

RIPCORD REPORT

For Friends and Survivors of FSB RIPCORD, RVN

A Newsletter

No. 10 January 1987

INSIDE

- Contacts
- Incoming
- Retrospectives
- A Letter Home
- Whippany/An End of A Mission
- Book Review by Fairhall
- Art/Photos
- Resources/Viet Vet Registry and More.

Sept. & Oct. Financial
Contributors:
Billy & Ann Roberts
Jim & Ellen Fairhall
G. Mitacek



Contacts

—Rev. Leroy Fox [HHC 2/506] [REDACTED] CO, 80010. Chaplain Fox stood by us during the grim days of Ripcord and presided over the memorial service conducted July 25, 1970.

—LTC. S. C. "Barney" Wintermute [1/506, B 2/319 ARTY] [REDACTED] Las Vegas, NV. 89103. Barney's correspondence is featured in Incoming. Presently he is a Professor of Military Science in the R.O.T.C. program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

—Steve Larkin [E 2/506 RECON] 147 [REDACTED], OH. 43302.

—Buford McCormick [E 2/506 RECON] [REDACTED] KY, 41179.

—Fred H. Edwards, M.D. [2/506 Bn. Eng.] [REDACTED], MD. 20863.

—Tom Shepherd [AC 2/506] [REDACTED] Pl., Elizabeth, N.J. 07201. Tom was a medic with Alpha and Charlie 2/506. Presently he works with the VA. He learned of the Association and the Whippany Reunion as the result of a last minute newspaper notice and drove on down.

—Eugene T. "Radar" Brown [2/319 ARTY] [REDACTED] et, Walbridge, OH. 43465.

—Doug Quick [2/17 CAV] [REDACTED] Dr., Riverview, MI. 48192.

—Lonnie "Mad Fragger" Knight [G/65 ARTY, Quad 50's] [REDACTED] ow, OH. 45152.

—Robert Romig [E 2/506, RECON] 222 E. [REDACTED] OH. 44691. I remembered 1st Lt. Romig being mentioned with RECON in the 2/506 Unit History for 1970. During his recent call, he also noted he was CO of E 2/506 for a time.

—New Associate Member Larry Horn [9th Inf. 9th Med. Bn.] Director of Vietnam Veterans Registry, Inc., [REDACTED] Bridgton, ME. 04009. Information on the Registry included later on.

—Jim "Catfish" Branner [C BTRY B 2/319 ARTY] [REDACTED] 22 D.C.C., Capron, VA. 23829.

—Sam "Fightin Lieutenant" Asbury III [MAT II-88, Adv. Tm #37] [REDACTED] Pl., Oklahoma City, OK. 73112.

EDITOR:

Chip Collins
P. O. Box 1834
Wise, VA. 24293
(703) 328-2006

PUBLISHER:

Bill Heath
P. O. Box 1688
Coolidge, AZ. 85228
(602) 723-5179

CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

Ripcord Association
c/o John Mihalko, Sec./Treas.
10 Legion Place
Whippany, N.J. 07981
(201) 386-9862

—Rodney "Newby" W. Watts [32nd MED. DEPOT] [REDACTED] Birmingham, AL. 35211.

—Gary "God Squad" Jestes [HHC 3rd BDE] P. O. [REDACTED] MD. 21784. Gary was a Chaplain's Assistant with 3rd BDE.

—Ken Hamilton [C 2/506] [REDACTED] Mendon, OH. 45862-9762.

—Craig Warren [Resident Veteran Counselor] Pre-Release Center Main, Goveland Correctional Facility, Route 36, Sonyea Rd., Sonyea, N.Y. 14556.

—Paul Mueller [D 1/506] Address is now [REDACTED], Bettendorf, IA. 52722.

—Col. Ron Bryce [S-3 101st AVN. BN.] [REDACTED] Lewis, WA. 98433.

—Elbert S. "Carolina Grif" Griffin, Jr. [E 1/506] [REDACTED] mston, N.C. 27892.

—Desmond "Mack" McClure, Jr. [S.E.R. T.S. Camp Evans] [REDACTED] 202, Mt. Clemens, MI. 48045.

—Marty Toohey [HHC 2/506] [REDACTED] Court Rd., Philadelphia, PA. 19115.

—James Williams [2/503 173 Airborne Recon] [REDACTED] aremore, OK. 74017 (Tumbleweed).

—John B. Franz [U.S.A.F. — P.A.C. A.F.] [REDACTED] pano Beach, FL. 33061.

—Gregory Kiekintveld [B/326 Eng. Bn.] [REDACTED] land, MI. 49423

"Kiek".

—Michael "Green Grass" Pendergrass [155th Assault Helo Co. 10th Combat Assault Bn. 1st Avn. Bde] #84-A-0614 [REDACTED] N.Y. 14079.

Incoming

14 September 1986

I just received the August Newsletter. Finally, some mention of my company, (D 1/506). During the battle Cpt. Don "Ranger" Workman mentioned we needed to link up with another company (A 2/506). Late on the 21st of July when C 2/506 came to rescue us I had thought they were that company. Thanks to Charles Hawkins I now understand why we were inserted right off of Hill 805.

It's too bad I'm the only one from D 1/506 that receives the newsletter. I enjoyed the last newsletter most of all. At times I wish I was a creative writer. It would be fitting to tell D 1/506's part of the Ripcord story. As you are aware, almost nothing is written in either of the battalions logs about our involvement.

While the N.V.A. were searching for Alpha, they already knew where we were. As a result, our casualties closely paralleled those of Alpha. On the 20th of July we had 9 KIA and 39 WIA. The next day saw two

more KIA including Cpt. Workman and over 20 WIA. I was one of only a dozen that were not wounded of 84 men in the company. Ironically until we were opconned to the 2/506 on the 15th of July we never had more than 60 men in the field.

I feel that Col. Lucas made a big mistake leaving Alpha alone and sending D 1/506 by itself to count graves. The rest of my battalion and the entire 3/187 should have been committed to the operation. The outcome might have been quite different.

Paul Mueller
Bettendorf, IA.

[Ed. note]

Due to a strong outreach effort in the coming year, we should locate more 1/506 people. It is expected that Jim Fairhall's eventual account of Ripcord will tell the story to the extent that the efforts of all units around Ripcord will be accounted for. Much discussion has occurred regarding what might have been done to insure Ripcord's survival. Jim Fairhall and Gen. Barry, in the July Anniversary issue of the Newsletter, spoke eloquently as to why, given the entire military and political picture, Ripcord could not be salvaged.

13 September 1986

I read with great interest (in the latest issue of the ASSEMBLY) about the Ripcord Association. Seeing the word Ripcord brought back some memories. I too, am a survivor of Ripcord. In fact I was in one of the last choppers out before the hill was overrun. A little background:

I served in RVN from April 1970 to April 1971. My branch was (still is) FA and from April to July, I served as a Forward Observer with the 1/506 Inf Bn. On 6 July, I (with the rest of the platoon) was wounded and evacuated to a hospital in Da Nang (I think). While my leg was healing, I flew air observation. Many of these missions were over Ripcord. Around 20 July, I was sent to Ripcord to assume the duties as XO for the 105 Battery. The previous XO had been burned in a powder fire. After being on the hill for about six days, a Chinook was hit while delivering ammo. It crashed into the ammo bunker and set off all our ammo. We went to the 155 Battery location. Chinooks later came in and evacuated the guns and remaining defenders.

If you have a historical account of the siege of Ripcord, I would certainly appreciate a copy. Also I would be honored to join your association.

I was not aware Bill Pahissa was on the hill the same time as I. What a coincidence! Also I find that both Bill and I were

Century men at the Academy!

Would certainly appreciate hearing from you.

Sincerely,

"Barney" 69
(signed)

Sheldon C. Wintermute
LTC, FA
Las Vegas NV.

September 25, 1986

Just thought I would drop a few lines to say hello. I want to say thanks again for the Newsletter. Believe me I find it very interesting and informative. The last really brought back some memories, especially of the old battalion area. I recognized the photo of Blackie. If you would say hello for me to him and all the guys. May God always walk beside them for he always was beside us when we needed him over there.

