

# RIPCORD REPORT

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



Number 67

Fall, 2005



## - 2005 - Another Great Reunion!

Special thanks go out to Fred Spaulding from everyone for another fabulous Ripcord Reunion. The tour of the Indianapolis Racetrack was a big hit. Here is Tommy Counts of D/2-506 sitting in one of the many cars on display.



## A Farewell from Fred Spaulding

July has come and gone and so has the annual Ripcord Reunion. Hopefully, a good time was had by all. On Monday, a load of people were coming and going, seeing all the various sites to see around my town "Indy". Tuesday was the annual "Harrison hackers" golf tournament, with eleven participants. Wednesday, we piled on buses and took a tour of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and Museum, followed by lunch at the Brickyard Restaurant. Thursday, the afternoon was taken up with the Business/Information meeting of the Association. It was discussed and approved, that the following people would be compensated for all their years of work and dedication to the Association, by being exempt from paying registration fees, forever more. Ben and Carolyn Harrison, Bob and Redd Judd, Charlie and Juanita Tipton and Fred and Micki Spaulding.

Thursday night at the Banquet, Gen Harrison handed out 17 coins to newcomers. I announced the seven guests that we had. Jeannie Frazier (Gen Harrison's secretary at Ft Harrison), Sally Melton, friend of Ben and Carolyn Harrison, Linda Betkes, an 86 year old lady that is like a second mother to me, Sherry and Al Kearns my cousin and her husband who was also a Vietnam Veteran and Cindy and Steve Miszak, who was the person that did our nametags for the last

3 years. Audrey Wrightsell and Dave Kreckel who also brought along his lovely daughter Aubrey, was also in attendance. (I did not mention them as quests because I consider them as part of our Ripcord family.

Ben and Carolyn Harrison presented me with a beautiful walnut plaque, which I didn't show anyone (reasons unknown) but I will have it with me in Charleston for everyone to see. My Ripcordettes presented me with a beautiful piece of crystal (engraved) and a golfer's pen and pencil set, all of which my wife and I will cherish dearly forever.

In closing, I thank everyone for their help over the years, especially Bob and Redd Judd, Charlie and Juanita Tipton and all my "Ripcordettes", Lydia Esposito, Bonnie Martin, Sheila Williams, Kathy Widjeskog, Susan Stanger and Patty Radford. Also Ben and Carolyn Harrison, whose guidance has been overwhelmingly supportive and greatly appreciated. But most of all, I'd like to thank my wife for not complaining when I had boxes stacked all through the house and the dining room table was always loaded with book packaging materials.

I wish you all well; my wife and I will see you in Charleston.

Fred Spaulding

# FROM THE EDITOR

The 2005 Reunion was another success. Fred Spaulding has stepped down from setting up the Reunions and passed the torch on to Lee Widjeskog. Lee has some great ideas and I am sure all of us will continue to enjoy the reunions. This year's reunion had a lot of members that made it their first reunion. If you have not been to a Ripcord Reunion, you are really missing that "something special", that you may be need. I get a lot of comments on how great the newsletter is, and I thank all of you. I just gather all the information, bundle it all up in an e-mail and send it off to Dennis Bloomingdale who unscrambles it, designs it, lays it out in the format and sends it off to be printed. He is doing an excellent job.

Remember, this is your Association, all comments and suggestions are always welcome

Please send them to:

[frankmarshall@ripcordassociation.com](mailto:frankmarshall@ripcordassociation.com).

## DONATIONS

**Donations are very important!** Donations pay for the printing and mailing of the newsletter. All checks should be made payable to "Ripcord Association".

Please send all donations to:

Lee Widjeskog  
493 Stillman Ave  
Bridgeton, NJ 08302

*E-mail: [leewidjeskog@ripcordassociation.com](mailto:leewidjeskog@ripcordassociation.com)*

## ARTICLES

**DEADLINE for next issue: December 1, 2005**

Please send all articles, photos, incoming mail, and interesting reading to:

Frank Marshall  
224 Derry Hill Ct  
Mt Laurel, NJ 08054-3709

*e-mail: [frankmarshall@ripcordassociation.com](mailto:frankmarshall@ripcordassociation.com)*

## RIPCORD BIOGRAPHIES...THEN AND NOW

Please send us a brief bio on yourself to be included in the newsletter. Include which company you served with, the dates you were in the service, the dates you were in Vietnam, your rank, any interesting facts about your involvement with FSB Ripcord, what you did after Vietnam, career, family, and some comments of your choice. You may include a picture if desired. Send all information to:

