



**ACADIANA CHAPTER DISPATCH**

**ACADIANA CHAPTER 82<sup>ND</sup> 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**

**THE JULY MEETING WILL  
BE HELD SATURDAY  
JULY 7<sup>TH</sup> IT WILL BE HELD  
AT BUILDING D AT HOLY  
CROSS CHURCH, IN  
LAFAYETTE, LA  
BEGINNING AT 1030 HRS.  
WE WILL MEET IN BLD D.**

**SW MEMORIAL  
AIRBORNE DAYS IN  
HOUSTON, TX. JUNE 8-10.**

**ANNUAL SOUTHWEST  
AIRBORNE DAYS  
REUNION:** The 2018 Southwest Memorial Airborne Day Reunion held June 8-10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at the Hilton NASA Clear Lake hotel is now history. The Lone Star Chapter put on a great event that was enjoyed by all who attended. Mark Melancon, his wife Linda and I were in attendance from our Acadiana Chapter. We enjoyed a trip to the Lone Star Flight Museum at Ellington Air Field. The tour was guided by a very knowledgeable person. We saw many WWII military Aircraft including a B-17 bomber and a number of Naval Aircraft. The banquet on Saturday evening was

very nice and guest speaker BG Richard "Rick" Noriega gave an excellent address that was well received. The hospitality suite was well stocked and they furnished breakfast on Saturday morning. The breakfast buffet by the hotel on Sunday morning was excellent.

**IMPORTANCE OF YOUR  
ATTENDING CHAPTER  
MEETINGS**

I am asking each of you to make a real effort to attend this meeting coming up. It is important because our organization has its strength in our members. You will benefit in the opportunity to interact with fellow paratroopers and you have a voice in all that we do. We will be discussing a possible trip (as a Chapter) to Ft. Benning to visit the Jump school as we have on two previous occasions.

**DIVISION UNVEIL HALL  
OF FAME:** The 82<sup>nd</sup> announced the inaugural class of the All American Hall of Fame. Earlier this year, subordinate units within the Division submitted nominations for inclusion

into the All American Hall of Fame. Those recommendations were presented before a board of senior leaders within the Division. That board selected 20 legendary figures from the Division's 101 year history for enshrinement.

Inductees were selected based on their service within the Division, their lifelong commitment to the Division values, and either valorous combat action or their contributions to their chosen field outside of the Division. Nominees must have either been awarded the Medal of Honor or served a minimum of two years within the Division. While nominees may still be serving in the Army, they must no longer be eligible for service within the Division and must be five years removed from last service in the Division.

Beginning in 2019, the All American Hall of Fame will enshrine up to five new members each year during All American Week. The inaugural class of the All American Hall of Fame consists of the following:

General (Retired) John F. Campbell;

Staff Sergeant Felix Modesto  
 Private First Class Charles DeGlopper  
 General (Retired) Ann E. Dunwoody  
 First Sergeant Leonard A Funk, Jr.  
 Command Sergeant Major William Gainey  
 Private Joe Gandara;  
 Lieutenant General (Retired) James Gavin;  
**Command Sergeant Major (Retired) Ted Gaweda**  
 Captain (Retired) Roy Hanna;  
 General (Retired) Daniel K. McNeill Lieutenant  
 Colonel Emory J. Pike  
 Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) James Megellas;  
 General (Retired) Matthew B. Ridgway;  
 Command Sergeant Major (Retired) Ken Merritt;  
 General (Retired) Roscoe Robinson, Jr.;  
 General (Retired) Maxwell D. Taylor;  
 General (Retired) James D. Thurman;  
 Sergeant Alvin C. York;  
 General (Retired) James J. Lindsay

The Induction ceremony was an invitation only affair, but Bruce Stacy and I were in the building and could see and hear everything that occurred. I am proud to have served in combat (Dominican Republic 1965) with CSM Ted Gaweda. I enjoyed visiting with him on the morning of the Division Run, Monday May 21, 2018.

