

Fire Support Base



RIPCORD REPORT



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

ISSUE NO. 145

SEPTEMBER 2026

2026 Ripcord Reunion

**The Ellie Beach Resort by Hilton —
October 25–29, 2026**



The 2026 Reunion will be at The Ellie Beach Resort, located at the south end of Myrtle Beach — just three miles from the Myrtle Beach Airport and two miles from the Market Common Shopping and Restaurant District.

Murrells Inlet, the “Seafood Capital of South Carolina,” offers everything from white-tablecloth dining to peanut-shell-on-the-floor burger joints, ten miles from the hotel.

Room rate this year is \$110/night. Resort fee \$15; total with tax and fees is \$141/night. Phone reservations: **1-800-774-1500** — mention **Firestore Ripcord Association, Group Code 904**. Online reservation link: is on our Ripcord Association website. or direct link: <https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/firebase-ripcord-association-26/>

Monday Night Show

Legends Theatre — reserve your seats now



The Ripcord Association has booked 94 adult tickets for Monday, October 26, 2026. Seating begins 6:45pm for the 7:30pm show — \$27 per ticket, casual dress. The show runs about two hours with a fifteen-minute intermission.

Featured impersonators: **The Blues Brothers, Shania Twain, Barry White, Alan Jackson, and Elvis.** Not a dinner show — eat before you go.

Contact Frank Marshall — 609-472-0970 — fbripcord@gmail.com We'll reserve your seats; Pay at reunion check-in. Please confirm if you're coming to the show.

Ripcord Association Update

by Peter Meloro



We are a mere two months away from our 2026 Reunion. I know everyone is looking forward to our annual get together. I have continued to receive sign ups for our event. At the present time, we have 120 people registered to attend. While we will receive additional registrations between now and the start of our reunion, it is unlikely that we will reach the number who attended in 2025. Last year 160 people attended and when comparing 2026 to 2025, we are experiencing a 25% drop in registrations. Hopefully the next two months result in a flurry of registrations. This edition of our Newsletter includes an update of who has registered to attend.

As always we will have a Ladies Auction during our Reunion so please remember to bring an item or items for our raffle. This is and always has been one of the highlights of our event.

I hope this finds everyone in good spirits and ready to enjoy each other's company come October.

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. You can order your yearbook or see it on our website. For your copy, please contact FRANK MARSHALL @ 1-609-472-0970 or email FBripcord@gmail.com The price includes shipping at only \$10.00

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



I hope everyone has had a great summer. Now it's time to get ready for our Reunion. We now have 1633 members on our Facebook page. A big thanks to all who have contributed to our page. Dennise and I won't be there this year. I ask all that attend to post your reunion pictures on our page. This summer Dennise and I went to visit her sisters. One lives in Minnesota the other is in Kentucky. Both are older and now live in nursing homes. This was our big trip for the summer. It was great seeing her family who we have not seen in years. Keep posting on our Facebook page. Your pictures and memories keep the page fresh. Enjoy this fall.

Donations

Donations for the year 2025 were from:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| • Frank Selinsky | • James Smither |
| • James King | • Douglas Puffer |
| • Cheryl Burdette | • B.W. Marshall |
| • Alfred Martin | • Jay Wetherby |
| • Ken Gainer | • Richard Blythe |
| • Joe Smith | • Michael Leiviska |
| • Steve Funk | • John Fowler |
| • Ken Hamilton | • Randy House |
| • Bill Hand | • Fred Shuttleworth |

Checks payable to: "Ripcord Association".

Mail to:

Pete Meloro,
107 Maple Drive
Spring Lake Hts, NJ 07762

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

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

September 11th is the deadline to make hotel reservations at the negotiated rate. If you are going to attend, make your hotel reservation now. 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.

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.

One More Time Around the Fire

by Frank Marshall



Every October since 1986, some of us have found our way back to each other — different hotels, different cities, same faces getting a little grayer each year. That's forty years of showing up for the men and women who stood the hill with us.

