



RIPCORD REPORT



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

Number 109

February 2017

REUNION IN LAUGHLIN, NEVADA

The 2017 FSB Ripcord Reunion will be held in Laughlin, Nevada at the Tropicana hotel and casino located near the Colorado River next to Arizona and about 90 miles south of Las Vegas.



The town was started in the 1940's and known as South Pointe. It provided resources to the workers building the Davis dam. When the workers left the community almost disappeared. Don Laughlin, a club owner in Las Vegas, stepped in and purchased the land and eventually built the Riverside Resort Casino. Through his efforts the town grew to what is there today. It has one of the lowest crime rates in the country but has only about 7,500 full time resident. It is unincorporated and managed by the Clark County administration.

The Tropicana was formerly the Ramada Express until 2007 when the Tropicana name was added. It is the site of many reunions and conferences each year and ours in 2017.

This year's Ripcord Reunion starts on Monday, October 2, golf outing on Tuesday, Ladies Auction on Wednesday evening and our banquet dinner on Thursday, October 5. In between the hospitality suites will be opened to all who wish to remember the days of youth and indiscretions.

The rooms are very reasonable at \$34 a night from Sunday to Thursday and \$60 per for Friday and Saturday nights. The rates include complimentary breakfast for up to two per room. Wi-Fi in the rooms is \$7.99 per day but there is free Wi-Fi on the casino floor and around the pool.

The primary purpose of this reunion is to see all your old friends and meet the new ones who are just arriving. However, after hours of talking, listening to stories, checking out the photos, wondering why you did not come sooner, some of you may wish to see what is beyond the hospitality suites.

Lucky for you there a many options in this little gambling town!



Tropicana Casino: Obviously you can gamble right outside your room if you so desire! You're staying in a casino! Also there is nightly live entertainment at the Calaboose Lounge and there are seven restaurants in the Tropicana to choose from for your dining pleasure. If you leave the Tropicana there are many other things to see and do.

Laughlin River Walk: A block to the east is the Colorado River and a walkway from the Riverside

(continued on page 3)

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.

DONATIONS Winter 2017

Leigh Freeman C 2/506

Bob Combs A 159 Avn.

Gary Watrous E 2506 Recon

Ken Hamilton C 2/506

Robert Patterson, Associate member

Jerry Rodgers Eagle Dust-off

Mike Hedding, Sensor unit

Checks payable to "Ripcord Association".

Mail to:

**Lee Widjeskog,
493 Stillman Ave.
Bridgeton, NJ 08302**

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.



Join us on Facebook group
Ripcord Association

Visit our website at
www.ripcordassociation.com

Please continue to send your letters and
send your comments or articles to:
frankmarshall@ripcordassociation.com

or postal mail to:
Frank Marshall
567 Circle Drive
Surfside Beach, SC 29575

Everyone would love to hear from you.

REUNION DATES:

2017 LAUGHLIN, NEVADA

**MONDAY 2 OCT
TO
THURSDAY 5 OCT**

LEAVE FRIDAY 6 OCT.

2018 MYRTLE BEACH, SC

**WEDNESDAY OCT. 31
TO
SATURDAY NOV. 3**

LEAVE SUNDAY NOV. 4

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
www.ripcordassociation.com

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(Reunion continued from page 1)

Resort to the Laughlin River Lodge the views and surrounding are lovely and open all year long. Great place to get a little exercise at a leisurely pace.



Shopping: Shoppers may want to check out the Laughlin Outlet Center located to the south in the town center on the right.



London Bridge Tour: An all-day jet boat tour will take you to the London Bridge and back by 4 PM.



Hoover Dam: This is 75 miles north of Laughlin if you wish to see the 750 foot high structure that created Lake Mead.



Oatman, AZ: A preserved gold mining town with roaming burros and staged gun fights. Located about 28 miles south of Laughlin and Bullhead City on Historic Rt.66.



Christmas Tree Pass: Seven miles west of Laughlin on a dirt road is a beautiful canyon, wildlife and petroglyphs if you walk. 4X4 recommended.

Grapevine Canyon: Take Rt. 163 west for 23 miles. Turn right onto dirt road at mile marker 13. Two miles in a short spur on left leads to the parking area. ¼ mile to the mouth of the canyon. To go further be prepared to climb over boulders and carry lots of water! To go deep you might want to be in good shape! Great petroglyphs! If that is not enough you can try your hand at hot, dry weather golf! Just be sure to bring and drink a lot of water!!