As Always,

Billy E. Roberts
Simpsonville SC

29 September 1986

I recently learned of the Ripcord Association. As a Ripcord Veteran I find the concept of such an organization fascinating and would be interested in finding out more.

I was the battalion engineer for 2/506 and first arrived on Ripcord on 1 July 70. I stayed on the hill continuously until the withdrawal 3 weeks later. So I feel like I know every square inch of the place. Bill Pahissa was a classmate of mine that I sponsored during his SERTS training.

If you could send me more information on the Ripcord Assn., I would appreciate it. Thanks much.

Fred H. Edwards M.D.
Rockville MD 20863

December 25, 1969 — The 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) celebrated Christmas Day with Operation Holly, which brought the Bob Hope Christmas Show to Camp Eagle. Hope and his troupe arrived late in the morning from the U.S.S. Ranger after bad weather threatened their long-awaited first appearance in northern I Corps. The two-hour show featured Astronaut Neil Armstrong, Connie Stevens, Suzanne Charny, The Goldiggers of 1970, "Laugh-In's" Teresa Graves, Les Brown and his Band of Renown and Miss World, Eva Reuber-Staier. An audience of over 16,000 cheered Hope in the newly-constructed Entertainment Bowl.

Taken from "The Screaming Eagle" Vol. III, No. 1 22 December 1969

Santa Goes Airmobile Thanks to 101st

CWO S. Claus didn't feel on top of the world. It was December, he was in the middle of his annual tour as Night Duty Officer, North Pole Station, United States Army, Alaska, and like every year he had just gotten orders for a special courier run the night of the 24th.

Looking around the barracks, Claus grew even more depressed.

"Everybody here is short but me," he thought. "Six-month nights play hell with getting 30 years under your belt."

The veteran aviator finally got up, stuffed his orders in his red fatigue jacket (Claus wasn't quite strack) and went out to find the motor sergeant.

At the motor pool Claus' Airborne sleigh was ready, but the motor sergeant said Pfc. Donner and Spec. 4 Rudolph had just reported to the aid station. "We've got such old equipment I can't blame them," Claus griped.

The motor sergeant just smiled. As the NCOIC of the dwarfs, he was the shortest man of all.

Still griping, CWO Claus climbed into the sleigh and headed for the international date-line, where the night of the 24th starts.

He made a couple of quick stops at Wake Island and Midway, then pulled into Guam. Last year, he had picked up a stack of Chieu Hoi leaflets in Guam from Strategic Air Command, to put under trees in North Vietnam. But that sort of thing had been curtailed, and Claus was a little bit relieved.

"With these fatigues, I never had any trouble in Hanoi," he told the base operations officer, "but the approach I had to make could get hairy."

Airborne again, Claus headed for the 'Nam. He had planned to enter at Saigon, turn north, and then swing toward Thailand. But somewhere over the Philippines Spec. 4 Vixen strained a muscle, forcing Claus to pick a shorter route to an emergency landing.

Pulling into Eagle International Helipad, CWO Claus was amazed.

"I've been in Army aviation since we lost out to the Navy at the Delaware," he told a young WO1, "but I've never seen anything like that," he added, pointing to a green machine crouched buglike on the PSP.

"It's slick!" Claus exclaimed.

"Watch your grammar, chief," the youngster, who had been to college, said. "It's A Slick."

By now Vixen had been bundled off to the aid station, and the remaining five reindeer-power gave Claus pause. He didn't know if it was enough to finish his mission.

Before he could decide, a friendly Re-up sergeant, ever alert, made up Claus' mind for him. The sergeant talked Pfc. Blitzen into taking a burst of six for a doorgunner slot with the 101st.

With 50 percent of his strength ineffective, Claus had to act fast. He talked the young WO1 into lending him the Slick for the night, and threw his sack of goodies aboard.

Heading westward jerkily (Claus' instruction on the Slick had been sketchy,) the old aviator started shouting out of habit, "On Dasher, On Dancer, On Prancer and Vixen . . ."

Before he could finish, Spec. 4 Prancer, riding as visual observer, interrupted,

"You're behind the times, chief. Try something new."

"Roger that, specialist," Claus said, and ever after, as he whirled through the Christmas night, he shouted — "Airmobile!"

Newsletter Intentions

The intention of this newsletter is to bring those of us together that are interested in FSB Ripcord, RVN. The events, the people, the humor, the memories of that time are being written by those that served there. We want this to be a healthy experience for the Veteran, his or her family or friends. We encourage you to write, call and talk, or send a taped message to us with your feelings about our Newsletter or Ripcord in general. We wish to improve as we grow and **your** initial input is necessary.

However, there may be those Veterans who are still troubled by their Vietnam experience. We regret this situation, but can not share responsibility for their reactions regarding the newsletter contents. Ideally, this newsletter will help all of us through our past and into a rewarding future.

Massacre

PROLOGUE:

Last year Jim Fairhall was kind enough to send me a copy of our unit's history for the year 1970. It made for some very interesting reading, but something was missing for one reason or another. It was a mission Bravo team fondly refers to as the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. The following is what happened on that mission:

THE ST. VALENTINES DAY MASSACRE

Bravo team was back at Evans celebrating our victory over the jungle on our previous mission. To us the mission was successful cause we didn't run into any shitheads. Our only battle was against the elements and mother nature which was a battle in itself. Being soaked in for a couple of days was the real hummer of that mission.

Our hooch was in its usual disarray, but for us it was party time. Sometime during the festivities Teenager entered our hooch and informed us that he was coming out with us on our next mission. The guys had told me about Teenager. He was a gung-ho platoon leader who liked to hunt Gooks. That didn't make me feel any too good. Hell, I was still learning the ropes just trying to keep up with the rest of the team. Teenager still looked like he should be in high school, not leading a Recon platoon in Vietnam.

Fortunately, our A.O. had been relatively quiet for some time. Nobody had even seen a Gook for months. Hopefully we wouldn't run into anything on that mission. Teenager probably briefed us on the mission but I don't remember. I was preoccupied with my own thoughts. I was determined to hump more food and water. The memory of being soaked in with nothing to eat was still fresh in my mind.

Evans faded in the distance as we flew out to the mountains. This time I made sure that I wasn't sitting in the middle. I took in the usual sights: the water filled bomb craters in the lowlands, Firebase Jack, Rocket Ridge, and then deep into the mountains. Again I had no clue where we were going, but the mountains kept getting bigger. We picked up our Cobra escort so I knew that we must be getting close to our destination.

The Cobras did their thing and in we went. I hoped it wouldn't be a hot L.Z. My heart was pounding like a drum solo on In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida. This time I jumped off the slick unassisted and congratulated myself on my victory over my ruck. I took up my position on the L.Z. and watched the slicks make their way back to Evans. My nose picked up the scent of the destruction from the Cobra strike. The jungle was damp and wet and the scent just hung there.

Teenager and Junior checked their maps and off we went with Ox in the lead. I took up my position and began round two of my ongoing battle with my ruck. The trail off the L.Z. was wet and slippery and it seemed like we would never reach the bottom of this mountain. If it was taking us this long to get to the bottom, I sure dreaded the climb up the next one.

I couldn't tell if this was a high speed trail or not. By the time I passed where everyone else had been there were too many boot prints in the mud, but evidently Ox had picked up on something. Our pace slackened and the word came back that we were at the bottom and a stream loomed ahead. None of us liked the idea of crossing a stream but we didn't have any choice. Teenager wanted to pick up the trail on the other side. The stream was very shallow and there was a sandbar in the middle of it.

We made our way across cautiously and picked up the trail again. We hadn't traveled very far when word came back that there was a Chicom grenade in the trail half buried in the mud, so watch your step. Sure enough there it was right in the middle of the trail. It looked harmless enough covered with rust, but what was it doing there? There weren't any trip wires and I followed the direction of my teammate in front of me.

