

ACADIANA CHAPTER DISPATCH



ACADIANA CHAPTER 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION
ASSOCIATION

CHAPTER MEETS AT HOLY CROSS CHURCH, 415 ROBLEY DR. LAF, LA
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
(337) 684-6175 or Cell (337) 288-2730
2424 Pierre Matte Road, Branch, LA 70516

ACADIANA CHAPTER'S MEETING WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY MARCH 4th, 2017 AT HOLY CROSS CHURCH IN LAFAYETTE, LA. IN BUILDING, D MEETING TIME IS 1030 HRS.

MARCH MEETING WILL BE PLANNING ON OUR 2017 SOUTHWEST AIRBORNE MEMORIAL DAYS EVENT AND SPRING BAR-B-QUE

Please come to our meeting to help us plan our Southwest Airborne Memorial Days, event in Lafayette, LA on June 9, 10 and 11 of 2017. We need a LOT of help to make this successful. The last time we did it in 2013, it was successful and everyone who came enjoyed themselves and had a very good time. **PLEASE** contact your Airborne friends from your service time and **INVITE** them to come have a reunion within the framework of this REGIONAL MULTI-STATE Airborne confab.

A lot of work has transpired and more need's to be done. **COME** to our meeting and give us your input. We need you to come to the meeting Saturday March 4th and to the "Southwest Airborne Memorial days on June 9,10 and 11.

We thank everyone who has come forward to work on this and who has pledged to furnish items for the gathering (Food, Drinks, Etc.). We thank especially Phoebe and Ralph Gaudet for soliciting items to be raffled off at our "Silent Auction" which will be held during the "Southwest Memorial Airborne Days" gathering June 9-11, 2017 in Lafayette, LA.

I am attaching by e-mail the Registration Form to attend the SW Memorial Abn Days event, plus a form to place an advertisement in our Program booklet that we will produce. This can be used as a business deduction if you advertise your business. **PLEASE MAKE** this a successful

event for our Chapter. Please invite your military buddy's to come to this to have your own personal reunion within this "Airborne Event."

CHAPTER SPRING BAR-B-QUE, SATURDAY APRIL 15TH 2017

As stated earlier, the Chapter voted to conduct a Spring Bar-B-Que on Saturday April 15, 2017 at the Holy Cross Catholic Church Knights of Columbus building on the Church grounds.

The cost (again) will be \$5.00 per person. For families coming with more than four, it will still be \$20.00. We are not trying to do anything but have a good time and break even. A form will go out with this newsletter (either by e-mail) or a hard copy for those receiving the Newsletter by USPS.

The menu is the same as in the past: Chicken or Hamburgers + Baked Beans, Cole Slaw, Potato Salad and Soft Drinks.

Please be at our meeting on Saturday March 4, 2017 at 1030 hrs to help plan for this.

We meet for one hour and then dismiss to go eat lunch at a local restaurant. The camaraderie and "Airborne" fellowship after the meeting makes it all very worthwhile. We had 15 at our last meeting and 12 gathered to eat lunch together.

AIRBORNE HISTORY!

United States Army "Jump School in 1947

The United States Army's Jump School has been conducted since 1942, first at Ft. Benning, GA and then in other places including Japan after WWII, in England during WWII for the 101st Airborne Division to make up their units numbers.

What follows is the story of John McGregor who enlisted in the Army in 1947:

How I became Airborne by John McGregor.

John joined the US Army at age 17 in 1947 with his mothers permission. He underwent 6 weeks of Basic Training at Ft. Dix New Jersey. He then went to Ft. Benning, GA for Jump School.

The second week of June, 1947 we started in Class B-33A of the Airborne School. At that time jump school at Benning was 6 weeks, 5 day jumps and 1 night jump. The first week was pure hell for physical torture. Running around Lawson Field twice a day, PT four times a day, drop down and give me ten for every minor infraction and

never walking, always running. For a kid just out of a classroom it took a while to build up those flabby muscles, but we learned to live with it. We learned loading & lashing for gliders and at the end of the week we took three glider rides in a Waco CG-4A troop glider carrying jeeps, motorcycles and 75 pack howitzers.

The next three weeks went much better; we were beginning to get the hang of the routine with all that running, pushups, exercising and the pushup muscles were beginning to build up. During those weeks we worked the 34-foot towers, the 250 towers, suspended agony, the wind machine and learned to pack our own parachutes including reserve chutes. We also learned the nomenclature of packing tray, risers, apex, static line and all those other things in a T-7 parachute.