For hotel reservations for our October event call 1-800-343-4533 and use the group code "RIPCORN". Please do this before September 17. See you in Nevada!!!

Anna Britt Nolan Trust

by Mary Murphy



Hi Everyone,

Hope you had a Very Happy Holiday Season! With the new year, I ask that you continue to keep Keith Nolan's daughter, Anna Britt, in your thoughts and help her make her college dreams come true. She is now a Junior in high school. She is the Editor of her high school newspaper and writes articles for the school paper, as well. She is getting good grades and is now looking at universities to attend.

The trust fund is growing steadily, thanks to our Ripcord Association and various members' contributions and royalties from Keith's latest book. Ulla Nolan asked me to thank all of you for all you're doing to help Anna Britt realize her dreams someday.

Take care,

Mary C. Murphy

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

2017 Ripcord Association Reunion

LAUGHLIN, NEVADA

MONDAY 2 OCT TO THURSDAY 5 OCT

LEAVE FRIDAY 6 OCT.

*Please note the days
of the week for
this year's reunion*

Ripcord on Facebook

by Anthony Chritchlow



[https://www.facebook.com/
groups/ripcordassociation/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ripcordassociation/)

Is everyone ready for spring? I am. This winter will go down in the history books as the most snow in one day since 1985. We got 14 inches in one day. We are lucky to get 4 inches at a time in a typical winter. Also the most snow fall between November 1 and January 25. We have got a total of 34 inches of snow in this time. I sure hope it stops soon.

So that being said are you all thinking about the reunion in Oct? I am. My wife and I will be there this year. I'm looking forward to seeing all of you. We are planning to stay in Vegas a few days after the reunion. We now have 640 members on our Face book page. And all is running smoothly on our page. Please keep posting your pictures or you time in Vietnam. Pictures and posts are welcome if they are of Vietnam, reunions or association news.

As I'm writing this I look out the window and it's snowing hard again. Lord I'm tired of the snow Hahaha. As some of you know I got my first tattoo in October. It is one side of the Ripcord coin. I am now thinking of getting another of the flip side of the coin. They say once you start you can't stop.

Remember this year's reunion in it Laughlin Nevada. All you west coasters that's an easy drive. Think about it.



Visit our website at
www.ripcordassociation.com

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

JERSEY RAMBLINGS

by Lee Widjeskog A/2-506



After our successful reunion in Springfield, we are busy preparing for the next three or four. Laughlin, Nevada will be our next one. It may be the last chance for a while for the west coast members to attend without traveling half way across country.

Recently, I had contact with two fellows from my platoon (2nd A 2/506) John Koozer in Oregon and John Brown in Montana. They are considering attending so I am really looking forward to seeing them for the first time in 47 years. Now if I can get Dan Pretty, Tom Swayne and Steve Matsumoto to show up I'll have 5 new guys for coins. Doug McVay and Capt. Al Burckard were hoping to attend last year so maybe they can make Nevada. This could be a big year for Alpha 2/506 at the reunion.

We all look forward to the reunions where we might re-connect with the fellows who once served with us. One of the most important items we all bring with us to the event is our memories. Some memories are fragmented or fuzzy. But others are very sharp. Problems with our memories of events is that the time lines tend to be confused or events have piled up on each other and where one starts or ends is not certain. Meeting and discussing with others who were there can help you clear up you memory and /or theirs. The difficult part is keeping an open mind and being willing to listen to what someone else remembers about the event. Sometimes people have actually kept logs or diaries about what happen. These help sort out the details.

The work that Robin Graham did by sorting out the daily Battalion logs has enabled us to piece together when things happened. As you go through the write up you may find some discrepancies about where your unit was supposed to be but generally the important items such as contact, medivacs, deaths and wounds are accurate.

I have talked to many fellows who say they don't remember much. When they start listening and talking, bits and pieces come back. This I find very valuable because it helps me clear up my stories or others I have heard. I would love to meet all the guys that were in my platoon while I was present, but each year that becomes less and less likely as we age and pass away.

My first platoon Sergeant, Dennis Leverett (middle

of photo) recently passed away. His help and guidance helped me get through the adjustments that came with taking over a platoon in the field. I always appreciated his abilities. I had just recently located him, but was never able to talk to him before he died.



I hope the others in my unit will continue to live and get their butts to a reunion while we can all still remember when we were younger and many times dumber!

See you in Laughlin!!