I won't pretend the math is getting easier. Every reunion, there are a few more empty seats than the year before — some from health, some we've lost for good. That's not a reason to stop gathering. It's the reason to keep gathering, while we still can.

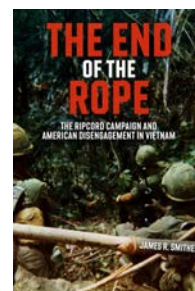
If you've been on the fence about October — about the drive, the cost, whether it's "worth it" this year — I'd ask you to think about it differently. This isn't just another reunion. For some of us, it may be one of the last chances to sit across a table from the guy who had your back on that hill, to shake his hand, to say the things that don't get said over a phone call.

We were never going to be young forever. But we can still be together, one more time, while the fire's still lit. I hope to see you in Myrtle Beach.

From Jim Smither, Author



Thanks to everyone who bought the book. I'll be happy to sign copies of it at the reunion, and answer any questions you may have (or you can tell me all the things I missed or screwed up on, at least within reason). I am also interested in conducting additional interviews for the archive and YouTube channel, so if you haven't shared your story yet and are interested in doing so, you can catch me at the reunion or email me at smitherj@gvsu.edu.



MEMORIAL DAY 2026

“Honoring Everyone . . . Remembering Someone”

by Bob Worrall

Memorial Day. Veterans Day. Armed Forces Day. Three days full of meaning—especially for those who have worn an American military uniform. We celebrated Armed Forces Day earlier this month honoring the men and women currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Space Force. In November, we'll celebrate Veterans Day and honor the millions of American Veterans who have served since 1775. Today, Memorial Day, we honor the 1.4 million Veterans who previously served, but while serving, lost their lives. Some died in combat. Some by accident. Others from illness or disease. But all were serving when they fell, and all are honored . . . today.

The enormity of that total, 1 million 400 thousand, makes it impossible to remember everyone (individually), so Memorial Day ceremonies, like ours, usually choose to honor everyone (collectively). But the thought I want to share with you this morning is that as important as it is for us to honor everyone, it's also important, for each of us, to pause, for just a moment, and remember someone:

- Your someone might be a family member who perished in one of the many wars and conflicts America has fought over its 250-year history.
- The someone you think about could be from our local community, like Captain Mark Tyler Voss, a Boerne High School graduate, who died with his KC-135 crew, “Shell 77”, during Operation Enduring Freedom, and whose Gold Star mother (Marcy Voss) has joined us here today. As you probably know, the Boerne Independent School District named a middle school in Bergheim for Captain Voss, and Boerne's American Legion Post 313 is named for him as well.
- You might remember someone who frequently

visited the Kendall County area, like Private First Class Milton A. Lee who died during the Vietnam War charging enemy bunkers, single-handedly, to alert his platoon of an impending ambush. A section of Interstate Highway 10, through Boerne, is named in honor of Private Lee.

- Or, you could remember someone with no family or community connections at all, just someone whose story you heard about, or read about, or saw a program about on TV, and whose story resonated with you, and came back into your mind . . . today.

Someone that I often remember on Memorial Day is Dennis Huffine. I first saw Dennis in December 1969. He was getting off a resupply helicopter to join his new platoon at a remote landing zone . . . somewhere in Vietnam. The 19-year-old kid from Arkansas got off that Huey along with several cases of C-Ration meals, a couple bags of mail from home, some “sundry packs” full of comfort items like candy bars and tobacco products, and a resupply of various military items that his new platoon had asked for. It was immediately obvious to everyone that Dennis was the “new guy”: fresh out of High School, fresh out of Basic Training, newly arrived in Vietnam, and as green as the brand-new set of jungle fatigues he was wearing.