We were going uphill now, but the grade was very slight and not too difficult. My thoughts were on that grenade. Was it dropped accidentally? Maybe it was a trail marker pointing the way to our destruction. I knew that we were in hostile country and I kept a constant lookout to our rear. The jungle seemed more deadly now than ever.

We didn't travel much further after our encounter with the grenade. A spot was found and we set up our N.P.D. Teenager was ecstatic. He had gotten off the horn and had gotten permission to ambush the stream. He was sure that this area was going to be a good hunting ground for us. I for one did not share in his glee. This may be a good hunting ground, but for which side?

My thoughts went back to the A.I.T. and the ambush demonstrations that were shown to us. "A successful ambush is over in five seconds or less," the instructor said. "Everything in your kill zone should be dead, if not, you screwed up and could be in a world of hurt." Those words were cold and final. They echoed through my brain. I didn't sleep very well that night.

The next morning we chowed down and an ambush party was selected. I got to stay behind to help guard our N.D.P. We wished the team good luck and watched them disappear into the jungle. The hours dragged by. The jungle was so quiet. I decided to catch up on my letter writing. I was describing jungle life in a letter to my brother when the silence was broken with a quick bam, bam, bam. I quickly grabbed my 16 and looked at the rest of my teammates.

Junior told us to keep an eye on the

trail. I still didn't know who was doing the shooting. It would be a while yet before I would hear the distinctive sound of an A.K. We waited and waited. The silence was eerie. The look on everyone's faces told me that it was our ambush team that was doing the shooting. That was a relief, but where in the hell were they? What was taking so long?

I heard movement on the trail and got ready to fire. I then saw the ambush party with faces grinning from ear to ear. We all wanted to know what happened. Teenager told us that D.J., the other cherry on the team, had blown away a Gook. D.J. said that he was just sitting there getting bored. He happened to be looking down at the time and when he looked up there was a Gook staring him in the face. Evidently the Gook was more surprised than D.J. D.J. drew first and blew him away. Simple as that.

Everyone was proud of D.J. and our spirits soared. Bravo team had gotten a Gook. The Gook turned out to be a rice carrier who was on his way to who knows where. We were happy to know that a lot of his buddies would go hungry that night. I wondered where he was going and if his comrades had heard the shots. Teenager reported our success to higher up and got permission to keep ambushing the stream.

The next morning another team was sent back to the stream to try its luck. The body was still there where D.J. had dropped it and it was decided to use the body as bait. The body was taken to the sandbar in the middle of the stream and placed there with a frag underneath it. We didn't ambush at night and it was hoped that if his pals came back at night to get him, they would be in for an unpleasant surprise from Recon.

The days went by and we all took turns ambushing the body. By now the smell of death was in the air. The body had bloated up and the flies and insects were taking over the remains. I was beginning to think that there were no more Gooks in the area. Even Teenager thought maybe we should move on. It was decided that we would spend one more day watching the body.

Morning arrived and I checked my little pocket calendar, and to my surprise I saw that the date was February 14th, Valentine's Day. I chuckled to myself. Valentine's Day is a day of love and romance and here we were keeping vigilance over a dead body hoping to add to our body count. The ambush team was selected and off we went back to the stream. Teenager set us up in our positions. I was set up as rear security. He told me to watch the stream and the trail behind us. If any Gooks came down the trail, I was to set off the ambush.

From my vantage point I couldn't see the body on the sandbar, so I decided to concentrate on the trail instead. I waited and waited. This whole mission had gotten boring. I was tired of sitting like a vulture eyeing a carcass. Once again the silence was

broken by gunfire. I looked out at the stream but couldn't see what was going on. I then checked the trail and saw that it was clear. This was no ordinary ambush. The rest of the team was still firing. What the hell was going on?

The suspense was killing me. I decided to leave my position and go to the sound of the guns. It only took me a few seconds to reach the action. By now most of the firing had stopped. I looked out at the stream, adrenalin flowing, and my eyes beheld the sight of more bodies. The stream was turning red from the blood. Just about everywhere I looked, there were bodies. I was terrified, and by the looks on everyone else's faces, they were too. I don't remember how many bodies I counted, six, maybe seven.

They never knew what hit them. The bodies lay frozen, suspended in time, twisted in death. I had never imagined that death could come so quickly. All was quiet again. The sound of the stream was the only sound. I kept a watchful eye on Teenager and the rest of the team as they waded out to check the bodies. I also watched the other side of the stream where the Gooks had come from. Teenager and some other team members were collecting the weapons, stripping the bodies, etc. It was much too quiet and peaceful.

All of a sudden there was an explosion in the trees overhead and behind us. Our R.T.O. shouted, "R.P.G.'s let's get the hell out of here." I didn't know what an R.P.G. was, I just hit the dirt and started firing into the treeline on the other side of the stream. We called out to Teenager but he seemed unfazed by it all. He was determined to strip every body. Another explosion and then another. Branches were falling everywhere. We were definitely under attack.

"A successful ambush is over in five seconds or less. Everything in your kill zone should be dead; if not you screwed up and could be in a world of hurt." We held up our end of the ambush. Everything in our kill zone was dead. Just what the hell did we run into? How many more Gooks were out there? I couldn't see a thing in the treeline, but I kept up a steady volume of fire. Everyone else who wasn't in the stream joined in.

Teenager and the rest of the team were now making their way back to us with their booty. They had enough weapons to outfit another recon team. We were still under fire and Teenager was on the horn requesting some help. We made our way back to our N.D.P., keeping a watchful eye on the trail behind us. We had evidently ambushed the point element of a large N.V.A. force. A line company was going to be inserted. That was sure a relief. We knew that we were outnumbered and hoped that the Gooks wouldn't decide to follow us and press their attack.

It didn't take long for the Cobras to reach us and fire up the area. The line

company was interested on the same L.Z. that we came in on. If the Gooks were still in the area, the line company was behind them and we were in front of them. I don't remember if the line company hit any shit or not. I was still trying to sort out in my mind what had happened and what yet might happen. I do remember our team going back to the stream to link up with the reinforcements. We were sure glad to see those guys. The 60 gunners and the thump gunners looked especially good to us.

The grunts from the line company looked at the bodies that littered the stream and the sandbar. They then looked at us with faces that read, what the hell did you guys get us into now, but they also gave us a look of respect. We had pulled off that ambush with nothing more than our 16's. We passed the word along not to fuck with the one body in particular because of the live frag we had placed underneath it.

Teenager consulted with the platoon leader and the line company moved out. We went back to our N.D.P. and examined our booty. We had AK-47's, AK-50's, uniforms, maps, belts, N.V.A. money, etc. Teenager was proud of us and we were proud of ourselves. Teenager divided up the stuff that we could keep for ourselves. We were informed that a bird was on its way to pick up Teenager, his R.T.O., and the rest of our booty.

The bird arrived on schedule and standing in the doorway was our C.O., Lt. Scaggs. He was grinning and giving us the thumbs up. A jungle penetrator was lowered and Teenager, his R.T.O. and the spoils of war were hoisted up. Some extra ammo was kicked out to us and the bird headed back to Evans. We were to be extracted the next morning. I must admit that I slept pretty good that night knowing that a line company was all around us for protection.

The next morning was bright and sunny. We made our way back to the stream for the last time. The line company was there and we were escorted back to the same L.Z. we had come in on. Some of the guys said to us, "Good job Recon," and we said thanks and wished them good hunting. I took one last look at all the dead bodies and shuddered inside. We had been very, very lucky indeed.

I wondered why the Gooks didn't press their attack. They surely had us outgunned and outnumbered. It dawned on me that they were probably just as scared as we were. I knew that I wouldn't want to cross that stream and join their dead comrades in a hail of gunfire. Maybe it was the sheer speed in which we mowed down their lead element. I guess I'll never know, but that stream is etched in my memory forever.

We got to the L.Z. a very happy group of guys. We sat around recalling the events of the past week. Everyone was laughing and joking. Noise discipline went out the window. We had a lot of G.I.'s

around us for protection. It felt good to talk instead of whisper. Guv looked at D.J. and me and said, "You guys ain't cherry no more." Those words were music to my ears. I was now a combat veteran. Our slicks arrived and we headed back to Evans. The laughing and joking continued all the way back.

