

Special Issue, No. 48
February 1999

For friends and survivors of FSB Ripcord, March 12-July
23, 1970, Republic of Vietnam

Ripcord Report

Web page for the Ripcord Association

Web page for the Ripcord Association

Go to: www.herolibrary.org

Click on "Welcome to HERO Library"

Click on "Proudly sponsoring ..."

NOKESVILLE, Va.—FSB Ripcord Association is now up and running on the World Wide Web thanks to the Historical Evaluation & Research Organization (HERO) Library and its Web domain. The Ripcord pages are still under construction and probably will be for some time to come, but there are already plenty of items of interest at the site.

The goal is to host as much good information as possible, including individual retrospectives, pictures (with caption and details of events), historical detail and data, and much more. There's a separate page for Ripcord Reunion '99, and some pictures from past reunions.

If you've got ideas or articles and pictures for submission, send them to *Ripcord Report*.

The FSB Ripcord site on the Web is a living, cyber memorial to the battle. We'd like everyone to participate as much and often as possible. And ... spread the word to others.

Keith's Progress on 'The Book'

The association received word via e-mail from Keith William Nolan about progress on the FSB Ripcord book. Here's what he wrote:

The manuscript is coming along. Have done several rewrites. It ain't perfect, but it's as good as I can do. In fact, it's the best stuff I've ever written—one reason why it may be taking so long. So far, the manuscript covers: the history of operations in the A Shau area (1963-75); the first battle of Ripcord (March-April 1970); the building of the fire base and patrol action around it (April-June 1970); the "sideshow" at Granite, Maureen, and Henderson (April-May 1970); morale in the 101st during 1970; the first five days of the battle as fought by the 2/506 (July 1-5, 1970); and the first phase of the 2/501st's involvement (July 2-11, 1970).

Tomorrow it's time to send Sgt. Granberry up Hill 1000 ...

Keith



Reunion '99

DEADLINE: Sept. 15, 1999

Please, follow these directions!

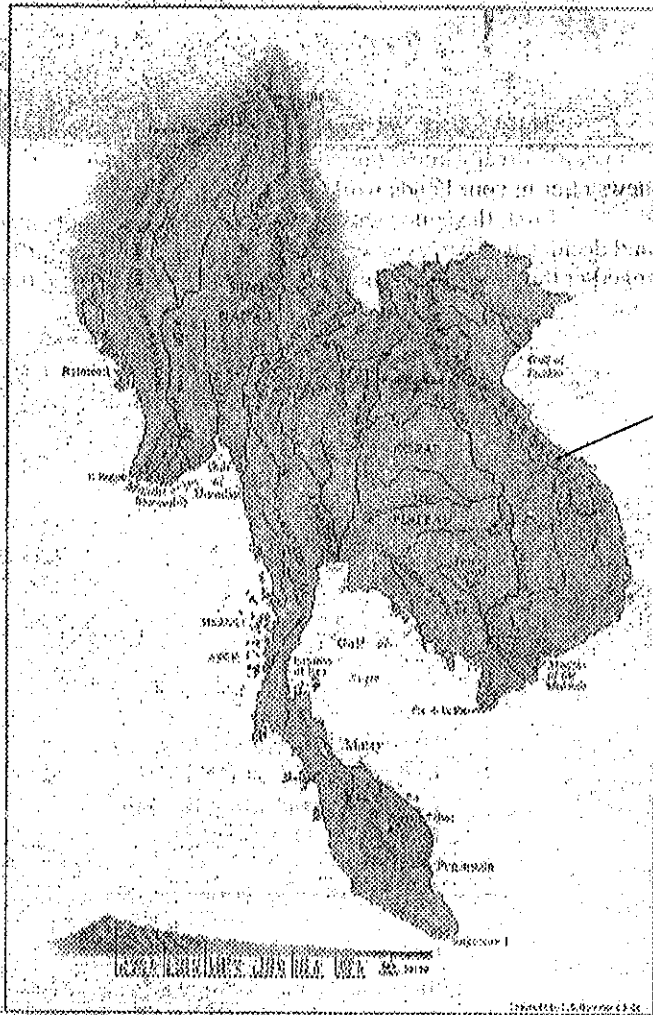
Step 1. Mark these dates on your calendar: Oct. 7-11, 1999 (Thursday-Monday, the long Columbus Day weekend).

