



RIPCORD REPORT



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

Issue # 125

February 2021

JERSEY RAMBLINGS

by Lee Widjeskog



The New Year has finally arrived!! 2020 was supposed to be a year of celebration for Ripcord survivors as we remembered our comrades killed in battle back in 1970. Well, some of that happened, but we were unable to join together as we remembered our friends, due to the pandemic.

Now, we have a new year but still a pandemic. People everywhere now know of others that have suffered from the virus or have had it themselves. It is not over. More of us can expect to know others who will suffer or die of the virus before we get together in October.

Everyone should practice wearing masks, avoiding crowds, keeping 6 feet from others and wash your hands frequently and longer than usual. If you do not need to go out, stay home! This should not be a problem for those of us who served in Vietnam. We endured issues that were much harsher than not eating out and hanging out at bars and we did it for a year. If you want to get together again in October than all I can say is "Buck Up!" You are tough enough to do this!!!

The shots are slowly becoming available. Pay attention to the news and when it is available, go in and get your shots. We want to be able to greet each other close up in October without thinking you might be giving you good friend COVID. Remember, some of our buddies cannot take shots due to prior conditions. To protect them we must get our shots and wear a mask. Get the shots! Earlier this month I was treated to a two night stay in a nearby high end hotel-resort. I was sitting in the living room (I passed out) and the next thing I knew, Kathy was making arrangements for my pickup! I was quickly escorted by two efficient workers who delivered me to the "hotel". They were very courteous and always concerned with my wellbeing. Once there, I had no time to get to my room before the "tour

director" was arranging events just for me! I went from one to the other and was soon tired out. After 6 hours, I arrived in my room and found I had two women available to respond to all my wants. It was none other than Mercedes and Alexis. I wondered if I was in an automobile showroom!!??. Room service was efficient and provided a delicious breakfast, lunch and dinner whenever I called. New activities were arranged for me, but they would not let me walk there but insisted I be wheeled and escorted at all time. The "tour director" was always concerned about how I was enjoying my stay and often had people asking me questions about how I felt and what I wanted. Sometimes it was the same questions, so I don't think they talked to each other too often. I assumed they were using the info to rate the "hotel". Finally after the second night it became apparent that the "resort" had run out of activities and it was time to return home. Kathy picked me up and I thanked her for the lovely, but short vacation. I think I will mention to the travel agent that the activities are not exactly what I would recommend but all turned out well. I have not seen the bill just yet, but I am certain it will be covered by our vacation fund!

Take care, wear a mask and get your shots so we can have a reunion in October!

The hotel is now taking reservations for our event. Call University Plaza Hotel at 417-864-7333. Mention the group code "Ripcord" and reserve a room. You can always cancel if things do not work out for you. We figure the first day will be Wednesday October 6 with the "Get Away" date of Sunday October 10, 2021. Some people book earlier and some stay later. Your call.

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.

- Mike Koskue
In memory of Mike Griffin, HHC 2/506
- Veronica Koenisberg
In memory of Herb Konesniberg HHC 3rd Bde.
- Marsha Stamm
In memory of David Hoglund
- Leigh Freeman C2/506
- Mike Kreutzger D 2/506
- George Scott A2/11 FA
- Robert Wright A2/506
- Patrick Cunningham

Checks payable to "Ripcord Association".

Mail to:
Lee Widjeskog,
493 Stillman Ave.
Bridgeton, NJ 08302



Visit our website at
www.ripcordassociation.com

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

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



Join us on Facebook group
Ripcord Association

Visit our website at
www.ripcordassociation.com

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

ltwidjeskog@aol.com

or

postal mail to:

Lee Widjeskog

493 Stillman Ave
Bridgeton, NJ 08302

Everyone would love to hear from you.

RIPCORD REPORT

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

Ripcord Report

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INCOMING MAIL



Dear Lee,

Linda and I hope this letter finds you and your family healthy and happy. Thanksgiving is just around the corner and that means Christmas is not far behind. As the holidays draw near I am missing my brother (Chuck Hawkins) a little more than usual, especially this year with all the craziness. I wonder sometimes what he would have to say about everything that has happened. He really did love this time of year. The cold and snow did not slow him down a bit. It just meant more time with friends and family, getting together for dinners and jam sessions playing his guitar.

