



# RIPCORDER REPORT



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

Issue # 142

Sept 2025

## 2025 RIPCORDER REUNION

### The ELLIE Beach Resort by Hilton

3200 S Ocean Blvd. Myrtle Beach, SC

Sunday, October 26 through Wednesday, October 29, 2025



**UPDATE:** This is the LAST NEWSLETTER before the reunion. If you want to join in the fun and comraderie, like the 180 attendees did last year, register NOW!

The 2025 Reunion will be at The Ellie Beach Resort located at the south end of Myrtle Beach. It is just three miles (10 minutes) from the Myrtle Beach Airport. The Hotel is also located two miles from the Market Common Shopping and Restaurant District, formally the old Air Force Base.

Murrells Inlet, known as "Seafood Capital of South Carolina" offers from fine-dining restaurants with white tablecloths to burger joints where you can discard peanut shells on the floor. Murrells Inlet also has a wonderful selection of restaurants for any taste. Of course, the area is famous for fresh seafood that is caught daily, including crabs, oysters, clams, and seasonal fish. Enjoy all of your favorite seafood dishes, as well as any other type of cuisine in Murrells Inlet. They are located 10 miles from hotel.

**Room rate this year is \$110. The resort fee is \$15. (\$110 + \$15 \* 12% tax + \$1 destination fee = \$141 total per night . The hotel reservation link is on the registration form page 6 and on our website. [Ripcordassociation.com](http://Ripcordassociation.com)**

### Monday night show Legends Theatre (Reserve your seats Now!)

These shows are known for their elaborate theatrical sets, magnificent costumes and full array of incredible special effects, including three dimensional multimedia and multimillion dollar, state-of-the-art lighting and sound systems.

The Ripcord Association has booked 94 Adult tickets for this event to be held on Monday, October 27, 2025. Each ticket is \$27 and they start seating at 6:45pm for the 7:30pm showing. Dress is casual, we are on vacation. The show lasts approximately two hours with a fifteen minute intermission.

The celebrity impersonators featured for this night so far are Elvis, Michael Jackson, Tina Turner, Brooks & Dunn. This is not a dinner show, so you might want to eat before you go.

**LAST CHANCE TO ATTEND** at this special rate and free ride to the theatre. Contact Frank Marshall in advance to secure a seat in our group. This promises to be a wonderfully entertaining evening. Hope to see you there.

Contact Frank Marshall 609-472-0970 or email [FBripcord@gmail.com](mailto:FBripcord@gmail.com) NOW. We will reserve your seats and you will pay when you register at the reunion reception room. But, I must know if you are coming to the show. Thanks!



Ripcord Association Update

by Peter Meloro



Hello again from the Garden State. This may come as a shock to many but New Jersey is called the Garden State due to the fertile soil and the abundance of farmland. I just thought I would begin with a fun fact. As I am writing this, it is late August and in a few months we will gather in Myrtle Beach for our next reunion. At this time, we have 126 people registered to attend our reunion. I encourage anyone who has not registered, but plans on coming, to forward the registration form to me as soon as possible. This information will assist us in planning for our events.

On Tuesday morning, representatives from the Myrtle Beach Visitors Bureau will join us at the Hotel during breakfast. As we did last year, we will have coffee and donuts available. The representatives will be speaking with us and taping some of our discussions to be used in their marketing. This organization has been extremely helpful to us both last year and thus far this year.

A few further thoughts on our reunion. As always, we will have a Ladies Auction on Tuesday. This is an event enjoyed by everyone. Therefore, please remember to bring your items for the auction. In addition to items brought to the reunion by our attendees, Frank Marshall will be reaching out to local businesses in Myrtle Beach in an attempt to secure additional donations for the Ladies Auction.

During our Business Meeting on Wednesday, Jim Smithers will be on the agenda to discuss the publication of his book. Jim has spent countless hours interviewing virtually every person who has attended our reunions over the last twenty or so years. While we do not know the exact time table for the publication of his book, we believe it will be in the foreseeable future.

I hope this finds everyone doing well and enjoying the summer. See you in October.

CURRAHEE

*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.*

2025 Reunion Update

by John Fowler



The Reunion in Myrtle Beach is just two months away. The cutoff date for hotel reservations at the negotiated Ripcord rate is September 24th. Please make your reservations before then. Attached below is a new link for online reservations. **The link was created by The Ellie Beach Resort to correct a problem with the assignment of default dates to the reservation – Arrive October 26 – Depart on Oct 30 (four nights) The reservation dates can be edited if not the same as the default dates. Be sure to click the update button after you have edited the dates.** <https://group.tapestrycollection.com/azee5j> Please contact me if you experience any problem with online or phone reservations:

John Fowler 614-893-3418 Jmfowler47@gmail.com

From the President by Bill Boles



Hello Everyone.  
It's getting real close to Reunion time. If you haven't signed up, please do it now. We are going to have a Great Time.

