



# THE RIPCORN!

*The Ripcord is a newsletter of the 2nd Force Recon Association.*

Volume I Number 1

14 June 2019

## Attention to All

Keep an eye on your incoming emails, we will be sending out an email survey to all 2nd FRA members to get suggestions on next year's reunion dates and location. We will also be sending a following survey to determine events you would like to participate in at the reunions. We want to keep the main thing, the main thing and reunions fun, casual and diverse.

**Your desires matter**, so let us know what you'd like to see and where you'd like to link up.

## From the President

The Ripcord is the first of what I hope to be many newsletters. We think it's a good means of communicating what we are doing, what we would like to do, passing along great war-stories and providing another venue for 2nd Force Recon Marines to reconnect. We intend to publish two newsletters a year and then as we get better and the interest increases, quarterly.

### The Association 5 Ws

1. **Who:** Any Marine/Sailor who served in 2nd Force Recon Company
2. **What:** Participate in an Association (group of like-minded souls) dedicated to taking care of Marines/Sailors of 2nd Force Recon Company
3. **When:** As necessary
4. **Where:** Anywhere in the USA
5. **Why:** Keep the main thing, the main thing. Camaraderie, Support, Focus on you.

### History

The Association had its beginning 9 years ago at the first reunion on N Topsail, in the backyards of Joe S. Rodriguez and Jim Capers. Joe Rodriguez has been and still is the driving force behind what the Association does and will do. He has invested both time and financial support to get us to a place where we can better assist 2nd Force Recon Marines and Sailors. We owe him our gratitude for his vision and his personal engagement.

#### Executive Board

Wayne Rollins, MGen USMC (ret)  
Jim Capers, Maj USMC (ret)  
Rick Nelson, Capt, USMC (ret)  
Joe S Rodriguez, MSgt, USMC (ret)  
Rick Gallagher, Capt, USMC (ret)

#### Current Board of Directors

Pres. Phil Smith  
VP, Joe Jennings  
Secretary, Chuck Zeugner  
Treasurer, Stu Shelley  
Membership, Rich Stickel  
Reunion Committee, Carl Schmitt  
Communications, Nick Percopo

## **The Ripcord!**

Page 2 of 12 pages

As more and more 2nd Force Recon Marines got word of our annual gatherings and the group began to grow, we came to realize that there was a need for assistance to brothers in need that the group might be able to meet. As we met and talked with Jim Capers, who served in all three Force Recon Companies, it became apparent that there was a desire to consolidate and organize. In 2016, a small group of leaders drafted some By Laws, created a treasury account, established leadership positions and the Association is now in the process of obtaining non-profit certification.

In the interim, it was decided that the board positions would be held by volunteers.

### Membership

Any Marine/Sailor who served in 2nd Force Recon Co are members. All you have to do is say so. We do not make a distinction in year group. There is no requirement for official paperwork to be submitted for membership. There are no fees required. If you want to retain your membership, all that is necessary is that you volunteer your name and email or phone so that we can include you on the membership roster and make sure you get information about the Company.

Spouses of deceased 2nd Force Recon Marines are automatic members.

Currently we have over 390 Force Recon Marines on our roster.

### What the Association does not do.

We are not the FRA nor the Marine Reconnaissance Foundation. While we may contribute to their efforts, we are distinct from both the Force Recon Association and 2nd Recon Bn Association; we have a different mission. We do not charge member fees. We do not sponsor scholarships. We do not invest Association funds. We do not do large scale events. We do not expand our membership beyond Marines/Sailors and spouses who were/are members of the Company.

### What we have done

Before and after our founding, the Association assisted Force Recon Marines with financial support, provided advice for dealing with the VA and/or provided moral and emotional support. We have worked with the VA as advocates for 2nd Force Recon Marines. We have coordinated and planned for annual reunions. Butch Waddill and Mike Kendall sponsored fishing trips in Montana. Joe Rodriguez worked with the VA on Jon Snyder's behalf. Skipper Nelson and Floyd Houston sponsored assistance to Doug Forrest, and his family upon Doug's passing. Ralph Esposito assisted the family of Irv Buitrago. I assisted the family of Monte Walker in coordinating his VA burial. We had representation at the Memorial Service of Col Wes Fox. The Association assisted the CG, MCB Camp Lejeune in the coordination necessary for Maj Capers' documentary. We have represented the Association at other Reconnaissance Reunions. We have coordinated with and participated in MARSOC Prayer Breakfast that featured Maj Capers. The Association coordinated participation in the 2019 Memorial Day ceremony in Bishopville, SC, birthplace of Maj Capers.

