



RIPCORD REPORT



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

Issue # 132

February 2023

Ripcord Association Update *by Pete Meloro*



Last October we held our reunion in Springfield, Missouri. After having to cancel our last two reunions due to the Covid 19 epidemic. We were all relieved that we could actually go forward with the reunion. This reunion was different in one very significant way and that is the fact that Lee and Kathy were not there. We persevered and we all know that they were with us in spirit. One cannot reminisce about our reunions without thinking about the two individuals who dedicated so much of their time and energy to our Association. Just before Christmas, Chris and I visited Kathy and she was her usual gracious self. While sitting and chatting in her living room, I could not help but notice that the TV was on and she had been watching an NFL football game. As it turns out and much to my surprise, she is an avid football fan and a big Philadelphia Eagle supporter. I told her that is where we would agree to differ since I am a fan of the New York Giants and Chris is a fan of the New York Jets; a true house divided. We did discuss the possibility of Kathy attending future reunions and she did not rule that out. We gave Kathy a flash drive of the testimonials from our dinner. Paul Buhr did a great job of filming the testimonials and transferring them to a flash drive. Kathy stated that she would be spending the holidays in Massachusetts with her daughter and son.

Approximately 175 people attended our reunion with fifteen new attendees receiving their Ripcord Challenge Coin. I must personally thank all those who stepped up and volunteered their time and energy throughout the reunion. We actually had to decline several offers to help us due to the fact

that we had so many people volunteer. We did introduce some changes at this reunion. We had what is best described as a fire sale for our shirts, hats, maps etc. It will be easier to continue our reunions in the future without transporting the many boxes of merchandise we have. We continue to have some items which will be available at our next reunion but we will not be adding to our inventory. We also did not have our usual Ladies Auction which was Lee's intent for our 50th Anniversary. At our Business Meeting John Fowler was elected to our Board and Frank Marshall and myself were reelected to the Board as well. We were all elected to three-year terms.

We have finalized plans for the 2023 Reunion and we will return to Springfield, Missouri and the University Plaza Hotel. The hotel has been under new ownership and management and I would agree that they did not fully have everything under control. All things considered, they did enough to warrant our return in October 2023. Our reunions in 2024 & 2025 will return to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. However, we have selected a Hilton Hotel. This should be an upgrade from where we have historically held our events.

I hope everyone had a Healthy and Happy Holiday Season and look forward to seeing everyone at our next reunion.

2023 Ripcord Reunion
October 8th - 12th, 2023
University Plaza Hotel,
Springfield, MO.

Fire Support Base Ripcord Symposium

South Vietnam, 1970



Saturday- April 29, 2023

Second Annual symposium

SC Confederate Relic Room and

Military Museum

301 Gervais Street

Columbia, South Carolina

In the spring and summer of 1970, the 101st ABN was engaged in a savage campaign with NVA forces on the eastern edge of the A Shau Valley. FSB Ripcord was established on a mountain with the plan to interdict NVA supplies and troops into South Vietnam. The base came under a month-long barrage of enemy mortar and automatic weapons in July until it was evacuated on 23 July. There were more than 143 KIA and several hundred WIA, but the American public did not hear this story because of a media blackout.

Meet Ripcord veterans, the historian of Ripcord, and learn how the Wildcat chapter of the Armor Modeling and Preservation Society designed and built a detailed model of Ripcord.

11 AM: Researching and building a diorama of FSB Ripcord, 2018-2020:

Members of the building team discuss the research and the some of the construction details

1 PM: Prof. James Smithers: Will examine the history of Ripcord and through his 100 interviews with Ripcord veterans will review the battle and its significance

3 PM FSB Ripcord: what it was like and how I survived: veterans will tell their story of the roles they played at Ripcord and life afterwards

Prof. James Smithers, an oral historian at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, MI., has spent more than a decade compiling oral histories with more than 100 Ripcord veterans for a forthcoming book on the months-long battle

Through the day living history members will display uniforms, equipment and weapons of the Vietnam era in the glass atrium outside the museum's entrance.

Ripcord on Facebook

by Anthony Critchlow



Happy New Year everyone. I hope you entered the new year in good health.

We now have 1207 members on our Face book page. Thank you for all the posts we had last year. I look forward to all the new ones this year.

Dennise and I have a great time at the reunion in Springfield. We look forward to the next one. Keep posting your pictures from Vietnam and our reunions.