Step 2. Pick up your phone and dial toll free: 1-888-258-8687. This will let you make room reservations at the Quality Inn & Suites, 6 Gateway Blvd., at Savannah, Ga.—exit 16 off I-95. Mention the Ripcord Reunion to get the special rate of \$65 per night plus tax. Our coordinator at the hotel is Tricia Patterson. Come early (Oct. 6, Wed.) and stay late (Oct. 11, Mon.)—or choose the dates that best fit your schedule.

Step 3. Send a check to Fred Spaulding, 7702 White Dove Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46256-1750, for the reunion registration. The fee is \$75 for adults; \$45 for children under 18. This covers the cost of the banquet (Saturday evening), hospitality suite and beverages and snacks, and the tour of historic Savannah, including a fabulous lunch (Friday morning). Let Fred know whether you want beef, fish, or chicken for the banquet meal and the number in your party.

See you in Savannah.

MAP OF SOUTHEAST ASIA



Chronology of Events Leading to Tet 1968

1945

Mar. 9—Japanese occupation authorities proclaim independent Vietnam with Emperor Bao Dai as nominal ruler.

Sept. 2—Communist led Viet Minh Independence League seizes power under Ho Chi Minh; establish "Democratic Republic of Vietnam."

Sept. 22—French troops return to Vietnam, clash with Communists and anti-French nationalists in Tonkin.

1946

Mar. 6—France recognizes Democratic Rep. Of Vietnam as "free state" within Indo-Chinese Federation and French Union.

Dec. 19—Viet Minh attack on French troops in north begins eight-year Indo-China War.

1949

Mar. 8—Independent state of Vietnam established with ties to France.

June 14—Bao Dai assumes role as chief of state of Vietnam; nationalists withhold support.

July 19—Laos established as independent state with ties to France.

Nov. 8—Cambodia established as independent state with ties to France.

1950

May 8—U.S. announces military and economic aid to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

1954

May 7—French stronghold at Dien Bien Phu falls.

July 21—Cease-fire signed at Geneva. Partition of Vietnam at 17th parallel into Communist north and anti-Communist south with proviso of free elections in 1956.

Sept. 8—Southeast Asia Defense Treaty (SEATO) established to check Communist expansion.

By the way, FSB Ripcord is right about ... here.

1955

Oct. 26—Republic of Vietnam established in South Vietnam with Ngo Dinh Diem as president. U.S. promises aid.

1956

April—Last French troops in Vietnam leave. U.S. military advisers train South Vietnamese.

May 8—Free elections to reunify the two Vietnams postponed.

1957

May 29—Crisis in Laos as pro-Communist Pathet Lao forces make bid for power.

1959

April—Increase of Communist underground (Viet Cong) activity in South Vietnam; supplied and directed from North Vietnam.

1960

Nov. 11—Unsuccessful military revolt against Diem regime in South Vietnam.

1961

Jan.—North Vietnam and U.S.S.R. aid pro-Communist rebels in Laos.

Mar.—U.S. reacts to threat of Communist takeover in Laos with increased aid and dispatch of troops to Thailand.

July—U.S. steps up aid to South Vietnam; increases role of military advisers.

1962

June 11—Agreement on coalition government in Laos announced.

Oct.—U.S. helicopter units begin air lifts of South Vietnamese troops against Viet Cong.

1963

May-Aug.—Buddhist demonstrations against Diem government in South Vietnam.

Nov. 2—Diem assassinated in army coup; start of a long series of shaky regimes and coups lasting until 1965.

1964

Aug. 2, 4—North Vietnamese patrol boats attack U.S. destroyers in Gulf of Tonkin.

Aug. 5—In reprisal U.S. 7th Fleet makes air strike against north Vietnamese boat bases and oil storage depot.