We have conducted interviews with Maj Capers focused specifically on his time as CO of 2nd Force Recon. We held a book signing for Maj Capers' book "Faith Through the Storm."

### What we plan to do in 2019/2020.

- Obtain non-profit certification
- Update our membership roster
- Mini Reunion in Las Vegas for West Coast 2nd Force Jarheads in Nov 2019. POC is Rick Gallagher
- Reunion in 2020 is TBD
- Fishing Trip in Montana in 2020 is TBD. POC is Mike Kendall
- Provide on call assistance to brothers who are in need.
- Hold Elections
- Publish Newsletters
- Establish a 2nd Force Recon Web page exclusive for members.

Semper Fidelis,

Phil Smith  
President, 2nd FRA

## Meet the Board and Volunteers

We'll highlight some of the people working behind the scenes in each issue. This time around we will introduce some members of the organizing board.

### President **Phil Smith**

Phil enlisted in 1974 and after a tour in 1/3 he was assigned to 2nd Force Recon from 1977-79 and commissioned through the MECEP program in 1982 as an Infantry Officer. He held the position of 81mm Mortar Platoon Commander (2/8), Rifle Company Commander (B 1/7), Infantry Bn Commander (3/2) and Infantry Regiment Commander (4th Marines). Phil has held staff positions on the Faculty of Infantry Officer Course, The Basic School and Command and Staff College. He served as III MEF Current Ops O and 3rd Mar Div G-3 as well as the MCCDC G3/5. His final job on AD was as Director and Deputy Director of Small Wars and Irregular Warfare Center. He participated in combat operations in Grenada, Beirut, Somalia and Afghanistan.

Phil currently lives in Pickens, SC and enjoys woodworking.

#### **Dougfest!**

Remember Doug Forrest by shooting manly firearms, playing golf and having a workday at Doug's widow's (Shelia) home. 'Doug Fest 2019' and it will take place at:

Park Mammoth Resort  
585 Park Mammoth Dr  
Park, City, KY 42160  
(270-749-4101)

Friday, 1 Nov 2019 through  
Sunday 3 Nov 2019.

POC is Floyd Houston (270-612-0633) (floydsteph@gmail.com)  
or Al Classon (239-980-3486)



## **Vice President** Joe Jennings

Joe enlisted in 1964 and reported to Parris Island on the day the Gulf of Tonkin resolution was passed.



He served four years as an O311 that included twenty-two months in RVN with E/2/9 and the 2nd Combined Action Group. He got out in '68 and went to college and got a commission through the PLC program in '72 as an O302. He went to Okinawa and joined 3rd Recon and then joined 2nd Force in early '74. He spent three years with 2nd Force as a platoon commander with 3rd Platoon and Training Platoon. After 2nd Force, he went to the Naval Postgraduate School (not the CIA like some people think). He retired in 1988.

Joe now lives in Northern Utah where he and his dog, Gunny, have been on a search and rescue team for almost twelve years. He and Betsy have been married for forty-nine years, and they have two kids and four grandkids. Their son, Mac, is a Marine Lt.Col., and their daughter, Katie, is a Ph.D.

## **Secretary** Chuck Zeugner

Chuck filed initial formation documents for the 2nd Force Reconnaissance Association and will be responsible for maintaining records and correspondence. In addition to emails and other forms of communication the Association will publish a newsletter and create a website.

Chuck arrived at the Company in the fall of 1977 and was assigned to be a communicator. However, he had not yet gone to comm school. It turns out that leaving boot camp was only the beginning of his journey to become a Marine, and ultimately a Force Recon Marine. In time, he went to radio school and to other schools including Morse code school, but most of what he learned about communications, he learned in training platoon, at the Recon comm shack, and as part of regular training with his platoon. He learned about antenna design and other ways to make it possible to send messages back and forth between Camp Lejeune and places as close as Fort Bragg or as distant as Rosy Roads, Stuttgart Germany, or Trondheim Norway. He commented at the recent visit to Recon Battalion that even with new technology, not much has changed with communications. Recon communicators still carry wire to build antennas in the field the old school way.



## **Treasurer** Stu Shelley

The treasurer is responsible for keeping and maintaining accurate accounts of all the properties and business transactions of the Association. These include assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, gains, losses, earnings, etc. customary in the financial statements. The Treasurer is authorized to make deposits and write checks to expend funds authorized by the Board and/or President. The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring the deposit of monies and other valuables and disperse funds of the Association by the Board and account for these transactions and of the financial condition of the Association.



