



RIPCORD REPORT



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

Issue # 144

May 2026

2026 Ripcord Reunion

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

The *Ellie*
BEACH RESORT
MYRTLE BEACH



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 8 and on our website. www.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 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 **The Blues Brothers, Shania Twain, Barry White, Alan Jackson and Elvis.** This is not a dinner show, so you might want to eat before you go.

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!



Ripcord Association Update

by Peter Meloro



Well, Spring has finally arrived and summer cannot be too far down the road. It seems like yesterday when we attended our reunion in Myrtle Beach but six months have already passed and much has happened during that time. Frank Marshall has had to reestablish our website after it was hacked. He not only completed this task but, in my opinion, has dramatically improved the content and quality of the site. Having interacted with Frank often during the repair of the site, I can attest to the fact that he invested significant time and energy in bringing the new site to its present state. We owe Frank our appreciation for all his efforts.

During our Business Meeting at our reunion I brought up the need for donations to our Association and I specifically mentioned the option of donating in conjunction with the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) associated with 401K type accounts. I am happy to note that we have received \$6,500 in donations in this manner. One donation was for \$1,500 and one for \$5,000. It has been our practice to list the names of those who donated but not the amount. The individual who donated the \$5,000 requested to remain anonymous. If anyone is considering using their RMD to donate to our Association, please contact me for the appropriate tax exempt code. My cell phone number is 732-947-1664. Additionally, we received donations from members totally \$3,861. Recently, I received another donation of \$1,500 from someone we all know, respect and owe a debt of gratitude. I received a check from Jim Smither for \$1,500. I will quote Jim's message received with the donation; "This is the amount that I received from the publisher as an advance, so I thought you people, who made the book possible, should have it". Thank you Jim. The sum of our donations since October is \$10,361 and it will help us to continue to deliver a quality reunion this year.

I have begun to receive registrations including some who have used the new format on our website. Please remember to forward your check as well. If you are planning to attend, please send your registration and checks as soon as possible. This will allow us to plan ahead and alleviate last minute changes. Hope all is well and I look forward to seeing everyone at our October reunion.

From Jim Smither,

Author



Thanks to all of you who have ordered the book. When you read it, you'll see that a lot of it is in your words rather than mine. I didn't plan it that way, but when you're a historian, you go where your evidence takes you, and I had so many interviews that provided so much good material that it just came out that way. I did my best to treat everyone fairly while trying to get at the reasons why things went wrong when they did, as well as to give people credit for doing their jobs well, which you consistently did.

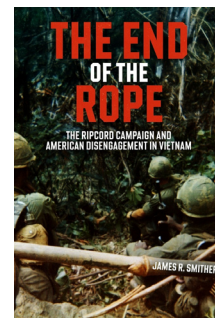
I will be at this year's reunion, and will be happy to sign your copies of the book if you bring them. I am also still interested in collecting more interviews. They won't get into the book unless there's a second edition, but they will go to the YouTube playlist for Ripcord, and into the permanent archive.

I apologize to all of you who were interviewed but didn't make it into the book. I had a word limit to work with, so not everyone fit, especially those of you who were in support roles more than in the field. Some of you may make it into another book that I plan to write, which will focus on the experiences of people who served in Vietnam in roles other than combat soldiers, who tend to get left out of the other books. I look forward to seeing you all again in October.

Jim Smither

Editor's note:

As Peter acknowledged in his update on page 1, Jim Smither donated \$1500 to the Ripcord Association, he said "That the book only happened because of the association and its members, so it's my way of saying thanks for their support."



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

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

Donations

Donations for the year 2025 were from:

- Charles & Tracy Tipton
- John & Carol Christman Baethge
- Larry Wirt
- Paul Buhr
- Steve Manthei
- Shane McCrory
- George & Cheryl Scott
- Peter Meloro
- Frank Selinsky
- James King
- Cheryl Burdette
- Alfred Martin
- Ken Gainer
- Joe Smith
- Steve Funk
- Ken Hamilton
- Bill Hand
- James Smither

Checks payable to: "Ripcord Association".

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

2025 Reunion Yearbooks

Beautiful **full color**

Order your yearbook now!

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. Order your's today! Or, order now and pick it up at the Reunion.
Thanks, Bill Heath Editor.

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.

Ripcord on Facebook

by Anthony Critchlow



Well, summer is about here. Let the fun begin. Like in the last newsletter, I said Dennise and I won't be at this year's reunion. We are filling the summer visiting her sisters who are not doing well. So maybe next year.



