



# RIPCORD REPORT

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



Number 68

Winter, 2006

## The Return to Charleston!

No, it's not deja vu! We are returning to Charleston, South Carolina for the July, 2006 Ripcord Reunion. And as we did before we will be staying at the new and improved Town & Country Conference Center at 2008 Savannah Highway.

If you haven't been to this 300-year-old Low-country City before here are some of the attractions available to see and visit while you are attending the reunion.

**PATRIOTS POINT NAVAL & MARITIME MUSEUM:** For \$14 a person you get to tour the famous Yorktown aircraft carrier as well as a destroyer, Coast Guard cutter, submarine and 25 aircraft.



*Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum*

**THE HUNLEY:** Saturday and Sunday from 10AM till 5 PM you can visit the restoration in progress of the first submarine used in battle which actually sank another ship. This Civil War ship was only recently found and is being displayed.

**FORTS MOULTRIE AND SUMTER:** These Forts are key in the history of the nation and the Civil War. Plan on a visit of the pair early in the day.



*Historic downtown Charleston*

In the downtown Charleston area you may want to visit the King Street Antique Mall on King Street, the Avery Research Center for African-American History and Culture on Bull Street, the Slave Mart Museum on Chalmers St., and the Aiken-Rhett House showcasing antebellum life in the South.

Anyone planning on spending time in the downtown area, which is just chock full of things to see and do, should park at one of the Visitor Center parking lots and take the affordable DASH Trolley to help you get around and locate things.

The traditional golf outing is scheduled for Thursday, July 27. You may rest assured that Fred Spaulding has laid on plans for one of the nicest courses to be found in the area. If interested be sure to sign up and check with Fred.

**Make your plans now to attend the Ripcord Reunion  
July 26 – 30, 2006**



# FROM THE EDITOR

The Ripcord Association has grown in the past years and the main reason is largely due to the hard work that a lot of members have done for the Association. From the beginning since Chip Collins started the Ripcord Association in 1985 (with maybe a dozen members), the Association now has 534 members. (363 Ripcord Veterans and 171 Associate members). There are 170 members that receive the electronic version of the newsletter by e-mail. There are 354 that receive the newsletter by postal mail. We have a total of 335 member's e-mail address. Our website receives a lot of visitors and has brought us a lot of new members that are searching the web and find our site. My Real Estate job has kept me quite busy this year but I hope to update the website soon.

When I took over the newsletter a few years ago, I had a concept to continue getting information out about the Ripcord veterans. It is getting hard to obtain information unless you send it to me. A great part of the newsletter is the "Letters to Editor" everyone likes to read what other members have to say. I can not make these up, or read your minds of what you want to say, so please, take a few minutes and send me something. Without your input, I have nothing to write.

This year the 2006 Ripcord Reunion will be in July in Charleston, S.C.. Please fill out the Registration form included in this newsletter.

The 2007 Ripcord Reunion will be in Springfield, Missouri July 2007

Fred Spaulding, Lee and Kathy Widjeskog, Dennis and Priscilla Bloomingdale, Arlene and I had dinner together Nov 28th, in my home town Mount Laurel, NJ, with the Regional manager for Royal Caribbean Cruise Line. The presentation was for a 5 day Cruise vacation in Feb 2007. This would not be considered a reunion, but a vacation for all the Ripcord members and friends that would like to go on a cruise. It went well and I will be sending information out to all members as I receive it.

As I stated in the last newsletter, I have more information on the production company that wants to do a story of Ripcord on the History Channel. See the article in this newsletter and please send information to them. They can not do a story unless you contact them.

Frank Marshall

---

**DONATIONS:** All checks should be made payable to "Ripcord Association". Please send all donations to:  
Lee Widjeskog, 493 Stillman Ave., Bridgeton, NJ 08302

**ARTICLES:** Deadline for next issue: March 1, 2006  
Send all articles, photos, incoming mail, and interesting reading to:  
Frank Marshall, 224 Derry Hill Ct., Mt Laurel, NJ 08054  
e-mail: frankmarshall@ripcordassociation.com

## RIPCORD BIOGRAPHIES...THEN AND NOW

Please send us a brief bio on yourself. Please 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

**SEND US YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS** to receive the *Ripcord Report*, updates and all new information immediately. frankmarshall@ripcordassociation.com

**THE RIPCORD ASSOCIATION WEBSITE** is on line and very informative. You can check it out now at:  
[www.ripcordassociation.com](http://www.ripcordassociation.com)

---

## Donations

We would like to thank the following Ripcord supporters for their generous donations since the last newsletter: Bill and Sheila Williams, Paul Buhr, Veronica Koenigsbauer, Randy House, Ryan and Denise (Widjeskog) Powers, Bill Vega, Leroy Fox, G. Garraty and John Schuelke. Donations allow us to continue to print and distribute the newsletter without charging a membership fee. Keep up the good work!