Current balance: \$13,798.56. This year's reunion raised \$14,804 in donations, 50:50 raffle, and proceeds from memorabilia. Reunion expenses: \$4,221.25.

If any member of the 2nd FRA is a member of the NFCU they can simply make donations from their NFCU account to the Associations account using account and routing numbers, 7087684416 and 256074974, respectively. There are no charges or fees. However, members can set up a money transfer, ACH, with their home/local bank. If 2d FRA members and non-member sponsors wish to contribute they can make deposits. Checks and deposits should be made out to the 2d Force Reconnaissance Association using the account and routing numbers listed above.

Stu entered 2nd Force Recon training Platoon as a PFC. He then reported to 1st Platoon which was led by Lt. Anderson. His Team Leader was Sgt Renteria. He rose through the ranks later becoming Team Leader at the rank of Sgt. Stu was later transferred to Okinawa where he had the pleasure to serve under Capt. Waddill at JWTC. Stu was Honorably discharged at the rank of Staff Sargent in 1979.

## **Membership** Richard C. Stickel



Duties include: Solicit/recruit for new members, member tracking, maintain member roster, update member contact information.

After service Rich taught school, became a police officer and Federal Air Marshall firearms instructor. He has one son, one daughter and two grandkids. Collects German war relics, restores Willys jeeps and always has a beautiful German Shepherd Dog.

## The Ripcord!

Page 6 of 12 pages

- 1976, Parris Island, SC (PVT-PFC)
- 1977, India, 3/2 Machine Gunner (PFC)
- 1977-1982, 2ND Force Recon Co (PFC-Sgt)
- 1983-1985, Fox, 2/2 Rifle/Weapons Platoon Leader
- 1985-1987, 2ND Force Recon Co. 1st Plt. Commander
- 1987-1989, Glassboro State College
- 1989-1993, Marine Corps Security Force Co., Bangor
- 1993-1994, Fox, 2/5, Rifle Co. Commander
- 1994-1995, 11TH MEU, Spec Ops Officer
- 1995-1999, Cornell University, Marine Officer Instructor.

## Reunion Committee Carl Schmitt

As the Reunion Committee Board Member, I coordinate various aspects of the 2d Force Recon Association annual reunion. My principal responsibility is management and oversight of the Reunion. Secondary responsibilities comprise marketing and communication collaterals with Marine Corps publications, Marine Corps Times, Leatherneck Magazine, American Legion Magazine, and TWS Admin. Military coordination consists of liaison with the Camp LeJeune (CL) Base Provost Marshall Office, the



Installation Pass and ID Office, Public Affairs, and Range Control. Community Reunion Support includes the Jacksonville/Onslow County Chamber of Commerce. Other details are overseeing hotel reservations (room reservations, technology and audio/visual aids), event planning options (a golf tournament, fishing tournament, CL on-base tours, and promotional items such as shirts, mugs, coins, etc). Liaison with the Association Treasurer ensures funding is in place for reunion financial requirements.

I enlisted in the Marine Corps in August 1972. My initial assignment was with 1/2, then joined 2nd Force Recon in Oct 1974 as a 2531 Radio Operator. After being an Assistant Team Leader, I was an E-5 Team Leader under Lt. Larry Worthington and Lt Alan Anderson. Deployments include a Carib, Med, NATO Cruises and Gitmo, Cuba with the Special Mission Force. Discharged in 1977, I became a career Federal DOD Civil

Servant, spending the last half of my 40-year career in Germany. I'm married to Cheryl for 40 years, who is a career critical care RN. Cheryl was also a Major in the Army Reserve Nurse Corps. We have two sons: Jacob and Martin, who is also a Force Recon Marine (GySgt). For recreation, I enjoy traveling with Cheryl and fly fishing. I am a volunteer EMT with various Community Life Support Units for over 30 years and 30-year member of the National Ski Patrol as an Alpine Patroller.

## **Director of Communications** Nick Percopo

As Director of Communications I am a link between members and officers on the board. It is also my job to get information out to our over 300 members. I am also the Editor of the newsletter so if you have any photos, info or stories you'd like to share with all of our members send them to me and I will get the info out following approval from the board. Hope to see you all at our next reunion.

I entered Training Platoon as a PFC in 1976, After completion I entered 6th Platoon led by Lt. Ley and Platoon Sgt. Broadstone. I was transferred to DRP Bravo Co. 3rd Recon Bn in 1979 and Honorably discharged Dec 1979. Semper Fi



## **Reunion News**

The 2019 2nd Force Recon Association reunion was held 1- 4 May at Sneads Ferry and N. Topsail Beach, NC. About fifty-five 2nd Recon Brothers attended.