We had a wonderful tribute to Chuck back on 1 Aug. It was well attended and everything that his daughter had hoped for. Another gathering is planned for 7 Aug. 2021 in hopes that more out of state folks can make it. Perhaps you can put it on your calendar. Have a great holiday season and may 2021 treat all of us more gently than 2020.

*God Bless,
Dick and Linda Hawkins*

Hello Lee,

I'm always looking forward to receiving the Ripcord News Letter. I have many good memories of the reunions I attended with my husband, Herb. I can't believe it's 18 years ago already since he passed away. Time flies! My mother always said "The older you get the faster the time goes by!" She was right! Wishing you a great year ahead. To all the Ripcorders: Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year.

*Sincerely,
Victoria Koenigbauer*

Dear Sir;

Here is a donation sent in the memory of David Roy Haglund. He died March 8, 2020. David was a helicopter crew chief on one of the helicopters that evacuated personnel. More than once he expressed he never forgot one person he evacuated. It was imprinted on his memory. Hopefully, somewhere along the line all survivors and or their families will hear their loved one was remembered. He received his ripcord coin from Benjamin Harrison.

It was hard earned. God bless y'all for what you do. Keep up the good work. Thank you so much!

*Best regards,
Marsha Stamm.*



David Haglund on left

Dear Lee & Kathy,

I hope you are both well and getting through this pandemic. Due to chronic asthma, I have been self-isolating. It's hard to believe how long it is taking to get past this and so frustrating that so many people are reckless and not taking it seriously. We've lost two Vietnam vets at our VFW to Covid with other complications. So sad.

I spoke to Ulla Nolan. Her son Erik is now staying with her as she helps care for his fourth stage cancer. Both Keith and her husband Bill died of cancer.

Anna Britt is still in school and doing well enough to maintain her scholarships. Her classes are on-line and she is self-isolating and carrying a full load of classes. She was very sick for one semester last year and was force to attend part-time then. By spring she was back full time.

The Ripcord Associations donations to her trust fund helps assist in her living and schooling expenses.

Take care!

*Love,
Mary Murphy*

Lee,

This was a fantastic report, Thank you. I was with B 1/506 when we went in to help C 1/506 when they were hit on Granite. I was with E Co. before being transfered to B Co. As we were walking out of Granite I saw an NVA laying on the ground with an RPG pointed at the FDC. The FDC Sgt was standing there and I looked up at him and he said "He wanted to get us but I got him first." I said "Stay safe" he said "No, you need to stay safe, watch yourself out there." I kept walking out of the base. Eventually we ended up going into FSB Maureen on April 25 when 4 of my guys were KIA and 4 of us were WIA.

*Thank you,
Michael Bookser*

INCOMING MAIL



Frank,
Thanks Frank. I appreciate being included. Hope all is well.

We've actually been enjoying lock down. I appreciate your covid consciousness. I've been participating in zoom conferences. One involved over 1,000 people and it was surprisingly intimate and satisfying. What would it take to put on a virtual reunion???

Hi to Dee
Kattherine Wilcox



Lee
I hope we are able to hold the reunion this year, but you guys are sensibly holding back on that for the time being. I haven't done any interviews since things shut down here in early March, and don't want to infect any interviewees, especially since most of them are still older than I am.

Whenever we do have it, I will be there, and would like to post something in the report and on Facebook page to encourage people to sign up. I realized over the past couple of years that the time had come for someone to do a serious military history of the Ripcord campaign and incorporating more of the stories of vets who have come forward since Keith Nolan published his book. This will mean both recording new interviews and doing some follow-up with people already interviewed as I attempt to sort things out as best I can. So once you sort out the plans for the next reunion, I'll send you something to put in the report. In the meantime, stay healthy, duck the stray hurricane.