Dennis had answered the call to Serve, but he knew that to survive the next 12 months as a combat infantryman, he would have to “get smart,” and “be smart,” and do so quickly. He needed to learn from the “old guys” in the platoon:

- How to pack his ruck sack
- How many canteens of water to carry
- Where to pack extra rounds of ammo
- How many grenades to carry
- Which of the dozen different C-Ration meals he would want to eat, and which he would not--after long, hot days patrolling up and down the jungled mountains of Vietnam (as I recall, the Beans and Frankfurter Chunks were popular . . . the Ham and Lima Beans, not so much!)

(continued on page 5)

(Memorial Day continued)

Dennis did learn quickly and the weeks that followed were punctuated with an increasing number of enemy contacts, and the terrible sights of comrades wounded, or killed, in action. For seven months, Dennis survived these dangers, and his plan to “get smart” and “be smart” seemed to be working . . . until it didn’t.

On July 14, 1970, Dennis’ rifle company was moving down the side of a steep mountain when it ran into an enemy bunker complex. An intense firefight erupted:

- Rocket propelled grenades
- Automatic weapons fire
- Machine gun tracer rounds . . . crisscrossing . . . red and green . . . ours and theirs
- Half the men in the lead platoon . . . wounded . . . out of action . . . in a matter of seconds.

Dennis’ unit was closest to the lead platoon, and he and several other soldiers were ordered to go down into the danger zone and assist wounded comrades back up the hill to an improvised aid station--there, they could be treated, triaged, and transported to surgical hospitals in the rear. Dennis followed orders and helped a wounded soldier up the hill to the aid station. The midday, 95-degree heat and constant, high humidity made the task of assisting the soldier difficult, but Dennis made it to the aid station, dropped off the wounded comrade, and . . . exhausted, he paused, for just a moment, to catch his breath before returning to his platoon. That’s when it happened: a stray bullet from the firefight still raging below found Dennis. He was hit in the chest. He died instantly. He hadn’t done anything wrong. He wasn’t being careless. He was just . . . in the wrong place . . . at the wrong time.

The loss of Dennis weighed heavily on everyone in his unit. His platoon leader, First Lieutenant Robert Layton of Cleveland, Ohio, ruminated over the “why” and “what for”, and “how come” of Dennis’ death for years after the war ended. Finally, about 15 years ago, he wrote a Veterans’

Day article for his local newspaper, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. In the article, Layton told Dennis’ story and concluded that Dennis had been a victim—“a victim of the uncompromisingly random nature of war.” War is, indeed, unforgiving in its randomness. Bullets might start off being “aimed” . . . but where they end up, is often not.

Our nation built a memorial to Dennis . . . and the 58,400+ other, American victims of the Vietnam War. It’s called the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, or Vietnam Memorial Wall, or just “the Wall.” Most everyone here has seen pictures of the Wall; some of you have been there in person. The appearance of the Wall itself is stunning: 144 highly polished, black granite panels with the names of the fallen etched in contrasting white, the wall angled in the middle with one wing pointing to the Washington Monument, the other to the Lincoln Memorial. During daytime, it’s beautiful; at night, it’s breathtaking. If you’ve been there, you know what I’m talking about. If you haven’t, you might want to check it out someday.

If you do visit the Vietnam Wall and have a little extra time, look up Dennis. You can find Dennis Huffine’s name etched in the black granite on Panel 8 West, Row 17. You can thank him for his Service. You can thank him for his Sacrifice. But make sure to tell him about . . . today:

Tell him that on Memorial Day 2026, you and some of your friends and neighbors in the small town of Boerne, Texas, gathered at the local cemetery to honor all 1.4 million Veterans who lost their lives in Service to our country. And, after honoring everyone who fell, we paused, for just a moment, we listened to HIS story. And by doing so, Dennis Huffine continues to be . . . someone remembered.

I want to thank each of you for the honor of your time and attention this morning, and I wish you a pleasant remainder of your Memorial Day as we all leave here today . . . Honoring Everyone, while Remembering Someone.

