

RIPCORD REPORT

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



Number 81

Winter, 2010

Jersey Thoughts and Reports

by Lee Widjeskog

After a great reunion in Myrtle Beach, Kathy and I are once more home in New Jersey.

This state, like Virginia, has the misfortune of holding state election on odd number years and national elections on even number years. Of course all the states around us hold their election on the even year so we hear campaign ads every year. We hear New York ads in the north, Pennsylvania ads in the south and of course our own the rest of the time. It seems like elections are running all the time. This year we vote for governor and state Assembly representatives. The Republicans and the Democrats are running neck and neck as I write this but no matter whom wins; they will have a difficult time correcting the state of affairs in New Jersey.

However, let's not dwell on such mundane items. The reunion this year was one of the best in years according to those who attend on a regular basis! The rooms were good, the beach right out the front door, good hotel entertainment, excellent food, decent size hospitality room, lots to do, nice mild weather and great company with all the members present.

The Ripcordetts raffle on Friday night did very well (\$1622) and the lamp (\$715) and Anna Britt Trust Fund Raffle (\$860) also did well on Saturday night.

At the business meeting attended by about 45 people. I reported the status of the Ripcord Account and suggested that the group could afford to donate the Ripcordetts proceeds for 2009 to the Anna Britt Trust Fund if the

membership so desired. A motion was made and passed to do so. That money added to donations and the money gathered from the Saturday raffle allows us to send a check to the trust fund for \$2,522. This will bring the trust

fund amount up to somewhere in the neighborhood of \$25,000. Not bad for the first year for the soon to be 10 year old young lady.

As I mentioned, our account is in good shape. At the end of the event after paying all the bills, and sending out the trust donation, we have \$32,606 in the bank. Last year our figure was \$29,142. The difference is from dona-

tions, sales of Ripcord items and books and raffle proceeds at the re-union.

Next year it will be 40 years since Ripcord. We will meet in Fort Worth, Texas from October 7 through October 9, 2010 to remember those who did not make it and to greet those that did.



2010 Ripcord Reunion
40th Anniversary
Oct 7 -11, 2010
Radisson Hotel
Ft Worth South, Texas

FROM THE EDITOR

Wow! Forty Years ago. Can you imagine! What can I say? This will be a good time to see everyone again. Our 40th Anniversary Reunion will be in October 2010 at The Radisson in Ft Worth Texas. I have never been to Texas, but a lot of friends and clients are telling me that Ft Worth is a great place to visit. More information will be on our website and the next newsletter.

As for the 2009 Reunion in Mrylte Beach, Wow again, it was fantastic. I am hoping we can go back there for another reunion. A lot of new faces to go along with the regulars that show up each year. Everyone had a great time.

E-mail address

I need your e-mail address. If you are not receiving updates and information about the Ripcord Association via e-mail, you may be missing out on a lot of news. Please go to our website and update your information. (Our website membership page is now working again)

Postal Mail Delivery

If you get the newsletter by Postal mail, then you will be receiving a postcard in the mailed newsletter. If you wish to continue receiving the newsletter by postal mail, drop the enclosed card in the mail. If I do not receive the postcard, you will no longer be receiving the newsletter by postal mail.

Send me your Biography

I have been asking for Ripcord Biographies, to put on our website. Please check them out and send me your bio. It is a well reviewed webpage on our website.

I hope you are all enjoying the newsletter and website and would really appreciate if you could send me e-mails, letters, photos, etc. pertaining to FSB Ripcord or anything about Ripcord veterans to put in the newsletter and on the website.

ARTICLES

Deadline for the Dec issue will be Mar 1st 2010. Please send all articles, photos, incoming mail and interesting reading to:

Frank Marshall
5 Taconia Ct
Mt Laurel, NJ 08054
or e-mail to: frank@ripcordassociation.com

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 newsletters free to all who wish to receive it.

Barb Adamczak

Bill Williams

Dale Falconer

Alfred Martin

Dan & Lydia Esposito

Peter Meloro

Chuck Hawkins

Dave Corradetti

Doug Bonnot

Dale McCrory

Agnes Kohr

Steve Furlong

Isabellino Vasquez

DONATIONS:

Checks payable to "Ripcord Association".