When we touched down at Evans, we got the best greeting we would ever get. There, waiting for us, was the whole Recon platoon led by Teenager and Lt. Scaggs. Lt. Scaggs had brought to the pad a trailer full of beer and soda sitting on a sea of ice. We made our way to the drinks amidst the congratulations and questions.

Up until February 14th, Charlie team had the reputation of being the best team in Recon. Well, the best team was now Bravo team with Junior in command. We headed back to the company area, led by Lt. Scaggs with his trailer load of beer. Teenager informed us that the Recon platoon led the whole Battalion in "body count" and that Bravo team led the way. To my knowledge, that record stood until April 1st.

As usual, Recon partied well into the night. Our hooch looked worse than the kill zone we had just left. Even Teenager joined in the festivities. He was so proud of Recon and Bravo team in particular. The partying went well into the night. I got as smashed as the rest of the guys, but I was more scared than ever. Those dead Gooks were still fresh in my mind. It could have been the other way around. We could be laying out in that stream, and the Gooks could be celebrating their victory.

I had been in Recon less than three weeks and had already earned my C.I.B. What did the next 11 months hold in store for us? Cam Ranh Bay seemed like a thousand miles away and Whippy was a different world altogether. My world now was the jungle and my family was Bravo team. I was sure of only two things. It was not going to be an easy tour and to survive we had to shoot first and ask questions later. Till next time.

J. Mihalko



Ripcord Trivia

The dates of Ripcord, March 12 and July 23 represent the birthdays of Chip Collins (March 12) and Gen. Ben L. Harrison, and John "Doc Speed" Sherba (July 23).

Ray "BLACKIE" Blackman
D, 2/501

There are constant reminders of Vietnam all around us in our everyday life. Every time I hear the distinct sound of a chopper, I get a chill up my spine. I stop what I'm doing, wherever I am, and scan the skies. If I find it up there, I watch it until it's out of sight, half expecting it to land at my feet.

When I spot a Phantom, which is often as I live near the Air National Guard, I get the chill, my heart goes wild and I start to sweat. If you have ever been close to an air strike and have heard the huge shrapnel chopping down trees nearby, then you know the feeling.

When several "reminders" combine together, there is a chance that the Nam instincts will find a way from the corner of your mind where they lay in wait till needed again.

Flashback

Early Spring, 1984

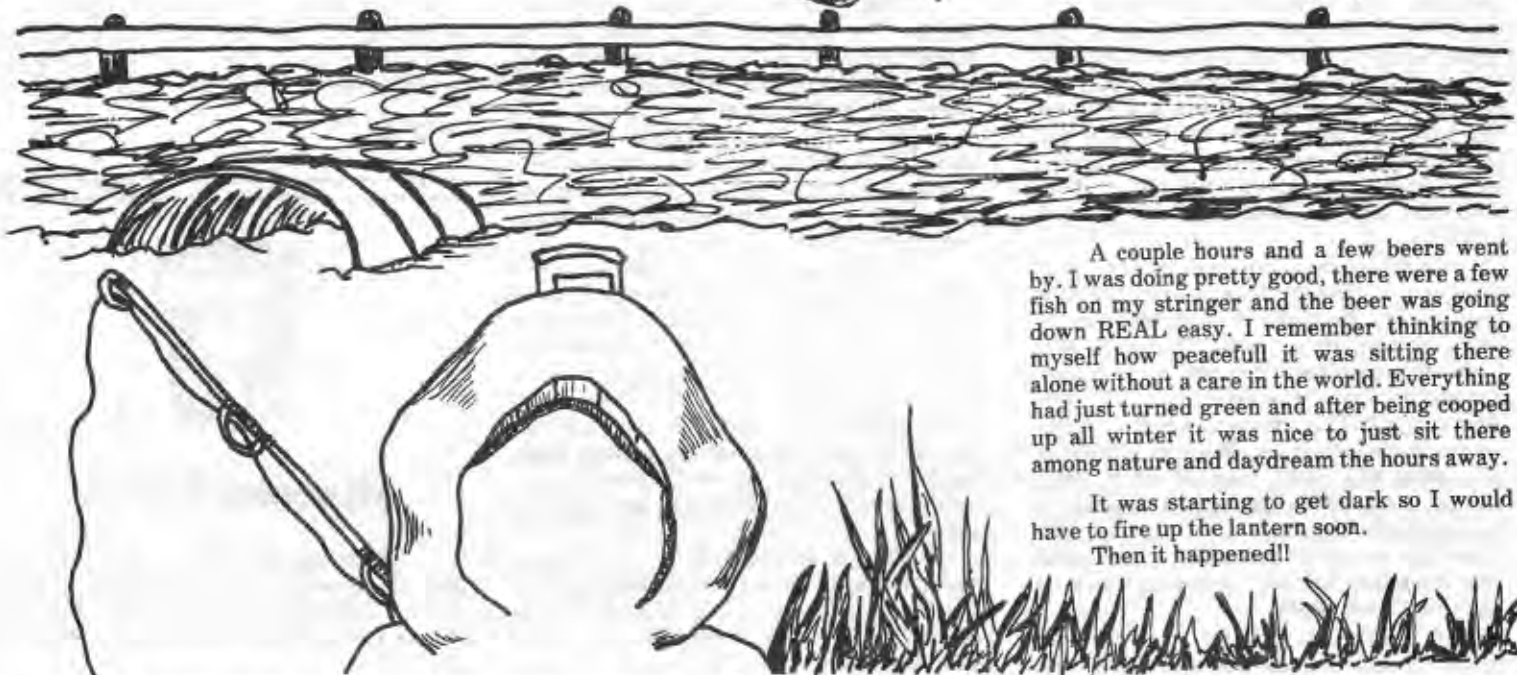
After getting home from work, I decided to go fishing. Solid grey clouds filled the sky and there was a steady mist, you know the kind, not really raining, just wet all over. I didn't think much about it at the time, but it was very much like a typical monsoon day.

Anyway, I've always had pretty good luck catching fish in this kind of weather. I grabbed my lantern, two fishing poles, a cooler of beer, some worms and jumped in my truck.

"I'm gonna catch me a bunch of fish, man!"

Since it was late afternoon, I decided to try my luck at the lake near my place. I parked my truck across the road from a wooded area where the main lake formed an inlet. After crossing the road, I found myself in a thick wooded area with heavy underbrush and tall weeds. God, this looks familiar!! Next time I fish here I'll bring my Corn Knife to cut a trail.

After working my way to the inlet, I settled in for some serious fish catching. I sat on a log along the bank with my feet dangling a couple feet above the water. Boy, would I just love to have a mess of big old Catfish for supper.