INCOMING MAIL



I contacted the South Carolina Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum and was informed that the Vietnam Exhibit, to include the FSB Ripcord diorama, will be open until the end of the year. For those traveling through Columbia, while going to or from the reunion in Myrtle Beach, they will be able to visit the museum, if so desired. (Unlike last year when the diorama was covered and the museum was closed due to a remodeling project.) The Relic Room is closed on Sundays and Mondays, however, the diorama is located in the atrium outside the entrance to the museum so it can be viewed (at no cost).

Craig Van Hout.

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I am the S3 at the SSG John W. Kreckel NCO Academy on Fort Campbell. SSG Kreckel was awarded a DSC posthumously for his actions at FSB Ripcord. His family will be visiting the Academy on 18 October 2025. We were wondering if there were any of SSG Kreckel's former brothers in arms who would like to attend. Thomas Butler

thomas.j.butler1.civ@army.mil 1-(270)-798-0701 or 1-(931)-561-5493

## INCOMING MAIL *(continued)*

I would like to apply for membership to a fantastic assn. Future generations need to learn about the brave men of Ripcord. I would like to personally to thank each and everyone of the Ripcord men for their service. You are the bravest!!!

*Robert Roby*

*Navy*

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I'm looking for some reference and information about my uncle. His name was SSgt. Raymond Lacy Ratliff. According to his paperwork, he was with 2nd Bn. 2/506 at FSB Ripcord. He passed in 2017 from lung cancer and COPD. He never said much about his service in Vietnam but did encourage me to join the military. I looked up to him a great deal and miss him dearly. Any information would be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance.

*Lee K. Shannon*

*Email kavin.shannon180@protonmail.com*

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Hello Mr. Marshall.

My husband was Ricky Hahn. I am thankful to receive the newsletters and updates. I have a suggestion. Rick always had a Vietnam Veteran garden stake flag near the front porch. I thought it would be nice to have a Ripcord veteran flag. Perhaps someone could design one and you could sell them at the reunions.

As of now, I will not be able to attend this year. If this idea works and you decide to have them made, PLEASE let me know. I may try to see if one of the local print shops could produce them.

The Vietnam Veteran flag I currently have is getting tattered and I want to replace it and thought of the Ripcord idea.

Thanks for taking time to read this. God bless you all.

*Janet Hahn*

*hahnlady1@yahoo.com*



**YES...AGAIN.** We will be providing DONUTS and PASTRIES for the mornings of Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday in the Hospitality room. The hotel will provide plenty of coffee between 7am and 10am.

## Ripcord on Facebook

*by Anthony Critchlow*



I hope everyone's summer is going great. Dennise and I are on the Oregon coast at the small town of Depoe Bay. We are enjoying the whales right out our window. This is getting us excited for our trip to Myrtle Beach.

Our Facebook page now has 1417 members. We seem to be holding steady at this number. I want to thank everyone for letting me know about the spam posts. It seems like every time I'm not here, we get the dumb stuff posted.

Thanks to all who have posted on our Facebook page. You are the ones who help us grow. See you in Myrtle beach. Be safe.



**Join our Facebook group:  
Ripcord Association  
Hosted by Anthony Critchlow  
1,417 current members**

## 2024 REUNION YEARBOOKS

Beautiful **full color** Books are ready for purchase.

We are offering these Yearbooks NOW for your enjoyment and a keepsake of last year's incredible Myrtle Beach Reunion. This 28 page book has 13 pages of individual attendees, photos of coin presentations, special awards, eight pages of Unit group photos, hospitality activities and our "Beautiful Woman of Ripcord" page.

Thanks again go out to the talents of photographer Paul Buhr and Vice President Frank Marshall for his design and layout.

