



RIPCORD REPORT



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

Number 104

November 2015

2015 Ripcord Reunion in Springfield, MO

reported by Lee Widjeskog

It's been 8 years since the Ripcord Association last met here in lovely Springfield, Missouri! Last time it was held in the summer around the same dates as the Ripcord evacuation and 112 people showed up. Since then we have returned to the Columbus Day weekend in deference to cooler weather and those who are still working. This year 165 people attended. Regardless, everyone seemed to have a good time and enjoyed the fine accommodations found at the University Plaza Hotel.

Many of the attendees took time to drive down to Branson to catch a show of two. The hour drive was worth the time and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

There were also forays to the Wilson's Creek Civil War site for a little historical knowledge. This battle took place in August of 1861 as Confederate Generals McCulloch, Price and Pearce sought to evict the Union troops from the northern state of Missouri. The Union troops, led by Generals Lyon, Sigel and Sturgis lost the battle but inflicted such heavy casualties on the Confederates that no pursuit followed and Missouri stayed in the union.

The golfers once more gathered to chase the dimpled white ball over hill and dale! To make things easy the hotel provided a shuttle to take them to and from the course. This year they had to do without the help of Fred Spaulding who had to sit it out for six months due to his doctor's orders. Some of the golfers said they felt he just could not stand the competition these days! Fred simply said "Wait till next year!"

The reunion was well attended but a couple of stand-out stalwarts, Frank Marshall and Fred Gilbert were noticed by their absence. They have both vowed to attend next year! As an aside it should be noted

that Frank Marshall has fled the northeast and is now spreading the word "YO!!!" in the Myrtle Beach area full time.

While Frank and Fred could not make the reunion, Mike Chirelli did. Once more he provided haircuts for all that wanted them in return for a donation to the Association. Mike is so dedicated to doing this that he arranged to have his dialysis done while he was in Springfield so he could attend the reunion! Mike did let us know that next year will be his last doing haircuts. We will miss his talents!

Friday night once more had hot and cold hors d'oeuvres that preceded the annual Ladies Chinese Auction or raffle. It was well attended and over \$2,000 raised.

Saturday evening saw yearbook pictures being taken, as well as holding a raffle for the Anna Britt Nolan trust. The banquet was in a well lit room with plenty of space to move about and talk with friends. The food was a buffet of New York strip loin, broiled sole and sautéed veal along with potatoes, vegetables and salad. Delicious! Following desert, General Harrison presented coins to Ripcord survivors who are attending their first reunion. This year we honored Andy Hegedus C 2/506, Tom Pack B 2/319 FSA, Willie Allen B 2/319 FA, Bruce Whipple E 2/506, Leigh Freeman c 2/506, Larry Gross A 1/39 FA, Lott Johnson, brother of David Johnson A 2/11 FA, and Daniel Bohan, brother of pathfinder Patrick Bohan. Additionally we gave a coin to Tim Bohan for him and Bob Smoker to present to D 2/506 interpreter Thuyet also known as "Tooie" when they see him in November during a Vietnam trip. We hope to see more new guys next year!!!

2016 Ripcord Reunion Springfield, MO

FROM THE EDITOR

Frank Marshall A/2-506



I was sorry to miss this year's reunion due to my recent relocation to Myrtle Beach. I decided I had enough of the snow and cold weather and I wanted to be closer to the beach (so now I am within one mile, a short ride in my new golf cart). I heard the reunion was another great one. Photos are on our website.

Lee Widjeskog, Fred Spaulding and all the others that help put the reunions together do a fantastic job and need all your support in their decisions for future reunions. The upcoming reunion schedule will be in this newsletter and on our website. You can also keep up with everything that is going on thru our facebook page.

I hope you have ordered and read the new Ripcord book "Remembering Firebase Ripcord". **Send me your review of the book so we can know what everyone thought of it. Send to frank@ripcordassociation.com.**

I hope to see you all in Springfield MO. in 2016 reunion.



Visit our website at
www.ripcordassociation.com

Read the **Ripcord Report** on line
Daily updates ● History
and much more

Please continue to send your letters and comments to: frank@ripcordassociation.com
Everyone would love to hear from you.

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.

"Remembering Firebase Ripcord" New Ripcord Book



"Remembering Firebase Ripcord" is available at online retailers amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com and others, including Books A Million and Outskirts Press. For those wanting a personalized copy, you can order directly from Chris Brady by emailing rememberingripcord@windstream.net. Copies are \$19.95 each plus tax and shipping and handling. Email rememberingripcord@windstream.net to obtain specific costs as shipping costs change from time to time based on postal media rates.