PHOTO SEARCH

As I noted in previous newsletters, I am trying to put together an album of pictures of all 138 who died in 1970 as a result of the FSB Ripcord operation. When I first asked for assistance I needed 20 photos. With the help of Jim McCoy and David Hine that number is now down to two!

The two people I still need photos of are **Leroy Nelson from Theodore, AL who was with B 2/501** when he was killed on 9 April 1970.

The other person for whom I need a photo is **Raymond Peter Susi from Brooklyn, NY. He started his tour with A 2/506 and then transferred to E 2/506** as a mortar man before dying in a helicopter crash on 28 April 1970.

Presently Jim Aanonsen is trying to track a photo down in the New York area but if anyone has a picture of either of these fellows I would love to get a copy. Those of you in B 2/501, A 2/506 and E 2/506 check your old photos and see if these fellows are in your collections!

Send photos to Lee Widjeskog if you have the people I am looking for. I have till 2020 to find the photos!

Thank you!

Lee Widjeskog

INCOMING MAIL



FOB KALSU

OU's Athletic Director saw this when he went to a fine restaurant in NYC this last week and took a pic of it and sent it to me.

The pic is of a marine standing by the "FOB KALSU" while in Iraq. Amazing for the OU Athletic Director to see this in NY.

God bless our military!

Jan Kalsu



I found your website quite a few years ago. I was trying to find info on my husband's time spent in Viet Nam, since he didn't speak much about it. He arrived in VN around the 1st of July, 1970 and was sent out to Camp Evans soon after. He doesn't remember the date of his 1st day in the field. He did make his 21st birthday on the 13th and was already in the field on or near Ripcord. He was in D 2/506th under Lt. Warren then, I think. He did say he didn't think anyone could make it through a year of that. My husband Sgt. Tony W. Little and he was there on the 23rd along with the rest of his company to help ya'll.

Anyway, this website has helped me understand a lot of things and I have read 3 books on the battle. I have also been able to email Mr. Seitz and speak with him. I have had a picture of him, my husband and 4 other men in one of my albums since 1971 and was pleased to put a person to the photo. He was very helpful.

Thanks for the website.

Koleen Little

E-mail=koleenlittle@gmail.com

Mr. Marshall,

I've come across your Youtube video and website. Many thanks for your efforts. I am doing research on behalf of my family as it relates to my uncle, 1st Lt. Gerald Hauswirth, killed in action on March 14, 1970. All information that I can retrieve puts him in the vicinity at the time.

If there is anyone who served with Jerry, or was in his company at the time of the battle, I would cherish the opportunity to learn more from them. If you have any guidance or assistance to offer to achieve that goal, it is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Mark Kapocius on behalf of the Family of Gerald Hauswirth.

Mark S. Kapocius

kapocius@uwalumni.com

Ripcord Association Newest Members

| | | |
|-----------|----------|----------------|
| Aldas | Seyit | C/2-506 |
| Biersbach | Norman | 101st |
| Brown | John | A/2-506 |
| Freeman | Richard | C/4-77 ARA |
| Garcia | Samuel | C/2-506 |
| Hotchkiss | Joel | HHC & B/2-506 |
| Koozer | John | A/2-506 |
| Little | Tony | D/2-506 |
| Taylor | Gary | D/2-501 |
| Willson | Delbert | C/2-17 & D/158 |
| Johnson | Woodford | C/2-506 |

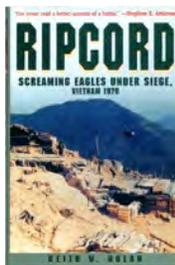
Membership Status

793 members in our Ripcord Association
 639 are Ripcord Veterans
 154 are Associate Members
 209 receive newsletter via Postal Mail
 584 receive the newsletter via e-mail
 640 on Facebook "Ripcord Association Group"

Please go to our website and update your membership to keep getting important information about our Ripcord Association

Books of Ripcord Interest

Ripcord, Screaming Eagles under Siege, Vietnam 1970 by Keith Nolan, 2000



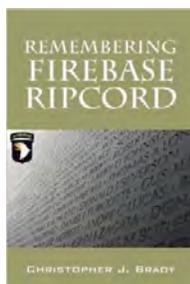
This was the first book written about the Ripcord Battle and set the ball rolling for other books and information to come in. It provides a good back ground for the fight based on interviews with survivors located before 2000. Since then more stories have come forward and additional info has been presented. It's a good book to get your feet wet but will be a little confusing to the non-military due to the use of unit designations and all the units that were involved. It can still be found at book stores and on-line.