For your copy, please contact FRANK MARSHALL @ 1-609-472-0970 or email FBripcord@gmail.com The price includes shipping at only \$10.00. Get your's today! Or, order now and pick it up at the Reunion.  
*Thanks, Bill Heath Editor.*



# FIRST REUNION

## 10 OCTOBER 1986

By Bill Heath Editor



Our 2026 reunion next year will be 40th Anniversary since the official beginning of the Ripcord Association Reunions. Fellow Ripcord veterans had been trying to find one another for a few years in the mid 80's, but that was a very challenging time. No computers, trying to remember facts about where people lived 15 years before, then calling the 411 operator for assistance. Me saying: "Do you have a number for a Billy Helvey in Texas?" She says: "What city?" I responded with: "I don't know, how about Dallas and Fort Worth?" In a firm voice she answers; "Only one city at a time please." "Okay, Dallas." I say in a hopeful voice. Then she gives me 15 possible phone numbers. My finger goes into the hole on the rotary dial and the calls begin. One city, no luck. Two cities, same result. This is how our small group began to form.

Talking to Chip Collins ( the man who really started getting us together and was elected the first President), was also talking with John Mihalko (the first elected Secretary/Treasurer), plus Frank Marshall and Chuck Hawkins about a possible get together. John lived in Whippany, N.J. and was a member of their VFW Post 5351. This Post was selected for the reunion and our Whippany Support Team would help in organizing and operations of the facility. Team Post members: Don Davidson, Bruce Oliver, Bill Gross, Bud Fitzsimmons and Pat Kruger. Ladies Auxiliary of Post 5351: Mary Gross, Bud's daughter Ann Marie, plus many other ladies and gentlemen representing veterans groups participated.

### Other Forms of Support

- Cable of support and congratulations from President Ronald Reagan transmitted from Air Force One and read at the Banquet dinner.
- Letter of support and congratulations from New Jersey Governor Thomas Kean.
- Proclamation honoring the living and fallen heroes of Firebase Ripcord by Township of Hanover, Whippany, New Jersey, signed by S.C. Iannaccone, Mayor and Joseph A. Giorgio, Clerk dated 9 October 1986.
- Presentations by State Level Veterans

Representatives at our Memorial Service 12 October 1986. Including a 21 gun salute with Color Guard.

- Group also took a trip to the Statue of Liberty and visited George Washington's Headquarters.

### Reunion Participants

Ray "Blackie" Blackman (D 2/501). Fred & Sherry Behrens (101 AHB Eagle Dustoff). Rick Blythe (HHC 2/506). Dick & Debbie Cable (E 2/506 Recon). Chip Collins (B, E 2/506 Recon). Jim & Ellen Fairhall (1/502). Chuck & Glenda Hawkins (A 2/506). Bill & Linda Heath (A, HHC 2/506). Frank Marshall (A 2/506). John & Kathy Mihalko (E 2/506 Recon). John "Doc Speed" & Debbie Sherba (E 2/506). Tom Shepherd (A, C 2/506). and George Westervelt (A 2/506).

### Closing Remarks

" I don't know about others, but the Memorial Service caused a great deal of weight to be lifted from my shoulders. Although there is much we can do for those fallen at Ripcord, I felt that provided us with a good start."

"In closing, I would note that the Reunion and the business meeting did two things. It made us realize how far we've come and also made us realize how far we can go. I hope all of you, and others soon to join us, will join in the challenges that lie before us. In many ways earlier, I had expected the Reunion to be the culmination of an effort. Instead, it was an auspicious beginning."

*CHIP COLLINS - October 1986*

### Donations

*Donations for the year 2025 are from:*

- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| • Richard Blythe     | • Joseph Jungles   |
| • Michael Hedding    | • John Fowler      |
| • Dennis Bloomindale | • Mile Foreman     |
| • George Scott       | • Bill Hand        |
| • Peter Meloro       | • Kathleen Roby    |
| • Randy House        | • Howard Strickler |
| • Alfred Martin      | • B.W. Marshall    |
| • James King         | • Carrie Deakin    |
| • David Lockwood     | • Howard Stricker  |
| • Gary Watrous       |                    |

Checks payable to: "Ripcord Association".

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

## Signed up for 2025 Ripcord Reunion

(\*Asterisk - signed up for the Legends show)