Mail to:

Lee Widjeskog,
493 Stillman Ave.
Bridgeton, NJ 08302

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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Myrtle Beach Reunion October 2009 Attendees

Uwe and Diane Meyer B 2/506
Fred Spaulding HHC
Ben and Caroline Harrison 3rd Bde
Polly Atkins: Friend of Ripcord
Lee and Kathy Widjeskog A 2/506
John Beadle & Noreen Labadie A 2/11
Alfred Martin 2/11 Arty
Terry Stanger A 159th ASHB
Ron Lloyd A 159th ASHB
Bob & Red Judd B 2/506
Tex Campbell D 2/506
Paul Buhr A2/506
Ben & Lillian Peters B2/506
Floyd & Diane Alexander A2/506 & B2/319th
Peter & Chris Meloro C2/506
Audrey Wrightsell A2/11th
Charles & Juanita Tipton C2/506
Craig & Sandy VonHout B2/506
Tim & Susan Newman A2/506
Bill & Ruby Hand B2/506
Bill & Sheila Williams B 2/506
Bob Conrad D 2/506
Dave & Lisa Snyder A 2/11th
Robin Graham HHC 2/506
Jim & Irene Aanosen A 2/506
Chuck & Jean Holman A 157th ASHB
Sandra Hammons & Vicki Crist C 2/506
George & Mary Murphy B 2/320th Art.
Bill Boles D 2/506 & HHC 3rd Bde.
John & Debbie Sherba E 2/506
Rick (Doc) & Betty Kellogg B2/506
Steve & Susan Wallace B 2/506
Isabelino & Uthoomporn Vazquez C 2/506
Frank Bort C 2/506
Wayne Spruell D 2/506
Tommy & Judy Counts D 2/506
Lisa Hill D 2/506
Frank Marshall A 2/506
Jim & Joan King HHC 3rd Bde. S-3
Ron & Linda McCrory E 2/506
Veronika Koenigsbauer HHC 3rd Bn.
Dan Esposito B 2/11 Art.
Bob & Jackie Wallace C 2/506
Dale Lane & Diane Grote A 2/506
James & Jan Carter D 2/506
Dale Falconer & Michele Corirossi B 2/506
Leonard, Carol & Russel Moore Mini-Cav
Joe Harbor & Mandy Knittle C 2/506
Dale & Shirly McCray C 2/506
Fred & Carol Gilbert D 2/506
Edith Habib - friend
Sam & Luree Robinson - friends
Bill Baldwin & Pam Dorris A 2/506
Merle & Ruth Dehagrange D 1/506

Gary & Patty Radford D 2/506
Ron & Barbara Gunyan B 2/506
John & Mary Marlowe B 2/501
David & Mary Jean Wall E 2/501
Mike & Edna Labbee B 2/506
Jim Campbell C 2/506
Fred Shuttleworth E 2/506
Joe Evans A 2/506
Bill Haynes Guest
Jim Harris HHC 2/506
Kent Rowland C/D 2/506
Charlie & Janet Lieb C 2/506
Charlott Faddus A 2/506

Ripcord Gathering Washington, D.C. May 14-16 2010

This is not a Ripcord Reunion. It is a gathering of Ripcord Veterans, Families and Friends. Everyone can Attend!

Spring Hill Suites
Hanover, Maryland
Rooms are \$99.00 a night
Under Ripcord name
(Same hotel as the last gathering)

Carol Gilbert is working on a 2010 gathering at the Wall on May 15th 2010. We did a small gathering three years also and went to the white house and wall. This time she is hoping to get a private tour of the Capitol, Vietnam Veterans Wall tour with maybe the Old Guard doing taps (questionable) laying of a wreath at the wall and also at Arlington at the statue of the 101st. Look for info in the newsletter. For additional information call Carol at 410-294-3519 or e mail her at carolg50@verizon.net

Check out photos from the last gathering in 2007 on our website www.ripcordassociation.com



Myrtle Beach - A Great Reunion Location

by Lee Widjeskog

The 2009 Fire Support Base Ripcord Survivors and Friends Reunion was a great time at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. While rain threatened the beginning of the week and again towards the end, most days were sunny, warm and enjoyable!

Almost 50 % of our people were present by Wednesday and by Thursday over 90% had shown up! Carol Gilbert, wife of Fred Gilbert (D 2/506) did a great job organizing the gambling and dinner boat trip for Thursday night. The 5- hour tour allowed Fred to win some money and others who were not so fortunate at least had time to chat with the other Ripcord people on board.

Friday morning was sunny and the temperature got up to the 80's by day's end. Many people used the warm weather for strolling the beach, which was right out front of the hotel, while others used the opportunity to shop or check out the golf courses.

Friday night was the night of the Ladies Raffle! Women and men brought items they made or bought and displayed them for the raffle while everyone consumed the delicious hot hors-d'oeuvres of finger sandwiches, shisk-abobs, scallops w/ bacon, chicken tenders, fried shrimp and a vegetable tray with dip. The Ripcordetts sold raffle tickets at the heavy price of \$1 each and managed to reap \$1,622 for the many items offered.