James Smither
GVSU



Hello Sir,
My name is Sandy and I have been an avid amateur Vietnam War historian ever since I was a little boy. I suppose I was and still am extremely proud to have had an uncle who served and listening with fascination to his stories of his time over there. "Although few and far between" but I'm proud he opened up to me more than most!
Anyway can I say what a wonderful website you have! The battle of Ripcord has always been like many other

battles an interest of mine.
I am also an avid battlefield relic collector and was wondering if you may be able to help me?
I would be extremely proud to purchase anything from the battle of ripcord to add to my small collection. Anything as small as a shell fragment/ shrapnel would be cherished.
I know my inquiry may sound a bit silly but I just love to protect history and pass it on so as we will never forget. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Lest we forget
Kindest regards
Sandy Campbell
sandy_jeffery@msn.com



Hello,
My name is Aaron Hooten and my father was Andrew Lark Hooten. My late father always told me about Ripcord, before and especially after my own deployment over seas. He originally was a red eye gunner and was in the 101st in '70. I realize the chances are slim but I was hoping to find anyone that might've known him or even had pictures with him. Dad fondly spoke about a guy named "odd job" out out Las Vegas. I appreciate y'all.
Respectfully,
Aaron Hooten.
ahooten1313@gmail.com



Ripcord Association Membership

- 689 members in our Ripcord Association
- 574 are Ripcord Veterans
- 115 are Associate Members
- 145 receive newsletter via Postal Mail
- 544 receive the newsletter via e-mail
- 936 on Facebook "Ripcord Association Group"

April 1970 Events of FSB Ricord

1 April

- The weather finally co-operated and 2/506 started their second attempt to establish FSB Ripcord.
- By 1030 hours Bravo 2/506 had units on the Ripcord LZ and immediately started receiving mortar fire and getting their first WIA. The mortar fire came from Hill 805. Regardless, the rest of Bravo Company and the forward TOC, landed and three more were wounded. The medevac chopper was hit and had to shut down. Air strikes and ARA were used in the area to reduce the mortar fire. Bravo received additional mortar fire at 1645 killing Sgt. Ratcliff as he positioned his men. Three others were wounded. Whenever a helicopter came in, the mortar fire followed it. At 1800 three more men were wounded.
- With Bravo was Major Law (Battalion Executive Officer), a forward observer team, Lt. Darling, the commo platoon leader, Engineers, pathfinders and other forward TOC personnel. They were hit with mortars sending Law to the hospital and killing the FO Lt. Wall, his RTO James Miller, Milton Swain of B 236 Eng., and pathfinder Donald Ragsdale. Lt. Darling took command of the TOC and directed the incoming traffic and medevacs during the battle.
- Alpha Company 2/506 was inserted between Ripcord and Hill 805. They too, received mortar fire and had one wounded
- 1100, Delta 2/506 Landed two clicks north of Hill 805 and proceeded to move towards Hill 805 and the mortars.
- Around 1500, Recon 2/506 landed on Ripcord and was quickly met with mortar fire over the fire base. Two men died (Don Heimark and Carl Barnett) and 10 more were wounded.
- Charlie 2/506 was located on FSB Gladiator providing security for B 2/319 Field Artillery as they provided artillery support for the Ripcord assault.
- Elsewhere, Alpha 1/506 was securing FSB Rakkasan while sister units Bravo, Charlie and Delta 1/506 patrolled the hills north of the Rao Trang river, not far from FSB Maureen. They spotted NVA but in small groups and scattered. None were killed.
- The 2/501, using Delta Company, secured FSB Jack and patrolled around Camp Evans and Rocket Ridge. No contact was made.
- The supporting artillery units were listed as

Alpha 2/319 at Rakkason,
B 2/319 at Gladiator,
C 2/319 and A 1/39 at Evans,
A 2/11 at Jack
B 1/39 at Barbara
C-34 was on FSB O'Reilly.



Heimark



Ratcliff



Wall



Miller



Swain



Ragsdale



Barnett

2 April

- The day started out with bad weather for helicopters.
- At 1650, Recon 2/506 moved to retrieve two bodies killed yesterday. They received RPG rounds and had two men wounded. Later they received mortar fire but no injuries.
- Gladiator is secured by Charlie 2/506 and has a mortar section on it. With the artillery and other units 192 men are on the fire base.
- Alpha, Bravo and Delta 2/506 continued to patrol around the Ripcord hill.
- Charlie 1/506 used an ambush to kill one NVA but had 4 WIA as a result. Later a second NVA was killed. The medevac took fire as they left, but no hits.
- The other units for 1/506 continued to patrol without incident north of the Rao Trang. The 2/501 continued to work the area near FSB Jack and Camp Evans. No contact.