If you do not have email and would like additional information, you can write Chris at: 3535 Susquehanna Trail, Watsonstown, PA 17777. Chris thanks all who assisted in this process and those who agreed to interviews. Updates will be posted from time to time via the Ripcord Association website and Facebook page. When he visits areas for book discussions, he will post so that those of you nearby can visit. Ripcord veterans are encouraged to sit in on the discussions to share their stories.

RIPCORD REPORT

Ripcord Report is a publication of the **Ripcord Association**, and is the authoritative voice of history for the Battle of Fire Support Base Ripcord.

Ripcord Report
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JERSEY RAMBLINGS

by Lee Widjeskog A/2-506



November is here and another successful reunion has been completed!! Things went well and the business meeting was well attended. The acting president, Peter Meloro started the meeting and announced the slate of officers and board of directors. The nominees were Peter Meloro (C 2/506), President, Frank Marshall (A 2/506) Vice President and Lee Widjeskog (A 2/506) Sec.-Treasurer. The same three people made up the Board of Directors. Bill Boles (D 2/506) volunteered to be on the board and since the meeting Jim McCoy (D 1/506) agreed to fill the last vacancy.

Fred Spaulding reported we will return to Springfield, MO for the 2016 reunion. Tentative plans call for 2017 to be in Laughlin, NV and then back to Myrtle Beach, SC in 2018. If all goes as planned we will return to Indianapolis, IN for 2019 and 2020. As Fred says, "Stay tuned".

The future of the reunions after 2020 is an unknown at this time. All of us are getting older and many are suffering from more and more ailments. This makes travel more difficult and for some expenses become more of an issue as medical bills mount. We will have to once more look into the possibility of locating a site central or desired for most attendees as a permanent reunion site. Discussion will go on over the next few year before a decision is made by the members. Don't you just love getting old?

Following the 2014 reunion we had \$42,647. Since then the income and out flow is as follows:

Hospitality beverages and snacks:	\$ 1,168	Registration:	\$ 12,605
Friday night food:	\$ 5,242	Ladies raffle:	\$ 2,324
Flowers:	\$ 954	Mike the Barber:	\$ 335
Banquet meal et al:	\$ 7,816	Store sales:	\$ 3,124
Web & newsletter:	\$ 1,144	Donations:	\$ 3,587
Store items (shirts, hats, etc.):	\$ 6,214	Remaining start cash:	\$ 614
Misc.:	\$ 890	Anna Britt Nolan Raffle:	\$ 1,495
Banquet start cash:	\$ 700		
Total:	\$ 24,128	Total:	\$ 24,084

This gives us a balance of \$42,603 after the reunion and before we send the money off for the Ann Britt Trust Fund. This is in line with directions from the group to not building up additional funds since we have no special needs for them. Regardless we still have plenty of money in the treasury to take care of the needs of the organization.

Once more I would like to thank all those who help make the reunions such good times! Bob and Red Judd continue to do excellent work in keeping the store straight and making certain the flags and guidons are present and in proper order. Bob has taken full charge of the flags and is very protective of the same. If you help him, be certain to listen since he has managed to keep it all in great shape and it is put up each year in an efficient manner and time. Things just would not go as smoothly without their help! Thank you guys!

As has become normal, Paul Buhr shoots photos for our yearbook. Between his photos as well as others sent in and Frank Marshall's excellent work on the yearbook set up, we are able to produce a book annually and cheaply. This always deserves our thanks!!

Thank you also to Fred Spaulding!! In spite of his medical issues he continues to do a great job in selecting decent places to hold the reunions. Great job!!

Kathy and I would like to thank the FSB Ripcord Association reunion attendees for the generous gift we received this year. It is not necessary, but we always appreciate the thoughtfulness of the group by their gift. We enjoy putting the event on and are happy to see that everyone enjoys their time with us.

Ripcord on Facebook

by Anthony Chritchlow



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ripcordassociation/>

I'll start with what a great reunion. My wife and I really enjoyed every minute of it. This year my sister and her husband joined us there. They were very impressed to say the least. I also want to thank everyone that came to me and said they liked our FB page and what I was doing. These comments really make me feel good.

We will be at the Laughlin reunion in 2 years. I'm really looking forward to this one. As it is just a 1 day drive from my house to there.

The ladies raffle was fun. There were lots of great items to bid on. The wife won one and I got one also. It's always fun to win.

What a great group that sets up and runs the reunions. Personally I would like to see the reunions closer to me. I understand the majority of us live in the east. You will be asked at the next reunion where you want them to be from now on. We need to settle in to 1 or 2 places.