Aug. 7—Congress passes Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, endorsing all measures to prevent further aggression.

Dec. 31—U.S. forces in Vietnam total 23,000.

Chronology continued ...

1965

Feb. 7—Viet Cong attack U.S. installations at Pleiku. President Johnson orders retaliatory raids, beginning the bombing of bases and supply lines in North Vietnam.

Mar. 8—3,500 Marines land at Da Nang as U.S. commits combat troops to support South Vietnamese forces.

June 18—First B-52 raid from Guam.

June 19—Military junta led by Nguyen Cao Ky comes to power in South Vietnam.

June 28—U.S. Army troops in first major operation against Viet Cong northeast of Saigon.

July 28—President Johnson orders U.S. forces in South Vietnam increased to 125,000, more if necessary.

Dec. 31—U.S. troops in Vietnam total 181,000.

1966

Jan. 31—U.S. peace offensive fails; bombing of North Vietnam is resumed after 37-day pause.

Feb. 7-8—President Johnson and Ky meet in Hawaii to discuss goals for Vietnam.

June 29—First U.S. bombing raids on strategic targets in Hanoi-Haiphong area.

Oct. 24-25—Manila conference of allied powers fighting in South Vietnam.

Dec. 31—U.S. forces in Vietnam total 389,000.

1967

Mar. 27—New constitution for South Vietnam.

May—Demilitarized Zone swept by U.S. forces.

Sept. 3—Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu and Premier Ky elected president and vice president of South Vietnam.

Dec. 31—U.S. forces in Vietnam nearly 500,000.

1968

Jan. 31—Viet Cong launch Tet holiday offensive; fierce fighting rages in Saigon and Hue.

Feb. 13—Additional 10,500 U.S. troops ordered to Vietnam to meet increased pressure against Marines at Khe Sanh and to meet Viet Cong assaults on South Vietnamese cities.

Source: *Vietnam Conflict Map*, issued to Chuck Hawkins when he was a senior at West Point.



101st troops in rotor wash of a CH-47 Chinook.

How *Ripcord Report* gets published ...

This is just "FYI" for those members and readers who don't already know how the "system" to get the newsletter in your hands works.

First, the editor gets up off his fourth point of contact and decides it is wayyyyy past time to pull 10 pages of stuff together that he thinks might just be worth reading. Once this momentous decision is made (usually once a quarter, sometimes more often, sometimes less), he sits back, scratches his gut, gets another cup of coffee, logs on to the Internet, checks e-mail, diddles around a few interesting sites for awhile, signs off, updates the mailing list, gets more coffee, then begins to work on the cover of the newsletter.

Well, you get the idea.

When the newsletter is finished, the mailing labels are sent to Jim Campbell in Shreveport, La., and the master pages of *Ripcord Report* are sent to Fred Spaulding in Indianapolis, Ind.

The tension mounts.

When Fred gets the master copy of the next issue—assuming he's not out playing golf or traveling around the country—he shoves 'em in his copy machine and watches while it grinds out 390 copies or so. Then he gets a staple gun and blasts away at the upper left hand corner of each assembled newsletter. Finally, when things are good to go, a large box of assembled and stapled newsletters are sent to Jim, who has been patiently waiting all this time. <yawn>

Now Jim swings into action. He gathers the full resources of his prestigious law firm about him—usually a single secretary who wants to keep on the payroll—and fires off an order: "Fold, staple, stamp, and label these and get 'em in the mail asap." This onerous and sweat-inducing chore accomplished, Jim returns to his favorite magazine, *Ducks'R'Us*.

But the cycle of newsletter production doesn't end there. No, sir. This is where you, dear reader, come in.

If the next issue of *Ripcord Report* is worthy, you will read it and share it with a friend or family member. If it's a really good issue, you will write a letter to the editor in hopes that he'll decide to publish it in the next issue. Maybe, if the issue is really, really superb—that is to say, Pulitzer Prize-winning quality—you may simply fire off a small donation to help build the war chest of the Association. Maybe.

This completes the cycle.