Dennis Willard Huffine

Born April 15, 1950

Killed in Action July 14, 1970

August 1970 Newsletter

by Bill Heath Editor

Photos also by Bill Heath



This publication was printed on an odd size 8"x13" sheet of white paper, front and back, in black copy ink. This issue was three sheets, printed on five sides and stapled in the upper left corner. Issue date: AUGUST 1970. The following four stories were part of 11 stories that appeared in the issue.



Original newsletter heading

CURRAHEES HOLD MEMORIAL SERVICE

Screaming Eagles of the 2nd Battalion 506th Infantry recently paused to honor their fallen comrades with a memorial service held at Evans Theater. With the traditional steel helmets, combat boots, and rifles at stack arms displayed before the Currahees, LTC John C. Bard, Battalion Commander, performed the calling of the roll. LTC Bard has assumed command after the death of LTC Andre C. Lucas, who was killed in action on Fire Support Base Ripcord. After words from MAJ Howard Johnson, Brigade Chaplain, and CPT Leroy Fox, Battalion Chaplain, the men paid tribute with three volleys of rifle fire and the playing of taps.



WELCOME TO THE BATTALION

Currahee 70 editors and staff extend a sincere welcome to all new personnel of the 2nd Battalion 506th Infantry. You are joining a proud tradition, as the men have distinguished themselves in operations south of the DMZ and the A Shau Valley. We are confident that you, the new arrival, will take pride in following the Currahee tradition. We wish you good luck and success as a Currahee of the 2nd 506th Infantry.

REPLACEMENT

The appearance of your replacement is always considered a milestone for a shorttimer. For SGT Robert Tarbuck, East Liverpool, Ohio, it also meant he was to become a tutor to the man about to take his slot as a machine gunner for Company C, 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry.

His replacement, PFC Jerome Buffington, Henagar, Alabama, arrived while Company C was assigned to provide security on Fire Base O'Reilly, 25 miles west of Hue. Tarbuck used this opportunity to begin instructing three new gunners and three new assistant gunners, just outside the barbed wire perimeter.

Tarbuck was appointed to the task as he is the machine gunner with the most "seniority" in the company. As he briefs his students in his filled expedient classroom, he checks out the weapons. He knows the weapons had been checked before leaving the perimeter, it was just the typical caution he'd developed after more than 11 months in the field. He had to be sure.

"Wait a second! You grasp the weapon this way." Tarbuck sternly corrects a young gunner as he straddles his prone body and manipulates his arms and hands correctly on the crew-served weapon. "You get under fire, you gotta do it right, so you better learn now."

Tarbuck directs the fire at the edge of the jungle wood line but soon puts an abrupt halt to the rounds going down range. "Start firing low.

(continued on page 7)

(1970 Newsletter continued)

Anytime you're in contact, you gotta fire low.
Charlie ain't six foot tall y' know."

After the firing, Tarbuck leads his band of disciples back through the concertina wire to instruct them on the cleaning of the M-60 machine gun. "It'll take you about 30 to 45 minutes every day if you're doing it right." Their mentor explains as he disassembles the gun. "And you better not lose your disassembly wrench if you know what's good for you."

Tarbuck watches Buffington awkwardly finger the parts laid out before him. He also looks nostalgically at the piece of equipment that he has lovingly cared for so many months. The weapon that he'd tenderly wrapped in his poncho while the monsoon rain's saturated his unprotected body. He looks at the replacement. "Buffington, you better take good care of that gun, y'hear."

CURRAHEES SCARE PANTS OFF NVA

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

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

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

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

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

GENERAL BERRY HONORS CURRAHEES

Thirteen members of the 2/506th Infantry were among those soldiers receiving awards presented by Brigadier General Sidney B. Berry, Assistant Division Commander, for the evacuation of Fire Support Base Ripcord and conjunctive action.



