

# Ready, set, jump

## Airborne Demonstration Team prepares, trains 11 first-timers

**Donna Smith**

For the Times Record News

FREDERICK, Okla. — July saw the World War II Airborne Demonstration Team (ADT) complete its first week's training session at the Frederick Army Airfield. Eleven first-time students enrolled for the inaugural program. Trainers, volunteers who give up vacation time and time with families to instruct and prepare first-time jumpers, say this is their way of honoring the veterans of WWII.

"This is how we bond with the greatest generation in history," said Public Relations Officer Craig Singshaus. "Paratroopers at that time were all

volunteers, and we are all volunteers."

Flight Instructor Tom Mason of Springtown, Texas, said the initial meet was a success before it even started. "We had young men from 'sex to shining sea' enroll for the week, and we're excited at future prospects."

Mason, a veteran of 51 jumps, said that four years ago he found out about ADT from their Web site.

"My dad was an air borne master sergeant in WWII. I always regretted never going in, and then heard about this group and after 9-11 applied for a direct commission in the Army Reserve, and here I am," Mason said.

Frederick Army Airfield was one of hundreds of air bases across America during WWII. Currently, the WWII ADT is working to restore the surviving facilities to a "living history" museum and provide a training site for paratroopers.

"Our major goal," said Singshaus, "is not to become wild and crazy daredevils but to become the best of professionals in honor of WWII veterans."

Jumping from a restored WWII C-47 aircraft, paratroopers wear authentic 1940s uniforms and equipment. Backpacks, weighing 56 pounds, are packed with round, static line-deployed WWII style parachutes. Each pack is double-checked before and after being

strapped to the back. Until the last minute before boarding for take-off, troopers practice their cord pulls, review landing tactics and chant the process to follow immediately after the instructor's shout "Now!" at the doorway exit to bird land.

The jump school is held twice yearly January and July. To stay current as to certification, troopers have to jump once every 90 days. To go beyond that time, each must go through refresher training. Training includes three major areas: written test, oral and required procedures necessary for jumping.

Jumping requirements include being strapped in harnesses and hoisted into the air



Courtesy

The World War II Airborne Demonstration Team boards a plane that will take them to jump as part of Frederick Army Airfield's inaugural program.

by rope and chain. From the air, students have to go through the normal steps for jumping.

They have to learn how to fall — safely. They must also learn protocol for aircraft flight.