



RIPCORD REPORT



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

Issue # 143

February 2026

2026 Ripcord Reunion

The ELLIE Beach Resort by Hilton
3200 S Ocean Blvd. Myrtle Beach, SC
October 25 through October 29, 2026



The 2026 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). Phone Reservations can be made by calling 1-800-774-1500. Make sure to mention that you are with the Firebase Ripcord Association – Group Code: 904

The hotel reservation link is on the registration form page 6 and on our website. www.ripcordassociation.com

Website And Email Updates

www.ripcordassociation.com is safe



Our website (ripcordassociation.com) was flagged as “Dangerous” by Google and when opening it, it displayed a dangerous site. I checked the site, along with professional web software developers. I worked hard with developers from our website host, which accomplished nothing. I could not understand the technical terms they continued to give me. So, I switched to another domain name to get a clean slate which is firebaseripcord.com and built a fresh, clean website where our original site was being redirected.

In the meantime, I continued to work on our original site that I had for 25 years, ripcordassociation.com and worked with the new host’s tech service team. That new site has an AI assistant software program and I decided to try that. That went very well. If you haven’t used an AI assistant, let me tell you, it is scary. The AI talked to me better than the human technicians. It walked me thru everything step by step and if I said I didn’t understand, they explained it in better terms step by step, so I could understand. I was really freaked out at this time.

Google has removed the dangerous warning on the site and our website ripcordassociation.com, is up and running with no problems.

I built our website in the year 2000 and through those 25 years, I tried to keep it updated with the latest software but technology has changed so much, it is hard for me to do so.

NEW EMAIL UPDATE

The address for Ripcord mailings will be: frankmarshall@firebaseripcord.com Go to your spam folders and mark my email address as safe. I have been emailing our newsletters for many years without a

(continued on page 2)

www.firebaseripcord.com

(Website and e-mail Update continued)

problem to over 680 members. Recently, gmail and most of the email providers have cracked down on mass and bulk e-mailings. There are a lot of new rules that have to be done by the sender. Most emails sent in bulk go to junk mail boxes. So, I have a new email marketing software program and think I might have one that works best for us.

Please respond to frankmarshall@firebaseripcord.com to stay on our e-mail list.

Thank You

Frank Marshall

A/2-506.

Vice President,

Webmaster and Membership



Ripcord on Facebook

by Anthony Critchlow



Welcome to 2026. It's about time to think about this year's reunion lol. Maybe not.



Dennise and I have decided not to come to this year's reunion. It takes a fair amount of money to get there, but we do love where the reunions are held. What a great town to be in. We will be back, but just aren't sure when. At this year's reunion, I challenge everyone attending to take lots of pictures and post on our Facebook page.

Our Facebook page is doing well. We have 1461 members. Your posts keep us going.

So in closing, be safe and have a great 2026.

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 26, 2026. 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 have not been announced yet. This is not a dinner show, so you might want to eat before you go.

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 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!



From the President

Bill Boles

I hope everyone had great holidays and everyone is well. I just wanted to say how much I am looking forward to next Reunion. I hope everyone is as excited as I am.



Ripcord Association Update

by Peter Meloro



Greetings from a snowy New Jersey. During the last two winters we have had very little snowfall in New Jersey but this year has more than made up for it. It is time to update everyone on what has happened since our October Reunion. One item of major significance has been the hacking of our Website and several issues surrounding this hack with Google. It has resulted in many people being unable to access our website and has impacted Frank Marshall's ability to send blast emails via our mailing list. Obviously, this has negatively impacted our ability to keep all members informed and up to date on Ripcord Association matters. For this we apologize. Frank has worked tirelessly over the last two to three months to resolve this issue. His efforts included researching a potential new website domain as well as interacting with Google to enable full access for all members. While some issues remain to be addressed, he is close to having them resolved.



As we discussed at our last Business Meeting it will be necessary to, once again, increase our registration fee for the 2026 Reunion. The fee for the 2026 Registration will be \$150 for each adult attending. The children rate will remain the same. We regret that this increase is necessary but in order to maintain a running balance for future reunions, we have no alternative.

Another item discussed at our Business Meeting was the potential for donations as a result of Required Minimum Distributions (RMD) from 401k Retirement Accounts. Certainly not everyone has these accounts but for those who must make these withdrawals, one way to lessen the tax burden is to donate pre-tax money from an RMD to a Not for Profit Corporation. Thankfully we are a qualified Not for Profit Corporation. If anyone is interested in donating in this manner, please contact me directly by calling 732-947-1664 or email me at peter.meloro48@gmail.com.

This week I actually received the first donation from a Ripcord Member utilizing a distribution from their 401k Account. This donation was for \$5,000 and the member requested to remain anonymous. The Association thanks you for your generosity. Any and all donations are appreciated regardless of the amount. These donations will enable us to continue to hold our Reunions into the future.

