



RIPCORD REPORT



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

Issue # 122

May 2020

Corona virus strikes Ripcord Reunion

After heavy thought and discussion with the board of directors and members of the Association, it was decided to cancel the 2020 reunion of survivors of the Battle for FSB Ripcord.

As you all know the people most susceptible to the disease are those in the age brackets over 65 years old. It is also hard on those who smoke, have diabetes, heart problems and lung issues. Obviously that puts all our members in the high risk area and some more so than others. With that as the background we decided to cancel for 2020.

All members who have paid for their Ripcord Registrations for 2020 will be credited with a paid-up registration for 2021.

However, if you would prefer a refund please contact me at:

ltwidjeskog@aol.com

Lee Widjeskog

493 Stillman Ave.

Bridgeton, NJ 08302

Or call at 856-451-1108.



The Association is quite solvent and returning the money will not be an issue.

As of this writing it appears there may be a vaccine available by March 2021 and maybe earlier. It will take time to get it administered but all our members should have an opportunity to use it before our 2021 reunion.

Next year I will send out registration forms to all who are paid in advance and have them returned so I can keep track.

2021 Reunion

We have previously contracted with the University Plaza Hotel to hold a reunion in October 2021. We have booked the time period of 4 to 9 October 2021. The hospitality room will open on Wednesday 6 October, golf on 7 October, hot food on 8 October and the banquet on 9 October with Sunday 10 October the "Get away day".

It is not possible to book a room at this time. Once the University Plaza Hotel is open for business, I will put the word out via E-mail, our web site and Facebook. In the meantime "Chill !!"

Canceled
2020 Ripcord Reunion
Springfield, Missouri

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.

Leigh Freeman C 2/506

Harold Gaither Assoc. Member

George Strasburg D 2/506

Murphy Majoria Assoc. Member

John Nicoson 3rd BDE Recon

Dave Snyder A 2/11 FA

Fred Spaulding HHC 3rd BDE

Fred Shuttleworth E 2/506

Marc Aronson B 2/319 FA

Joe O. Smith 326 ENG & D 2/506

Checks payable to "Ripcord Association".

Mail to:

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

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.



Visit our website at
www.ripcordassociation.com

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

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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FSB RIPCORD DIORAMA

by Craig Van Hout

On February 29, 2020 the FSB Ripcord Diorama was moved from a workshop in beautiful, suburban Winnsboro, SC to the South Carolina Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum (SCCRRMM) in downtown Columbia, SC. The diorama was constructed in two pieces due to the sheer size of the model. The base portion was loaded on a trailer the evening of February 28 for transport early the next morning. The base had to be turned on its side in order to fit through the doors of the museum. After the base was put in place the crew returned to Winnsboro to load and transport the top portion of the mountain.

Several members of the RIPCORD Wildcats modeling club put the finishing touches on the diorama and turned it over to the SCCRRMM on March 8.

An unveiling of the diorama program was scheduled for Mar 28. However, COVID-19 entered our lives and the program was cancelled. The museum is closed until the current crisis passes. At this time it is unknown when the museum will reopen and if there will be an unveiling program at a future date.

Numerous photos of the diorama are available for viewing on the Ripcord Association Facebook page.



Ripcord on Facebook

by Anthony Chritchlow



www.facebook.com/groups/ripcordassociation

Welcome to spring 2020! Our face book page is doing well. We are up to 895 members. All is well on our page. I am still getting requests to join. These are mostly family members of our Ripcord vets. So, if you have any family members that say they tried to join the page but did not get accepted. Here is what might have happened. I have a question that must be answered to join. It's simple. Why do you want to join our page? If it is not answered I just delete the request. I also get a lot of yes to that question, which get the request deleted. Now the exception to answering the question is if a member suggests a person to join. They get in with a member's request.

I bet I am with the rest of you out there, I am bummed that this year's reunion has been canceled. Had to be done to keep us safe. I spend a fair amount of time figuring out my route and hotels to stay in. We also were going to visit the wife's sister in Minnesota. The good news is I have everything planned for 2021 now. Everyone please be safe. I will see you next year.

Ripcord Rings

Tony Little reports that if anyone is interested in buying a commemorative FSB Ripcord Ring they may do so by calling: 931-359-8199 any time after 29 April 2020. Anyone who answers the phone will be able to help you. Just refer to the "Ripcord Ring". It is available in gold or sterling silver. "You can request the ring "antiqued", which adds a black high light to the background to make the writing, numbers and symbols stand out better." The sterling silver goes for about \$300, 10k yellow gold for \$1,000 and 14k yellow gold for \$1600. Those prices may fluctuate due to the price of precious metals but you can find out when you call.

