

# RIPCORD REPORT

*A Newsletter*

No. 37 DEC. 1994

For Friends and Survivors of FSB RIPCORD, RVN

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

## MEMBERSHIP ISSUE!

Our lead story this issue is about membership in the Ripcord Association, and includes a listing of 260 members, beginning on page 10 and continuing through page 17. The list is printed in three columns, and reads top to bottom by zip code by page, starting with our one overseas member and Massachusetts members, and continuing through to our Alaska colleagues.

Each person is listed in the following format:

First Name ... Last Name  
Street Address  
City, State Zip  
Relationship to the Ripcord Association \*

\* This line is important, because it shows the unit the member belonged to in Vietnam, or if the person is affiliated as a friend, family member or concerned individual. In cases where a "?" is shown on the fourth line, it means the person's affiliation is unclear, or has been lost from our files.

Please take a moment to write us a postcard or brief note to update your listing. Give your unit(s), parent division, separate brigade or other parent unit, years in Vietnam and other information you want to have listed with the association. If you are "friend or family," please give us some information about your connection to Ripcord as well as your own military service or other interest. If anything else is incorrect about your listing, please let us know.

The purpose of the listing is to share information with other members. The list of members is not intended for any commercial or other purpose. If you do not want your name and address listed annually in future issues, or if you no longer want to receive the Ripcord Report, please tell us that, too.

### Demographic Data Membership in Descending Order (As of Nov. 12, 1994)

Virginia, 25	Indiana, 11	Maryland, 7	Maine, 4	Connecticut, 3
Ohio, 17	Pennsylvania, 9	Texas, 6	Wisconsin, 4	Georgia, 3
Illinois, 16	Iowa, 9	New York, 6	Nebraska, 4	Kansas, 3
New Jersey, 14	Michigan, 8	Alabama, 5	Oklahoma, 4	Vermont, 2
Florida, 13	Minnesota, 8	South Carolina, 5	Arizona, 5	Alaska, 2
California, 13	Tennessee, 8	Massachusetts, 5	Utah, 4	Nevada, 2
Missouri, 12	Colorado, 7	Kentucky, 5	Washington, 4	

The following states have only one member: New Hampshire, South Dakota, Louisiana, Arkansas, New Mexico, Wyoming and Oregon. And these states have no members: Hawaii, North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, West Virginia, Rhode Island, Delaware, North Carolina and Mississippi. There are no members living in Guam, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands or Washington, D.C.

One Ripcord Association member lives overseas, working in Saudi Arabia.

Fifty-three percent of members live in Eastern states, while only nine percent live along the West Coast. The Central states boast 31 percent of Ripcord Report readers, and the lowest proportion, seven percent, live in mountain states.

The Ripcord Report truly is a national newsletter, and the word needs to get out to more veterans who served there with the 101st Airborne Division or other units. If you know someone who should be receiving the newsletter, a veteran, friend or family member, please let us know.

**WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU GAVE A CONTRIBUTION TO KEEP RIPCORD REPORT  
GOING OUT TO ASSOCIATION MEMBERS?**

## New Members

In this special issue we also welcome new members, all formerly of Bravo Company, 2d Battalion, 506th Infantry. For this bonus of 23 new names a tip of the Currahee Steel Pot is awarded to Chris Garrett, who has unstintingly sought out his old company mates. Listed in full in the body of the newsletter, these men are: Jim Owens, Joseph Anter, Philip Molstre, Allen Boyd, Arthur Olsen, Jackie Gottman, Jeffrey Taylor, Thomas Muskus, Gregory McGinn, Chris Garrett, Keith Harold, Carl Jensen, Rich Palone, Sam Knipmeyer, Mark Wissel, Buford Byers, Robert Thomlinson, James Wilke, Tom Friedrich, Steve Commo, Paul Jensen, Ralph Harrera and Uwe Meyers. A warm welcome to you and your families from Ripcord Report.

## Deceased Members

Two members of the Ripcord Association apparently have passed away in the last two years, Marty Toohey of Philadelphia, and Ed Davis, who lived in Connecticut.

Marty Toohey served in the headquarters of the 2d Bn., 506th Inf., and was a radio operator on Ripcord with the advance command post when it deployed there after the hill was secure on Apr. 10, 1970. Edward P. Davis was with the 101st Aviation Group in 1970, and was one of its commanders.