The Fifth week was jump week; the reason we were there. It took the first three jumps to figure out what we were doing. On the third jump we finally lost our first guys to freezing in the door. It seemed like every jump from there on had a quitter or two. It became common to see a couple of guys double timing down the runway holding their Corcoran's backwards at waist level and they would be gone by the following morning.

On Saturday of week six we marched onto the big parade ground and lined up on the white stripes. The big guy, General Something-or-other made a speech telling us what an accomplishment we had just completed and then we marched up onto the stage in alphabetical order. The general pinned on a set of jump wings, shook hands and then I stepped back and saluted. Just before walking off the stage a bird colonel handed me a pair of glider wings.

If any of you have something that you would like me to run – including your jump school or Airborne experiences, please send it to me as a Microsoft Word document, which I can use in the Newsletter. Please make it 500 words or less. JRV

NEW AND RENEWING CHAPTER MEMBERS

James O. Evans – Lives in Carencro and is a retired Methodist Minister. He served with 507th PIR Nov 43-Apr 45; 517th ARCT Apr 45-May 46

Joseph "Jack" Rogillio – Lives in Rosedale, LA with his lovely wife of 75 years Ms. Felicie. Jack served with Service Company 506th PIR of the 101st Abn. Div. and made the combat jumps at Normandy and Holland. He fought at Bastogne during the battle of the Bulge and knocked out a Nazi Tiger tank with a 2.36"

Bazooka shot to the bogie wheels.

Brandon J. Varisco – Lives in Breaux Bridge and served in the 82nd with B. Co. 82 CAB, 82nd Abn Div. 2003-2008 Deployed Aug 03 - Apr 04 Iraq, Jan 07 - Jan 08 Afghanistan.

Randolph Bascle – Lives in Bourg, LA. He served with Co A. 82nd Signal Battalion from 3/59 to 06/60; then 2nd ABG 503rd ABN Inf. Okinawa from 06/60 to 09/61

Col. (R.) Hector R. Ponton – Lives in Lake Charles, LA and served in the 173rd Abn Bde. in Vietnam.

Terry J. Johnson Sr. Lives in Lafayette, LA and retired as a 1SG from the Army. He served with B Co. 1/75th Ranger Bn from March 1987 to March 1989; SF Units C 1/7/SWC Jan 1990 to June 2000.

NEW LIFE MEMBER

Leroy “Pete” Burney III, Lives in Lafayette, LA and served in the 82nd Signal Battalion and 3/319th FA from 3/1987 to 8/1990. Pete left the service as a Captain.

We thank each for joining or renewing and we thank them all for their service to our Nation.

ACADIANA CHAPTER WEBSITE:

Check out our new website. It is located at:
www.acadianairborne.org/

RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS.

We ask you to keep a copy of the application form and recruit new members! If you want, application forms call me. You must tell them we need a DD214 or other document showing the issuance of the parachutist badge (Jump Wings). **Make sure the DD214 indicates “Separation under Honorable Conditions” or a copy of their Honorable Discharge. This is a REQUIREMENT of the Association.**

ASSOCIATION EVENTS OF IMPORTANCE

All American Week will be held at Ft. Bragg, N.C. May 22-25th 2017. I sent out forms to attend this earlier. IF YOU NEED ONE CONTACT ME.

82nd Association Convention Will be held in Orlando Florida August 8-13th 2017 at the Rosen Hotel in Orlando. I sent out forms to attend earlier. IF YOU NEED ONE CONTACT ME.

Thanks and “Airborne All The Way!”



John R. “Randy” Vidrine
HHC 2/325th Dom Rep 1965
Chapter Chairman Acadiana
Chapter 82nd Abn Div Association
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Branch, LA 70516-3631
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Presenting New Life Member "Pete" Burney his "All American" Life Membership Certificate and Card



Members at Lunch after meeting (Chili's in Lafayette Amb. Caffrey) Starting at left going up: Grady Thomas, Marcus "Mark" Melancon, Paul Cador, Tom Grote, Terry O'Connor, Octavia Solomon, Roosevelt Solomon. On right going up are: Joseph A. Mitchell, Randy Vidrine, Delores Vidrine, Phoebe Guadet and Ralph Gaudet.
Come to our March meeting Saturday March 4th at 1030 hrs at Holy Cross Church!