Hell on a Hill Top by Major General Benjamin L. Harrison 2004



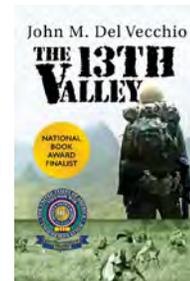
General Harrison, who was brigade commander during much of the Ripcord Battle, traveled years later to Vietnam to talk with his military counterparts about how they saw the battle. Thanks to his interviews the reader will get a much broader picture of what was going on during the battle. This can be found on-line and from the Association.

Remembering Firebase Ripcord, Vietnam 1970 by Christopher J. Brady 2016



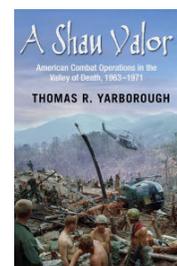
Chris Brady compiled additional interviews to augment the work done by Keith Nolan. Working with a clearer picture of the battle he is able to make the story interesting and clears up some things that were inadvertently left unsaid in the Nolan book due to not finding the witnesses. This can be purchased on line or from Chris Brady directly.

The 13th Valley by John M. Del Vecchio 1979



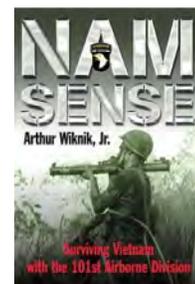
This is a novel written by a member of the 2/502 which operated near FSB Maureen about the same time period as Ripcord. It's an excellent read and reeks of the things all the "grunts" remember when they were in the AO. He started writing the book in 1972 and had it published in 1979. Some will swear it was about the Ripcord operation! While we were busy with Ripcord, the First Brigade and the 2/502 was busy with their NVA problems. Worth reading if you haven't done so yet.

A Shau Valor, American Combat Operations in the Valley of Death, 1963-1971 by Thomas R. Yarborough 2016.



This book describes the various battles that took place in the A Shau Valley area till the US troops moved to the coastal areas. This valley had always been the easiest route from North Vietnam to the south since it went through Laos and the US had avoided taking the fight to the area for any length of time. The author details the various battles including Ripcord. Reading this it becomes obvious that if you wanted a fight, just send troops to the A Shau.

Nam-sense by Arthur Wiknik, Jr. 2005



Wiknik, a "Shake and Bake Sergeant", served with the Second Platoon of A 2/506 from April 1969 to April 1970. He relates his experiences as a newly promote sergeant coming into a unit of experienced infantry men. The books provides a view of what some NCO's experienced and the issues that came up during his tour.

RIPCORN REUNION 2017 LAUGHLIN, NEVADA

Yes, I'll be there!

I have not attended a Reunion since 1997 and have not received a Ripcord Coin.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ UNIT IN 'NAM _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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. For adults see discounts below !

DISCOUNTS FOR EARLY REGISTRATION:

Before June 30, 2015, \$75 per adult

July 1 through 31, 2015 \$80 per adult,

August 1 through September 6, 2015 \$85 per adult.

After September 6, 2015 \$90 per adult.

Your registration fee covers the cost of the snacks, beverages, hot hors d'oeuvres on Wednesday night and dinner on Thursday.

Registration due no later than SEPTEMBER 25, 2017.

Make your check payable to "RIPCORN ASSOCIATION"

Mail your check with this form to:

Lee Widjeskog, 493 Stillman Ave., Bridgeton, NJ 08302.

Questions? Call Lee at 856-451-1108 before 26 SEPT. 2015. (After call 609-774-6951)

- Monday, October 2:** Hospitality suite opens at 1200 hours. (Self guided tours and shopping)
- Tuesday, October 3:** Hospitality suite opens at 1200 hours. (Golf in the AM) (Self guided tours)
- Wednesday, October 4:** Hospitality 1200 Hours. Ladies raffle 1800 hours (6PM)
- Thursday, October 5 :** Business meeting for association business in Hospitality room.
Dinner with cash bar in Pavillion starting at 1700 hours done by 2200 hours.
- Friday, October 6:** Homeward bound

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

HOTEL RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE SEPERATELY

BY September 17, 2017

CALL 1-800-343-4533

MENTION GROUP CODE: **RIPCORN**

(Price is \$33.99 per night plus tax (Sun-Thur.) breakfast is included.)