CPT Charles Hawkins, CPT Benjamin Peters, SSG Jim Burnette, PFC Donald Colbert, CPT Rembert Rollison, SSG Sergio Macias, SGT Sidney Tucker, SP4 George Kitzmiller, SP4 Elisha Dixon, CPT James Harris, 1LT Henry Bialosuknia, SGT Donald Wilkins and SGT Jon Penfold, all received Silver Star Awards.



Speaking from Currahee Pad, General Berry also cited all units involved with Fire Support Base Ripcord for accomplishing what he termed "a highly successful operation."

CURRAHEE 70 is an authorized publication of the 2nd Battalion (Airmobile) 506th Infantry. Currahee 70 is published monthly under the guidance of the Battalion CO, the Adjutant and other Currahees that want to get into the act. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of career personnel.

Reunion Registration sign up

Here are those registered for the reunion as of May 7th. Those marked in **Red 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 9

*Jim & Irene Aanonsen	A Co 2/506
*Lin & Pinkey Bashford	D Co 2/506
*Kurt Bashford & Kari Cline	Guest
*John Beadle & Lisa OHaire	A 2/11 Arty
*Richard & Michele Blythe	A/E/HHC 2/506
*Timothy & Elaine-Lanier Bohan	Guest
*Bill Boles	D Co 2/506
Bruce Brady & Karolyn Kruger	A Co 2/506
Paul Buhr	A Co 2/506
Don Bullard	B Trp 2/17
Albert & Claudia Burckard	A Co 2/506
*Dale & Sue Cooper	C 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
Carnell Evans	B 2/319 Arty
Chad & Kim Evans	Guest
Ken & Niki Hook - Guest	B Co 2/506
John, Debbie & Alison Fowler	C Co 2/506
Leigh & Vicki Freeman	C Co 2/506
*Ken & Saralyn Gainer	A Co 2/506
Michael Goff	B Trp 2/17 Air Cav
*Bob & Maura Gustafson	Guest
*Bill & Lynn Hand	B Co 2/506
*Paul & Laura Hansmann	B Co 2/506
*William & Linda Heath	A/HHC Co
2/506	
*David & Maureen Hilleren	B Co 159
*Ray Hines	2/319 Arty
Terry Hodges	D Co 1/506
*Chuck & Jean Holmen	A Co 159 ASHB
Don & Linda Holthausen	C Co 2/506
*Jim & Kathy Howton	Pathfinder

*Dale & Charlene Ireland	C Co 159
*Dave & Sophia Kenyon	B/326 Engineers
*Greg & Kristi Kiekintveld	B/326 Engineers
Juliana Knott & Greg Krayak	Guest
*Dale Lane & Dianne Grote & Sue Koste	A Co 2/506
Robert Layton	B Co /501
Bob Leibecke	C Co 2/506
*Tony Little	D Co 2/506
*David Lockwood & Ingrid Hietzke	A 2/11 Arty
Mark & Andrea Lynch	Guest
B W & Dollie Marshall	A 2/11 Arty
*Frank & Dee Marshall	A Co 2/506
*Alfred & Sondra Martin	A 2/11 Arty
James & Michelle McCoy	D Co 1/506
*Ron & Linda McCrory	E Co 2/506
*Peter & Chris Meloro	C Co 2/506
*Uwe & Diane Meyer	B Co 2/506
Robert Pagano	B Co 2/506
*Ray & Sheilla Potts	B 2/319 Arty
*Douglas Puffer	D Co 2/506
Stephen Pullen	B Trp 2/17 Air Cav
*Mike & Lura Renner	A 2/11 Arty
Gary & Mary Ryan	B Trp 2/17 Cav
Fred Shuttleworth & Victoria Rayle	E Co 2/506
*Norman & Joshua Simmons	A/B 2/11 Arty
Everett Slaughter & Hale Sommerdorf	B Co 2/506
Joe Smith	B/326 Engineers
James Smither	Associate Member
*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
Craig Van Hout	B Co 2/506
William & Pat Watrous	B Co 2/506

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. 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.