Best wishes for the holidays from Idaho
Anthony and Dennise Critchlow



Visit our website at
www.ripcordassociation.com

Donations

the life blood of our Association

The following have given donations to the Ripcord Association since the last newsletter. These donations help keep the website and newsletters published to keep all our Ripcord members up to date.

John Lally (Assoc. Mem)

Ron Will, Jr E 2/506

Charlie Tipton C 2/506

Jim McCall D 2/506

Fred Shuttleworth E 2/506

Gene Marshall B 2/319 FA

Lauree Rawlison (Assoc. mem)

Bill Williams B 2/506

Peter Meloro C 2/506

Jim Harris HHC 2/506

Audrey Wrightsell A 2/11 FA

Rich Drury D 1/506

Mike Womack C 2/506

Lloyd Rahlf HHC 3rd BDE in memory of

John Mihalko

Ulla Nolan (Assoc. Mem)

Checks payable to "Ripcord Association".

Mail to:

Lee Widjeskog,

493 Stillman Ave.

Bridgeton, NJ 08302



The Ghosts of Ripcord Documentary DVD Update

Thank you for everyone's continued interest in the documentary entitled, The Ghosts of Ripcord. After distributing DVDs to the people who made donations at the start of the production our team has been on a hiatus as we are trying to reorganize our resources. Unfortunately we are unable to distribute additional DVDs at this time due to limited means but hope to distribute more in the near future.

We are currently having our film being vetted by a local PBS affiliate in Pennsylvania so the film can be broadcast on television and will be submitting the documentary to the GI Film Festival which takes place in May of 2016.

We will make sure to notify everyone with more updates in the future!

John Daily
Producer

Ripcord Association Newest Members

Bender	Bruce	163 Av / 101
Gross	Larry	A/1-39th FA
Hahn	Ricky	E/2-506
Hopkins	Frederick	2/319 FA HSB
Maselli	Rip	B/159th ASHB
Stevens	Angus	Associate Member
Thomas	Robert	C/2-501

746 members in our Ripcord Association
611 are Ripcord Veterans
134 are Associate Members
199 receive newsletter via Postal Mail
548 receive the newsletter via e-mail
539 on Facebook "Ripcord Association Group"



Anna Britt Nolan Trust

by George and Mary Murphy



First of all, thank you for the nice card that everyone signed at the reunion. I am doing better than I was at the time we would have gone to the reunion, and we are hoping to attend next year.

Ulla Nolan called after getting home from attending the reunion and said she had just received a letter from Anna Britt. Anna Britt Nolan is now in her second year of high school. She is very involved in writing, working on her high school newspaper, as well as interning at a local newspaper where she gets the opportunity to work with real journalists. Ulla tells us she is doing well academically, making the honor roll, and she is looking forward to going to college.

We want to thank Diane Alexander and Kathy Widgeskog, as well as anyone else who helped sell tickets for the Anna Britt Nolan Raffle. We especially want to thank all of you who bought tickets to make this year's raffle a success, as well as all of you who send in contributions to the Trust Fund throughout the year. Keith Nolan must be smiling down on all of you, as well as acting as guardian angel for his daughter. God Bless!

The address where donations may be sent for the trust fund is:

Anna Britt Nolan Trust
c/o First Bank
6211 Mid Rivers Mall Drive
Saint Charles, MO 63304-1102

To our Ripcord family.



We want to take this opportunity to thank everyone at the reunion that contributed and signed the very nice card for us expressing your appreciation for our involvement with the group. This organization has made a positive impact on our lives and we hope our involvement does the same for other members. Thanks again, until next year.

Currahee.
Bob & Red Judd

INCOMING MAIL



Dear Friends at the Ripcord Association,

I was so touched by the beautiful flowers you sent for John, thank you. We had a military ceremony for John at Ft. Logan. The red, white and blue spray of flowers you sent were perfect to display during the service.

The Ripcord Association meant so much to John. He first became involved because of the incredible struggle you shared on Ripcord. He stayed a part of the organization for three decades because of the special people he met there; he treasured the friendships he found. Thank you all for the kindness and friendship you showed John, me and our family over the years.

I am going through John's papers and notes, and I'm sure I'll find a few things worth sharing with the Ripcord Association. I will send them to you once I've sorted things out. For now, I wanted to thank you for honoring John with flowers and the information you put on the Associations' website.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions or to share memories you might have of my wonderful husband.

*Thank you again,
Kathy Mihalko*

My brother was Virgil Martin Bixby...KIA in Vietnam 7-22-70.

I just recently found out about this website. I'm trying to find people that may have photos of Virgil they could share with me.