## 2007 Reunion Scheduled for Branson/Springfield, MO

For those who plan far ahead, Mike Womack and Fred Spaulding have the July, 2007 reunion lined up for Springfield, MO just north of Branson. More details will be presented next year as we get closer.



Captured NVA .51 caliber weapon displayed at Camp Evans



## News from New Jersey

I suspect that many of you have been to New Jersey at some time in your life. For most people it is not a pleasant experience as you hustle through from the north to the south or in reverse going up and down the New Jersey Turnpike. As you may have noted it doesn't cost anything to cross all of the major bridges as you enter the state. But you can't leave without paying a toll. I think the idea is to force people to stay a little longer. Fred Spaulding recently came into the state and commented as he usually does about the costs of travel. He came from Indiana via turnpikes and it cost him \$17 but he got into NJ free. However, he still had to pay to get out. In the future I suspect he will find roads that charge less.

As you may have read or heard, Fred Spaulding has decided to give up most of the responsibilities of setting up and running the Ripcord Reunions. Those who have attended the ones he put on know what a great job he has done. You cannot appreciate the amount of work and attention to detail it takes to have an event run smoothly until you try it yourself. Fred was able to pull it off well with the help of Bob and Red Judd, Charlie and Juanita Tipton, Bonnie and Al Martin, as well as all the Ripcordettes and others who helped out during the event.

Even though I should know better, I have offered to take over for Fred. This will only work if I am able to get help and cooperation from as many of you as possible. Fred is still involved and will guide me as best he can. The real challenge will be just prior and during the event.

I would like to spread out the workload so no single person is tied down to the hotel all the time. Ideally I would like a couple of people from near the reunion site to act as my go between if needed prior to the event and to help procure snacks and drinks locally. Once the event is underway I will need a small cadre of people to take turns being responsible for over seeing and closing the hospitality room each night. In this way snacks will always be available but not squandered and sufficient drinks will be available. I also need people to help out with the registration. This group of people are just needed to make sure the money is collected and the nametags filled out and handed out. But most importantly we need greeters. The job of these people is to welcome first time visitors and try to introduce them to others from their unit or engage them in conversation with others so they will feel welcomed. On occasions we have failed some people in this effort. I know we can do better. If all of this is accomplished then everyone can sit and enjoy discussions of when we were young and daring and/or stupid with others who may share the same memories.

So, if you plan to attend the Charleston, SC reunion and you would like to help out, please give me a call (856-451-1108), send an e-mail (ltwidjeskog@aol.com), or write (Lee Widjeskog, 493 Stillman Ave., Bridgeton, NJ 08302). Your offer and your help will be greatly appreciated. With good cooperation we should continue to have great reunions and an enjoyable time for all.

Lee Widjeskog

## INCOMING MAIL

Happy Veterans Day

Just wanted to say thank you to all of you guys for the sacrifices you made 35 years or so ago by serving your country. It's a pleasure to have met each one of you over the years and I thank you for allowing me the opportunity in my own little way to experience the bond that brought all of you guys together.

Sean Cox (Tony Cox's son)  
Indianapolis, IN

You know I just viewed the movie Jarhead, Marines and Desert Storm and at the end of the movie it says even though they come home and go about their lives have families go to work they can never leave the desert it is foremost in their minds the people they served with, the people they fought with and the people that died. Most of the people in the theater just shook their heads and could not understand. My wife looked at me she knew that I understood the end of the movie. You guys never leave me and we can never leave the jungle but we go on. It is as it should be.

Currahee,  
Happy Veterans Day to all.....  
Gary Powell

I still have a cigarette lighter from Nam that has similar words inscribed upon it. It says, "For those who have fought for it, freedom has a taste the protected will never know".