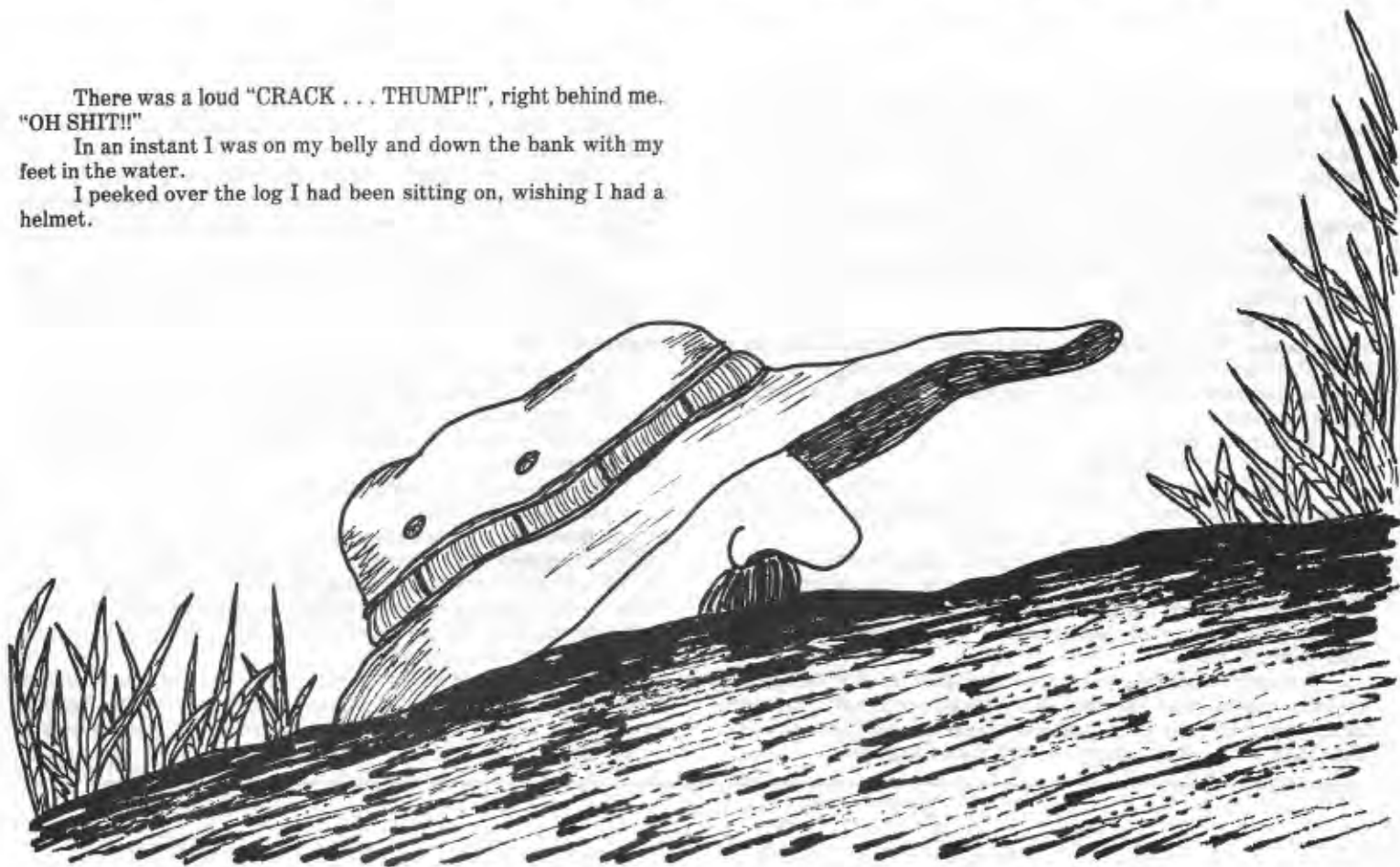
A couple hours and a few beers went by. I was doing pretty good, there were a few fish on my stringer and the beer was going down REAL easy. I remember thinking to myself how peacefull it was sitting there alone without a care in the world. Everything had just turned green and after being cooped up all winter it was nice to just sit there among nature and daydream the hours away.

It was starting to get dark so I would have to fire up the lantern soon.
Then it happened!!

There was a loud "CRACK . . . THUMP!!", right behind me.
"OH SHIT!!"

In an instant I was on my belly and down the bank with my feet in the water.

I peeked over the log I had been sitting on, wishing I had a helmet.



The next thought that popped into my mind was, "I don't have a fucking gun, man!!!" This can't be happening to me. How the hell did they find me after all these years? . . . They gotta be the gooks we were fighting on 805.

Think man . . . you gotta get the hell outa here, now!!! Then my mind went to work. The truck is only about a half mile from here . . . I'll have to cross the road.

I could low crawl through the woods . . . NO, I can't leave the same way I came in . . . might be an ambush.

I could swim to the culvert that goes under the road, crawl through and have an easy hump to my truck. They would be looking for me on the road and the culvert would get me past them. I could just see myself breast stroking toward the culvert with a stinking fishing knife tightly clenched in my teeth.



What if they're waiting at the damn truck?? Well, then I could hump cross the fields to my house, pick up my 22 automatic, come back and nail them! This little war will be held on my turf so I will have the advantage this time.

Where are they? How many? What do they have for weapons? If I sneak out, they might follow me home. No, I gotta end this here and now . . . I'm sick of running!

Maybe this was supposed to happen. I don't know, like some sort of un-finished business.

I've got an old rusty fishing knife. That will help. I can make some spears!! I've got some gas in the lantern. What can I use for a fuze? They know I'm alone. Why haven't they come yet?

Better slide to the side . . . an RPG could hit that branch above my head.

Branch! . . . Branch???

"HOLD EVERYTHING"!!!

What the fuck am I thinking? This can't be REAL! Just calm down. Why would they go through all this trouble just to get ME? I've got to take it easy and think this out.

It was probably just a dead branch falling from a tree!! I'm simply gonna open another beer (my old one was spilled when I dug in) and continue fishing. I'll be a little more quiet though. I don't think I'll fire up the lantern either. Well, I guess my survival instinct is still intact.

I quietly re-baited my lines, popped open another beer (with my hand cupped over the top), lit a cigarette (cupped), and went on fishing. Every noise I heard was magnified and I was shaking from head to toe, even though I wasn't scared anymore.

All of this happened in a fraction of a second. My God, am I crazy or what?

I tried to force myself to think of something different. It was no use. My mind was riveted on Vietnam and all the undescrivable feelings that a grunt had while being hunter/hunted in those jungles. There was no way to change it.

I tried to think about the "Good Times" over there . . . the mud slide, the mail bag. I recalled every detail . . . wasn't shaking so bad anymore. I thought about all the funny things that had happened to me.

I was calm now, though still very alert.

When the fish stopped biting and my cooler went dry, I reluctantly decided to go on home. I calmly, but quietly worked my way toward the truck in a manner that any of you old Point men would be very proud.

My wife asked my how I had gotten so muddy.

I told her, "I slipped!!"

I have thought a lot about what happened in my mind that night. It seems the monsoon type rain, nightfall and the "JUNGLE" area I was in . . . then the branch that fell, all contributed to my slipping into the Grunt — instincts that had been laying dormant, on the tip of my brain, just waiting for a reason to be dusted off and used again.

The situation was the formula that had transformed me, from a mild mannered, totally relaxed fisherman, into the fighting survivalist that I some times think of as just a figment of my imagination.

The End



A Letter

... From Tom Chase, 163rd AVN Co., to his parents. This was right after the Ripcord Extraction.

23 July 70

Dear Mom & Dad,

Firebase Ripcord is no more. I'm sure that you have or will have heard the news on our firebase. Remember my telling you earlier how bad it was out there? Believe me I know. Well, I got up at 4:00 a.m. today. We left at 5:00 a.m. for Firebase Ripcord to begin the extraction.

The N.V.A. have been mortaring and ambushing them for three weeks. We've lost 61 men KIA and 345 men WIA there this month alone. It's astounding! There are only a few hundred men out there on and around it.

We began pulling our troops out. But first at dawn Chinooks came in to haul out material. There are some six 155-MM guns. Then came Water Blivets, Radio Shacks, Radar, etc. This was done under heavy enemy mortar and small arms fire. Our Cobras and Air Force fighters were working on the enemy but they still kept on. Our Chinook was shot down and had to make an emergency landing on Ripcord.

We started to pull out personnel at 10:30 a.m. This too was done under heavy enemy mortar and small arms fire. Three ships would go in to make a pick-up. A Cobra would lead the way strafing with its Mini-gun and Rockets. The three ships would be close behind while briefly Charlie had his head down. This was fine but as the ships approached to land, mortar fire fell and they had to turn away. As they turned, they would again run into heavy small arms fire.

The Cobras would work out in the area where the firing came from but Charlie was well dug in and had his head down. The ships were forced to pick up the men under constant mortar fire. We just couldn't knock out the goddamn mortars and they had Ripcord zeroed in.

The final troops were taken off around 2:00 p.m. Just as they took off, a mortar round scored a direct hit on the Chinook that had made the emergency landing at dawn. They probably did us a favor. After the troops were off, we would have had to destroy it anyway.