## **AIRBORNE HISTORY – THE TEST PLATOON**

The Airborne Test Platoon: This platoon was created after Gen. George C. Marshall, chief of staff of the Army, realized the potential

for airborne forces - and mobilized his power to do something about it, according to A Combat History of American Airborne Forces.

Over 180 Soldiers, all from the 29th Infantry Regiment, volunteered to join the Test Platoon.

Out of the 180-plus Soldiers who volunteered, two officers and 48 enlisted men were chosen based on their high standards of health, fitness and a written test, said Master Sgt. Robert Lucas, 1st Bn. 507th Parachute Inf. Regt.

In World War II, most platoons had two officers in case one got hurt within the platoon and they needed an immediate backup, and extra men for the same reason. This was particularly important within the Test Platoon, as the risk for losing one officer was much higher.

"June 26, 1940, was the date that they actually stood up as the airborne Test Platoon," Lucas said. "That's when they came together and started training as a team."

The officer who took charge of the Test Platoon, Lt. William T. Ryder, had an interest in airborne and paratroopers long before the War Department approved the creation of a Test Platoon, according to Combat History. He passed the boards test with flying colors - walking out of the test room a full hour before any other candidate - and went on to become the Army's first paratrooper, a

title he earned by being the first to jump out of the C-33 transport aircraft, said Luke V. Keating, historian for the 1st Bn. 507th Parachute Inf. Regt.

"Ryder was a huge factor in (creating) the training and jargon airborne still uses today," Lucas said. "He designed the 34 foot towers (consisting of four 40' telephone poles set six feet in the ground – with the platform and mock aircraft built above) that still stand at the airborne training ground; his men called them 'Ryder's slide of death.' He also made every Soldier pack his own parachute, which he claimed inspired confidence in the paratroopers."

To prepare for the training jumps over Lawson Army Air Field, the Test Platoon flew to Fort Dix in New Jersey. Fort Dix had 150 foot jump towers, like the towers that stand on the airborne training field at Fort Benning today, only with two arms.

"The Test Platoon used the training towers so much that the military eventually bought four and they were built on Fort Benning in the early 40s," Hart said. "Ours have four arms, one in each cardinal direction, which the Army decided was good enough. Those towers still have the same elevators and same motors they did when they were built; the only updates are the electronics."

The final and qualifying jump for the Test Platoon came August 29, 1940. The platoon did a mass exit jump

and it went off with only a minor hitch: one paratrooper landed on a hangar.

\*Footnote to the above article. The first US Army Officer to jump was Lt. William T. Ryder. Numbers were drawn to determine the first enlisted man to jump. The person who drew #1 refused to jump so the #2 man, PVT William N. "Red" King gained that honor. The fellow, #1, was not punished but was reassigned to another Army post.

**82<sup>ND</sup> 72<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION ORLANDO, FL. 8-11 AUG 2018**

The registration fee per person is \$110.00, which includes the Hospitality Room and banquets. The Rosen Centre Hotel, 9840 International Drive, Orlando, FL. Deluxe Rms \$85.00. Call 800-204-7234 (refer to 82<sup>nd</sup> Abn Division Association. If you want a hard copy mailed for the registration, please let me know. I am e-mailing a copy with this newsletter.

**RENEWING CHAPTER MEMBERS:**

Please check your membership card to see when it expires. If you are close, please renew.

**ACADIANA CHAPTER WEBSITE:**

Our website is located at:  
[www.acadianairborne.org/](http://www.acadianairborne.org/)  
Please bookmark this site on your computer for quick reference.

**ACADIANA CHAPTER FACEBOOK PAGE:**

Please bookmark on your computer to check on it.

[www.facebook.com/pages/Acadiana-Chapter-82nd-Airborne-Division-Association/174739489213482?fref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Acadiana-Chapter-82nd-Airborne-Division-Association/174739489213482?fref=ts)

Please copy and paste on your browser. We have announcements and pictures frequently on the site.

**RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS.**

First, wear an Airborne Cap and you will smoke people out. We ask you to keep a copy of the application form and recruit new members! Applications can be downloaded from our Chapter Website.

Thanks and "Airborne All The Way!"



John R. "Randy" Vidrine  
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