Contributions go into an interest bearing account for the FSB Ripcord Association. The Association is trying to save enough money to establish a scholarship fund for worthy students at some point. But we're not there yet by a long shot!

Stay posted.

All computer programs, to be considered really important, have to have a bug in them.

LZ Windy Hill

The Civilian Cost of War

NOKESVILLE, Va.—When we think of war and fighting, we do well to occasionally reflect on the loss of innocent lives of noncombatants—civilians who are accidentally caught up in the inferno of war.

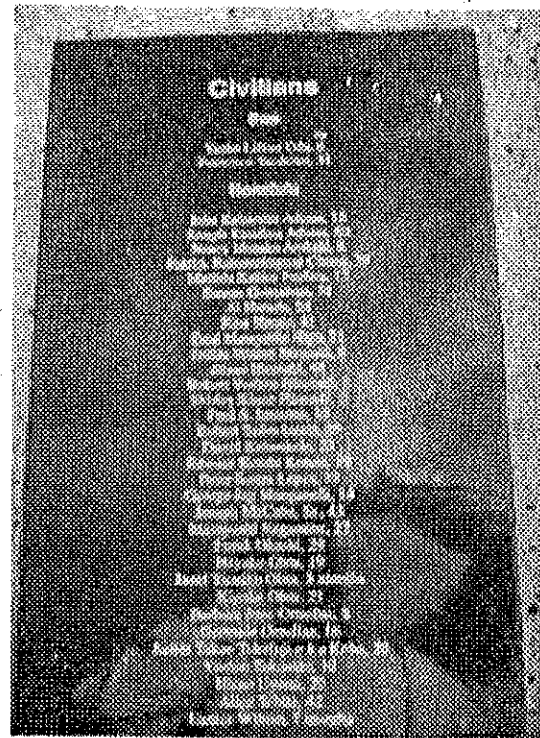
Civilians die in war. This sad fact is termed in today's politically correct parlance as "collateral damage."

Sometimes the death of civilians is intentionally caused. Civilians, women and children particularly, have been used as human shields—by the North Koreans during the Korean War; more recently by Muhammad Aided's thugs in Mogadishu.

By the 20th century war had become total, and pitted entire nations against each other. The allied strategic bombing campaign in Europe during World War II caused the deaths of approximately 300,000 civilians. In Nanjing, China, the bestiality of Japanese soldiers in 1937 accounted for the deaths of as many as 300,000 Chinese civilians in that city alone. The numbers from history are mind numbing. The totals exceed our ability to grasp easily the impact on individuals, families and local communities.

For a narrower, more specific perspective, one might consider the American civilians lost during the surprise Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941. Thirty four innocents, ranging in age from 54 years to three months, were killed by the blast of Japanese bombs and strike of bullets. Nearly half of the 34 were women. Twelve were 16 or younger. Of the 12 who were 16 or younger, nine were girls. Some families suffered disproportionately. John Kalauwae Adams, 18, and Joseph Kanohoa Adams, 50, were taken in the attack. The Hirasaki family lost four members. The Ohta family lost three.

Patriotism and American vigor are much in evidence on Oahu, as one should expect. Reflecting on the past there offers a lesson for us all.—Chuck Hawkins, editor.



Two civilians died on

Ewa

Yaoko Lillian Oda, 6
Francisco Taoderan, 34

and the rest were killed in

Honolulu

John Kalauwae Adams, 18
Joseph Kanohoa Adams, 50
Nancy Mauako Arakaki, 8
Patrick Kahamokupuni Chong, 30
Matilda Kaliko Paofata, 12

Emma Gonsalves, 34

Ali Harada, 54

Kisa Hatate, 41

Fred Masayoshi Higa, 21

Jackie Yoshito Hirasaki, 8

Jitsuo Hirasaki, 48

Robert Yoshito Hirasaki, 3

Shirley Kinue Hirasaki, 2

Paul S. Inamine, 19

Robert Seiko Izumi, 25



Model of a Japanese aircraft carrier.