Thank each and every one of you for your service to our country. I still can't believe how you were treated when you came home. I'm sure you know I wasn't one of those people.

I have a grandson in the Air Force and another one in the Navy (they are brothers). When I found out they were joining, I went into my panic mode...it stirred up a lot of bad memories... Tyler was 20 when he joined... same age as Virgil. I'm doing better now....

God bless all of you.

*Linda Krug
grandmalsk@yahoo.com*

Gentlemen,

I found myself in my LOH, tail number 018 after most of the guys were withdrawn. I do not remember why I was up there, but I landed on the remains of the once magnificent firebase. I called the chatauqe, there were so many landing pads plus the POL. There were 3 guys who jumped out of the dirt and I motioned for them to get on my LOH, 2 in the back 1 up front with me and I flew them back to Camp Evans.

I have been haunted that I never got their names, I just waived to them and took off and back to work. I know if they are still alive, they will remember the one lone LOH that landed and pulled them off Ripcord.

Please attempt to get this message to them. If they are alive, God Bless them, if they are on the other side, I'll see them later.

*Bruce Bender
163 AV Co, 101st Airborne
quizzzy12003@yahoo.com*

I was a CH-47 Crewman at Ripcord on July 23, 1970

*Rip Maselli
B/159th ASHB*

My name is Vencent Caballero. I am looking for information on my father from the war. He was Lt Caballero. If you knew him or was with him and have time please send me a e-mail or you can call me at 707 758-6752. Any information would be good.

*Thank you
Vincent Caballero
cab4646@yahoo.com*

I flew front seat cobra during Ripcord insertion with the Condors and Cobra Aircraft Commander, Condor 28 or Banshee 28 during the extraction. Can't remember when I transferred to B Trp.

*Bruce Emerson
C Trp. & B Trp., 2/17 Air Cav*

INCOMING MAIL



I served with COL Wm. F. ("Crusader") Bradley during the majority of my Tour as BDE Fire Support Coordinator (FSCOORD) on Crusader's personnel staff. I flew daily missions with CSM Ray Long (KIA-FB Henderson), MAJ Robert Turner (BDE S-3) and COL Bradley. I was part of the Command Staff which drew up plans to go to Ripcord, not once but twice.

I was wounded on FB Henderson, at 1730 hours on 6 May 1970, and was standing outside of the sand-bagged revetment protecting the entrance to the 501st Inf Bn TOC under command of LTC Livingston. At that precise time, CSM Long (BDE CSM) was killed by a few fragments under his chin and I suffered major trauma to my lower extremities and pelvic region. COL Bradley, MAJ Turner, CSM Long and I made two separate insertions into Henderson on 6 May 1970. The first insertion occurred about 08:00 hours and the second and last insertion about 17:00 hours. It was a very bad day for all who attended.

Ripcord was equally a disaster from the moment of the first attempt to secure the FB and I remember that the second attempt was equally faulty. I still have frequent nightmares about Henderson, Ripcord and Kathryn. Who can forget AO "Pear?"

Frederick Hopkins (Cpt)

*HSB 2Bn, 319 FA REGT/HHC 3rd BDE, 101st ABN
peppyraffles90q@hughes.net*

I just discovered this site and look forward to learning more about it.

Thank you

David Hall

101st Airborne, 159th Bat., C Co. Heavy Lift

My husband James Stroud was one of the last if not the last person to leave Ripcord. He held on to the rungs of the chopper as it lifted off and another soldier sat on his head and helped to hold him on.

*A Battery 2nd 11th Artillery 101st Airborne
Sherlene Stroud*

I was Door Gunner on extraction of packs at base of hill where Ripcord was. I think 327th were packs we picked up on hover, but I really can't remember.

Michael Leiviska

B Co. 101st Avn. Bn. (Kingsmen)

I am looking to find John Seramacki. His MOS was a 11-bush. I came across information that may have put him at Firebase Ripcord in 1970. One of Charlie Companies' Chinook Helicopter, 101st Aviation BN. got hit when it was landing or taking off in 1970. I was just wondering if anyone knew him. The last time I saw him, he was skying-up back to the states.

Angus A. Stevens

Associate member

steveaaa@hotmail.com

Hill 1000 & Hill 902 Veteran of Charlie Company 2nd of the 501st Geronimo 101st Airborne Division Airmobile Infantry, July Third 1970 till Early September of 1970.