My son was 1 month old when I left for Nam. Today he had lunch with his mom and I and as we were eating he asked, "isn't today some kind of holiday". I thought of those words on that lighter when I realized that he didn't even know it was Veterans Day. He and I have never spoken of my time in service. Maybe it is time to try to share my "experience" so that he may come to appreciate the meaning of the day.

Buddy Jenkins

Frank,  
Ripcord has a Brick donated by Munster, IN on their history walk at their Vietnam Memorial.  
Best Regards, Terry Stanger



# INCOMING MAIL

Letter to The Editor

"I have to tell you a little news. Two days ago I received a small package at my anesthesia office. As I rarely go there they sent it to me in the operating room and I noticed the return address to be that of Wayne Spruill. Well, I remembered him from the Ripcord Reunion, we sat together at the D/1/506 table. Well, Maria and I opened it and inside was a box containing the afghan of the 101st for which we had all bid at the auction at the reunion. He enclosed a letter stating that he remembered me joking about the fact that I had put 25 tickets in that cup! and that he wanted me to have the afghan as a gesture of thanks for "what I had done for the guys". General Harrison, Maria and I wept when we read his letter, and tears come to my eyes again as I recount this to you. Tell me, how does the same God make Saddam Husain and Wayne Spruill??"

Larry Rosen:

---

Frank,

Just wanted to reiterate that Barb and I both had a great time at the reunion. It was great seeing you, Tiny, Floyd, Chuck, Lee, Dale, Doc Kellogg and just everybody. I wish more Alpha guys had been there but maybe next year. Thanks a lot for making me feel like I belonged and not some lowlife REMF. I was somewhat apprehensive but I am now very glad that I came. It was more than a little cathartic and I will carry the memories of this reunion for a long time.

Paul Buhr  
A/2-506

---

Hello Frank,

I just received your note on the e-mail from George Pourchot from June. Thanks for forwarding it to me. I do want to hear from anyone that knew Don (Ranger). I am interested to hear what he has to tell me.

Thanks. Keep up the good work. It is because of the Ripcord Association that I have heard from so many fine people telling me what they thought of my brother. It helps me to hear from them.

Sincerely,  
Karin J. Loke  
lokem001@hawaii.rr.com

---

How nice of you to put my note in the Newsletter, Frank! I really do think of you all so much. After writing you last night, for some reason I decided to put Bob's name in "Google" and it was unbelievable how many times both a Army and a Marine Camp are named after Bob in Iraq. The Army one is named "1LT Kalsu Replace-

ment Company, 101st. Soldier Support Battalion, 101st. Airborne Division, Air Assault" and the one with the Marines is Forward Operating Base Kalsu.

Two coincidental things happened with those Bases. I received a letter via the Catholic High School that my children attended from Maj. George Andrew Williams USMC.

It was a wonderful letter from "Andy" Williams, a student with Jill and Bobby, that had come in contact with the Forward Operating Base Kalsu while stationed in Iraq. I had worked at the kid's High School as a Secretary to pay for their tuition and so I know Andy well and was so proud in hearing from him.

The other coincidence, was another student that went to school with my children, who works for a mobile phone company here and had a soldier who was on R&R from Iraq wanting his phone repaired. He told "Jason" that he had been stationed at Forward Operating Base Kalsu. Jason then told him that he went to school with the children of 1LT. Kalsu. From what Jason's father said, both men were astonished at how small the world is, in that connection.

My life has been very, very busy in caring for my 82 year old mother. She raised nine children, so now it is time to give back to her the wonderful care that she gave us.

Jill, Steve and their four precious children have been in Colorado two years come this February. It grieves my heart not to have them down the street any more. I relish the three or four visits we do have each year and thank God for the unlimited long distance and also Web Camera so that the pain of distance is some what eased.

Bobby and Jenny live about 25 minutes from us, so I am very blessed to see their three precious Sugar Plums more often.

Both Jill & Steve and Bobby & Jenny gave me wonderful news a couple of months ago. Jill and Steve are expecting Baby # 5 in February and Bobby and Jenny are expecting Baby # 4 in March. We are all so thrilled!! Both families take all their children to hear the heart beat's of their babies and the first ultra sound. This is a wonderful way of allowing them to share in the joy and excitement. We will let you all know what when the babies are born, but in the mean time, we would count it a blessing if all of our Ripcord Family would pray for both the mama's to be and their babies during their pregnancies.