If you have any questions feel free to call the jewelers or Tony Little. His number is 615-310-9024.

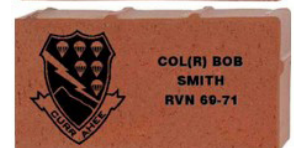


Currahee Memorial Brick Paver Project

Honor the memory of your buddies with a laser etched paver that will last forever. Pavers are installed at the Currahee Memorial on Fort Campbell and will be maintained by the 506th Infantry Regiment Association.

To order a paver go to:

www.thatsmybrick.com/506airborne



INCOMING MAIL



Dear Mr. Widjeskog

Some time back you and I talked on the phone about my brother Francis E. Maune. I gave you some information about him. Over the holidays I got together with my family and we got some pictures together for you. We hope it is not too late to receive them for your book.



We also agreed that he was a fun loving person, he liked to dance, and he liked to dance waltzes. He enjoyed going to Saturday night dances at familiar and local dance spots near his home town. Francis also liked to bowl on Sunday afternoon at the local lanes. Cruising through town in his car, attending church picnics, fishing and playing horseshoes at family outings were other things he enjoyed. He enjoyed both rock and country music.

He finished his grade school years at St. Francis Borgain but only went to Washington High School for two years before quitting and taking a job at Deb's Shoe Company in Washington until leaving for the United States Army. His life was cut short before he really got started. He has been deeply missed by his family, Mom, Dad, three brothers and three sisters.

At the present time there are only myself, a younger brother and younger sister left. He is still greatly missed
Maurice Maune

Washington, Missouri

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Lee,

Talking to you last week was a "Blast." It's been "40" years. I am looking forward to seeing you again. My wife and I are starting to plan the trip to the reunion in July. We are very excited about it.

Enclosed you will find my book "Weapons of War." Doc Draper use to always get on me for writing my fiancée back home all the time. He sometimes called me a love-sick fool. You know Doc, if he had something to say he'd say it. Man, at times when I think about him, I really do miss him. We use to always talk about hanging out together when we got out and returned home. I know he would get kick out of reading my book. The substance of the book is a compilation of all

those letters he hassled me about. If you can take some time and read it. It will bring back a lot of memories, Including Eagle Beach (LOL). Talk to you soon.

Bob Wright

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Lee,

I know that with the Coronavirus that's sweeping the country, there will be tough decisions to be made in regard to our reunion. I will be tracking my email and the Association website for updates as they become available. Regardless, I am enclosing a check for my wife and me to attend with the assumption that, if necessary, the reunion will be pushed back to a later date. Since all of our Ripcord veterans are on the cusp of reaching the age of 70 or beyond, we are in the most vulnerable age group for contracting the virus. As safety is the chief concern, I don't believe that anyone would object to a postponement.

I don't envy you the task of handling the situation but I certainly support whatever you and the Board members decide.

Wishing you and Kathy safe passage through these troubling times.

Warm regards

Fred Shuttleworth

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Howdy Lee

Getting ready for the big reunion. Can't believe it has been 50 years. It really does not seem that long ago to me. While visiting my grandson, who is in the Army at Ft. Bliss, I happened to go to the PX. They had a vendor showing and selling military art work by an artist named James Dietz. I now know that he is a well-known artist. One of the painting is a depiction of the 101st showing WW II soldiers in the back of a marching formation with C 47s and parachutes and then VN soldiers with Hueys and Chinooks and then to more modern 101st soldiers with more modern helicopters. At the bottom of the painting is printed "Stands Alone, Together, Forever" and then the Black Spade with the 506 Crest.

This was enticing to me with the thought it would be an excellent display at the reunion. You can see a better picture on the internet, James Dietz and then Stands Alone will take you there

Currahee

Walt Lyssy

Remembering Steve Stanley

Steve Stanley and I hit it off right from the start. More like myself then most. He gave me the handle of Wild Jacob and I gave him Wild Henry. We came in about the same time as Bob Radcliff and Bob Tarbuck. Big Alabama boy who took his training seriously and wanted to fight. Not everybody was born and groomed to be a Warrior but this guy had it. Same as most guys in Charlie Co. only son. We talked about everything. Training, what was coming, being part of an elite Unit. We all listened to the old guys. Knew that was important. Collage guy. Janice was his future wife. Wanted kids. Lots of kids. Deep thinker just like myself. Interested in starting his own Business just like I already done before The Nam. He got a kick out of the fact I was a country boy, deer hunter, muscle car guy, liked horses, and most humorist, rode a Harley. We teamed up every time we had a chance to get into a good card game. We both made a lot of money in those card games. Sent it all home. Everyone else was doing hard telling what. We were playing cards.