We now have 1,600 members on our Facebook page. I want to thank everyone for their contributions to our page. Your posts and pictures help us a lot. If you have pictures of other Vietnam sites that you have been to, please post them too. I just don't want any that you get from other pages or off the internet. I want your pictures. Thanks in advance.

Ok, have a fun summer.

New Members

Armstrong, William	Associate Member
Cecil, Gary	Associate Member
Creed, Daniel	B/3-187th
Hamilton, Kenneth	C/2-506 (Updated)
Hull, Patrick	C/158
Hunt, Kris	C Co. 158th Avn Bn
Jones, Neil	HM Royal Navy
Kiel, Verne	Associate Member
Kolstee, Richard	D/1-506th
Lemire, Sarah	Associate Member
Reilly, Charles	L Company Rangers
Wineland-Groh, Kim	Associate Member
Joshua Stolz	Associate Member

By The Numbers

738 members in our Ripcord Association

599 are Ripcord Veterans

139 are Associate Members

133 receive newsletter via Postal Mail

605 receive the newsletter via e-mail

1,600 Facebook "Ripcord Association Group"

INCOMING MAIL



To Frank Marshall,

I would like to join the Ripcord Association if I am eligible.

I was an Infantry Squad Leader with B Co 3/187th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division from 5 Apr 70 - 27 Feb 71. I visited Vietnam three years ago this month and spent time in Da Nang, Hue and out west to Hamburger Hill and Khe Sanh. I also walked around Camp Evans, FSB Jack and Eagle Beach. The former bases are grown over but small pieces of sandbags are still visible on the ground. Khe Sanh base is a tourist attraction.

I volunteer at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in DC. I enjoy it very much because I learn a lot and meet people from all over the US and the world.

Thank you.

Daniel Creed

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My husband was a great asset to the US Army. He served with the 101st airborne attached to 1st Air Cavalry. I need help with his records. You see, the army sent him home to Chicago after he was wounded in 2 different huey crashes, to be eval at Ft Ord, CA. The records were delayed from his unit and names got mixed. The Afees mistakenly placed him back in BCT, and so never were followed up on, shorting him his next tour in Nam. I am presently looking for help with this injustice. He was honorable and later went in reserves 8663rd Combat and 338 but army never corrected his service in Nam. Please contact me if you can help me. I want to come to any of your events, thank-you all who served, even doorgunners without MOS I found he was placed under 67A. Aviation mechanic code. He was E7 in Vietnam, I miss him so much,,,,VA never got it right to give him anything...What a shame ...I want our families name restored and his full service recognized. His call name was "Cricket"....I am reconstructing his record now. I am a registered nurse that loved him so....
Kim Marie Wineland-Groh
kimwineland@aol.com

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My name is Ramon Santana. I served as a Specialist Four (SP4) and Infantryman (11B20) with Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry from 1969 to 1971. I served as an M203 grenadier ("thumper") in

the 2nd Platoon, Soul Squad, and I was also the Doc protector—staying with our medic during movement and contact to ensure he could reach and treat the wounded. I was one of the last men off the hill during the July 23, 1970 overrun, leaving on the final lift while the NVA were already on the wire. Our platoon stayed until the very end to ensure no one, living or fallen, was left behind.

I am trying to reconnect with two of my brothers from that time and respectfully request your help checking the Association's active and "Fiddler's Green" rosters:

1. Sergeant Clarence Clark – A career soldier who had re-enlisted three times when I served under him.
2. "Brother" Foster from Panama – A key member of our Soul Squad.

I was also informed that Bravo Company was recommended for the Bronze Star during the Ripcord campaign, but I never received mine. If the Association has any record of that award list or the original recommendation, I would be grateful for any guidance.

Currahee!

Ramon Santana

ramon1949@hotmail.com

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Hi Frank,

Greetings from across the pond. I'm an avid reader of the Vietnam War and am a member of your FB association. I've visited Vietnam twice in the past three years with the Vietnam Battle Tours company to cover I, III & IV Corps - from Ap Bac to Dong Ha, Long Tan to LZ Xray, Khe Sanh to Hue and I am intending to visit the US soon to catch up with the previous tour manager.

I came across the history of FSB Ripcord through the book by Keith Nolan and have just purchased 'The End of the Rope' and 'Hell on a Hill Top' here in the UK to understand further what the 101st went through. I will be returning to Vietnam for a third tour sometime in the near future to cover some areas that I haven't managed to get to, this includes Hill 937 and An Loc. On my last tour, I did ask my Vietnamese guide to source transport to get me to deep into the Ashau Valley, however time prevented this. I was born 22nd April 1970, so realise this period happened during my infancy. It would be an honor to support your association and look forward to hearing from you.