Lee Widjeskog  
493 Stillman Ave  
Bridgeton, NJ 08302

*e-mail: [leewidjeskog@ripcordassociation.com](mailto:leewidjeskog@ripcordassociation.com)*

## We need your E-mail address

Send us your e-mail address and receive all the updates and new information on The Ripcord Association immediately. We do not send junk mail, only important information and news. If you are not currently receiving updates, please send your e-mail address to:

[frankmarshall@ripcordassociation.com](mailto:frankmarshall@ripcordassociation.com)

## Electronic Newsletter

A lot of members are receiving the newsletter via e-mail. If you have **Adobe Acrobat Reader** on your computer (most computers do) you can receive the newsletter by e-mail, just open it and read it, print it or save it. But, we must have your e-mail address to send it to you.

This saves the cost of postage and you receive the newsletter before anyone in the snail mail.

You can download **Adobe Acrobat Reader FREE** at:

[www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html)

## Ripcord Association Website

The Ripcord Association website is on line and very informative. I had crashed the site last month, but it is up again and I'm gradually replacing everything that was on it. You can check it out now at:

[www.ripcordassociation.com](http://www.ripcordassociation.com)

*Check out the 2005 Ripcord Reunion photos on the website!*

## Donations

The following have sent donations since the last newsletter:

Bob & Janice Wallace, Fred & Linda Edwards, Jim "Doc" Harris, Bill & Shiela Williams, Agnes M Kohr ( In memory of her son Bill Kohr), Theodore M Reeves (In memory of his wife Jean Reeves), Steve & Patricia Smith, Ben & Carolyn Harrison, VFW Post #4171 Golden, CO, Tony Cox, Timothy Cox, Dale Falconer, Tom & Janyce Rubsam, Floyd & Diane Alexander, John Digilin, Dr. Lawrence Rosen, Bruce Updyke, Steven Morgan, Dan & Lydia Esposito, Jim Leonard, Mike & Liz Womack, Charlie & Juanita Tipton, Gary & Patty Radford

## Correction:

In the last issue of the Ripcord Report donations, there was a misprint.

It should have been Christine Echols, Childhood friend of Dudley Davis

## Ripcord VHS and DVD Available Now

A number of people at the Indianapolis reunion wanted to know how to get copies of the film footage shot on Fire Support Base Ripcord from 8 - 10 Jul 70. Craig Van Hout has had additional copies made, both in VHS and DVD format. He also had copies of the tape of the 30th Anniversary Reunion in Shreveport, LA in 2000 made, again, in both VHS and DVD format. Cost of the VHS tapes is \$10.00 each. Cost of the DVDs is \$17.50. The fee covers the production of the VHS/DVD and mailing. To order a tape or DVD contact Craig by email at [cvanhout@sc.rr.com](mailto:cvanhout@sc.rr.com) or phone 803-736-5073.

## Attention All Ripcord Vets

We have been contacted by a TV Channel that wants to do a documentary on The Battle of Ripcord.

We need from you a written account of your participation in the battle to include your unit (company, platoon and squad). Also include names of those that were in your platoon and squad. Include any pictures or film of the battle. If you send photos, please include the date, place and names of those in the photo.

Family members may also send any info you have of their family that were involved in the battle.

As stated before, the TV Channel wants to do a documentary on the battle and need our assistance to make it happen. Without your input, there is no documentary.

Please include your name and contact information  
Send all information to:

Frank Marshall  
224 Derry Hill Ct  
Mt Laurel, NJ 08054  
856-273-4426

[frankmarshall@ripcordassociation.com](mailto:frankmarshall@ripcordassociation.com)

## 2005 Reunion Costs

The costs of the reunion were as follows:

Hospitality Room .....	\$ 1,981.47
Tour Buses .....	\$ 1,350.00
Flowers .....	\$ 519.00
Ind. Motor Speedway .....	\$ 450.00
Brickyard Restaurant .....	\$ 1,002.96
PIP Printing .....	\$ 209.88
Banquet .....	\$ 5,478.00

After all the checks finally cleared, Fred sent a cashier's check to Lee Widjeskog in the amount of \$14,517.58. Another \$600.00 should be added to that for books and donations received these past couple of weeks.