The August 1994 issue of the newsletter sent to these men came back with "deceased" marked on Marty's, and "terminated" marked on Ed's. If anyone has additional information about these soldiers, and would like to share it with Ripcord Report, it would be appreciated.

## Former Members, Lost or Missing

The following members of the Ripcord Association have either moved and left no forwarding address, or forwarding time had expired through the October 1994 issue. Again, we would appreciate any information regarding their whereabouts, and adding them again to our list of members. They are listed with their last known city location.

Howard Warrick, Webster City, Iowa  
Harry Crawford, Grosse Point Farm, Michigan  
Ronald Gaines, Columbia, South Carolina  
Ken Iacullo, Harwood Heights, Illinois  
Terry Zahn, Omaha, Nebraska  
Michael Leiviska, Cedar, Minnesota  
Michael Borland, Fort Belvoir, Virginia  
Jim Fairhall, Stony Brook, New York  
Lonnie Knight, Morrow, Ohio  
Cathryn Ball (friend or family), Highland, Indiana  
Ed Kemen, Racine, Wisconsin  
Wayne Kabat, HQ European Command  
William Swayne, Millville, New Jersey  
Elbert Griffin, Williamston, North Carolina  
Robert Bridges, Macomb, Mississippi  
Frank Gonzales, Tucson, Arizona  
Lloyd Harrington, Marianna, Arkansas

**DON'T GET LOST IN THE SHUFFLE, SEND  
IN CHANGE OF ADDRESS CARDS WHEN  
YOU MOVE!**

## WHERE ARE THE DOCTORS AND NURSES?

Do any members know where any of the doctors and nurses are that treated Ripcord casualties? They are very important people who were involved with the Battle of Ripcord. We depended on them then, and we need to thank them now! So start searching through your Veterans Organizations for those doctors and nurses who were at those evacuation hospitals, and Aid Stations throughout Vietnam where our wounded were sent. Send us their names and address for our mailing list.

**GOT A TIP FOR THE  
RIPCORD REPORT?  
WHERE ARE THOSE  
RETROSPETIVES?  
HOW ABOUT BIOGRAPHIC  
PROFILES OF MEMBERS?  
(Send before/after photos if you have  
them.)**

**HOW WOULD YOU  
LIKE TO MEET  
SOME OF THE  
GUYS THAT SERVED  
WITH YOU IN VIETNAM!  
THEN COME TO  
"RIPCORD REUNION 95"  
JULY 19 - 23, 1995**



## STAFF JOURNAL: LZ OAKTON



### Be Of Good Cheer

CAMP EVANS, Republic of Vietnam, Christmas Eve, 1970-- The monsoon season had settled in for the winter, much abated from its October fury. Charcoal clouds swept low across the sky, fog filled mountain valleys, and sometimes leaked into the lowlands.

The 2d Battalion, 506th Infantry, was deployed on Fire Base Rakkasan, a few clicks into the mountains from Rocket Ridge, and in the surrounding jungle. It was about the same position the Best of the Currahees had occupied the year prior.

I, on the other hand, now held the exalted position of battalion adjutant (also the personnel officer), one of the supreme REMF\* jobs available to officers.

Capt. R. G. Rollison (now the battalion supply officer) and I shared half of a hooch just behind the personnel building. Capt. Lee Fox remained as chaplain, and he and headquarters commandant 1st Lt. Jim "Crazy Jim" McCall shared the other half of our plywood and sand-bagged living quarters.

In the evenings, Rollison was fond of throwing his Randall knife inside against the door. Most of the time he managed to stick it through the plywood. Sometimes it ricocheted into my half of the hooch. Once it struck my guitar a glancing blow. We 'bout had a disagreement over that, but his Randall was bigger than mine. Besides, the man had once saved my life.

By Christmas, there had been other changes in officer personnel. Lt. Col. John Bard had completed a short stay (four months) as battalion commander, and in his place was a fiery whip of a man named Joe Bellochi. Among his accomplishments, Lt. Col. Bellochi counted receiving an Article 15, as a young lieutenant in Korea, from Gen. Douglas MacArthur, among the most significant. Not many officers survived a blemish on their service record to become battalion commanders.