Steve and I made plans after we got out to open a Business back in my home town of Janesville, Wisconsin. A Night Club. Live entertainment. JAKE and HENRY'S. I would continue to work at the Auto Plant, run my Horse Business, and help Grandpa on the Farm. Janice and Steve would run the Club. Told his Parents all about us, so they knew me well.

Steve made SOLDIER OF THE MONTH. Got to go back into the rear for a while. Came back with some great stories about him and our sniper ironically named Plunk. Steve was a hoot. One of many. Laughs abound. March 16, 1970. We went over to another hill top where we were hit from the night before. Set up an ambush. RT was the Gun, I was AG. Set up ready to go and sure enough there he was. Split second before I took him out he got one shot off before he gave his life for his Country. That one shot tore by my head on the right side. It was only after a fire fight did RT and I learned Steve was right behind me and was killed instantly. Mistakes cost lives. The reason I say that now is because some guys never understand their BATTLE FATIGUE. Split seconds. I told myself that would never happen again. You learn early to fight with a Vengeance. Everybody felt the sting. The next day LT Wallace told me to saddle



up. Spade was coming out to get me. At the request of Fred and Kathryn Stanley I was to escort Steve's body home. I worried about leaving the guys, but I knew why Steve's mom and dad wanted me there. They needed to know. Tough as it was I did it with all the Honor and Respect Deserved. Steve has a Great family. I stayed at his house, slept in his bed. Sat at his place at the table, met his whole family, and all his friend's. Including his sweetheart Janice. Went to all his favorite places. Then we laid him to rest. After the Ceremony Steve's parents and I had a vely long and heartfelt talk .They lifted a great weight off my shoulders that I still use today to inspire me to live my life to the fullest and never let them forget his name. I keep my word.

I was set to go back to The Nam and Fred and Kathryn said not before I go home and see my family. They handed me a two way ticket home. I look back and know that was really the best thing that could of happened to me under those circumstances. I wondered about my guys if they were alright but I honored their wishes. As a result I now have a wonderful daughter. Something good turned out of something bad.

We lost a lot of good men in that War. Today for me they inspire me daily. They are a part of who we are. If you have the opportunity and courage to do something Great. Years down the road you will be remembered for being part of something really great.

Stephen Manthei

C 2/506



Hi Lee,

I remember Steve Stanley very well, with his Alabama accent, tall, dark hair, always making the time, joking and playing cards.

On 15 March 1970, our platoon got hit in the evening. I was wounded while putting out my claymore mine. They couldn't get us wounded out until the next day.

On the 16th, the platoon leader wanted a recon to check out the trail where the RPGs came from the night before. Due to my head wound, I couldn't go with the squad. Soon after the squad took off there was a fire fight. When they returned to our night defensive position, I learned Stanley had been killed.

Later the medevac came in to pick up me, a "Shake and Bake" Sergeant with an arm wound and the body of SP4 Stanley which was rolled up in a poncho.

Terry Unger

C 2/506

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Remembering Bob Radcliff C/2-506

Met Bob in Basic Training at Fort Campbell, KY, March of 1969. Hit it off from the start. We had a group of guys much like ourselves we hung around with when we could. Bob was very much like myself. Man of Faith, Family and Country. Knew what



he was getting into. Took his training seriously. Was good at everything. Was in shape when he got there just like some of us. We actually enjoyed most of the training. Always gave it our all. Understanding Survival cannot be bought.

Came from what I would call a normal American family at that time. Talked a lot about growing up and his family. His girlfriend. His Muscle car. His job waiting for him. His plans for his life together with his soul mate and business partner. Wanted two kids, a boy and a girl. Had a great sense of humor. Used it often. We all did. Had to get it from those in his family who already been there and done what we

were about to do. We all believed it would give us an edge.

We went on to our next duty station Fort Polk, La. Bob remained health through Basic. I was not so lucky. Knee injury kept me on Profile for a good part of training. No running for me. Got to ride. Bob was always supportive and we joked often about everything. We both never left Base. Just hung out, called home and ate every Chocolate Eclair's we could find.