Don't you know "Grandpa Kalsu" is delighted and praying very hard for them, and of course all of us, while in the presence of God in Heaven!

Our love to all of you and your families!  
Jan Kalsu-McLauchlin

*(Editor Note:)*

*If you would like to send Jan Kalsu-McLauchlin an e-mail, please send it to members@ripcordassociation.com*

# THEN & NOW

## Barry D. Mishler, B - 2/506, E - 2/506

My name is Barry D. Mishler. I served in Vietnam from 1969 –1970 as an E-4 with Bravo Company 2/506. I arrived with an M.O.S. of 11-C (mortars) but was assigned as II-B (infantry).

I was on FSB Ripcord when the Chinook was shot down on the ammo dump. On that day I was going outside the wire on a detail with two other guys. Two of us provided security while the third would cut down trees to improve our fields of fire. We had just left the perimeter when we heard the 51-caliber fire on the Chinook. We watched as it crashed onto the ammo dump. Soon things started blowing up and we were outside the wire and could not get back inside. We hunkered down outside the wire and waited for a chance to get in. After a long time the explosions became fewer, things calmed down and we were able to get back inside. In my bunker fighting position laid unexploded artillery round.

Apparently due to heavy wounded in the mortar unit, the next day I was transferred to mortars. Now instead of being in my bunker on the side of the hill, I was right on top of Ripcord where the enemy mortars hit regularly. I



*Barry Mishler*

didn't think we would ever get off Ripcord alive. When we were extracted a few days later, I got on the bird and never looked out. There was word that the enemy was coming up the hill like ants, but I wasn't looking.

I have recently retired from the trucking company USF Holland and am now working as a custodian for a school district in Woodstock, Illinois. I have been a member of the Union Fire Department for 25 years and I am a life member of VFW Post 5040 in Woodstock, Illinois.

I have a great wife Rita, daughter Tonya and son Jason (daughter –in- law Georgette). I have four grandchildren, Jarvis, Devin, Zoe and Gage. I also have three stepsons, Darren, Tyler and Gavin (daughter-in-law Lisa).

While my experiences in the war were minor compared to others, they were not the same as my father, Dean Mishler, who served in World War II. He had the misfortune of being captured 3 times and was held as a prisoner the last time for 112 days. To me (and probably to my brothers Bob and Scott), Dad will always be a hero.

*Barry on RIPCORD*



*Barry and his wife, Rita*





## Another Ollie North War Story About the 3rd Bde, 101st Abn in Vietnam

One year before Ripcord, in May 1969, the 3rd Bde was committed to APACHE SNOW and ordered to assault Dong Ap Bia in the A Shau Valley. The hill and battle became famous as Hamburger Hill. Marin Hinton, producer of Ollie's War Story RIPCORN, is doing research, including a visit to Vietnam, for a Fox News TV program to be aired about mid 2006.

I know some of our troopers, like Bill Vega, also participated in Hamburger Hill. If you, or if you know of others who fought there, please get in touch with Martin Hinton at martin.hinton@foxnews.com

## LOU REDA PRODUCTIONS

### VIETNAM: THE LONG JOURNEY HOME

Lou Reda Productions, one of the nations leading producers of historical documentaries, is seeking film footage, still images, newspaper articles, radio broadcast, etc., related to OPERATION RIPCORN for a potential History Channel program. These materials would form the basis for the production and would determine whether there is enough imagery to produce the program. This would include visual/audio materials leading up to, during and aftermath of the operation.

All materials will be copied and promptly returned. Anyone with questions regarding this project can contact us at, Johnproduction1@aol.com. We greatly appreciate your cooperation as we try to develop a program that is representative of those who served in Operation Ripcord.

Mailing Address to send info:

John T Wright  
743 Center St#1  
Bethlehem, PA 18018  
or call John at 484-767-2631

## Ripcord Caribbean Cruise Q & A

I have received some e-mails about the pricing of cabins for the Ripcord Caribbean Cruise. Hopefully this will help answer some of those questions:

The inside and outside cabins are grouped together, mid ship, on the same deck so your buddies and friends will be near each other. This price is locked in, other prices can change. The more cabins we book by this coming Valentine's Day, the longer we can lock in the price and hold extra cabins so that more can join us.