David Kahookela, 23

Edward Koichi Kondo, 19

Peter Souza Lopes, 33

George Jay Manganelli, 14

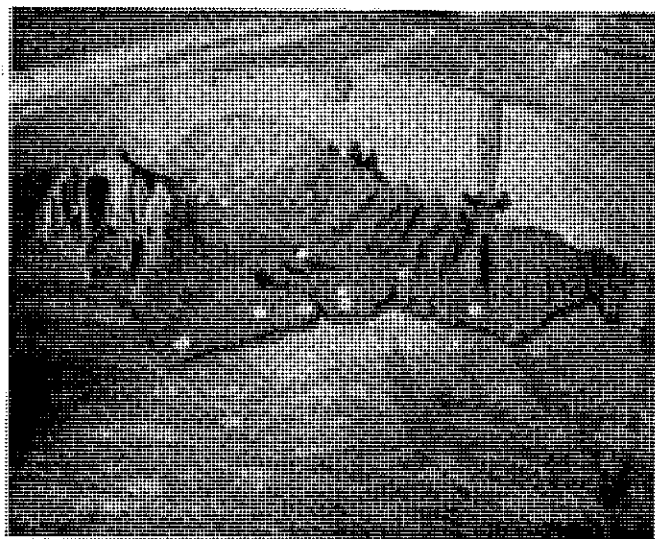
Joseph McCabe Sr., 43

Masayoshi Nagamine, 27

Frank Ohashi, 29

Hayako Ohta, 19

Janet Yuniko Ohta, 3 months



Diorama of Japanese attacks on the island of Oahu. Pearl Harbor is at the front center between the mountains at the end of the valley.

Kiyoko Ohta, 21

Barbara June Ornellas, 8

Gertrude Ornellas, 16

James Takao Takefuji aka Koba, 20

Yoshio Tokusato, 19

Hisao Uyeno, 20

Alice White, 42

Eunice Wilson, 7 months

What a cool cat, man ...

PICTURE OF THE DECADE!

Jam session, Chinese style



LIJIANG, People's Republic of China—So sorry, all, but I simply could not resist using this picture in the newsletter. So, what's the story, you ask?

Well, first, I've got the old scanner working again. It bumps and grinds, but the software drivers hang in there.

Credit goes to my friend in Beijing, Ren Halyan, who translated a really neat picture book into English. I did a little editing for her, and received a copy of the book in return for the favor.

The book, *The Old Town of Lijiang*, is a pictorial journey through Chinese culture in one of the PRC's most quaint ethnic communities—the Mu Clan of the Naxi people. Relatively new by Chinese standards, Lijiang is only 1,300 years old. One section of the book deals with the music of the Naxi, and that's where this picture fits. I think the old fellow's picture would make a great poster for a 1960s rock group, but it's a recent photo and these guys are in dead earnest about their traditional music.

From *The Old Town of Lijiang*, by photographer and author Zhang Tongsheng.

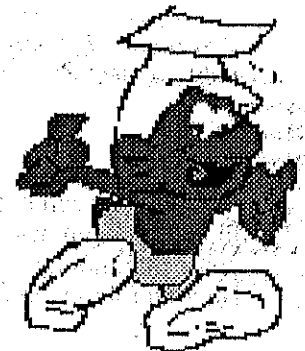
Special thanks to our financial supporters ...

Al Jacobs

Bob Morton (whoa, Bob, way to go)