*Bob Faddis gets to show his wife Charlotte how heavy and cumbersome the arms and equipment were in Vietnam while attending the Welcome Home Tribute to Vietnam Veterans in Branson, Missouri. (see story on page 5)*

## Attention Ripcord Survivors:

Capt. David Rich who served with the artillery on Ripcord is writing a book to tell the story of what the battle was like from the view point of the artillery and others atop Ripcord. He is seeking contacts, pictures and comments from guys who were there with him and without him. If you are interested in getting your story told write to David Rich, PO Box 961, Farmington, ME 04935

## Something to Consider...

As I reflect on visiting, talking with the guys at the reunion in Indianapolis, I remembered a quote that I had read and copied. I went to my notes and found it. I think it helps to understand why we have these reunions and why more of the guys who have never been to one, should make a special effort to attend.

Ben L. Harrison

"Comrades gather because they long to be with men who once acted their best ... men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped raw, right down to their humanity."

Mike Norman, Ft Worth Star-Telegram

## 2006 Ripcord Reunion

Charleston, SC on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 20 July through 22 July with early birds arriving on Wednesday 19 July. The banquet will be on the last night, 22 July, 2006.

# RIPCORD REUNION ROUNDUP



# 2005 Indy Reunion Attendance

Jim "Tiny" & Irene Aanonsen  
Floyd & Diane Alexander  
James 'Mike' Anthony  
Sonny Arkangel  
Stephen 'Greek' Avgerinos  
Dennis Bloomingdale  
Paul & Barbara Bisanz-Buhr  
Randy Burdett  
Mike & Michael Chiarelli  
Ernest Claxon  
Tommy & Judy Counts:  
Grandsons, Blake Bolton &  
James Hill  
Tony Cox Shawn Cox & Sandy  
Garner  
Kenneth David  
Wayne Dawson  
Merle & Ruth Delagrange  
John Digilin  
Richard P. Doyle  
Richard & Patricia Drury  
Bill Edmister

Dan Esposito  
Bob & Charlotte Faddis  
Dale Falconer  
Dean Finch & Barb Walls  
Richard L. Frazier  
Martin & Lea Glennon  
Robin Graham  
David & Arlene Grubb  
Bill & Lynn Hand  
Robert 'Tim' Harley  
Jim 'Doc' Harris  
Ben & Carolyn Harrison  
Chuck Hawkins  
John 'Popp' Hedrick  
Chuck & Jean Holman  
Bob & Red Judd  
Rick & Betty Kellogg  
Jim & Marilyn Kilgore  
David & Aubrienne Kreckel  
Dale Lane & Diane Grote  
Jim Leonard & Diane  
Frank Marshall

Fred Martin  
Richard & Joanne Meier  
Kenneth Miller  
John Mihalko & Jamie  
'Boomer' Mihalko  
Steve Morgan  
Sandy Gardner  
Leonard Moore  
Bob Mulhauser & Anita  
Campbell  
George & Mary Murphy  
Uwe & Diane Myer  
James Neff  
Bruce & Ramona Nelson  
Ben & Lillian Peters  
Greg & Krystal Phillips  
Joe 'Poje' Pojedinic Jr.  
Bob Pressley  
David Rich  
Lawrence Rosen  
Gib Rossetter  
Kent & Janyce Kent

Tom & Janice Rubsam  
John & Sandi Schnarr  
Steve Smith  
Dave Snyder  
Fred & Mickie Spaulding  
Wayne Spruill  
Terry & Susan Stanger  
Dale & Janet Tauer  
Craig & Sandy VanHout  
Bob & Jackie Wallace  
Steve Wallace & Susan Hug-  
gins  
Bruce & Jennifer Whipple  
Audrey Wrightsill  
Ray & Judy Williams  
Lee & Kathy Widjeskog  
Jeff Winters  
Mike & Liz Womack  
Bruce & Karel UpDyke  
Ethan & Courtney Wright  
Doug Rupert

## A Welcome Home Tribute

During the week of 13 June 2005 a welcome home tribute to Vietnam veterans was held at Branson, Missouri. Four Ripcord Association members made the effort to attend. Mike Womack (C 2/506), Pops Hedrick (E 2/506), Robert Faddis (A 2/506) and Alfred Martin (2/11A) and their wives enjoyed the event and presented a reef at the base of the traveling Vietnam Wall in memory of those who lost their lives during the battle of FSB Ripcord.

Shows were half priced for Vietnam veterans and often for their spouses and food was discounted by 20%. Before each show, Vietnam vets were asked to stand and were cheered by those in attendance.