Irrepressable Maj. Sid Davis had rotated stateside for a tour at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., and the battalion executive officer's slot was filled by a quiet West Virginian, Maj. McClintock. For all the shennagains we occasionally got into in the rear, McClintock rarely batted

an eye. Even when Crazy Jim and I swipped one of the two captured 37mm NVA anti-aircraft cannon that were parked outside 3d Brigade headquarters, McClintock quietly shook his head. "The brigade commander (now Col. Grange)," he told me, "has initiated an Article 31 investigation (the Army's equivalent of a grand jury). I hope it doesn't snare anyone in the battalion," he finished.

It didn't. McCall and I got away scott free. Confession, they say, is good for the soul. Confession after the statute of limitations has run out is even better. What were they going to do, anyway? Send us to Vietnam?

As Christmas 1970 approached my spirits became more ebullient,

for I was now a "two-digit midget," and going home to wife and family was never far from my mind. For a Christmas present, or maybe just to get me out of his hair for a day, McClintock granted me a day off to spend with some Army aviator friends in Phu Bai. Then, while I was partying far away with "those crazy aviators," mayhem broke loose at the battalion headquarters at Camp Evans.

A soldier assigned to Headquarters Company, depressed at some sad fact of his life, locked himself in a hooch and opened up at random with M-16 rifle fire. No one was hit in the opening fusillade, and Rollison, Fox, McClintock and a dozen other men quickly surrounded the deranged soldier's makeshift fortress, and tried to talk him out.

Instead, the hooch door opened a squeek, and out rolled a M-26 football-shaped fragmentation grenade. The grenade failed to explode (A Christmas miracle?), and Rollison rushed the door, kicking it in. Now terrified, the soldier could think of only one thing to do. He pointed his weapon at his foot and pulled the trigger.

It was a messy wound. The round and accompanying hydrostatic shock destroyed bone and muscle. But it accomplished the immediate purpose of getting him hustled off to a hospital rather than the stockade.

The Christmas that might have turned deadly, did not. And men who otherwise might not have appreciated as much God's gift of life, were reminded again, so far from home, that our tour on this earth is only temporary.

From LZ Oakton, I wish you all good cheer. Merry Christmas, gentlemen and gentlewomen, and Currahee.

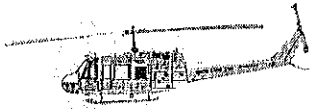
Chuck Hawkins

\* This acronym is rated PG-13.

### LOOKING AHEAD TO 1995

#### A List of What's In and What's Out

IN	OUT
Ripcord Reunion '95	Phony Vietnam Vets
Republicans	Democrats
Al Gore	Hillary Clinton
Striped Business Shirts	Batik Print Shirts
Higher Interest Rates	Affordable Housing
Newsletters	Major Print Media
Multi-Media CD-ROM	Floppy Disks
Internet	Information Highway
Petting Zoos	Sexual Harassment
Women in Combat	Gays in the Military
Geo. Bush Economic Policy	The Economy, Stupid
Election Year 1996	Election Year 1996



## INCOMING



### MIA Status Resolved

It's good to see the Ripcord Report back in circulation. I know it means a lot to the members of the association, myself included.

I wasn't with the 101st. I was next door, up north (Jan.-Oct. 1970) with the 5th Mechanized Brigade (Delta, 1st Bn., 11th Inf.) on the DMZ. Because we relied on the 101st choppers for our transportation into the bush and for resupply, we were always kept up to date on all the rumors concerning your action.

The NVA had a choice of hitting us or going down and raising hell with you guys. I was on Fire Base Fuller on the night of April 29th, when sappers decided to come through our wire. If it weren't for one of the men in our platoon who decided to string his trip flares perpendicular rather than the "taught method" of horizontal, many of my buddies and myself might not have made it back. The sappers came up on our side (west) of the mountain and got as far as the sandbagged wall before a trip flare went off. The toll after that was 21 sappers killed and no casualties for our company. We were damned lucky.

I wanted to write to let you know I appreciate some of the information you passed along in the October report. You mentioned Fire Base Henderson and Staff Sergeant Refugio Thomas Teran as being missing in action. Sergeant Teran was a graduate of the NCO school at Ft. Benning, Ga., Class 3-70, Dec. 2, 1969. Because of your article, the NCOC Locator can let Sergeant Teran's classmates know the circumstances of his MIA status. It's important never to forget the men who never came home.

Our group is still young as far as compiling data about former graduates, but eventually we will be known as the Noncommissioned Officer Candidate Association.

Thanks for your efforts and tell all your members from us ...

Welcome Home!

In brotherhood,

Leonard F. (Budd) Russell, Jr.

