



RIPCORD REPORT



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

Issue # 134

September 2023

Ripcord Association Update

by Pete Meloro

Hello again from New Jersey! This will be the final Newsletter prior to our upcoming Reunion in October. In less than two months we will meet once again to share our stories and our camaraderie. Thus far we have 86 people registered to attend our Reunion in Springfield. If you have made your reservation at the hotel and have not sent in your registration to me, please do so as soon as you can. If you plan to attend and have yet to register with the hotel or mailed your registration form to me, please do so. This will greatly assist us in preparing for our Reunion. As a result of feedback from many attendees last year we have made one major change. Rather than another hat or random item in our welcoming bags we have decided to have lunch available each day beginning October 22nd through October 25th. As usual, breakfast will also be available.



We will also bring back one of the raffles that we have enjoyed over many reunions. The Ladies Raffle will again take place after a brief hiatus. The raffle will take place on Tuesday, October 24th. As always, hors d'oeuvres will be enjoyed as well. For those who bring gifts to be raffled, please leave them in the Hospitality Suite upon your arrival.

Chris and I continue to speak with Kathy Widjeskog. She is doing well and keeping quite busy with her children, grandchild and extended family. I did discuss the possibility of her attending our Reunion this year but she declined. She did, however, tell Chris and I that she would consider attending next year in Myrtle Beach. I know everyone feels as I do in the hope that she decides to attend next year.

In closing, when you arrive at the Hotel in October, please confirm that you are receiving the special Ripcord rate for your stay. It came to our attention that a few

people were charged without the benefit of our reduced rate last year. As you may recall, the hotel staff was somewhat inexperienced. Our recent exchanges with the hotel indicate that this has been addressed. In any event, please confirm your rate and correctness of your bill upon departure.

I hope this finds everyone in good health and enjoying the summer. I look forward to seeing you at our Reunion in October.

Future Reunions

2023 Ripcord Reunion

Springfield, MO

University Plaza Hotel

Springfield, MO 65806

October 22nd- 25th, 2023

[\(more information on page 2\)](#)

2024 Ripcord Reunion

Myrtle Beach, SC

DoubleTree Resort by Hilton

Myrtle Beach, SC 29577

October 27, 2024 – October 31, 2024

2025 Ripcord Reunion

Myrtle Beach, SC

DoubleTree Resort by Hilton

Myrtle Beach, SC 29577

October 26, 2025 – October 30, 2025

2023 Ripcord Reunion

John Fowler



Sunday, October 22nd
through
Wednesday, October 25th
with departure on
Thursday, October 26th

University Plaza Hotel,
333 S. John Q. Hammons Pkwy
Springfield, MO 65806

Call 417-864-7333

for hotel reservations

Group Code: RIPCORDER23

on line reservation link

is on our website

www.ripcordassociation.com

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

**This year is the first time
Breakfast and Lunch is included.**

HOTEL RESERVATIONS MUST
BE MADE BY

September 20, 2023

TO RECEIVE THE
\$94/NIGHT RATE.

The hotel restaurant will be open
for lunch during the Reunion.

Ripcord on Facebook

by Anthony Critchlow



I hope your summer is going well. Our Facebook page now has 1,279 members. We also had 297 visitors. Please note that visitors are usually the low life's that put spam articles on our page. With your help in telling me, we can keep them at a low level. I have some rules in place that stop most of them. The one that works best is no one can post to our page if their facebook account is less the 30 days old. (Unfortunately, this has stopped one of our members from posting on our page. That problem has been corrected.) Please keep posting your Vietnam pictures on our page. Your posts were what make our page great!

So, this summer my wife and I had our 50th wedding anniversary. We took a trip to Long Beach, Washington and a side trip to Mount Saint Helens. We did have a little get together at a local park for family and friends. I hope to make it to this year's reunion, but time will tell if this happens. Have a great summer or what's left of it.



**Join our Facebook group:
Ripcord Association
Hosted by Anthony Critchlow
1,279 current members**



From the President

Bill Boles



Hope everyone is getting excited about our Reunion in a couple of months. I am really looking forward to it! I'm sure it is going to be great with the work the Board has put into it.



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.

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.

Randy House, John Fowler

Fred Shuttleworth, Joe Smith

Checks payable to: “**Ripcord Association**”.

Mail to: **Pete Meloro**
107 Maple Drive
Spring Lake Hts, NJ 07762

NEW MEMBERS

John Potts HHQ 321st Arty Radar Sect

William Watrous B/2-506 Infantry

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

MEMBERSHIP IS FREE!