Static displays showed the equipment we used and gave others a chance to appreciate the strength and agility we once possessed.

The welcome home included a parade that featured members of the 101st and saw Pops Hedrick carrying a flag at the head of the parade. During the last night a simulated firefight with helicopters and gunfire was presented. While those who had never participated in a live firefight enjoyed this, some of the veterans found it disturbing and too real even 35 years later.



**Mike Womack, Pops Hedrick, Bob Faddis and Fred Martin prepare to lay the reef at the panel with the majority of our losses.**

A very moving moment occurred when a young ROTC student was singing the nation anthem. Into the song he lost his place and started to falter when someone from the audience picked up the verse and the entire audience sang the rest of the anthem. According to those present it created a very special feeling.

Overall our group felt it was a great time and worth the time spent.

# INCOMING MAIL

Frank,

Thank you for adding me to the Ripcord Association. On July 18, 1970 there were two CH-47s from my flight platoon resupplying Ripcord. I was the aircraft commander of the CH-47 that didn't crash. I flew 16.5 hours that day trying to get personnel off Ripcord and establishing a new fire support base to cover Ripcord. Several days later, I also flew as a part of the final evacuation of Ripcord. I wish I had known about the Association in time to attend the reunion this summer. I hope to attend future reunions.

I would add is that on July 18, we lost a very fine young man. SGT Michael A. Walker from Scottsbluff, Nebraska, was killed in the crash of the CH-47. I don't know if everyone knows this, but halfway around the world, SGT Walker's wife gave birth to their son that same day. Everyone in A/159 ASHB has prayed for that young man who never met his father for years. If anyone has news of the son of Michael Walker, I know we would all like to know the news. In addition, I believe many of us would like the opportunity to tell the young man what an outstanding person his father was.

Chuck Whitacre

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Hello Frank,

This sounds crazy but. When Ripcord was getting over run, I pulled out 3 guys on my LOH and flew them to their hooch at Camp Evans. I figured no would remember a particular LOH but bringing them back to Evans might stand out a bit. I always was curious about those three guys and even wrote Oliver North when he did the Ripcord story on Fox.

Anyway. I came across this website and if anyone could locate these guys you could.

My best to you.

Bruce Bender

---

Frank

We are having a reunion of all artillery units that fought in Vietnam in I Corps. The reunion will be in Branson, MO over the Veteran's Day weekend, November 10 -13, 2005.

We would appreciate it if you would let your artillery units know about the reunion.

Also, we are looking for speakers from the 101 that would be willing to come to Branson for our banquet on Saturday, November 12, to talk about what affect artillery had on their tour in Vietnam, both good and bad. Most of us Red Legs had no idea what was happening at the other end. I was with an 8 inch/175 unit that spent the summer of 1970 at Fire Support Base Veghel. Among other things we supported the 101 at Ripcord.

The web site for I Corps artillery is  
<http://www.willpete.com/I-CorpsArtilleryVets.htm>

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Hi Mr. Marshall

I would like to introduce myself. I am Jim Saller. I was with the 221st Signal Company - - 1970 -- 1971. I was one of the Army photographers, along with Christopher Jensen, who attempted to document the action at Firebase Ripcord. Unfortunately, I only lasted a few days before I was removed from Ripcord. I was wounded on July 14th. I have a good number of photographs taken during my tour in Vietnam. Including a number of photographs taken at Ripcord.

Jim

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Hi Frank

Thank you so much for always sending me the Ripcord Newsletter. I would love to receive it my email, to save you all money on stamps.

Now let me explain my email address, as some (I found out), think it is funny. I call my precious grandchildren "My Sugar Plums" and they have now nick named me as they are getting old enough their "Sugar Gram". Therefore they were delighted when I chose that to be my email address.

I do wish their Grandpa Bob Kalsu could see what beautiful grandchildren God has blessed us with. Of course I'm boxing him in on our earthly time. I sure in heaven, he is enjoying and praying for all seven of them, including Jill, Bob Jr. and me.

I admire and think all of you men from Ripcord are the best. Please tell everyone that I send my love and fondest regards.

Jan Kalsu - McLaughlin

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Frank,

My wife Karel and I had a great time meeting all the Ripcord family. We felt right at home with everyone right away, and enjoyed all our new acquaintances. A special thanks to all those who worked hard to make it the success it was. Also, I appreciated very much receiving "The Coin" from General Harrison. It means a lot coming from him personally, and means a lot sharing something like that with all the guys who were at Ripcord.