Join our Facebook group:



Ripcord Association

Hosted by

Anthony Critchlow

1,207 current members

**Everyone is WELCOME
to join our Association:**

www.ripcordassociation.com

MEMBERSHIP IS FREE !

For our membership request form,
download at:

www.ripcordassociation.com/membership-form

695 members in our Ripcord Association

584 are Ripcord Veterans

110 are Associate Members

150 receive newsletter via Postal Mail

546 receive the newsletter via e-mail

1,206 on Facebook "Ripcord Association Group"

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

Ripcord Book Project and Interviews

Jim Smither

GVSU Veterans History Project

If you would like to be interviewed by Jim Smithers, the best way to contact him will be by email at: smitherj@gvsu.edu. You can also leave him a voice mail message on his office phone, (616) 331-3422.

TO ALL MEMBERS

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

newsletter@ripcordassociation.com or

postal mail to:

Frank Marshall

567 Circle Drive

Surfside Beach, SC 29575

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

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.

INCOMING MAIL

To All the Wonderful Friends Who Helped at the Ripcord Reunion

We could not be more grateful for the many ways in which so many of the Ripcord family helped make the recent Reunion such a special and successful event!

From the consistent help with staffing the welcome desk to setting out the items for sale and helping to make the sales, and then working on the dinner in so many important and meaningful ways, we are humbled by the extreme demonstration of teamwork and support.

And seeing everyone be so welcoming and enthusiastic about new attendees was heartwarming although not unexpected!

We are one family - The Ripcord Family - and we always have each other's "6"!

*Thank you most sincerely,
Chris, Michelle and Debbie
Christine Nevin Meloro
Michelle McCoy
Debbie Fowler*

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2022 Ripcord Reunion comments from members:

It is always good to see everyone once again at the reunions. We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from sunny Wyoming. (-30 degrees) We are looking forward to 23 reunion and hope to see everyone there.

Thanks to Frank and all the officers for the work done to put on the event.

Lin Bashford D/2506

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The reunion this year was absolutely wonderful. It was my first and I will tell you that I had a lot of anxiety going there but it was well worth it. Everyone extended a great deal of hospitality. Most of all it was a very joyful experience for me as this is the first time for me visiting with guys that served around Camp Evans, Ripcord and the A Shau Valley in 52 years!

Peace and good will to all.

Bob & Cindy Jones HHC 2/506

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Joe and I had tried to make it to the Reunion before this year. We finally made it this October.

Since I am a widow of a soldier that died in Viet Nam, I never got to know the other soldiers that my husband served with before the reunion. When we arrived, we really had no idea what to expect. But the immediate and warm welcome we received put us at ease. And we are grateful to feel accepted in the group.

We will treasure the time we had together at the reunion. Hearing people share their story was very helpful to us. At the end of this gathering, I felt at peace.

Diane (and Joe) McCarville

(Diane is the widow of Capt Hewitt C/2-506)



Chris Straub and Diane McCarville

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Mary and I thank all who attended for your warm welcome to this, my first Ripcord Reunion. I was glad to meet not only Currahees, but also some of the aviators and Redlegs to whom I and many others owe their lives.

The Association has done an amazing job documenting and spreading the word about the battle and all the sacrifices entailed, and that's in full view at the Reunion. Most of all, we got to know some of those who were with us, over us, near us in the battle (Just needed a USMC A-6 pilot to make it complete).

I am most grateful for my Ripcord coin, and for the being permitted to present Ripcord coins to the (many!) other first-timers.

Mary and I look forward very much to the 2023 Reunion,

Chris Straub D Co 2-501 Inf

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To our Ripcord family,

Nothing ever stays the same. At our age we are all well aware.

This year's reunion there were more noticeable changes and as usual our Ripcord family stepped up to the plate and made it happen and look smooth. Future reunions are in good hands.

Many have volunteered over the years and that hasn't changed. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone that has helped us over the years. We could not have done what we did without the help we got from our Ripcord family.

Bob & I appreciate the recognition for our part and the plaque presented at the banquet has a place of honor on the Ripcord bookcase in his office.

A special thank you to Paul Hansmann for the beautiful box you made for Bob with the CIB emblem. Spot on for the wooden box and the emblem.