Everyone is welcome to join our Association

www.ripcordassociation.com

For our membership form,

www.ripcordassociation.com/membership-form/

BY THE NUMBERS

698 members in our Ripcord Association

585 are Ripcord Veterans

113 are Associate Members

150 receive newsletter via Postal Mail

548 receive the newsletter via e-mail

1,247 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.



*Drawing by **MIKE BRADY** Vietnam 1970. Reprinted from the **Rendezvous With Destiny** magazine, Summer 1970 edition, page 7. A publication of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile)*

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

www.ripcordassociation.com

Editor: Bill Heath

email: editor@ripcordassociation.com

Design & Layout

Frank Marshall & Bill Heath

email: newsletter@ripcordassociation.com

Found this letter in my memorabilia I brought back from RVN in 1970. It was circulated around the 2/506 and may have been written by someone in the unit. If anyone knows the author, please let me know so I can give them credit. BILL HEATH Editor.



Dear Friends, Civilians, Etc.

In the very near future, the undersigned will once more be in your midst, dehydrated and demoralized, to take his place again as a human being with the well-known forms of freedom and justice for all; engage in life, liberty and somewhat delayed pursuit of happiness. In making your joyous preparations to welcome him back into organized society, you might take certain steps to make allowances for the crude environment which has been his miserable lot for the past twelve months. In other words, he might be a little “Asiatic” from “Vietnamesitus” and “Over Seasitus”, and should be handled with care. Do not be alarmed if he is infected with all forms of rare tropical diseases. A little time in the “Land of the Big PX” will cure this malady.

Therefore, show no alarm if he insists on carrying a weapon to the dinner table, looks around for his steel pot when offered a chair, or wakes you up in the middle of the night for guard duty.

Keep cool when he pours gravy on his dessert at dinner or mixes peaches with his Seagrams VO. Pretend not to notice if he eats with his fingers instead of silverware and prefers C-Rations to steak. Take it with a smile when Joe insists on digging up the garden to fill sandbags for the bunker he is building. Be tolerant when he takes his blanket and sheet off the bed and puts them on the floor to sleep on.

Abstain from saying anything about powdered eggs, dehydrated potatoes, fried rice, fresh milk or ice cream. Do not be alarmed if he should jump up from the dinner table and rush to the garbage can to wash his dish with a toilet brush. After all, this has been his standard. Also, if it should start raining, pay no attention to him if he pulls off his clothes, grabs a bar of soap and a towel and runs outside for a shower.

When in his daily conversations he utters such things as, “Sin Loi” and “Choi Oi” just be patient, and simply leave quickly and calmly if by some chance he utters “Didi” with an irritated look on his face, because it means no less than, “Get the H--- out of here”. Do not let it shake you up if he picks up the phone and

yells, “Calvert Sir” or says, “Roger out” or just shouts, “Working”!

Never ask why the Jones’ son held a higher rank than he did, and by no means mention the term, “Extend”. Pretend not to notice if at a restaurant he call the waitress, “Numbah One Girl” and used his hat for an ashtray. He will probably keep listening for “Homeward Bound” to sound off over AFVN. If he does, comfort him, for he is still reminiscing. Be watchful when he is in the presence of a woman—especially a beautiful woman.

Above all, keep in mind that beneath that tan and rugged exterior there is a heart of gold (the only thing of value he has left). Treat him with kindness, tolerance, and an occasional fifth of good liquor, and you will be able to rehabilitate that which was once (and now is a hollow shell of) the happy-go-lucky guy you knew and loved.

Last, but by no means least, send no more mail to the APO, fill the ice box with beer, get the civies out of mothballs, fill the car with gas, and get the women and children off the streets... THE KID IS COMING HOME!!!

Curahees Scare Pants Off NVA

Screaming Eagles literally scared the pants off an NVA sapper recently on Fire Support Base Ripcord.

When movement was heard on the perimeter just minutes prior to a scheduled reconnaissance-by-fire exercise, it was decided to move up a bit.

In the display of fire power that followed, which made the term “mad minute” self-explanatory, it was apparent that something other than fragmentation grenades was disturbing the barbed wire of the perimeter.

A search of the perimeter the next morning amazed members of the security force provided by Company D, 2nd Battalion 506th Infantry.

“A couple of guys thought I was just hearing things when I reported movement last night, but I came up with the proof,” said Private First Class Bruce McCorkle, Breckenridge, Texas, as he held up a pair of black pajama pants he’d torn off the concertina wire of the perimeter.