3 April

- Dense cloud cover once more kept resupply from happening to those on Ripcord. The air force will

try to parachute supplies today.

- The 2/506 TOC has moved to FSB Gladiator.
- 1000: 4/1 Regiment, ARVN at 289198, hit three NVA with small arms. One ARVN KIA and three WIA. 25,000 pounds of rice captured.
- 1120: At 343194, Recon Platoon 2/506 moved back to the yesterday position to search for a lost code book. They were fired upon by NVA with small arms and RPG. This resulted in the death of Lt. John Wilson and 3 WIA. After more shooting, there were 3 NVA KIA.
- 1220: at 351202, Delta 2/506 discovered bunkers and equipment for an observation unit. It had been hit by artillery and skeletal remains of one was found. The results were destroyed.
- Bravo 2/506 sent coordinates to the air force for a re-supply drop. They also found two un-usable SKS rifles.
- 1305: Recon moved towards Alpha 2/506 to get a medevac. Continual low clouds prevented the helicopters from getting to them till the next day.
- 1430: The air resupply did not work so Bravo 2/506 is moving to Delta 2/506 to get food.
- A 1/506 secured FSB Rakkasan. B, C & D continue patrolling without contact. 2/501 continues around Camp Evans.
- Artillery Units were as listed:
A2/319 FSB Rakkasan,
B2/319 FSB Gladiator
B1/39 FSB Nancy,
A 2/11 FSB Jack
& FSB Gladiator
A 2/94 FSB Barbara
C/34 FSB O'Reilly



Wilson

April 4

- Cloud cover a problem below 1000 feet restricting helicopter assistance.
- 0630: A break in cloud cover allowed a medivac for Recon and a resupply for Alpha 2/506. Past KIA bodies were removed.
- 1320: Delta 2/506 received an air force supply drop. It was not found.
- 1/506 units worked their AO. Charlie 1/506 found a 20 foot tunnel and destroyed the same at 486160.
- 2035: at 453158, Delta 1/506 received small arms fire and grenades. Three men WIA.
- 2/501 units secured the area around Jack and Evans. Artillery unit locations unchanged.

April 5

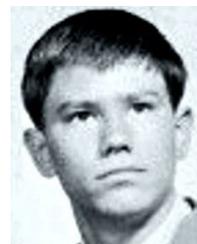
- 0735: Alpha 2/506 at 349194, received mortar fire. No injuries.
- 0935: 2/17 Cav landed on Ripcord. They soon received mortar fire leaving two men wounded.
- 1149: Downed helicopter from 1 April has been extracted.
- 1150: Engineers and Recon lifted from Ripcord and taken to FSB Gladiator.
Alpha 1/506 secured FSB Rakkasan,
Bravo went to Eagle Beach, Charlie was at 479148,
Delta at 445158, Recon at 441152.
All are near the Rao Trang.
2/501 units secured the FSB Jack and Evans area.
2/501 was op-con to the 2/506 and secured FSB Gladiator.
- Artillery did not move.

April 6

- 1250: at 343192, 3Charlie 2/506 received small arms fire, mortar and RPG fire. This lasted until they broke contact at 1415. PFC Larry Christman and SP4 Carl Goodson were KIA when their squad was hit with a RPG and 8 others were WIA.
- LZ cutting teams worked with Bravo 2/506 at 350201 completed a one ship LZ.
- 1845: at 339191 1&3 Charlie 2/506 received a ground assault of small arms, M-79, and RPG. Results were four WIA and Sgt Steve Stewart killed.
- The other 2/506 units continued to patrol without contact.
- Meanwhile, 7 clicks southeast of FSB Granite (482148), 1Charlie 1/506 engaged two NVA killing one while Doug Moniaci is WIA.
- Delta 1/506 is at 445-153,
Recon at 444-153
A is securing FSB Rakkasan & Granite.
B 1/506 enjoys Eagle Beach.
2/501 continues to patrol about Camp Evans and FSB Jack.
- Artillery is unmoved.