Regards Neil Jones

n-jones2@sky.com

DISTINGUISHED & HONORARY MEMBER OF THE REGIMENT

Ft. Campbell, Kentucky

The 506th Infantry Regiment held their DMOR and HMOR ceremony on 19 May 2026 at 2:00pm at the Currahee Memorial. Two of the Ripcord Association were selected to receive this Honor. William (Bill) Heath a Ripcord founding member and Newsletter Editor, was selected as the Distinguished Member Of Regiment and Dr. James Smither, an Associate Member and author of *The End of the Rope* was their Honorary Member Of Regiment. The ceremony inducted a total of 22 Distinguished and five Honorary Members that day.

Dr. Smither was unable to attend but Heath was there with his wife Linda, daughter Jennifer, son David, granddaughter Jenna and her boyfriend Cole, all from Arizona.

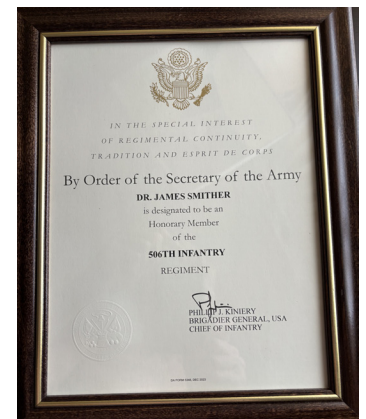
Ceremony was conducted by CPT Joseph Levesque with remarks by LTC Gerald C. Philip, Commander of the 1/506th Infantry Regiment. Presentations were given out by Honorary Colonel of the Regiment (HCOR), Col (R) John "Joe" Johnson and CSM Lenny T. Zawisza, Honorary Sergeant Major of the Regiment (HSGMOR) among others.

Reception followed and static displays of the most modern weapons and vehicles were available to handle and/or ride in. Current troops were in full combat dress, camo faces included. There was a hospitality room in the hotel for food and drink, plus meeting new comrades. Casey Jones Distillery hosted a tour and tasting for 50 attendees. Fun was enjoyed by all.

This event was part of the Annual Reunion of the 101st Airborne Division Association.



William Heath



Dr James Smither

THE SCREAMING EAGLES SONG

WE HAVE A RENDEZVOUS
WITH DESTINY.
OUR STRENGTH AND COURAGE STRIKE THE SPARK
THAT WILL ALWAYS MAKE MEN FREE.
ASSAULT RIGHT DOWN THROUGH THE SKIES OF BLUE;
KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE JOB TO BE DONE
WE'RE THE SOLDIERS OF THE 101st;
WE'LL FIGHT TILL THE BATTLE'S WON!

Reunion Registration sign up

Here are those registered for the reunion as of May 7th. Those marked with asterick are signed up for the Legends Show. Please check the box on the registration form if going to Legends Show.

The reunion registration form is on page 8

- *Richard & Michele Blythe A/E/HHC 2/506
- *Bill Boles D Co 2/506
- Paul Buhr A Co 2/506
- Dave & Connie Cote B/E Co 2/506
- Michael & Christine Dicken B Co 2/506
- Russ & Maryann Dixon B 2/319 Arty
- Leigh & Vicki Freeman C Co 2/506
- Michael Goff B Trp 2/17 Cav
- *Bill & Lynn Hand B Co 2/506
- Don & Linda Holthausen C Co 2/506
- *Jim & Kathy Howton Pathfinder
- *Dave & Sophia Kenyon B/326 Engineers
- Greg & Kristi Kiekintveld B/326 Engineers
- David Lockwood & Ingrid Hietzke A 2/11 Arty
- *Dale Lane & Dianne Grote A Co 2/506
- *Frank and Dee Marshall A Co 2/506
- *Alfred & Sondra Martin A 2/11 Arty
- James & Michelle McCoy D Co 1/506
- *Peter & Chris Meloro C Co 2/506
- *Ray & Sheilla Potts B 2/319 Arty
- Stephen Pullen B Trp 2/17 Cav
- Everett Slaughter & Hale Sommerdorf B Co 2/506
- Joe Smith B/326 Engineers
- James Smither Author
- David & Lisa Synder A 2/11 Arty
- Dale & Janet Tauer D Co 1/506
- *Charles & Tracy Tipton C Co 2/506
- Harry & Dawn Lane (Guest of the Tiptons)

Those marked with *asterick are signed up for the Legends Show

If you sent your registration on-line thru our website, please send your check to Peter. We are showing only those where payment was received. If your name is not showing attending Legends show, let Frank know and I will update the list.