Until we meet again,

Currahee

Bob & Red Judd



Bob and Red Judd, Frank Marshall

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The 2022 reunion was both happy and bittersweet. I really enjoyed visiting with everyone after a two-year hiatus due to Covid. The bittersweet part was that some have passed since we last got together I.e., MG Ben, Lee and my good friend Leonard Moore. It was a joy to hear Jim Campbell pay tribute to Leonard (and his toothpick). For those who have stepped up to fill leadership vacancies; thank you and job well done.

Respectfully,

Troy R Porter, MSG (ret)

C/2/506 & 3rd Bde Air Cav (Recon)

I want to thank you and the rest of the Ripcord reunion heroes for being able to attend this very special reunion. You and the rest of the directors put on the most impressive reunion I have ever attended and hope I will be able to attend many more. When Brian Pautz was driving back to Minnesota, he even talked about how great it was. And being presented with the Ripcord coin was a very special honor to be included with the heroes of Firebase Ripcord.

Praying you and your family and the rest of the Ripcord family stay safe and healthy until we meet again.

Dan Brockmiller A/159 ASHB



Chris Straub and Dan Brockmiller

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It was great working with such wonderful people! It was a great success. Never heard a negative rumble!
Jim McCoy D/1-506

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Had a very good trip at the reunion touching base from all the people that were there, Lea even played the harp which we were glad to do.

Glad to talk to all out Ripcord team.

God Bless till we meet again ...

Martin Glennon A/2-506 Medic

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Hope Everyone had Great Holidays and hope to see everyone at Reunion this year

Bill Boles President Ripcord Association

2022 Reunion Photos



Bill, Pete and Frank trying to look like they know what they are doing.



I want to sit over there.



This is my story and I am sticking with it.



I only exaggerated this much.



It is tough trying to study with this group.



Am I seeing double ?

2023 Ripcord Reunion

Sunday, October 8th
through Wednesday, October
11th

with departure on
Thursday, October 12th

University Plaza Hotel,
Springfield, MO.

Call Hotel 417-864-7333

for hotel reservations

Group Code: **RIPCORDER23**

HOTEL RESERVATIONS MUST BE
MADE SEPARATELY
BY September 5, 2023

CALL 417-864-7333 for Univ. Plaza Hotel
and ask for HOTEL RESERVATIONS
and mention the
GROUP CODE: RIPCORDER23
(on line reservation link is on our website
www.ripcordassociation.com)

Price is \$94 per night plus tax:
breakfast is included.
\$129 for King Suite or Poolside

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, and all our Ripcord members up to date.

- Dennis Bloomingdale
- George & Cheryl Scott

Checks payable to:

“Ripcord Association”.

Mail to:

Pete Meloro

107 Maple Drive

Spring Lake Hts, NJ 07762

Future Reunions

2024 Ripcord Reunion Myrtle Beach, SC

DoubleTree Resort by Hilton
3200 S Ocean Blvd,
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577

October 27, 2024 – October 31, 2024

2025 Ripcord Reunion Myrtle Beach, SC

DoubleTree Resort by Hilton
3200 S Ocean Blvd,
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577

October 26, 2025 – October 30, 2025

RIPCORD REUNION 2023 SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI

I have not received a Ripcord Coin. I require a Reunion Name Tag and Lanyard

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 _____

Registration fee of \$ _____ is enclosed for # _____ Adults and # _____ children under 18.
\$35 for children under 18.

Your registration fee of \$75 per Adult covers the cost of the snacks, beverages, (includes beer and wine) hot hor d'oeuvres on Tuesday night and dinner on Wednesday.

Registration fee is now due!

Make your check payable to "RIPCORD ASSOCIATION" Mail your check with this form to:

Peter Meloro, 107 Maple Drive, Spring Lake Hts, NJ 07762.

Questions? Call Pete at 732-947-1664 or Frank Marshall 609-472-0970

AGENDA

- Sunday, October 8:** Hospitality suite opens at 1200 hours. (Self guided tours and shopping)
Monday, October 9: Hospitality suite opens at 1200 hours. (Golf in the AM) (Self guided tours)
Tuesday, October 10: Hospitality 1200 Hours. Hot hors does 1730 hours
Wednesday October 11: Business meeting for association business in Hospitality room (1100 hrs)
Dinner with cash bar starting at 1700 hours done by 2200 hours.
Thursday, October 12: Homeward bound
Monday golf outing (a separate fee). Check if you will play [].

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