I can add some of the cheapest cabins, category Q, to our group space if you would like me to do that. But the difference in price is only \$20. The Q's are the smallest cabins on the ship and are only in the bow.

People who have cruised before know these are the least desirably placed cabins. That's why they're also the least expensive.

The cheapest cabin is Category M, \$20 more than Q. Its on the same deck as category G (outside) so that everyone can be together and be mid-ship.

The internet shows the cabin prices with the port tax added but DOES NOT add the government taxes of \$48.91.

So the internet shows the least expensive cabin, Q, as \$449 and our category M as \$469.

The only way anyone gets to see the real price, with the government taxes included, is if they go through the process of booking it online. The government tax is added in at the last step.

### Money Saving Idea:

Putting \$10 a week away per person pays for the Inside Stateroom, \$17 a week per person pays for Balcony Stateroom.

*Thanks to Terry Stanger  
for sending in these  
photos of the Vietnam  
Memorial in Munster, IN.*





# Ripcord Ultimate R&R



## Caribbean Cruise Vacation



5 Night Western Caribbean Cruise  
Departing 03-FEB-2007  
from Fort Lauderdale, FL  
aboard  
*Enchantment Of The Seas*

Day	Ports of Call	Arrive	Depart
1	Fort Lauderdale, Florida		5:00 PM
2			At Sea
3	Ocho Rios, Jamaica	8:00 AM	6:00 PM
4	George Town, Grand Cayman	7:00 AM	5:00 PM
5			At Sea
6	Fort Lauderdale, Florida	7:00 AM	



*Itinerary subject to change.*

### *While onboard enjoy:*

- ❖ Bungee trampolines, serious fun for thrill-seekers
- ❖ Massive suspension bridges spanning the Pool Deck
- ❖ Chops Grille
- ❖ Latté-tudes,<sup>SM</sup> a specialty coffee house featuring Seattle's Best Coffee<sup>®</sup>
- ❖ Boleros Latin-theme lounge
- ❖ Rock-climbing wall
- ❖ Casino Royale<sup>SM</sup>
- ❖ Themed bars and lounges

*For information and reservations contact:*

**MARYLEE CIPRIANO, JUST CRUISES**

611 County Line Rd., Suite C  
Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

Phone: 215-364-3310 ❖ Fax: 215-364-5020

www.justcruisespa.com  
justcruises@att.net

- ❖ Stunning Centrum, an open atrium featuring shopping and more
- ❖ Pool area featuring an interactive Splash Deck
- ❖ Solarium with a sliding roof and indoor/outdoor pool
- ❖ Adventure Ocean<sup>®</sup> youth facilities
- ❖ ShipShape<sup>®</sup> Day Spa and Fitness Center

*All of this and more for only:*

Interior Stateroom **from USD 517.91**

Large Oceanview Stateroom **from USD 637.91**

PRICES BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY. TAXES AND GOV'T FEES INCLUDED. 3RD & 4TH PASSENGER RATE \$397.91. BALCONY STATEROOMS AVAILABLE FOR \$887.91. AIR AND INSURANCE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

For a 360<sup>°</sup> Virtual Tour of  
*Enchantment Of The Seas*  
visit: [www.royalcaribbean.com](http://www.royalcaribbean.com)



*Get out there.<sup>SM</sup>*

# RIPCORD REPORT

Frank Marshall, Editor  
224 Derry Hill Court  
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054

Address Correction Requested



## ***In This Issue...***

The Return to Charleston .....	Page 1
From The Editor .....	Page 2
Donations .....	Page 2
News from New Jersey .....	Page 3
Incoming Mail .....	Pages 3-4
Then & Now .....	Page 5
The Ultimate R&R .....	Page 7

## **The Ultimate R&R!**

Join the Ripcord Association members,  
family and friends for the Ultimate R&R  
Caribbean Cruise Vacation.

*See page 7 for the details.*

# 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**

224 Derry Hill Court  
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054

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

*Editor:* Frank Marshall

*Phone:* 856-273-4426

*E-mail:* frankmarshall

@ripcordassociation.com

*Writer:* Lee Widjeskog

*E-mail:* leewidjeskog

@ripcordassociation.com

*Design:* Dennis Bloomingdale

*Phone:* 215-922-4359

*E-mail:* denb@verizon.net