Everything and everybody was finally off Ripcord. A task that took from 5:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. That Place is hell out there. Surprisingly one man was still left on Ripcord. A Cobra saw him walking around. They immediately had a LOH OH-6A to go in and get him. They barely got him off in time. Five minutes later several N.V.A. charged up the hill and threw satchel

charges into the empty bunkers and operations center. That guy was very lucky.

The only ship I know of that we lost today was the Chinook. I don't know how many men were killed during the extraction. I do know the Battalion Commander and his S-3 Major Tanner were killed.

I don't know what is going to happen now. It's funny to be flying in the sky and watch the ships go in and see all those mortar rounds exploding on Ripcord. And you know what? There ain't a god-damned thing we could do about it. We couldn't even find the mortars let alone knock them out.

We may have pulled out so we could put in arclights (B-52 raids) on them. Then we may go back to set up Ripcord again but I doubt it. If there's one thing I'll remember

for the rest of my life, it will be the extraction of Firebase Ripcord.

Boy! Am I tired! Nine and one-half hours in my gun well, getting out only to refuel at Camp Evans. To top it off, I went to bed at 2:00 a.m., so I only had two hours sleep.

Well, Ripcord aside I'm fine. Hope you don't worry about me. I'm too short. Besides they can't hurt me, I'm from Cuyahoga Heights.

I'll close for now, Mom and Dad. I'll be seeing you soon so have my room ready for an old veteran from Vietnam. I came here out of curiosity and to experience war. It's an unpleasant experience. Take care.

Your son,

Tom

**The Ripcord Association
P. O. Box 1834
Wise, Virginia 24293**

TO: Those attending the Ripcord Reunion

FROM: Chip Collins

SUBJECT: Business Meeting held 10-12-86
at VFW Post 5351

SUMMARY OF MEETING

Present were Bill Heath, John Mihalko, Frank Marshall, Chuck Hawkins, Tom Shepherd, Chip Collins, Fred Behrens. Also present were Bruce Oliver, Don Davidson, and Bud Fitzsimmons representing VFW Post 5351, as well as other Whippany veterans groups.

The meeting opened with much enthusiasm over the result of the just held First Annual Ripcord Reunion. Comment was made that the group had generated a lot of energy. That energy should be directed toward positive results. Much discussion then focused on the fact that although we had taken a big step in terms of the Association being able to get together a first time, many of our Ripcord brethren were still unaware of the Association's existence. Chuck Hawkins estimated that with the entire 2/506, elements of 1/506, 2/501, 3/187 and others that at least some 2,000 people were involved on or around Ripcord during the 23 days in July.

Ways were then strategized as to how we could best begin a strong outreach effort. Chuck Hawkins had designed a notice to appear in various publications. Other potential contracts were noted: Special Services at VA Hospitals, Local Veterans Outreach Centers, DAV, Marine Corps League, Vietnam War Newsletter, American Legion, Screaming Eagle (new notices for publications we've covered in past), Soldier of Fortune, etc. (members of the group to get back with contacts they

were willing to make to avoid duplication). The use of Compu-Serve was discussed at length.

Tom Shepherd, who works with VA, agreed to process letters to those individuals we might have names and social security numbers listed on old orders. He noted, in his case, the only people he could locate would be those that were disabled. To protect the contact's privacy, he would simply direct a letter from us, explaining the Association to the individual who might not choose to contact us back. (Those of you with old orders, send to Chip for eventual posting to Tom).

Discussion of a need for outreach led naturally to what intermediate and long term goals of the Association should be. It was agreed that outreach should bring us a regular membership of 200 by this time next year. Another intermediate goal was to work toward a Second Reunion in Washington next year with a trip to "The Wall". Chuck Hawkins agreed to act as on-site coordinator for next year's event.

Briefly discussed were long term goals. Chuck Hawkins had mentioned at the pre-reunion meeting in July that at the very least Ripcord dead and survivors alike were deserving of a memorial. Bruce Oliver of our Reunion Committee suggested the provocative idea of a living memorial in the form of a scholarship, etc.. Another long possibility is the Associations being able to help in some way to get Jim Fairhall's account of the Ripcord Action published. One way would simply be to get media attention focused on the battle. Once that was done at the National level, it should be easier to sell the idea of a book to a publisher.

It was agreed the group would work at purifying many of the inaccuracies that existed in print of the battle. For instance Delta 2/501's KIA'S are listed as those of D 2/506. Also correcting spelling errors on the mailing list and in the body of the newsletter were to be a priority.

One item needing resolution was the

future of the newsletter. Some months earlier Bill Heath had expressed a desire to lend his professional publishing expertise. Following discussion of the matter it was agreed Chip Collins would continue to serve in an editing function and Bill would put together a final package, typeset and publish it. Bill to have 2-3 weeks lead time publishing.

Given the numbers now present on mailing list, it was felt the newsletter should be kept to a minimum length for monthly mailings (but still include regular features, Incoming, New Contacts, Retrospectives, etc.) However, every third monthly issue would be along the lines of Bill's recent special edition which included more art, photos, memorabilia of era.

Finances and general business were discussed. The group overwhelmingly voted to continue to have no dues required for regular or associate membership. Members would be expected to contribute what they could when they could. Collins noted that in many cases members donated much more valuable time to the Association than

they might have done financially. It was agreed the newsletter would soon have a tearout indicating whether or not members wished to continue receiving newsletter. This due to many members having been referred by someone else but not having formally contacted the Association to confirm their interest. The mailing list could then be purified to keep expenses down.

Although Chip did not formally report on the Association's finances at the meeting, this might be a good place to insert that since July 1985 some \$1,218.90 were contributed to the Association. The bulk of this has gone for postage, telephone and newsletter printing costs. By the time of the reunion, some \$115.00 remained in account.

At the meeting Bruce Oliver and others of the Reunion Committee reported raising in excess of \$1,500.00 for the Reunion Event. Once the dust settles and all Reunion expenses are accounted for, it was expected that some few hundred dollars would remain to go toward the

Association's coffers. A phone call to J. Mihalko at the time of this writing found that the Whippany VFW was still raising funds.

To more effectively deal with business finances and fund raising, it was agreed that John Mihalko would establish the Ripcord Association as a Non-Profit Corporation in the State of New Jersey. It was observed that once the mailing list reaches 200, we would qualify for group library postage rates. To establish the Corporation two organizational officers would be needed. Chip Collins was then elected President of the Association. John Mihalko was appointed as Secretary/Treasurer. It was agreed Bruce Oliver would continue as treasurer pro-tem until Reunion accounts were settled and a transfer of responsibility could be assumed. John would then continue the checking account originated for the Reunion as the Association's regular account. Future Association contributions to be sent to Ripcord Association, C/O John Mihalko, 10 Legion Place, Whippany, New Jersey 07981.

The meeting was then adjourned.

Whippany/An End Of A Mission?

Reunion Participants

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

Whippany Support Team

Don Davidson
 Bruce Oliver
 Bill Gross
 Ladies Auxiliary of Post 5351: Mary Nemec, Mary Gross, Bud Fitzsimmon's daughter, Ann Marie, plus many other ladies and gentlemen representing veterans groups and the tour of Whippany.

Other Forms of Support

- Cable of support and congratulations from President Ronald Reagan transmitted from Air Force One and read at banquet dinner.
- Letter of support and congratulations from New Jersey Governor 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 October 9, 1986.
- Presentations by State Level Veterans Representatives at Memorial Service October 12, 1986.