Robert Thomas

Charlie Co. 2/501st 101st Abn. Airmobile

Call sign Blackwidow 17. I flew resupply to Ripcord many times before the emergency extraction. Made two landings in to extract personal during the siege by the NVA. During one I had a mortar hit hit just beyond the landing pad peppering the helicopter shrapnel. Thankfully no one was hurt, but we hit get a lot of holes. I was glad we could help get you guys out. I would love to tell you what the flight looked like coming in to Ripcord and the chaos on the radios.

Jeffrey Lacey

C/101/101 AVN

Our members enjoy reading letters to the Editor, so why not take a few minutes and send us a letter to let other members know about you, your thoughts about the Ripcord Association, our reunions or anything you like to share.

Send your letters to:

frank@ripcordassociation.com

Springfield Attended 2015

David & Sophia Kenyon 326 ENG
Bob Tarbuck & Paige Corkhill C 2/506
Terry Stanger 159 ASHB
Al & Sondra Martin A 2/11 FA
Dave & Lisa Snyder A 2/11 FA
Tex Campbell D 2/506
Jim & Michelle McCoy D 1/506
Bob & Red Judd B 2/506
Lee & Kathy Widjeskog A 2/506
George & Sheila Potts B 2/319 FA
Mike & Liz Womack C 2/506
George & Sheila Potts B 2/319 FA
David & Linda Yonts A 2/506
David & Wendy Yonts guests
Anthony & Denise Critchlow HHC 2/506
John & Kathy Williams Guests
Don & Rich Kiefer A 2/506
Dale & Sue Cooper C 2/506
Bill & Linda Boles D 2/506
Uwe & Diane Meyer B 2/506
Bruce Brady A 2/506
Tim & Daniel Bohan brothers of Patrick,
Pathfinder
Chuck & Jean Holman A 159 AVN
Doug & Iris Puffer D 2/506
Lee & Debra Tremblay 3rd Bde Air
Ben & Carolyn Harrison 3rd BDE
Murphy & Phylis Majoria Guest
Floyd & Diane Alexander 2/319 FA & A 2/506
John & Barbara Hedrick E 2/506 Mortars

Paul Buhr A 2/506
Russ & Maryann Dixon 2/319 FA
Tommy and Judy Counts D 2/506
Lisa Hill Guest
Merle & Ruth DeLagrange D 1/506
Bob Leibecke C 2/506
Joseph & Marion Minias C 2/506
Dave & Cheryl Corradetti C 2/506
Ben & Lillian Peters B 2/506
Mark & Denise Skinner D 2/506
Robin Graham HHC 2/506
Ken & Maryann David D 1/506
Paul & Laura Hansmann B 2/506
Bill, Pam & Adam Baldwin A 2/506
Bob & Jackie Wallace C 2/506
Rick & Betty Kellogg B 2/506
Audrey Wrightsell A 2/11 FA
Bob Romig D&E 2/506
John & Annette Kuennen C 2/506
Bruce & Jennifer Whipple E 2/506
Troy & Barbara Porter C 2/506 & 3rd BDE Air
Kent Rowland D 2/506
Donald & Linda Holthausen C 2/506
Ron & Linda McCroy E 2/506
Leonard & Carol Moore 3rd BDE Air
Fred & Micki Spaulding HHC 3rd BDE
Gene & Star Marshall B 2/319 FA
Andy Hegedus C 2/506
Rex & Carol Flansburg D 2/506
Mike & Cathy Chiarelli B 2/506
Bob & Janice Counts A 2/506

Bill & Lynn Hand B 2/506
John & Debbie Fowler C 2/506
Greg & Kristi Kiekintveld 326 ENG
Billy & Margaret Helvey A 2/506
Wayne Spruill D & E 2/506
Ulla Nolan Guest
Peter Meloro C 2/506
Leigh Freeman C 2/506
Benny & Teresa Mulkey Pathfinder
Ron Zahn a 2/11 FA
Ron & Linda Hudson A 1/39 FA
Bill Rose A 2/506
Larry & Annabelle Sena A 2/506
Gary & Patty Radford D 2/506
Phil & Sheri Tolson B 2/506
Fred Shuttleworth E 2/506
Tom & Jan Pack B 2/319 FA
Bill & Sheila Williams B 2/506
Robert Pagano & Rachel Springer B 2/506
Willie (Bear) Allen B 2/319 FA
Lin & Pinky Bashford D 2/506
Jim Smither Grand Valley State Univ.
George Westervelt A 2/506
Thomas DeWulf D 1/506
Dale & Janet Tauer D 1/506
Harold Day 2/17 CAV
Jim Harris HHC 2/506
Jerry & Mariella Moyer C 2/506
Lott Johnson brother of Dave Johnson A 2/11 FA
Larry Gross and wife A 1/39 FA

Photos by Anthony Critchlow