NCOC Locator

### To all members: Lest we forget.

Sometimes, thinking back about 'Nam, I wish I could forget everything. Then I realize this wouldn't be fair to the ones who died there. Acting as if this never happened would also be acting as though these people had never lived.

I want to give a special thanks to all involved in starting the Ripcord Report, and to those who have continued this publication through the years. I am honored to be a member, and proud to have served in the 101st.

May God be with all of you, and make life easier on those who had it so rough when they were young.

Jim Griffin, B Co., 2/501st

Rossville, Ga.

### Asian Poetry

Thanks for putting me on the Ripcord Report mailing list. I enjoy it. My contribution to the cause is enclosed.

Chip Collins' poem in the October edition was an interesting description of our involvement in Vietnam. It brought to mind my favorite poetic description of the European involvement in Asia. It's by Kipling, but I confess I don't know the title.

It's not good for the Christian health  
to hustle the Asian brown  
For the Christian riles and the Asian smiles  
as he weareth the Christian down.  
And the end of the fight is a tombstone white  
with the name of the late deceased  
And the epitaph drear, "A fool lies here  
Who tried to hustle the East."

I first read the poem while in Saigon, and its rattled around in my head all these years.

Gary Roberson, Lt. Col., USA, Ret.

Wexford, Pa.

Gary's memory serves us well. The Kipling piece comes from The Naulahka [1892] Chapter 5.--Editor

### NFL Player Died At Ripcord

On the chance you aren't aware of it, Laura Palmer's book, Shrapnel in the Heart (pp. 150-157), has a chapter dedicated to an artillery captain [then first lieutenant] who died at FSB Ripcord. His name was Bob Kalsu, and he also happens to be the only professional football player to have died in Vietnam. He played for the Buffalo Bills when he was called to service. I met him several times at FSB Arsenal and thought him to be one of the nicest and most squared-away officers I ever met.

"First Strike"

"M-60" Kelley, D Co., 1/502d

Sacramento, Calif.

*To the best of our knowledge, the only other professional football player to serve in Vietnam was Rocky Blier, of the Pittsburg Steelers. Blier recovered from war wounds to thrill fans with exciting performances on the gridiron.--Editor*

*Visit  
fascinating*



This poster, an expression of wry GI humor, was submitted by Art Wiknik of Higganum, Conn. Art is a Hamburger Hill veteran who served with the 2/506, and is a regular contributor to Ripcord Report.

**VIETNAM**  
**Fun Capital of the World**

## VIETNAM WAR, 25 YEARS AGO

### MEKONG DELTA, Dec. 3, 1969--

A surprise attack by communist soldiers against the hamlet of Tuyenbinh was repulsed by South Vietnamese defenders today, but not before 15 civilians were killed and 30 wounded. U.S. warplanes came to the aid of South Vietnamese forces, and helped chase the enemy across the Cambodian border. A total of 108 communists were reported killed in the engagement.

**TAYNINH, Dec. 7-8--**Allied forces reported killing 88 North Vietnamese soldiers in two sharp clashes near Tayninh, at a loss of one American killed and four wounded. In all, the enemy launched 44 attacks in South Vietnam during this period.

**THUA THIEN PROVINCE, Dec. 7--**Operation Randolph Glen began today, with the 101st Airborne Division and the ARVN 1st Infantry Division cooperating to provide a shield of security on the periphery of the populated lowlands along the northern stretch of QL-1, the main north-south national highway.

**WASHINGTON, Dec. 8--**At a news conference in the nation's capital, President Richard M. Nixon announced that the Vietnam War is reaching a "conclusion as a result of the plan that we have instituted." Known as "Vietnamization" of the war, the plan calls for replacing U.S. troops with South Vietnamese forces.

**DALAT, Dec. 9--**Viet Cong guerrillas attacked a national police field force today. Thirteen police were killed and 25 were wounded.

**PARIS, Dec. 11--**Xuan Thuy, chief negotiator for the North Vietnamese peace delegation, boycotted the Paris talks today, apparently protesting the United States lack of a replacement for Henry Cabot Lodge. Speaking to the news media, Xuan condemned the U.S. for "sabotage" and "downgrading" the talks.

**SOUTH VIETNAM, Dec. 12--**Philippine Army troops began leaving for home today, as the first of 1,350 non-combatants left. The Philippine government has been a part of the Allied coalition since 1966. The redeployment is

expected to take about a week.