Best time we had was on Escape and Evasion, and Survival Training. Made it back undetected and ate fresh hog. Tough guy among tough guys.

Graduated and we went home for 30 days.

Sure enough we both ended up in Washington. Sent to The Nam Jungle Training and off to Co C 2/506, 101st Airborne Div. We were very glad to be in an elite Unit like that where we knew the guys were top of the line. If you're going to fight a War .You wanted to fight alongside the best.

We were cherries along with Bob Tarbuck and Steve Stanley. We knew we had to prove ourselves and listened to the old guys who had been there and were seasoned. The likes of Sgt. White, Doug Taylor, Bob Quinn and others.

27 days in we lost our cherries. Now we were part of a team second to none. That's the way we looked at it. We had each other's back. That was a life style for us. We were determined to make the best of it. Through Hell and high water we pushed on. The four of us kind of bonded. Although we bonded with all are guys.

Bob's handle was BUTCH, Bob Tarbuck was RT, Steve Stanley's was Wild Henry, and mine was Wild Jacob.

We really had some Great times together with Charlie Co. Wow what a fun loving crazy bunch. We had this saying. "Yea though I walk through the valley of death, I fear no evil, for I'm the evilest son of a bitch in the valley". That was instilled in us by great Leadership for the most part. Understanding there were where many leaders among the ranks. Hale and Vazquez were inspiring. We became Hard as Nails. Ready for the fight that we knew was coming.

Hill 902, July 2 1970. We lost a lot of good men on that hill. Including Butch .The one thing we all know he went down fighting. Hard as it is to imagine .We all fought with a vengeance. We held the line Brother. RIP.

Stephen Manthei

C 2/506

JERSEY RAMBLINGS

by Lee Widjeskog A/2-506



Well, this is not what I expected to be doing in April 2020. I did figure on doing a newsletter, but I thought I would be in the midst of preparing for the reunion. As we are all aware, the advent of the spread of Covid-19 has altered plans for most of the United States if not the world.

We felt it was necessary to cancel the 50 years anniversary of the battle of Ripcord in order to protect the members of the FSB Ripcord Association. Gathering three or four hundred people in a relatively closed area for four days would have been a great way to spread the virus and rid the nation of a batch of veterans and their spouses. We decided that was not desirable.

So we are all staying home and avoiding unnecessary contact as the virus progresses through the country. Those in rural areas will have less chance of encountering the virus, but sooner or later you must interact with others. Your best bet is to limit the interaction and stay home as we wait for a vaccine to be developed. If all works out well, we will have had an opportunity to get the vaccine before our next reunion in October 2021. That reunion, will also be held in Springfield, Missouri but during the first week of October. This date was agreed upon back in 2019 and should give us all a little breathing room from the effects of the pandemic.

The diorama dedication has been cancelled for the time being due to the viral concerns. It is on display at the museum in Columbia, South Carolina when the museum re-opens to the public. The dedication ceremony may take place this Fall but at this time nothing is certain.

The booklet concerning those who died during the Ripcord operation is moving along. Frank Marshall has done a lay out and adjusted the photos. Bill Heath and his wife, Linda have taken the time to check the grammar and punctuation. I continue to attempt to fine tune the writing as we close in on a printing date. It was to be ready for the 2020 reunion but now may be slightly delayed. But no matter, it will be done. I plan to send copies out to those who have requested it as well as family members of those who died. It will be available to all who attend the next reunion.



Ripcord Association Membership

687 members in our Ripcord Association

570 are Ripcord Veterans

117 are Associate Members

140 receive newsletter via Postal Mail

547 receive the newsletter via e-mail

895 on Facebook "Ripcord Association Group"

New Members

Allen	Anderson	B/2-319 Arty
Joe	Bozec	A/2-506
Joseph	Catalfamo	D/1-506
Donald	Cook	D/1-506
James	Crawford	HHC/2-506 Medic
William	Elkin	A/2-11 Arty
Kenneth	Fitz	159th
Edward	Harris	Associate Member
Ray	Huhn	A/2-506
John	Johnson	A/1-506
Joseph	Keller	D/158 ASHB
Mayo	Roe	A/2-506
Timothy	Runyard	D/1-506
Jim	Stephens	2/506
Jerry	Watson	159 ASHB
Tom	Wenman	Associate Member
Larry	Wirt	A/2-506

Membership in our Ripcord Association is FREE!
Everyone is welcome to join.

<https://www.ripcordassociation.com/membership-form/>

If your contact information has changed, please go to our website and update your membership to keep getting important information about our Ripcord Association