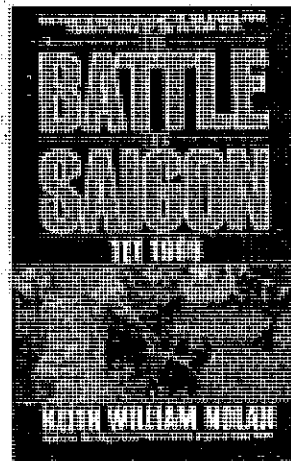
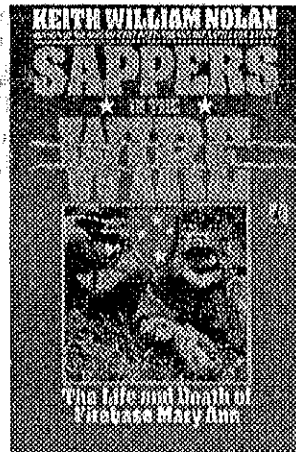
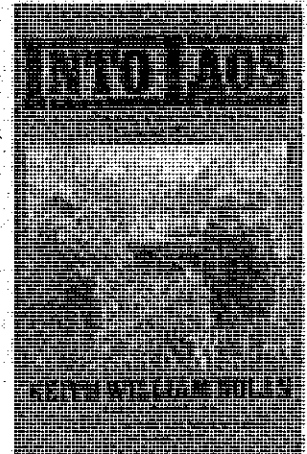
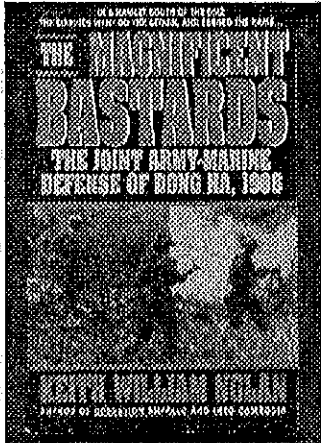
Rod and Becky Thompson (parents of Randy Thomspen, D/1-506)

Dan Esposito



Progress on Ripcord book by Nolan ...

See the story on page one. Keith is getting there! Just to refresh your memory, here are a few of Keith's other titles. Most of them are still available in most book stores.



War means fighting ... The business of the soldier is to fight ...—Maj. Gen. Thomas (Stonewall) Jackson

"During an operation decision have usually to be made at once: there may be no time to review the situation or even to think it though ... If the mind is to emerge unscathed from this relentless struggle with the unforeseen, two qualities are indispensable: first, an intellect that, even in the darkest hour, retains some glimmerings of the inner light which leads to truth; and second, the courage to follow this faint light wherever it may lead."—Karl von Clausewitz, *On War*

Editor's history corner ... photo from the past!

Look familiar?

This 2.35-inch Rocket Launcher (designated the M9) is being fired into a cave on Saipan, July 28, 1944. (Note the boonie hats.) American G.I.s called these weapons bazookas. They were usually fitted with a flesh deflector to protect the operator from unburned powder as the rocket left the tube. Bazookas were employed against tanks, armored vehicles, pillboxes and other enemy emplacements. Operations to rid Saipan of the enemy continued for nearly two months after organized fighting had ceased.

Courtesy HERO Library, United States Army in World War II, Pictorial Record, The War Against Japan, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C., 1952.



In early 1944, the Mariana Islands became the next objective in the Central Pacific for U.S. forces. Different from the coral atolls of the Marshalls and Gilberts, the individual islands of the Marianas are much larger and the distinguishing terrain features are precipitous coast lines, high hills and deep ravines. Plans were made, ships and supplies collected, and the troops given special training for the invasion; meanwhile Japanese air and ground reinforcements poured into the Central Pacific.

An intense air offensive against enemy installations in the Marianas began on June 11, 1944, and a naval bombardment of Saipan began on the 13th, two days before the landings on the 15th. Opposition was heavy at first, but by the 25th U.S. troops, supported by tanks, heavy artillery, renewed naval gunfire and aerial bombardment, drove the enemy from the high ground on the central part of the island. Again advances were slow and difficult with heavy troop losses. On July 9 the mission was completed, except for mopping-up operations which continued for nearly two months.

Che Muen

Ripcord

HEI 002

Photo taken by MSEC Lloyd J. Hamm, Ops. Sec., Ft. Huay, Guam in helicopter on April 24, 1970.