I hope everyone is doing well and enjoying a pleasant winter. Stay safe and stay warm. CURRAHEE

2025 Reunion Update

by John Fowler



I am pleased to report that the hotel for the 2026 Ripcord Reunion will again be The Ellie Beach Resort. The facilities, staff and services were excellent last year and we wanted to provide the same high level of quality for this year's reunion.

The negotiated room rate is \$110/night plus resort fees and tax. The total daily expense for room, tax and fees is \$141.12. That's the same price as last year.

The following is included:

- Free Onsite parking
- 20% off the hotel restaurant breakfast price
- A hot breakfast is not included, but coffee, tea and pastries will be available in the hospitality room every morning.

Phone Reservations can be made by calling 1-800-774-1500 Make sure to mention that you are with the Firebase Ripcord Association – Group Code: 904
Online reservation link : <https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/firebase-ripcord-association-26/>



Special Thanks

Paul Buhr

I am honored to be a member of the Ripcord Association and I thoroughly enjoy photographing the members at each reunion.



I want to thank everyone who participated in signing the thank you card at this past reunion. It was very much appreciated, as well as the cash inside.

My wish is that we all can enjoy many more reunion events together.

Thanks

THOMAS

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.

Lt. Col. Frederic L. Spaulding

April 9, 1940 - December 22, 2025

Obituary taken from Shirley Brothers Mortuaries & Crematory

Lt. Col. Frederic L. Spaulding, 85, of Indianapolis, passed away December 22, 2025. He was born April 9, 1940, in Indianapolis, Indiana to the late Walter Leon and Victorene C. (Wysong) Spaulding.



Fred was a graduate of Thomas Carr Howe High School. He received his bachelor's degree from Army College and later his master's degree from the University of Maryland. Fred proudly served his country in the U.S. Army, June 1958 through June 1987 with time being spent in Vietnam.

Throughout his military career, he exemplified the finest spirit of the U.S. fighting man as an Airborne Army Ranger, Pathfinder, Master Parachutist, Raider/Reconnaissance Officer and Special Forces Officer.

Fred served in three combat areas, Dominican Republic, Korea and Vietnam. He commanded five rifle companies, two HQ companies, and three Special Forces "A" Teams. He was selected for the United Nations Honor Guard Duty, NCO of the year (1963), and runner up for the Eighth Army NCO of the year.

As an officer in Vietnam, Fred was asked to take charge of Firebase Henderson, and "lead the way". This location had been attacked during the night by North Vietnam causing multiple KIA/WIA. Firebase Henderson remained under constant mortar attack and heavy arms fire. During this time, Fred called in effective air strikes and evacuated the wounded. He later returned under fire and recovered all his KIA troops to bring them home.

Further in 1970, Fred was selected to plan and coordinate the battle of Firebase Ripcord. Operation Ripcord was one of the last big pushes for the USA to leave Vietnam. He was responsible for all aircraft and fire support during the battle with emphasis on the siege. During this battle, three of the four (OH6A) helicopters were badly damaged and rendered inoperable. The fourth helicopter he used that day was also heavily damaged but was flyable enough to complete his mission of getting all troops out and opening the way for a massive B52 strike. Fred's disregard for his personal safety while under fire, to accomplish his mission, in the highest tradition of the credo; "RANGERS LEAD THE WAY".

Lt. Col. Spaulding received numerous awards including Combat Infantryman Badge, Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Bronze Stars with Valor, Air Medals with Valor, Presidential Unit Citations and Valorous Unit Awards. Fred was a member of Faith Presbyterian Church, Army Rangers Society, Special Forces Association, American Legion, National Pathfinders Association, 82nd Airborne Association, National Infantry Association and VFW.

Fred is survived by his loving wife of 54 years, Micki (Mihye Shin) Spaulding and one brother, Jon Spaulding.

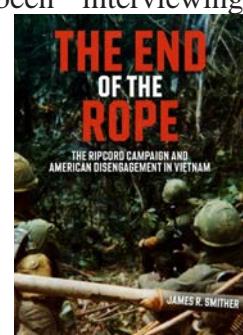
(Note) In the beginning years of the Ripcord Association, Fred Spaulding was very instrumental in finding locations and setting up the annual Ripcord reunions.

New Book Release

The End of the Rope: The Ripcord Campaign and American Disengagement in Vietnam

by James R. Smither (Author) Hardcover – May 15, 2026

Jim Smither, who has been interviewing Ripcord Association members for the past fifteen years, has written a new book about Ripcord entitled *The End of the Rope: The Ripcord Campaign and American Disengagement from Vietnam*. Jim to date has conducted nearly 150 oral history interviews relating to Ripcord, and much of the book is based on those interviews. He has tried to make the book readable for everyone, while also carefully enough researched to satisfy military historians.