Some people such as Bill Baldwin (A 2/506), Fred Spaulding (S-3 Air) and Diane Meyer (Uwe's wife) had more than their share of good luck this year. But everyone had a great time and the Association always appreciates the money.

Following the Saturday business meeting all got cleaned up and met in the ballroom for the Southern Style buffet. After opening ceremonies the meal was served and again we were once more satiated more than needed.

General Harrison presented seven first time attendees with their "Ripcord Coin". This year we were fortunate to have with us Dennis Wall of E 2/501 and E 2/506, Joe Evans and Tim Newman of A 2/506, Joe Harber (brother of Steve Harber C 2/506), Bob Conrad and James Carter D 2/506 and Jim King HHC 3rd Bde S-3.

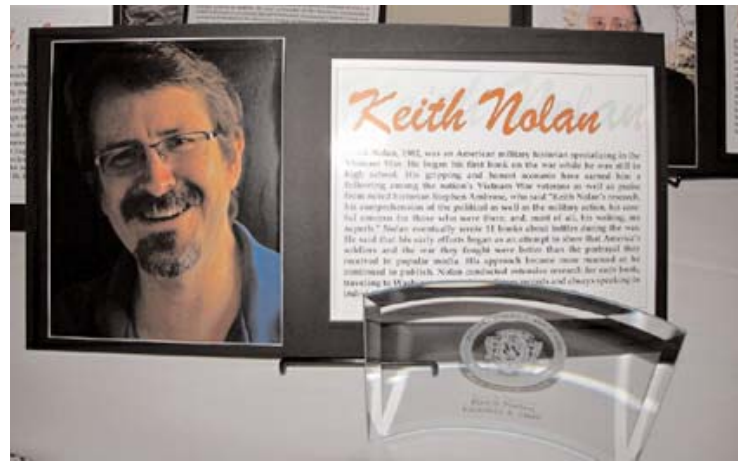
All who commented enjoyed the location and the beach. Next year we will be celebrating our 40th year since the battle and will do so in Fort Worth, Texas. See you there!!!



Nolan Inducted into the Webster Groves High School Wall of Fame

On Saturday evening, October 3, 2009, Keith Nolan was inducted into the Webster Groves High School Wall of Fame. This was the high school that Keith graduated from in 1982. There was banquet and ceremony to honor the 12 alumni being inducted this year. Among the inductees is another name you may recognize – Harry “Skip” Caray, Jr., of broadcasting fame in the Midwest.

Our Ripcord website has featured some of the past articles written by Bill McClellan of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.



The photo/information plaque and award

Hi,

I'm Keith's sister in law and I wanted to pass along a few photos from the Wall of Fame dinner on Saturday. Keith's mother, Ulla, accepted a beautiful plaque and his



Ulla and Eric Nolan with Keith's award

photo/plaque will hang in the halls of his alma mater, Webster Groves High School. I will send a photo of that when we get it. (I have to visit the school to get the photo).

Keith would be humbled by all of the accolades he is receiving and I can tell you that his family appreciates all that you do for his memory.

Becky Millinger

Frank

We had a great time at this year's reunion and want to thank everyone for supporting the Anna Britt Nolan Trust Fund raffle, as well as the Ladies' Raffle (the proceeds of which were also generously donated to the trust fund). If you were unable to attend the reunion, Keith's mother, Ulla Nolan, asked us to read a letter from her thanking everyone who has donated to the trust fund to date. The fund has now grown to over \$20,000.00. She said the love and concern of the Ripcord Association, as well as other veterans, has helped the family to get through this very difficult past year.

Britt is almost ten years old now. Like her father, she loves to write. She is a very good student and dreams of becoming a veterinarian someday.

We are now trying to contact veterans who were written about in Keith's other books in hopes they may join us in our goal to provide his daughter with a college education. For more information, contact us at brittfund@ripcordassociation.com.

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

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

Sincerely,
George & Mary Murphy
B2/320th Arty. 101st Airborne

Dear Ripcord Association,

Thank you for the generous check Britt received from you wonderful people.

I wish Keith could be here and thank you personally. We miss him, but appreciate all of you keeping him alive.