**CAN THO, Dec. 13--**A highway bridge was struck by communist saboteurs, the second such attack in as many days.

BIEN HOA airbase was shelled by enemy rockets.

Near MY LAI, soldiers of the Americal Division reported killing 53 enemy.

Also on the 13th, 11 American soldiers were reported killed and 27 wounded in scattered actions around the country. Enemy losses for the day were reported to be 130 killed.

**CAMBODIAN-SOUTH VIETNAM BORDER, Dec. 14--**A report from the headquarters of the 1st Air Cavalry's 3d Brigade today listed 1,177 enemy soldiers killed in firefights along the Cambodian border since the U.S. unit began operations there on Sept. 24th.

**WASHINGTON, Dec. 15--**President Nixon announced today that a third U.S. troop reduction of 50,000 men would occur by mid-April 1970. Also, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird stated that draft calls should be reduced by about 25,000 men in 1970, a direct result of force reductions in South Vietnam.

**MEKONG DELTA--**While Nixon was reducing U.S. troop presence, South Vietnamese soldiers reduced the presence of 83 North Vietnamese troops, who died in a vicious battle along the Mekong estuary. Allied losses were put at 17 killed and 61 wounded.

**WASHINGTON, Dec. 18--**Congress prohibited the Defense Department from introducing U.S. troops into either Laos or Thailand.

**BANGKOK, Dec. 21--**The Thai government announced today its decision to withdraw its 12,000-man contingent from South Vietnam.

The SOUTH KOREAN government stated that it would maintain its 55,000-man force in South Vietnam.

**LOC NINH, Dec. 27--**The North Vietnamese presence in South Vietnam was further reduced today when U.S. forces reported killing 72 communists of a 250-man force 80 miles north of Saigon.

**LAI KHE, Dec. 28--**American G.I.s

of the 25th Infantry Division suffered seven killed and five wounded as the result of an explosive charge that was thrown into their camp during hours of darkness.

**PARIS, Dec. 30--**The issue of American POWs was raised again at the peace talks when Phillip Habib, acting head of the U.S. delegation, handed a list of 1,406 names of missing U.S. servicemen to the communist side. Habib said he hopes the other side will indicate which men are prisoners and which are known dead, as a "matter of humanitarian concern for their families."

**SOUTH VIETNAM, Dec. 31--**Allied military units began a cessation of combat activity, starting at 1800 hours.

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## FLOTSAM AND JETSAM 50 Years Ago

Between Dec. 1-16, 1944, at Camp Irwin, Calif., 24 rockets, named the Private A, were test launched only 11 months after the start of the development project.

During a Dec. 13-14 aerospace conference Army Air Force specialists indicated that they preferred rocket motors instead of jets as the power basis for the X-1 airplane research project.

In December 1944, the USAAF VB-1 controlled-trajectory air-to-surface bomb (known as Azon) was produced and used in combat in European and Burma theaters.

Also in December, a supersonic (Mach 1.7) wind tunnel was completed at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., for use in ballistic research and development.

During 1944, Japan began launching the first of approximately 10,000 Fugo balloons (30-foot diameter) which carried incendiaries and were directed toward the North American continent.

Source: Aeronautics and Astronautics, Eugene M. Emme, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Washington, D.C., 1961.

## THE VIETNAM WAR IN 1969: SUMMARY OVERVIEW

By year's end it was apparent that the Nixon administration had made substantial changes in the war. U.S. forces in South Vietnam had been reduced to 479,000 from a peak in June of 543,000. Although another 46,000 U.S. personnel remained in Thailand, these, too, had been reduced. Likewise, allies Australia and the Philippines had begun to reduce their contingents. Not so the South Koreans and the Thais, although Bangkok had announced its plans to do so.

Enemy presence, too, had apparently declined from an estimated 290,000 in 1968 to approximately 240,000 at the end of 1969. These were composed of about 100,000 North Vietnamese regulars and a similar number of Viet Cong guerrillas, with an additional 40,000 considered "main force" units. However, Communist activity in neighboring countries, particularly Laos, may

have affected somewhat their operations in South Vietnam.

South Vietnamese military forces, on the other hand, were increasing in size and capability. The seriousness of the Tet 1968 crisis galvanized the South Vietnamese to greater support of their own defenses, and military strength increased from 850,000 at the beginning of the year to over one million by January 1970. In addition, vast quantities of war materiel of all types changed hands from U.S. to ARVN units during the year.