2025 Reunion Update

by John Fowler



When: October 25 – 29, 2026
Where: The Ellie Beach Resort
Tapestry Collection by Hilton
Myrtle Beach Oceanfront
3200 S. Ocean Boulevard
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577
843-315-7100

June is upon us leaving just four months to make hotel reservations at the negotiated rate. If you are going to attend, please make your hotel reservation as soon as you can. That will help with the planning and ordering of the auction and banquet food.

The negotiated room rate is \$110/night plus resort fees and tax. The total daily expense for room, tax and fees is \$141.12. The following is included:

- Free Onsite parking
- 20% off the hotel restaurant breakfast price
- In Room Amenities:
 - Basic guest internet access (up to 2 devices)
 - Unlimited local & 800 access
 - In room bottled water
- Resort Amenities:
 - Walking access to Pier
 - 10% off onsite Gift Shop purchases
 - Use of Beach towels during stay
- Recreation Amenities:
 - Mini golf
 - Life sized games & board games

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: is on our Ripcord Association website.

<https://ripcordassociation.com/ripcord-reunion-information/>

If your contact information has changed, please go to our website and update your membership to keep getting important information about our Ripcord Association

Introducing Our New Ripcord Association Website

Fellow Ripcord veterans, family members, and friends. We are proud to announce the launch of our completely rebuilt Ripcord Association website at www.ripcordassociation.com. The new site has received tremendous response from our members and we invite everyone to visit and explore everything it has to offer.

- **2026 Reunion — Myrtle Beach, SC**

All the information you need for our upcoming 2026 Reunion in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina is on the website. You can now *register for the reunion online* directly through the site. Please note that hotel reservations must be made separately through the hotel link provided on the reunion page. Don't wait — the hotel deadline is September 11, 2026. Visit: ripcordassociation.com/ripcord-reunion-information

- **Newsletters — Current And Past Issues**

The current issue of the Ripcord Report is available on the website for download. But that's not all — every newsletter we have ever published, going all the way back to 1985, is now available in our complete archive. All 144 issues are there, searchable by year, free to download anytime. Visit: ripcordassociation.com/newsletter-archives

- **Member Biographies**

We have begun publishing biographies of the men who fought at Firebase Ripcord on our website. We want YOUR story there too! If you would like to submit a biography and photos to be featured on the site, please send them to Frank Marshall at frankmarshall@ripcordassociation.com. This is a wonderful opportunity to preserve your story for future generations. Visit: ripcordassociation.com/member-biographies

- **GVSU Veteran Interviews — Hear The Men Speak**

Dr. James R. Smither of Grand Valley State University conducted video interviews with over 140 Ripcord veterans for his new book. Most of those interviews are now linked on our website — you can watch and listen to your fellow veterans tell their stories in their own words. Visit: ripcordassociation.com/gvsu-veteran-interviews

- **The End Of The Rope — New Book**

Dr. James R. Smither's long-awaited book "The End of the Rope: The Ripcord Campaign and American Disengagement in Vietnam" This is the most

comprehensive account of the Battle of Firebase Ripcord ever written, based on fifteen years of interviews with our veterans.

Full details on the website at: ripcordassociation.com/end-of-the-rope

Much More On The Website

The new website is packed with content for veterans, family members, and anyone wanting to learn about the Battle of Firebase Ripcord:

- **KIA Casualty List** — all 138 men honored by name, unit, and date.
- **Reunion Yearbooks** — 14 years of reunion yearbooks available to view and download.
- **Videos** — documentaries, National Geographic, War Stories with Oliver North, and more.
- **Books** — every book written about the Battle of Firebase Ripcord.
- **Operation Texas Star** — the official declassified military operations narrative.
- **Unit History** — the complete 2/506th Infantry history for 1970.
- **The Diorama** — the incredible 1/72 scale model of Firebase Ripcord with construction videos.
- **Member Roster** — all 729 members listed and searchable.
- **New Email Program — Please Check Your Spam Folder**

We have implemented a new email program for delivering the newsletter and important updates directly to your inbox. If you have not been receiving our emails please check your spam or junk folder and mark our address as safe. If you are not receiving emails at all please contact Frank Marshall at frankmarshall@ripcordassociation.com to update your email address.

We are proud of what this website represents — a permanent memorial to the 138 Americans who gave their lives at Firebase Ripcord and a home for the survivors, families, and friends who keep their memory alive.

Visit us at www.ripcordassociation.com — and please share the address with anyone who served at Ripcord or wants to know their story.

Frank Marshall

Vice President, FSB Ripcord Association
frankmarshall@ripcordassociation.com

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.