Love you all,
Ulla A. Nolan

INCOMING MAIL

Dear Frank

The reunion was a wonderful experience on many levels for both myself and my wife, Mary Jean. I can't thank everyone enough for being so friendly and welcoming us the way we were received. I especially want to thank Lee Widjeskog for calling me ahead of the reunion and making me comfortable about coming as well as thank him for all of his work in arranging the meeting. I wanted to hear the other men's stories surrounding the last few days on Ripcord and I tried to be a good listener which was very enriching. I did particularly enjoy meeting Craig Van Hout who had been in E-mail contact with me prior to the reunion. When meeting Craig who was in the unit who was in the hand grenade tossing exercise when I was coming up the hill during the fire / explosion on July, 18th. and then meeting Bill Williams, his captain who gave the order to "Kill that S.O.B. when they saw me down the hill outside of the wire that eventful day. There was certainly a great deal of closure for all of us. They by the way made me an honorary member of their squad. The setting for the reunion was excellent and I have a special display case for my Ripcord coin which I will always treasure. We are looking forward to returning to the future reunions planned. I also want to thank Robin Graham for his research and being so friendly.

Yours Truly,
David Wall

Hi Frank

"Special thanks to Walt Lyssy for his personal efforts (and personal expense) for providing us with 125 DVD copies of speeches at the 2007 Vietnam War Symposium at Texas A&M University Kingsville. The original recording of the speeches by Ben Harrison and Larry Rosen were out of sync for the voice recordings and a bit distracting to watch/listen. However, the Question and Answer/Discussion bit has good sound and voice sync and certainly worth watching/hearing."

Ben L. Harrison

Frank

I am looking for information on PFC Ricky Lee Young. Who was with the 101st in Vietnam from 13 October 1969 to 3 November 1970. He was in a line unit. He was my First Cousin. I have one picture of him on a blown out hill with boonie hat and M-16 rifle with his 101 patch on his shoulder. His last Major Command that he was assigned to at

Fort Benning Georgia was CO. C 5thBN31st INF BDE 3a.
Ricky Young Took his own life in October 1985.
John Young
riverotterone@wk.net

Frank:

I'm attempting to locate Spc. 4 Ronald Wayne Hoskins. He is the half brother to Earlene and Darnell McDowell. They are related to me and I need to locate them because they are my Dad's half sisters. I was with the 101st in 74 when I was discharged and I recall Wayne (RWH) was injured while he was @ FB Ripcord. He received the PH and Bronze Star while he was there in 69/70. His mother was named Jessie and he lived in Memphis, Tennessee or East Arkansas. He was also recovering from injuries at Eagle Beach when he returned home on leave. If you have any ideas on how to locate him, help would be appreciated. I'm Tommy Lee and my e-mail is quest2@peoplepc.com Thanks 4 your help and I look forward to your reply.

A true Patriot-Tommy Lee

Hi,

I'm sending this to you to see if you can help me find some info on the 101st or pictures etc. I was reading an article on the last battle in Vietnam from 1970 last week and now I want to read the books on it as I am ordering a couple today. One is by Keith Nolan. I also am trying to help someone who was there and I told him I found your website so he is interested to see what I find out from you since he does not have a computer. His name is Ryan E. Harper and he was in the 101st Airborne if I'm correct. Anything you could help me with info, pictures, contacts for him, I would so appreciate. He does keep in contact with some of his buddies but I only know them by first (nicknames) such as Lucky, Sanford, Smokey. Again I thank you for any information you can get to me.

Sincerely Deb
deb512@centurytel.net

Frank,

I have enjoyed your website for quite sometime now. I have been working with the Charlie Company Vets to create a place where we can all post current info and old Nam photos to share with everybody. I would like to request to trade links with your website.

<http://www.company-c-2nd-bn-506th-inf.com/index.html>

INCOMING MAIL

Currahee,
Randy Parmley
Charlie Company Webmaster
randy.parmley@adelphia.net

Hi Frank,

My wife, Mandy, and I want to thank you for the hospitality and warm welcome we received at last weekend's Ripcord Reunion. It was a very moving and emotional experience for both of us. I've spoken with my siblings and they also are very appreciative.

It's really wonderful to know that my brother was with so many courageous and dedicated men. It was an honor to be with you all.

Thanks,

Joe Harber

joeharber@aol.com

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/joeharber>

Frank:

I was with the Southeast Asia Pictorial Center and led the only photo team to get onto Ripcord. The short version is that the PIO at Camp Eagle told us no photographers, Army or civilian, were to be allowed out to Ripcord. He didn't care that we were shooting for the Department of Army archives.

So, we went down and asked the dust-off guys if they would take us to Ripcord next time they went out. They did. Lucas seemed surprised to see us and refused to allow us to join the companies in the bush but said we could stay at the fire support base. Some of our mopic has been used by Fox and others in the past.