However, the fighting was far from over for both U.S. and South Vietnamese units. U.S. combat deaths in 1969 were 9,414, down from 14,592 the year before. At least 6,000 Vietnamese civilians were killed in Communist terrorist attacks in 1969, a testament to the continuing brutality of the regime in the North.

On the dark side, disturbing increases in the number of "fragging" incidents and

a rise in drug use by G.I.s, signalled a lowering of morale in many U.S. units. In 1969 there were 117 convictions in the U.S. Army for "mutiny and other acts involving willful refusal" to obey orders, as opposed to only 82 such convictions in 1968. And, on the home front, anti-war sentiment was on the rise, and opposition to the war had been much more openly expressed in Congress.

Still, with the death of Ho Chi Minh and President Thieu's apparent consolidation of power in the South, a good outcome seemed possible. Polls in the United States showed a majority of people continued to support Nixon's policies in general, and the president was far from calling off the war. "Vietnamization" was working, and time seemed to be on the side of the Allies.





## EDITOR'S HISTORY CORNER

Dept. of the Army  
HQ, 2d BN (Amb) 506th INF  
APO San Francisco 96383  
Unit History, March 1971

*Continued from No. 36*

### THE 'OFFICIAL' HISTORY OF 2/506TH FOR 1970

This segment of the 2/506th Unit History addresses the initial efforts by the battalion to deal with enemy dug in on Hill 1000, just west of Ripcord.

Even as Capt. Jeff Wilcox took over the reins of Charlie Company and they were combat assaulted to another location, Ripcord continued to receive incoming mortar and recoilless rifle rounds. During the day another Chinook helicopter was shot down on the fire base, but only one U.S. soldier was wounded. The well constructed bunkers and fighting positions were seeing maximum use. There was, as yet, no sign of a ground attack.

Bravo Company, still working southeast of Ripcord and now commanded by Capt. Benjamin Peters, saw limited action on several occasions, killing three enemy and capturing a 12.7mm machine gun on Hill 805. First Lieutenant Romig, now in charge of the Recon Platoon, continued successful ambush operations, killing several North Vietnamese. The siege continued for the next several days with no significant changes in the tactical situation. Then, on 6 July, as one of Romig's recon teams approached Hill 1000 to the west of Ripcord, they heard the sounds of enemy mortar tubes firing and NVA soldiers talking.

Bravo Company had assumed control of Ripcord early on the 6th, and Delta Company went to the west, toward Hill 1000 and the recon team. Meanwhile, the recon team had been ordered forward to gather more information on the enemy locations and strength. As the recon team drew closer to the enemy, they were spotted and were engaged by small arms fire and RPGs. With [five men] wounded, the team, now ineffective, drew back to a secure location as Delta Company moved forward. Capt. Rollison sent a two-squad attack force forward to [link up with the recon team and aid their evacuation. This force, too, became engaged with the enemy on Hill 1000, but were able to complete the evacuation.] Then Rollison, deciding that there was more on Hill 1000 than met the eye, ordered the two squads to return and requested a heavy artillery preparation on top of the hill. Artillery was not long in coming, and for one hour 105mm, 155mm and 8-inch rounds impacted on the enemy locations.

[On the morning of 7 July], with gunships on station, Capt. Rollison led his entire company forward in a determined assault on Hill 1000. After roughly one hour of contact, Delta Company had managed to flank what they thought to be the enemy's major element. Small light observation helicopters, equipped with dreaded miniguns, flew low over the contact

area providing suppressive fire and observation of the battle area. As Delta Company systematically engaged the enemy in his bunkers, the LOHs noted that an increasing amount of enemy fire was coming from the west and southwest of Delta's location.

Rollison now realized that the bulk of the enemy's forces were not where he was presently heavily engaged. Delta Company had managed to surround five heavily fortified bunkers that were only a part of a much larger bunker complex. The men of Delta had little choice but to withdraw. The withdrawal, however, was not an easy one. Rollison had [13] men wounded and [three] killed, his unit had been in contact now for the better part of two hours and they were running low on fragmentation grenades and smoke grenades.

In a daring maneuver, Lt. Col. Lucas loaded cases of smoke and fragmentation grenades on his command and control ship and returned to the scene of the contact. Flying at an extremely low altitude and drawing enemy automatic weapon fire all the way, he hovered over Rollison's location and dropped the necessary ordnance to him. Lucas and the aviator got away unscathed, the helicopter received seven hits and Delta Company, with the aid of the smoke grenades, frags and air strikes, withdrew to a secure area. The attack was not without its successes, however. Delta Company had killed [six] enemy.