We hope to see everyone next year.

Sincerely,

Bruce Updyke, C/158 Avn.

The Phoenix

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Frank, I attended the reunion in Indianapolis and cannot begin to thank you guys for all that it has meant to me.

Laurence Rosen, Eagle Dust Off 91, 326th Med Bn

## Martin J. Glennon, Medic for 2nd Platoon, A/2-506

In 1969, an Indiana youth made a fateful decision when he opted to withdraw from his college English course. By so doing, he was no longer a full-time student and now available to be drafted. Within weeks Martin Glennon had received his notice and was heading to Fort Leonardwood for basic training. From there he traveled to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas to train as a combat medic. With the completion of training in January of 1970 his family gave him a tearful good by to Vietnam. Within days he was delivered to Cam Ran Bay where he discovered he had been assigned to the 101st Airmobile Division. This assignment brought to his mind disturbing visions of airborne rangers, parachute drops and behind enemy line activities. Glennon was happy to learn that the visions were not reality but he would learn that reality was just as disturbing.

Following a week of in country training to get used to the heat and humidity Martin was assigned to work with Alpha 2/506 under the command of Captain Albert Burkard and specifically with 2nd Platoon led by Lt. Gary Kelly.

His field time started out with what was to become a familiar routine. Diagnosing minor ailments seeing that all the troops took their malaria tablets, distributing aspirins and anti-biotics and treating the minor cuts and abrasions accumulated by troops walking through the mountainous jungle terrain. This changed when the platoon Kit Carson Scout hit a booby trap and suffered severe shrapnel wounds to the chest and abdomen. Despite the best efforts of Martin this young Vietnamese died enroute to Camp Evans. The next day another booby trap was encountered and two GI's were injured. These men were successfully treated and survived their wounds in the hospital.

On the 12th of March Alpha attempted to open Fire Support Base Ripcord. Three men from the first platoon were killed and others injured. The attempt to secure the firebase was called off. A few months later the battalion and Alpha went on a weeklong stand down before going to FSB O'Riley to provide security. From a medics point of view this was a period of quiet and relaxation since the

injuries were few and generally slight. During this time Martin started reading the bible regularly. He also considered re-enlisting in order to get out of the field but after some thought decided against it. By now Martin had a new LT and Captain in Widjeskog and Hawkins (was this why he sought a new assignment and comfort in the Bible?) In all, life wasn't too bad on O'Riley.

On 10 July Alpha Company was once more inserted into the jungle and on 12 July with D/ 2-501, assaulted Hill 805, which luckily was undefended. An attack that night by the NVA led to injuries in Delta and a number of enemy soldiers killed. The next day Alpha moved off the hill in search of the enemy.

It was the morning of 22 July 1970 when Medic Glennon reported to his Platoon Sergeant Johnny Brown, that he smelled NVA. Patrols around the NDP failed to turn up any sign of

activity and the Company waited for the time to move out. Martin began reading his bible for comfort. As the Second Platoon moved out Glennon soon heard shooting, explosions and cries of "Medic" from the front. Martin froze in his tracks as the shooting and explosions erupted. SP4 Tom Schultz grabbed Martin and assured him that all would be well. He gathered his composure and moved to tend the wounded. By the end of the 6-hour firefight he had tended wounds on most of the 17 platoon members present. However, Robert Journell and Tom Schultz were dead and Brown had a serious face wound. But 15 of the 17 in the field had survived. That night when not tending to wounded he continued to read his bible.

Following the evacuation of FSB Ripcord, Glennon was re-assigned to duty at the Corp hospital and eventually left country in December. The remainder of his service was spent at Fort Knox.

Martin returned to Indiana and attended school once more. He soon decided to dedicate his life to Jesus. With that he married his girl friend Lea and finished Bible College.

Today he is an insurance salesman and a lay minister with over 100 weddings performed. He and his wife live in Valparaiso, Indiana where they continue to raise their eight children and dedicate their lives to Jesus.



*Martin Glennon as medic in 1970*



*Martin Glennon today.*

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## **Hell On A Hill Top**

Ben Harrison's book, **Hell On A Hill Top**, is now available! Paperback \$19.95 and Hardcover \$29.95. You can order on line at the **Ripcord Association** website: [www.ripcordassociation.com](http://www.ripcordassociation.com) or from

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## **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.

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