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This story is being reprinted from the August 1970 Newsletter of the 2nd Battalion (Airmobile) 506 INF titled CURRAHEE 70, an authorized publication of the Battalion.
BILL HEATH Editor

Ripcord Book Project and Interviews

I will be back at the reunion this year to conduct more interviews for the GVSU Veterans History Project Archive. If you're interested in doing an interview, it will help if you contact me in advance so that we can arrange a specific time. I will also make appointments at the reunion to fill any gaps in the schedule. I have started working on the book, but progress has been slow so far. Simply going back through the interviews and documents and getting everything sorted out takes a while, and I want to make sure I get things right.

If I interviewed you previously and you have any additions or corrections that you want to make to your story, please let me know. I do also plan to get back to everyone who has contacted me offering to share the information they have. If you haven't heard back from me, feel free to remind me. I will be doing interviews on the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of the reunion, and possibly on Sunday, depending on when I get in. The best way to contact me is by email as smitherj@gvsu.edu, but you can also leave a voice mail message on my office phone, (616) 331-3422. Once the semester starts on Aug. 28, I will usually be in the office MWF 11-1 and 2-3 if you want to catch me in person.

Jim Smither
GVSU Veterans History Project

Correction

On page 4 of the last newsletter (Issue #133), it states, "The second symposium event was the detailed story of the origin, construction and placement of the FSB Ripcord diorama project presented by Jeff Nelson and Ralph Nardone".

Unfortunately, Ralph was not able to attend the symposium this year.

This should actually read, "The second symposium event was the detailed story of the origin, construction and placement of the FSB Ripcord diorama project presented by Jeff Nelson and Kevin Cook".

BACK IN 1970

NEWS HEADLINES

600,000 people attended The Isle of Wight Festival, one of the largest rock concerts of all time.

Paul McCartney announces that the Beatles have disbanded.

Boeing 747 makes its first commercial passenger trip to London.

Luna 17 Mission launched by USSR, carries the first remote-controlled robotic lunar rover to the moon.

The US lowers the voting age to 18 from 21 when President Nixon signs the bill into law.

The first computer chess tournament takes place.

First Earth Day celebrated across the US.

The North Tower of the World Trade Center completed, becomes tallest building in world 1,368 ft.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty goes into effect after ratification by 43 nations.

100,000 people demonstrate in Washington DC against the Vietnam War.

AVERAGE COST OF LIVING

Annual Income = \$9,400

Cost new home = \$23,450

New car cost = \$3,542

Movie ticket = \$1.55

Gallon of gas = 36 cents

Gallon of milk = \$1.15

Pound of bacon = 82 cents

Postage stamp = 6 cents

Candy bar = 10 cents

SPORTS NEWS

NFL Champs - Baltimore Colts

NBA Champs - New York Knicks

World Series Champs - Baltimore Orioles

Stanley Cup Champs - Boston Bruins

Golf Masters Champion - Billy Casper

INCOMING MAIL

Hello,

I'm writing to inquire about information on a specific person, if possible. My late grandfather, Allen Lee Harper (2/506th 101st, D company) was very reserved about his time in Vietnam. It wasn't until his after his passing (July 18th, 2021) and during his recent interment at Arlington, that the family learned any information about his past. I really just want to know whatever information of his time there (beyond the well written and greatly detailed article already on your site), or any photos or videos he might have been in. We know he was honorably discharged after stepping on a land mine and losing one of his feet, but we don't know if that was at Ripcord or elsewhere. I just want to know what experiences, no matter how bad, shaped him into the stoically strong and kind man the family knew, loved, and relied on so much.

Any information would be incredibly appreciated. Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,
Tresha Harper
treshaharper@yahoo.com



DID YOU KNOW CAPT. MICHAELS

I am looking for information on Capt. John "Jack" H. Michaels (101st ABN 48 AHC) who flew with the Blue Star Jokers. I believe Jack was shot down defending a firebase in July 1970. I suspect it was Ripcord but having difficulty finding details. I do remember reading a citation (50 years ago) how after running out of ammunition Jack flew at ground level using the rotor blades of his cobra gunship to repel the enemy forces that were attempting to over run the fire base. The crash resulted in a serious spinal cord injury and he was a paraplegic the rest of his life. Jack volunteered for the rights of others like himself. He was a wonderful man.

Thanks for your help.
Donovan Rafferty
draff8888@comcast.net



WITH SADNESS

I am sorry to say that I have sad news to report to you. My Daddy, Col.(Ret) Otis W. Livingston Jr , passed away peacefully last night in hospice. He was 93 years old and led a full life with the joys of family, children,

grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. He had an extraordinary life and an exemplary military career.