But I have a lot of professional-quality stills (some used by Keith Nolan) I am thinking people might like to see if you wanted to post them on the web site. I just want a photo credit and a copyright note. I don't mind if the guys print them out, but I don't want them to wind up being used by someone commercially.

Regards,

Chris Jensen

Editor's note: These photos are on our website for you to view www.ripcordassociation.com

To all:

Attached is an email I received yesterday from a young man that worked with Layne the last 4 year's of Layne's

life when he was traveling all over the country working on a crew that laid overlays on runways and interstate highways. I remember Layne telling me about his emotional visit to the Wall. I have never known a more remarkable man with people than Layne. He affected everyone he ever met in a most positive manner as he was so basically honest and genuine. He was the consummate soldier. This young man's words about him give you a great idea how he affected everyone he came in contact with during his journey through life. I miss him dearly.

Jim Campbell

From: jamie Hudnall [mailto:jamiehud95@yahoo.com]

Sent: Thursday, November 12, 2009 8:19 PM

To: Campbell, James

Subject: our friend

LT. Campbell, My name is Jamie Hudnall. I live in West Monroe, La. I work for Humble Equipment Co. in Ruston La., and just as he was to you, Layne Hammonds was my friend. As I sat in my home watching the History Channel on tv, veterans day evening, I couldn't help but think of the man that I only knew for 4 short years, and loved like my own daddy. Layne told me quiet a bit about Vietnam, and Ripcord, as we traveled together across the country on our job. So, I got on the net to learn more about my friend and what he told me about. When I went on the Ripcord page, I found the article that you wrote about our friend. LT., I just wanted to say thank you for for the wonderful words that you wrote about Layne. He was all that and more! He also told me a lot about you, [my ol lieutenant buddy], as he would call you. I got the opportunity to take him to the memorial in DC one year, let me tell you, that was priceless. I videoed him the whole time we were at the wall. Every eye and ear were on Layne that cold and rainy day as he remembered and told stories about his fallen buddies, and rubbed their names with his hands. He told me that he should have been there with them. Layne taught me a valuable lesson that day, about the price of freedom, that I will never forget. You probably don't remember me, but I met you at the funeral. If you ever get through Ruston, we would love to have you stop in and visit. Thanks again for bragging on our buddy, if there was ever a deserving man, it was him.....Jamie

2010 Ripcord Reunion 40th Anniversary

Oct 7 - 11, 2010

Radisson Hotel

Ft Worth South, Texas



Experience our Fort Worth Hotel's Recently Renovated Accommodations

Experience comfortable accommodations, excellent amenities and spacious meeting rooms at the Radisson Hotel Fort Worth South. We recently completed a five million dollar renovation and offer the only full service hotel accommodations in South Fort Worth. Our hotel's Fort Worth location at I-35W and Altamesa East Blvd puts you only seven miles from downtown and 18 miles from the DFW Airport. Stay at the Radisson and enjoy our South Fort Worth hotel's brand new facilities.



Relax in our Fort Worth, Texas Hotel's Guest Rooms

Guests will feel comfortable in our Fort Worth hotel's 247 newly renovated guest rooms and suites. All accommodations at our hotel in Fort Worth, TX feature complimentary high-speed Internet access, a coffee maker with coffee, a hair dryer, an iron/ironing board, cable TV, pay-per-view movies, a work desk and our signature Sleep Number® beds.

Enjoy Superior Services at our Hotel in Fort Worth, TX

Guests of the Radisson Hotel in Fort Worth, TX can take advantage of our superior hotel services and

amenities. Relax in our indoor swimming pool and whirlpool, work out in our state-of-the-art Fitness Center, take care of business in our Business Center, or dine in our Fort Worth hotel's on-site restaurant and lounge.

Visit our Fort Worth Hotel's On-site Restaurant

The Radisson hotel in Fort Worth, Texas offers a number of on-site dining options during your stay. Guests can enjoy breakfast, lunch and dinner at the Atrium Café or head to Lucy's Sports Bar for weekday drink specials. Room service is available daily at our Fort Worth, Texas hotel from 6am until 10pm.

Enjoy our Fort Worth, Texas Hotel's Location

The Radisson South Fort Worth Hotel's location puts you close to the adventure and excitement of the area. Our hotel is only seven miles from downtown and a short drive from area attractions, including the Fort Worth Zoo, Amon Carter Museum, Texas Motor Speedway, Fort Worth Stockyards and Billy Bob's of Texas, the world's largest honky tonk. You are sure to enjoy our Fort Worth, Texas hotel's convenient location.