* Lin & Pinkey Bashford	D Co 2/506		
* Kurt Bashford & Kari Cline	Guest	* David Lockwood & Ingrid Hietzke	A 2/11 Arty
* John Beadle & Lisa Ohaire	A 2/11 Arty	Walter & Kathie Lyssy	HHC 2/506
Wayne Beheler	B Co 159th	* Phyllis Majoria	Associate Member
* Richard & Michele Blythe	A/E/HHC 2/506	B.W. & Dollie Marshall	A 2/11 Arty
* Bill Boles	D Co 2/506	* Frank & Dee Marshall	A Co 2/506
Bruce Brady	A Co 2/506	* Alfred & Sondra Martin	A 2/11 Arty
* Paul Buhr	A Co 2/506	* James & Michelle McCoy	D Co 1/506
* Mike & Vivian Carper	1/327 Inf	* Ron & Linda McCrory	E Co 2/506
* Ronald & June Cochran	A 2/11 Arty	* Peter & Chris Meloro	C Co 2/506
Howard & Diana Colbert	C Co 2/506	* Bob & Maura Gustafson	Guest
Ray & Debbie Dwyer	Guest	* Uwe & Diane Meyer	B Co 2/506
* Dale & Sue Cooper	C Co 2/506	Eric & Serena Meyer	Guest
Paige Corkhill	C Co 2/506	Clem Neiderer & Sherri Myers	HHC 2/501
* David & Connie Cote	B/E Co 2/506	Robert Pagano	B Co 2/506
* Anthony & Dennise Critchlow	HHC 2/506	Troy Porter	C/E Co 2/506
* Merle & Ruth Delagrange	D Co 1/506	G. Ray & Sheila Potts	B Co 2/319 Arty
* Michael & Christine Dicken	B Co 2/506	* Douglas Puffer	D Co 2/506
* Russ & Maryann Dixon	B 2/319 Arty	Steve Pullen	B Co 2/17 Cav
* Rex & Carol Flansburg	D Co 2/506	* Mike & Lura Renner	A 2/11 Arty
Mike & Lee Foreman	B Co 2/506	* Norman & Joshua Simmons	A 2/11 Arty
* John & Debbie Fowler	C Co 2/506	Everett Slaughter	B Co 2/506
Leigh & Vicki Freeman	C Co 2/506	Joe Smith	D Co 2/506
* Ken & Saralyn Gainer	A Co 2/506	Jim Smither	Guest
Martin & Lea Glennon	A Co 2/506	* David & Lisa Snyder	A 2/11 Arty
* Bill & Lynn Hand	B Co 2/506	* Terry Stanger & Carol Keilman	A Co 159th
* Paul & Laura Hansmann	B Co 2/506	* Christopher & Mary Straub	D Co 2/501
* William & Linda Heath	A/HHC 2/506	* Dale & Janet Tauer	D Co 1/506
* Dave & Marlene Hilleren	B 159th Avn	* Greg & Juliann Krayak	Guest
Terry Hodges	D Co 1/506	* Charles & Tracy Tipton	C Co 2/506
Donald & Linda Holthausen	C Co 2/506	* Craig Van Hout	B Co 2/506
* Buzz & Charlene Ireland	C Co 159th	Steve & Susan Wallace	B Co 2/506
* Robert & Cindy Jones	HHC 2/506	Bill & Pat Watrous	B Co 2/506
* David & Sophia Kennon	326 Eng	* Tom & Lori Wenman	Associate Member
* Greg & Kristi Kiekintveld	Co B 326 Eng	Leon & Karen Wright	B Co 326 Eng
Bob Leibecke	C Co 2/506	Ron Zahn	A 2/11 Arty

# RIPCORDEREUNION 2025 Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

☐ 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 \$100 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 "RIPCORDEREUNION 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**

**Monday golf outing (a separate fee). Check if you will play ☐.**

**Monday night Legends Theatre show (a separate fee \$27). Check if you going ☐.**

### AGENDA

**Sunday, October 26:** Hospitality suite opens at 1200 hours. (Self guided tours and shopping)  
**Monday, October 27:** Hospitality suite opens at 1200 hours. (Golf in the AM) (Self guided tours)  
**Buses boarding outside lobby at 6:15pm show at Legends Theatre**  
**Tuesday, October 28:** Hospitality 1200 Hours. Hot Hors D'oeuvres 1730 hours  
**Wednesday October 29:** Business meeting for association business in Hospitality room (1100 hrs)  
Dinner with cash bar starting at 1700 hours done by 2200 hours.  
**Thursday, October 30:** Homeward bound

## HOTEL RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE SEPARATELY

**BY September 24, 2025 CALL 843-315-7100 for Ellie Resort by Hilton**

**and ask for HOTEL RESERVATIONS and mention the**

**GROUP CODE: "90N" or Firebase Ripcord**

on line reservation link is <https://group.tapestrycollection.com/azee5j>

link is also on our website [www.ripcordassociation.com](http://www.ripcordassociation.com)

**Price is \$110 + \$15 \* 12% tax + \$1 destination fee = \$141 total per night**

The on-line default dates are shown as October 26 - October 30 (4 nights).

Arrive on October 26 and Depart on October 30 which you can change.