RIPCORD ... Vacation Spot of Thua Thien Province

FSB Ripcord, a resort paradise designed to fulfill your every vacation wish. Sleep and eat in specially constructed in-ground accommodations designed by world famous architects. Exercise spa features our unique 'run-to-meals, run-to-guns' fitness regime. Never a dull moment. Nighttime sound and light shows and daytime nature walks combined with special clothing and equipment make Ripcord the place to be in 1970. Sign up before March 11 and get 23 days free meals and lodging at the height of the tourist season in July. Send e-mail reservations to: currahee@youbetyourass.com

[REDACTED]

So glad to see Jerry's letter in the *Ripcord Report*. Since his address was not complete, please fill it in for us. Also enclosing check for printing and postage. We hope to attend the Savannah reunion.

Becky Thompson
Biloxi, Miss.

I've moved. Hope to see you in Savannah, Ga. this year. Please let me know about the details. Curraheel!

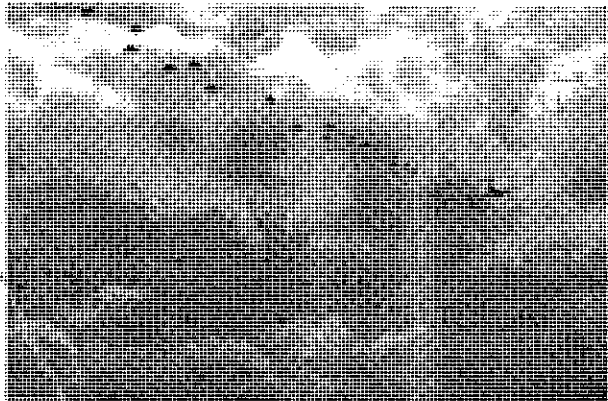
Paul Mueller
Barnes, Wis.

I've got a few pictures that were taken during stand-down June 1970 at Camp Evans. Give me a fax number and I'll send them. If you would be interested in any, I'll get copies made.

All my boonie pictures, undeveloped, were in my rucksack. Lost contact with ruck when I was wounded June 21, 1970. My personal stuff never made it home. By the way, if you have a 1:50,000 Ripcord AO map, on June 21, 1970, C/2-506 was at YD360165. I think those are the coordinates of where we were ambushed. They are on an onion skin of Log #2604, 0835 hrs., 21 Jun 70. It was in my old 201 file. Also have original letter that Col. Lucas sent to FNG [effing new guys] families. Enough about that.

How much trouble are you having in setting up the Web site? I'm getting ready to do one for the City of Forsyth, Mo. Not really my job but it's ending up in my lap. I have absolutely no idea of what I'm about to start. Should be interesting though. Don't want to be a pest so take care. Don't Charlie Foxtrot, and Curraheel!

Mike Womack
Forsyth, Mo.



Airborne U.S. troops over Kyrgyzstan.

NOTE: A separate Ripcord Reunion '99 notice and registration form will be sent to membership soon.

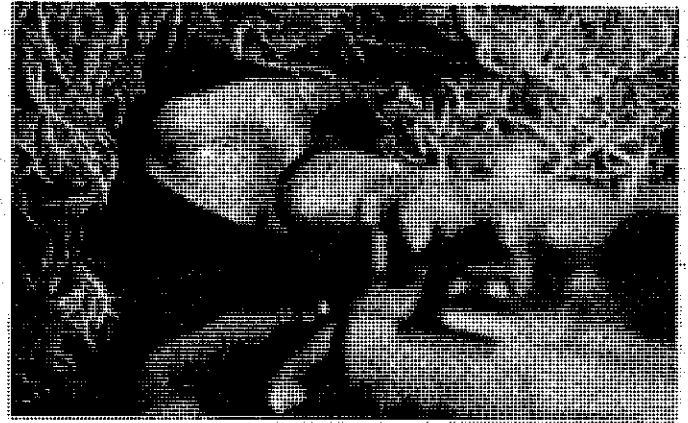
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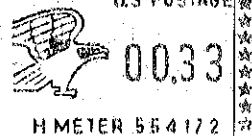
Ripcord Report is a publication of the Battle of FSB Ripcord Association, and is the authoritative voice of history of the battle.

Sniper ... one shot, one kill.



U.S. Dept. of Defense award winning photo.

Ripcord Report
c/o Hawkins



Special Issue: February 1999

Please send address changes or corrections
to the address above.