Brief Reunion Agenda

- 10-10-86 p.m. — Get Acquainted Hour at VFW Post 5351
 10-11-86 a.m. to early p.m. — Trips to Statue of Liberty and George Washington's Headquarters.
 10-11-86 9:00 p.m. to 10-12-86 3:00 a.m. — Banquet dinner. John Mihalko, J.D., Chuck Hawkins, Keynote speaker. Other speakers included Bud Fitzsimmons, Don Davidson, Bruce Oliver, Chip Collins, Jim Fairhall.
 —Hanover Proclamation presented to Chip Collins. Proclamation to remain with whoever is Association president.
 —Awards to John, both formal and humorous, for his diligent work as Reunion Coordinator.
 —Presentation of enlarged, framed photo of Firebase Ripcord to VFW Post 5351 and Town of Whippany from the Ripcord Association.
 —Door prizes galore.
 10-12-86 — Memorial Service. Numerous speakers, Color Guard, 21 gun salute. Reading of names of those fallen at Ripcord by John Mihalko, Chip Collins, Chuck Hawkins and Bill Heath.
 10-12-86 3:00 p.m. — Business meeting of Association.
 10-12-86 p.m. thru 10-13-86 a.m. — Farewells.

Reunion Reflections

Almost ever since I've been aware that I would need to write something about the Reunion, I've dreaded it. Even now that it is over, I'm still having difficulty coming to grips with recording it. Some of my feelings come from the emotions the Reunion evoked. Others come from knowing that no matter how hard I try, I could never give all the credit due to all the magnificent people who made it what it was.

At best, perhaps all I can do, at this point, is mention parts of the weekend that were notable to me and offer some later comment on what the Reunion did for the Ripcord Association. Hopefully others will write of their reflections to give it the

perspective it deserves, to be shared in other issues of the newsletter.

For a first time, the Reunion was absolutely top-rate. The people that came were magnificent. An early indicator was that by the time people left the VFW on the first night, there was a strong sense of kinship.

Our support team, in the form of VFW Posts 5351, 155, The Veterans Alliance, and our own Whippany Reunion Committee, did much to insure its success. Their advice and support kept the whole project afloat. I'm only wondering now what John Mihalko will use as an excuse to get back down regularly to the VFW and get sloshed. Maybe that's a good project for the Committee.

We could never thank the fantastic gals of the Ladies Auxiliary enough for the good food and cheer they heaped on us. I thought Virginia was known for its southern hospitality and New Jersey for the mafia. But no southern belle I know could hold a light to these girls.

I never thought I would have anything in common with Vets who served in World War II and Korea. My work in July and throughout the Reunion weekend with Don Davidson, Bill Gross, and Bud Fitzsimmons taught me differently. In fact, I feel as if I've been firmly and subtly put in my place by these guys and right now I know very few people I admire and respect more.

Bruce Oliver, the stereotypical Marine, a sucker for every Marine joke imaginable; but somehow, I've managed to like him. In fact, looking at him is looking at me. I'm sorry, Bruce, that there will probably be no Reunions of your unit in Vietnam. But I'm proud that the Ripcord Association has provided you the opportunity to do so vicariously. You would have made an excellent Screaming Eagle.

Apart from the Veterans Groups and Associations involved with us, we were made to feel a part of the town of Whippany, Township of Hanover. The Veterans of Ripcord came home that weekend and the town they came home to was Whippany. I would propose that Whippany, New Jersey officially be recognized as headquarters of the Ripcord Association. I have a sense that as we reunite in the future, that Whippany will always be drawing us back.

In much the same way Whippany has adopted us, so has Jim Fairhall. He was one of the first to understand the significance of Ripcord, not only to history but to us. He has adopted in some fashion our cause, that Ripcord not be taken lightly and never be forgotten. Rest assured, Jim, that the group has patience with your effort, and that their only requirement be understanding and accuracy. We stand by to help in any way possible.

Chuck Hawkins, you were located in the last several months as our destiny with the Reunion was rolling like a runaway boxcar. The Association has much to thank you for in your leadership of the past few months. Unfortunately we've gotten addicted and will need regular doses to sustain the level of leadership energy this Association is beginning to require. Your theme as Keynote speaker on the value of individual effort was never more true than when applied to you.

John Mihalko has to be the Pied-Piper of Whippany and Reunions in general. As soon as you heard of the Ripcord Association, you were ready to join and to act. But, not only were you a joiner, you too were a leader. The sweet song you sang, not only to members of the Association, but to your town as well, has been "Come dream this dream with me". You caused people to see the dream of a Reunion and helped us all to make it a reality. The thanks here comes from all of us, John.

I don't know about others, but the Memorial Service Sunday caused a great deal of weight to be lifted from my shoulders. Although there is much we can yet 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 held Sunday afternoon did two things. It made us realize how far we've come. It 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

Talking About Vietnam: The War at Home

The son of a professional soldier, Nicholas Proffitt passed his childhood bouncing around the country from one Army post to another. As a young man he served in the "Old Guard", the STRAC outfit - housed in colonial barracks and dating back to the Mexican-American War - which mounts honor guards in the Washington, D.C. area and attends burials at Arlington National Cemetery. Later he became a journalist and covered the Vietnam War for *Newsweek*.

Proffitt drew heavily on this background in writing *Gardens of Stone* [1983], his first novel. Of his main characters, two are enlisted men in the Old Guard, while the third, a woman, is a reporter for the *Washington Post*. The title refers to the Arlington Cemetery, that vast "garden" where the Old Guard troopers cynically perform their depressing duties. The novel's events take place in the middle 1960s, during the period in America of Vietnam's rise from obscurity to an object of divisive obsession.

For the most part, Proffitt's plot unfolds in the Arlington - Washington area. A young private, Jack Willow, reluctantly joins the Old Guard, biding his time until he can go to OCS and volunteer to fight the tide of Communism in Southeast Asia. He becomes friends with his platoon sergeant, a veteran of three wars named Clell Hazard, and with Hazard's hardbitten buddy, Sergeant Major Nelson. A subplot follows Hazard's relationship with Samantha Huff, an attractive, fortyish reporter who gets involved with the antiwar movement at the same time that Hazard feels increasingly torn between his doubts about the war and his loyalty to the Army.

We learn about Willow's boyhood as an Army brat through a series of italicized passages which punctuate the text in chronological order. These scenes bring us up to his decision to enlist in the Army and afterwards portray his disillusioning experiences in Vietnam. A solemn prologue identifies Willow in terms of his childhood fantasies as an archetypal soldier, present at various ancient and modern campaigns where he met the odd defeat but never - until Vietnam - "an inglorious whipping, unmarked by heroism, true grit, and a larger meaning in the overall strategic picture."

This prologue points up a problem with Proffitt's depiction of his central character. Except for short stretches in the descriptions of his boyhood, Jack Willow never really comes alive. He remains one-dimensional, a personification of gung-ho idealism.

Proffitt does better at the difficult job of drawing a sympathetic, believable picture of his other main character, a career NCO. Both Hazard and his friend Goody Nelson rise above the gruff, uneducated stereotype that we might expect. In fact, Proffitt overdoes it with Nelson, who not only quotes poetry and philosophy, but appears to have studied military history with the thoroughness of a Prussian staff officer. Both men, however, are far more rounded characters than Jack Willow.

Again, Proffitt depicts the love affair between Hazard and Samantha Huff with considerable skill. Our interest flags only during their interminable conversations. This is a problem throughout the novel. Dialogue carries too great a burden,

especially in exploring the tactics and morality of the war. This remains true even though the author, through his characters, makes several interesting points.

One of the best things in **Gardens of Stone** is the setting. The novel begins with a detailed description of the burial of an officer in a raw, newly developed section of the cemetery — one marked by place — names from Vietnam. As time passes, these burials occur more and more often. Their trappings — honor guard, firing party, drummer, bugler and [for an officer] riderless horse — become symbols of a grim ritual celebrating the escalation of the

war. The men of the Old Guard perform these and other rituals of Stateside Army life with cynical efficiency. Then they, too, are shipped out to Vietnam.

On the whole, **Gardens of Stone** is a talky novel, with a tendency towards soap opera. Yet it is also skillfully put together, serious in purpose and original in its slant on Vietnam. Best of all, it is highly readable.

J. Fairhall





Standing [L to R] — Chip Collins, Dick Cable, Bill Heath, Chuck Hawkins, John Sherba, Fred Behren, Rick Blythe and Tom Shepherd. Squatting [L to R] — Frank Marshall, John Mihalko, and George Westervelt.



