CALL 417-864-7333**

Ask for HOTEL RESERVATIONS and mention the

**GROUP CODE: RIPCORD**

(Price is \$82 per night plus tax: breakfast is included.)