His funeral was held on Monday, May 15, at The Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration in Saluda, North Carolina. I wanted to let you know of his passing.

With Peace,
Carrie Grayson
404-668-2368
clgrayson@yahoo.com



Dear Mr. Marshall,

My name is Joshua Sheehan and I would first like to thank you for your service and, second, to thank you for reading this letter. I also wanted to thank you for your assistance in providing valuable research information and guidance, as well as the opportunity to purchase a copy of the FSB Ripcord Casualty Report. All of your efforts assisted me in creating parts of my final thesis project for my Master of Arts degree program in Military History at American Military University.

I have always considered myself a life-long learner and this past May 2023, I completed a huge bucket list goal in acquiring my Masters degree. The topic of my thesis project was, "Air-Mobility Evolution Throughout the Vietnam War". I highlighted what I felt were three pivotal battles; Ia Drang Valley, Hamburger Hill and FSB Ripcord. I must say I was very nervous because I was not a veteran, but I felt that my passion to tell my story would overcome any shortcomings. More importantly, these stories, events and actions need to be told, retold and shared as often as possible. We owe it to those who never made it back to make sure every story is recognized.

My enthusiasm for history started at a very early age, with trips, with my grandfather, to many historic sites all around my original hometown of Boston. It was a wonderful bonding opportunity that continues into another generation with my son, Thomas, and daughter Gwynnie. We are in the early planning stages for our next summer vacation to Washington D.C. hopefully in 2024.

Lastly, we were hoping that you would please sign these enclosed uncirculated currency notes for us as it would be an incredible honor to add them to our history collection. Thank you again for your time.



Signed up for 2023 Ripcord Reunion

as of August 21, 2023

- William Tex Campbell
- Melvin and Mary Olsen
- Bill and Lynn Hand
- Douglas Puffer
- Rick and Racquel Montgomery
- Jerone Buffington
- David and Ingrid Lockwood
- Peter and Chris Meloro
- Ron and Linda McCrory
- Tony Little
- Uwe and Diane Meyer
- David and Connie Cote
- Don and Linda Holthausen
- John and Barbara Hedrick
- Bill Boles
- Paul Buhr and Chris Courtney
- Bob and Red Judd
- Korky Buhr
- Marc Skinner
- Everett Slaughter
- Wayne Spruill
- Merle and Ruth Delagrange
- Lin and Pinkey Bashford
- Diane and Joe McCarville
- David Hilleren & Marlene Smith
- Frank Marshall
- Paul and Laura Hansmann
- Dale and Sue Cooper
- John and Annette Kuennen
- Howie and Diana Colbert
- Martin and Lea Glennon
- Fred Shuttleworth and Victoria Rayle
- Bob and Maura Gustafson
- Timothy and Elaine Lanier Bohan
- Charles and Jean Holmen
- David and Lisa Snyder
- John and Debbie Fowler
- Ronald Zahn
- Lyle Kohmetscher and Pam Stone
- Troy and Barbara Porter
- Leland and Debra Tremblay
- Ken and Saralyn Gainer
- Elwood and Johnnie Hall
- Terry Stanger and Carol Keilman
- Leland (Al) Gagnebin
- Janet Hahn
- William and Pam Baldwin
- James Joyce
- Paige Corkhill
- Charlie and Tracy Tipton
- Audrey Wrightsell and Alex Denton
- Bill and Linda Heath

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 _____

E-mail address _____

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 Hors 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 22:** Hospitality suite opens at 1200 hours. (Self guided tours and shopping)
 - Monday, October 23:** Hospitality suite opens at 1200 hours. (Golf in the AM) (Self guided tours)
 - Tuesday, October 24:** Hospitality 1200 Hours. Hot Hors D'oeuvres 1730 hours
 - Wednesday October 25:** Business meeting for association business in Hospitality room (1100 hrs)
Dinner with cash bar starting at 1700 hours done by 2200 hours.
 - Thursday, October 26:** Homeward bound
- Monday golf outing (a separate fee). Check if you will play [].**

HOTEL RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE SEPARATELY

BY September 20, 2023 CALL 417-864-7333 for Univ. Plaza Hotel and ask for HOTEL RESERVATIONS and mention the GROUP CODE: **RIPCORD23**

(on line reservation link is on our website www.ripcordassociation.com)

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

NEW! Breakfast and Lunch are included.