Sitting inside the VFW Hall, Chuck Hawkins, Bill Heath and Tom Shepherd are enjoying a cold beer while looking at the Special Edition Newsletter. All three members were in Alpha Co. 2/506th Inf.

Sporting a nice handlebar mustache and overseeing what's going on, is Fred Behrens, who was used to looking down at them, because he flew Dustoff Medivac choppers.



[L to R] Don Davidson, Bruce Oliver, Bud Fitzsimmons and Bill Gross.



These Ladies Auxiliary members were the reunions "supply" support group. They made sure we had plenty of great food, hot coffee and cold beer. (Not necessarily in that order.).



John Mihalko of Echo Company, is seen here doing a little "Recon" work that he is so famous for. The A.O. that he seems to be checking out was code named "Glenda". It was later learned that "Glenda" was assigned to Capt. Hawkins of Alpha Company.



Here we see Sgt. Bruce Oliver of the Marine Corp. trying desperately to convince Capt. Chuck Hawkins (A 2/506) U. S. Army, that the Marines actually did participate in the Vietnam experience. To the left, you can see John Mihalko ignoring Bruce and trying to order another round of drinks.

Vietnam Reunions Helped

Starting with an idea born out of need and frustration, Larry Horn, a 38-year-old disabled Maine veteran has turned a dream into reality — a registry of Vietnam veterans to make their reunions easier to achieve.

Larry, wounded during the 1968 Tet offensive, started the Vietnam veterans registry last summer.

"After being unemployed for some time, I thought the registry would be the ideal thing to fulfill my desire to work and to serve other veterans of my era," he says.

After attempting to organize a reunion for the 24th Evac. Hospital, he soon learned he was not alone in terms of his frustration concerning reunions for Vietnam veterans.

"I received calls from Vietnam veterans from across the country describing similar problems in organizing reunions," he says.

The major objectives of the registry are to facilitate the location of Vietnam veterans and to serve as a clearing house for all Vietnam veteran reunions.



In the last few months Larry says he received letters from a dozen unit and division associations, but he admits he is not even close to registering even 10% of all associations.

After the registry is well established, it will assist in the creation of memorial funds, promote reunions and conduct surveys to determine the needs of Vietnam veterans.

Answering letters and mailing registration forms, from a small office in his home, near Bridgton, Maine, has almost become a full time job, but Larry says he welcomes the challenge. Over a five-year period, he hopes to process 100,000 reg-

istration forms. His address is RR 1, Box 585 A, Bridgton, Maine 04009.

To guarantee the confidentiality of the registry, Larry has made it impossible for anyone within the registry to sell or transmit for personal gain any information in its possession. Access to the names on file is limited strictly to Vietnam veterans who have registered. No person or group has access to the entire directory and even reunion committees will have to follow a strict set of guidelines.

Registration and inquiries are free to Vietnam veterans, but Larry admits that donations are welcome. Larry and his wife Fran have invested nearly \$1,500 in the registry and they readily admit it has not been easy on their family budget. He is a member of Post 685, Reading, Mass.

**Vietnam Veterans
Registry, Inc.
P. O. Box 430
Bridgton, Maine 04009**

Larry Horn, the founder of the Registry, enlisted in the Army February 1967. He received his basic training at Ft. Jackson, S.C. and after a short stint at Ft. Mamouth, N.J. was transferred to Ft. Sam Houston, Texas for medic training. Larry arrived in Vietnam the day before Christmas 1967; and after the usual processing and in-country training was assigned to the 9th Inf. Div., 9th Med. Btn., C Co.. His assignment was a small aid station near Tan-An. On February 28, 1968, during the Tet Offensive, he was severely wounded during a mortar attack and was med-evaced to the 24th Evac. Hospital. After spending three weeks at the 24th he was air-evaced to Camp Zama in Japan and three months later to Chelsea Naval Hospital, Mass.. Larry was released from the hospital in November 1968 and two years later permanently retired from the service. He established the Registry in the summer of 1985 as a means of fulfilling his desire to work and to serve other veterans of his era. Currently he resides in Sweden, Me., with his wife Fran and two year old daughter Alycia.

ANNOUNCING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS REGISTRY INC.

The registry is an autonomous nonprofit corporation established for the following purposes:

Assist Vietnam veterans in locating friends made as a result of their service

Assist Vietnam veterans in locating fellow comrades in order to substantiate veterans claims.

Assist Vietnam veterans in locating another veteran next of kin.

To promote solidarity among veterans and to ascertain their needs through surveys.

To assist veterans in the creation of memorial funds.

To assist veterans in organizing reunions.

The registry has no membership, no dues and is a totally free service to all registered Vietnam veterans. It is not a veterans group: it is best described as a computerized information center. Access to the names and addresses on file with the registry is limited strictly to those Vietnam veterans that have registered.

The first main project of the registry is to organize a reunion for the 24th Evac. Hospital, Vietnam. If you would like to obtain a registration form or info about the reunion, please send a business size S.A.S.E. to:

Vietnam Veterans Registry

P.O. Box 430

Bridgton, ME 04009

As a donation supported nonprofit corp., the registry welcomes assistance from any individual, group or corporation.

It is hoped that all Vietnam veterans will register regardless of whether they intend to use the services of the registry.

Larry Horn
Founder/Director

Fran Deslauriers
Sec./Treas.



TOWNSHIP OF HANOVER

P.O. BOX 250
1000 ROUTE 10
WHIPPANY, N.J. 07981

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF HANOVER
COMMEMORATING THE FIRST ANNUAL REUNION OF THE RIPCORD ASSOCIATION AND
RECOGNIZING THE VALOR, COURAGE AND LOYALTY OF THE SECOND BATTALION,
506 INFANTRY BRIGADE AT THE SEIGE OF FIRE BASE RIPCORD IN SOUTH VIET NAM

WHEREAS, in July 1970, the Second Battalion, 506 Infantry Brigade was called upon to prevent the incursion of North Vietnamese Troops into the Ashau Valley and from amassing men and materiel for a major assault on the Southern Provinces; and

WHEREAS, members of the Second Battalion, 506 Infantry Brigade established a fortification to be known as Fire Base Ripcord; and

WHEREAS, during the first twenty three (23) days of July the Second Battalion was locked in fierce combat which resulted in the loss of sixty one (61) lives and three hundred fifty four (354) wounded; and

WHEREAS, the battle at Fire Base Ripcord, perhaps the last major ground engagement for American Forces, was overshadowed by the invasion of Cambodia and has been dubbed as the "Forgotten Battle"; and

WHEREAS, during the Viet Nam Conflict the men and women of the United States Armed Services gave of themselves unselfishly on behalf of the cause to protect and defend the freedom and rights of other people; and

WHEREAS, those unsung heroes of Fire Base Ripcord both living and dead should be recognized for their valor, courage and sacrifices; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Hanover is indeed honored that the survivors of Fire Base Ripcord will hold its First Annual Reunion between October 10 and 12 at our Veterans of Foreign War Post No. 5351.

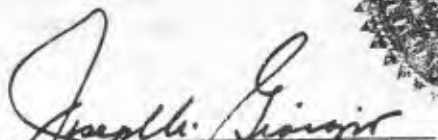
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Hanover in the County of Morris as follows:

1. That the governing body hereby proclaims Sunday, October 12 as a day of remembrance in honoring the survivors and fallen heroes of Fire Base Ripcord during its seige from July 1 to July 23, 1970.

2. That the governing body calls upon all citizens of Hanover Township to remember the courage, devotion and loyalty of all our Viet Nam Veterans and especially those who fought so valiantly at Fire Base Ripcord.

3. All citizens are encouraged to attend an outdoor Viet Nam Veterans Memorial Service at 12:30 P.M. on Sunday, October 12 at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post No. 5351 to honor the Fallen Heroes of Fire Base Ripcord.

DATED: October 9, 1986
ATTEST:


Joseph A. Giorgio, Township Clerk



TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
TOWNSHIP OF HANOVER
COUNTY OF MORRIS
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

S. C. Iannaccone, Mayor