To be continued ...

### Special Thanks

The red printed cover sheet and red printed inside pages were supplied to us for this month's newsletter by Heath Custom Printing in Coolidge, AZ Bill Heath A2-506 Inf

### COMING SOON / ON CD-ROM

#### "THE WALL: A LIVING MEMORIAL"

The sobering list of the dead that graces the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial will become an even more vivid testament in "The Wall: A Living Memorial", a CD-ROM due by February from Magnet Interactive. Virtual visitors will be able to explore a computer-animated model of the 492 foot long wall and locate any of the more than 58,000 names engraved on its black granite face. Call up a name and you'll see a short bio of that soldier.

The program will also include a catalog of personal artifacts left at the Wall by friends and family members, including letters, poems, and childhood toys. "These items really bring the Memorial alive", says Jan Scruggs, founder of The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. "This CD-ROM captures that, which is important for the children of today who may be called upon to serve their country in a difficult period".



## MORE ABOUT HILL 1000

**We are talking about a very bad place, here. Very bad.**

As we have learned over the years, Hill 1000 had to be purged of enemy if Ripcord were to have a chance at survival. As we have also come to know, by early July 1970, Hill 1000 had become a regimental-sized enemy position, with deep underground bunkers on its top and ringing its sides. What Americans had accomplished in building Ripcord's redoubtable fortifications, the North Vietnamese had accomplished almost entirely underground right next door. And what they accomplished, they did under our very noses, with no one the wiser on our side. Of course, that changed on July 6th.

Part of the problem was that U.S. forces had become thinly spread over the Ripcord area in May and June, which left uncovered gaps large enough for a division, literally, of enemy to march through. Another part of the problem was that U.S. rifle companies and reconnaissance platoons were understrength by as much as 40 percent to begin, a partial result of the U.S. force draw-down. Then there was the American conceit that the enemy was incapable of mounting their own initiatives against us. They were, of course, able to mass a considerable number of troops for an attack against Ripcord, but in so doing they became vulnerable to awesome American firepower.

For any chance of success, then, the North Vietnamese required three conditions: to build up a force so strong that its very size would give them the element of surprise; to protect that force in numerous underground bunker complexes; and to secure key terrain features around Ripcord--the Coc Muen, and Hills 902, 805, and particularly Hill 1000.

Sergeant Robert "Junior" Granberry, a Pensacola, Fla., member of the Ripcord Association, led Recon Team Bravo on July 6th when they discovered enemy presence on top of Hill 1000. The unit history, however, avoids reference to the fact that Granberry was initially ordered to attack the mortar crews he and his men discovered. It was a stupid order. Reconnaissance teams are not assault forces. Granberry objected, but his objection was overridden. So, good soldier that he was, he led his men in their ill-fated assault, and the rest is history.

As a result of Team Bravo's discovery, and of Delta Company's follow-up attack on July 7, we began to learn for the first time the extent of enemy forces arrayed against us. Although enemy strength was initially underestimated by a factor of about four, the element of surprise of a larger-than-anticipated force began to be taken away. Now, the enemy had to choose between continuing their efforts against Ripcord, or disappearing where they had come. The North Vietnamese were not yet prepared to leave, and as subsequent events show, the siege would become an enormous struggle between their sheer numbers

and American firepower and mobility.

But we are getting ahead of our story. The next issue of Ripcord Report will deal with the two-company assault on July 8 to wrest Hill 1000 from enemy hands.--Editor

**REMEMBER:  
YOUR INPUT  
AND  
VOLUNTARY  
CONTRIBUTIONS  
ARE WHAT KEEP  
THE NEWSLETTER  
GOING.**

**DON'T DELAY ANY  
LONGER!  
WE NEED TO KNOW  
ABOUT YOU!**

**WHAT YOU HAVE  
BEEN DOING SINCE  
YOU LEFT VIETNAM?**

**WHAT ARE YOUR  
FEELINGS ABOUT  
LIFE AFTER  
RIPCORN**

### NEWSLETTER BOARD A NATIONAL NEWSLETTER SINCE 1983

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Chip Collins  
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Many thanks!

**RIPCORD REUNION '95**  
**Twenty-Five Year**  
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