Goodson



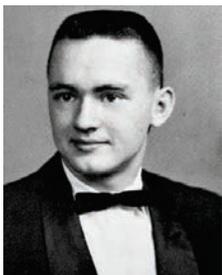
Stewart



Christman

April 7

- 0055: at 445-158, 3Delta 1/506 received satchel charges and RPG fire. This resulted in US casualties of 1 KIA (Sgt. Paul Frink) and 26 WIA. One of the WIA (Lt. Jerry L. Smith) died of his wounds on 25 May.
- 0930: at 358192, 2&3 D2/506 shot and killed a NVA who threw a grenade at them. He was found to be a squad leader of a 7 man unit. No injuries for Delta however, a medevac was called later and a man flown to the 85th Evac. Hospital.
- 2/506 units continued to patrol around the Ripcord site. 1/506 continued their patrolling along the Rao Trang and south of FSB Rakkasan with Bravo near and at FSB Granite. C 2/501 maintained security on FSB Gladiator while the rest of the 2/501 worked Rocket Ridge and FSB Jack.
- Artillery was unmoved.



Smith



Frink

April 8

- 1400: at 368163, Bravo 2/501 engaged and killed one NVA near what was to be known as "Re-Up Hill".
- 1533: at 350187 Delta 2/506 was fired on by a Pink Team. Fourteen men were WIA and Lynn Osborn was killed.
- 2107: at FSB Gladiator, C 2/501, using a starlight scope, spotted an NVA sniper. Small arms and fougasse were employed and the man was apparently wounded as he fled.
- 2/506 patrolled the same area near Ripcord as yesterday while C2/501 secured FSB Gladiator. 1/506 continued as the past day around FSB Rakkasan and FSB Granite seeking NVA. 2/501 has been attached to the Ripcord area and is now located south of Ripcord on the ridge running up to Hill 902 from the Rao Trang.
- The artillery units are unmoved.

April 9

- 0655: at 372163, 1Bravo 2/501 was ambushed by an enemy force. The fight that ensued left two NVA dead, three US KIA and 6 WIA. The dead included Sgt. James Mace, PFC Charles Selman and new guy PFC Leroy Nelson. Six others were WIA. Thomas Gates was paralyzed and died of the wounds in 1986.
- 1033: at 332174, 1Delta 2/501, near Hill 902 engaged the NVA and killed one.
- 1055: at 372164, 1 Bravo 2/501 was hit by small arms fire. PFC Allen Clay, who spotted the NVA and alerted his squad, killed one as he was also killed. Overall two NVA were killed.
- 1230: at 366165, 3Bravo 2/501 hit a booby trap wounding one GI.
- 1355: at 354192, Alpha 2/506 reported a WIA from shrapnel from an air strike 1,000 meters away. Medevac was requested.
- B 2/506 cut a LZ at 349189.
- 1625: at 332174, 1 Delta 2/501 was engaged by NVA using small arms, grenades, claymores, mortars and RPG. They wounded 13 GIs.
- ARVN units continue to work the west and north of Triple Hill, above FSB Ripcord. 1/506 secured FSB Rakkasan and Granite. Their units patrolled south of Granite. C2/501 secured Gladiator.
- Artillery unmoved.



Osborn



Nelson



Gates



Selman



Clay



Mace

RIPCORN REUNION **2021** SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI

[] I have not received a Ripcord Coin.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ UNIT IN 'NAM _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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

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 1 2021, \$75 per adult

June 1 through July 9, 2021 \$80 per adult,

July 10 through August 20, 2021 \$85 per adult.

After August 20, 2021 \$90 per adult.

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

This form and fee, due no later than Sept. 25, 2021.

Make your check payable to "RIPCORN 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 2021. (After call 609-774-6951)

BASIC AGENDA

Wednesday, Oct 6: Hospitality suite opens at 1200 hours. (Self guided tours and shopping)

Thursday, Oct 7: Hospitality suite opens at 1200 hours. (Golf in the AM) (Self guided tours)

Friday, Oct 8: Hospitality 1200 Hours. Hot hors doers 1730 hours

Saturday, Oct 9: Business meeting for association business in Hospitality room (1100 hrs)

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

Sunday, Oct 10 Homeward bound

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

**HOTEL RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE SEPERATELY
BY SEPTEMBER 3, 2021**

CALL 417-864-7333 for Univ. Plaza Hotel

Ask for HOTEL RESERVATIONS and mention the

GROUP CODE: RIPCORN

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