The scheduled release date is May 1, 2026, but the book is available for preorder through Casemate Publishers. **Ripcord Association members ordering from the publisher will receive a 50% discount by using a promo code, which will be valid through April 30, 2026.**

Ripcord Association members can contact Frank Marshall or Anthony Critchlow for the promo discount code. You are welcome to order as many copies as you like using that code, but we would appreciate it if you did not share the code with non-members, since this discount is far more generous than what most presses would offer.

R&R / LEAVE Program

LETTER OF INSTRUCTION

by Bill Heath

1. You have been selected to participate in the Out-of-Country R&R program or have been granted leave as shown on your orders. YOU MUST REPORT FOR PROCESSING AT THE DIVISION R&R PROCESSING CENTER, CAMP EAGLE, BETWEEN 0800-0900 HOURS. We will inform you of your in-country travel arrangements.



2. In order to participate in the R&R program or to take leave, you must be fully prepared.

- a. **Personal Appearance:** As representatives of the "Screaming Eagles", you are obliged to meet the highest standards of personal appearance prior to departure and while at the R&R or leave site. This means neatly trimmed hair (mustache) and a clean shave.
- b. **Clothing:** Appropriate civilian clothing is now authorized for wear aboard R&R aircraft to all sites. The service uniform (Army khaki, tan, or light weight green) is optional for wear aboard R&R aircraft to all sites.
- c. **Immunizations:** You must have your shot record card when you report for processing. The following immunizations are required: Yellow Fever, Typhus, Tetanus, Typhoid, Smallpox, Plague and Cholera.
- d. **Medical Inspection:** If you are traveling to Sydney, Australia, you must have a medical inspection within 72 hours of flight departure.
- e. **Personal Finances:** You are required to have at least \$250 MPC when you report for processing. For your information, however, average expenses for leave on R&R are now around \$350. You will convert your MPC to US currency just before your plane leaves from Da Nang.
- f. **Identification:** Wear your ID tags, and bring your ID card and MACV Form 5 (currency Control Card) to R&R/leave processing.
- g. **In-Country Travel:** The Special Service Center will make reservations for all R&R participants from Phu Bai Air Base to Da Nang. Leave personnel will depart Phu Bai Air Base on a stand-by basis.

3. Possession of any of the following while aboard aircraft or while in R&R or leave host countries will subject you to prosecution under the UCMJ and/or host country laws:

- a. Narcotics, marijuana.
- b. Explosives, firearms, fire-works, knives, ammunition.
- c. Vietnamese currency in excess of 500 Piasters.
- d. Articles produced in China, North Korea, North Vietnam.
- e. Obscene or pornographic literature or articles.
- f. Gold or silver bullion.
- g. More than one unopened bottle of liquor. Opened bottles of liquor cannot be taken aboard. You must be E-6 or above to possess liquor.
- h. More than one carton of cigarettes.

4. If you will prepare yourself, as outlined above and report on time, we will make every effort to take care of the remaining details.

This is a condensed letter from 1Lt. Richard T. Klein, AGC Division R&R Officer. 101 FL 32-R (Replaces 101 FL 32-R, 18 Mar 70). Dated 22 May 1970.

Issued to SP4 William Heath, 28 June 1970 on his first R&R to Tokyo, Japan



INTERESTING U.S. CENSUS STATS.

1,713,823 of those who served in Vietnam were still alive as of August 1995. During that same census count, the number of Americans falsely claiming to have served in country was 9,492,958. As the August 2000 census was taken, the Vietnam Vet population was estimated at 1,002,511. The number of Americans falsely claiming to have served in country was, 13,853,027. By this census, four out of five who claim to be Vietnam Vets are not.

RIPCORD REUNION 2026 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 \$150 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 25: Hospitality suite opens at 1200 hours. (Self guided tours and shopping)
Monday, October 26: Hospitality suite opens at 1200 hours. (Golf in the AM) (Self guided tours)
6:30pm show at Legends Theatre \$27 per ticket
Tuesday, October 27: Hospitality 1200 Hours. Hot Hors D'oeuvres 1730 hours
Ladies Auction 1730 hours
Wednesday October 28: Business meeting for association business in Hospitality room (1100 hrs)
Dinner with cash bar starting at 1700 hours done by 2200 hours.
Thursday, October 29: Homeward bound

Monday golf outing (a separate fee). Check if you will play [].

**HOTEL RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE SEPARATELY
BY September 11, 2026 CALL 800-774-1500 for Ellie Resort by Hilton
and ask for HOTEL RESERVATIONS and mention the
GROUP CODE: 904 Firebase Ripcord Association**

(on line reservation link is on our website www.ripcordassociation.com)
Price is \$110 + Daily Resort Charge per night plus tax: (\$141 total)
A hot breakfast is not included, but coffee, tea and pastries will be available
in the hospitality room every morning.