The rally point for the Reunion was the conference room at the Hampton Inn in Sneads Ferry.

The engraved 2nd Force Recon mugs, polo shirts and hats were big hits.

There were two events on Thursday the 2nd; The MCAS flight line tour organized by Carl Schmitt and the golf tournament organized by Rick Gallagher.

Skipper Nelson and Dody Koontz organized the visit to 2nd Recon Bn.

Participants enjoyed talking with young Recon Marines, the briefing on the Battalion's capabilities and the WWI and WWII weapons display courtesy of LtCol Daughtridge (ret). Many thanks to Col Bain, CO Combat Engineer School, MCI and LtCol Hoey, CO, 2nd Recon BN for their support and coordination necessary to make our visit worthwhile. The Association provided sandwiches and beverages for all.

A company meeting and dinner were held on Friday evening in the hotel conference room. Joe Rodriguez provided tacos and pizza, and the Association provided beer and soda for fifty-five Brothers and guests. The meeting focused on educating everyone on the purpose and mission of the Association. Thanks to heart-warming stories from Jon Snyder, Nick Percopo, Floyd Houston and a stellar performance by Joe R., members pledged approximately \$8,000 to support the work of the Association. We will continue our efforts to support members of the Company who need VA, medical, or other assistance. They should know that they have Brother's from 2nd Force Recon Association always beside them.

## 2019 Reunion Golf Outing



A great day on the golf course. Joe Rod, Joe Jennings, TJ, Stu Shelly and Kevin D was Joe's caddie



Twelve showed up for the Butch Waddill Memorial 3-mile beach run and 2-mile walk coordinated by Mike Armstrong. Mike Armstrong and Mark American Horse captured the prizes

## **A Brother's Last Wishes**



At 1100 03 May 2019 at DZ Falcon, we paid our respects and said goodbye to one of the most well-respected Marines of the Company, LtCol. Durwood "Butch" Waddill USMC. Butch passed away on 9 Oct 2018 in Montana and was piped over the side with eight bells while Rick Gallagher spread his ashes over the DZ. Special thanks to Mike Kendall for being by Butch's side while Butch passed through the Valley, taking care of Butch's estate, coordinating the details necessary that allowed the family to rest easy and for ensuring Butch's remains were made available.

# MCAS Flight Line Tour and Memorial Visit



Walking the flightline



We're ready! Where are the chutes?



A CH-53E pilot describes of the Echo model



An Association member touring the CH-53K model



At the memorial garden



# Picnic at Major Capers' Home



The grand finale of the Reunion was the picnic at FOB Capers. Mark American Horse organized Maj Capers book signing. John Holmes supplied the logistics, tents, chairs, etc. Julio Royal (right) gave an inspirational talk on leadership, and Joe Rodriguez presented him with a Rolex watch on behalf of the Association.



John Keifer presented the honor quilt to SgtMaj Martinez (left). Chuck Zeugner read the names of deceased 2nd Force Recon Marines, and Major Capers gave a brief presentation (center).

Thanks to Jim Stiles and Chuck Zeugner for their work in updating our memorial roster and to Hodge Jordan for providing the nameplates added to the "Lest We Forget" board.

If you were unable to make it this year, we hope to see you at next year's reunion. We are already planning dates and events, and the word will be out soon! Check your email for a survey.

## The Ripcord!

Page 12 of 12 pages

### How to contact the Board

<b>President</b>	Phil Smith	540-498-0733	<a href="mailto:jarhed73@yahoo.com">jarhed73@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Vice President</b>	Joe Jennings	801-452-5092	<a href="mailto:jenningsjb@gmail.com">jenningsjb@gmail.com</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	Chuck Zeugner	218-235-9234	<a href="mailto:czeugner@gmail.com">czeugner@gmail.com</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Stu Shelley	219-707-0632	<a href="mailto:swshelley8654@gmail.com">swshelley8654@gmail.com</a>
<b>Membership</b>	Rich Stickel	973-718-1143	<a href="mailto:marine03mustang@gmail.com">marine03mustang@gmail.com</a>
<b>Communications</b>	Nick Percopo	845-233-4814	<a href="mailto:neeko777@aol.com">neeko777@aol.com</a>
<b>Reunion Committee</b>	Carl Schmitt		<a href="mailto:carlschmitt3@icloud.com">carlschmitt3@icloud.com</a>