

THE X2 FILES

GWRRR South Central Region H

Texas Chapter X2

March 2002 Edition



51 AND STILL IMPRESSED

Hey guys, I'm sorry, but at 51 years old not much impresses me these days. This Chapter Director and other Texas Chapter X-2 members and visitors toured the Battleship Texas this past weekend and I must say that this guy was thoroughly impressed by this "dreadnought". I have lived in Houston all my life and have always known that this tremendous ship was at the San Jacinto Battlegrounds but it just never seemed important enough to visit her. Boy, was I totally wrong.

The first thing I noticed was how large a ship this was. Her length is over 573 feet and her width is over 106 feet. Along with her World War II colors, dark blue which she wore during her service in the Pacific in 1945, she looked totally awesome against the light blue sky on that day. Upon the walk up to this ship on her starboard side, among the other things noticed, is how many different kinds of machine guns and cannons there are scattered on this one side. It's hard to imagine this same number of armament on the other side, which is the port side, and all being fired at the same time. It has 10 – 14 inch cannons along 5 turrets. These cannons can fire 1500 lb. projectiles out to a range of 13 miles. At Okinawa in May of 1945 she fired 2,019 rounds of these same projectiles. It also has 6 – 5 inch cannons, 10 –3 inch cannons, 10 – 44 mm quad mounts and 44- 20 mm machine guns. The firepower of this Battleship, in my opinion, is unimaginable but there it is sitting right in front of you waiting to be loaded and fired in your mind.

While touring this vessel you realized just how intricate this ship had to be. She was assembled and commissioned in 1914. The men, 1500 to 1800 of them that served her, had some tight sleeping and eating quarters. For one example of her assembly, back in 1914 there were not many indoor toilets. Most people in those days had the old fashioned out-houses. When you went to the head, as they called it, you would see two boards laying across a flowing trough of water with two boards laying across it shaped in the form of a current toilet seat. Man, this was extreme but men in those days thought this was the greatest, indoor plumbing. Another example was that originally she was powered by coal but was later converted to oil in 1925.

In April of 1948, she was towed to her now home to become the nation's first memorial battleship where she has been continually restored over the past twenty years by former crew members, interested groups, the people of the State of Texas and their volunteers.

Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN, said it best on April 21, 1948;

Here in the shadow of the great monument of the heroes of San Jacinto, you are standing today on the decks of a great fighting ship – the Battleship which bears the name of the state whose independence was secured on these hallowed grounds. Texans are proud of the privilege of providing a snug harbor for the ole "T", and preserving her as another symbol of Texas greatness. It is particularly fitting that her

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STAFF & STUFF

Chapter Directors

Steve & Judy Mueller

Tel: 281 955-7220

Email: SteveMueller@houston.rr.com

Asst. Chapter Director

Rich Bassi

Tel: 713 465-7188 - Email: rbassi@pdq.net

Asst. Chapter Directors

Steve & Tory Rhoden

Tel: 281 351-8270 - Email: rhoden@wt.net

Sr. Chapter Directors

Lloyd & Wanda Olinger

Tel: 281 894-1383 - Email: wlo2leo@flash.net

Chapter Educators

Charles & Martha Lewis

Tel: 281 855-0038 - Email: clewis3368@aol.com

Treasurer

Mike Gately

Tel: 713 667-2154

Email: michael_a_gately@reliantenergy.com

Newsletter Editor

Tory Rhoden

Tel: 281 351-8270 - Email: rhoden@wt.net

Webmaster

Steve Rhoden

Tel: 281 351-8270 - Email: webmaster@txx2.com

Blood Bank Coordinators

Robert & Missy Lerma

Tel: 281 828-1571 - Email: lerma@aol.com

Membership Coordinators

Bill & Marty Elliott

Tel: 281 463-8798 - Email: Bill.Elliott@howcogroup.com

Technical Coordinators

Buck & Camille Huddle

Tel: 281 655-0181 - Email: buckskin@houston.rr.com

Chapter X2 Couple of the Year

Greg and Deborah Decker

Tel: 281 286-3392 - Email: gregd@dtihome.com

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final resting place be adjacent to these historic battlegrounds where so much of the Lone Star State tradition was born.

The work of saving the Texas has involved tremendous effort and has been a great source of pride throughout the state. But while the ship is open for tours on a daily basis, her restoration is not complete. Over a period of several years, many spaces on the ship will be carefully refurbished to portray life on a warship in 1945. Some of the spaces scheduled for work have never been available for public tour. Although this phase of the restoration will be exciting, it will also require considerable time and resources. Assisted by former volunteers and contributors, Texas Parks and Wildlife will continue to bring new life to The Battleship Texas.

Now that definitely impresses me.....

Steve Mueller
Your Chapter Director

Remember

On all of our rides, we meet prior to departure at the Exxon Station located at the corner of Hwy 290 and Huffmiester.

Our regular chapter meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at the Denny's restaurant located on FM 1960 just north of Hwy 290. The meeting starts at 7:30 but come early and enjoy dinner with the group.

Highside Dynamics

More often than not, making a mistake while riding a motorcycle leads to misfortune, usually not serious, but sometimes fatal. One of the most deadly mistakes you can make is called doing a *highside*.

When a bike is dumped, or laid down, it falls **DOWN**, gravity assisted, all the way to the ground and ends up on its side. At slow speeds this usually results in little or no damage to the bike or the rider. Even at higher speeds, given that the rider is wearing appropriate protective clothing, most damage is restricted to the bike. In either case, these are known as doing a lowside – meaning that the rider exits the bike by going in the direction of the fall: down.

Doing a highside means that you exit the bike by being thrown up and over the high side of the bike. That, in itself, is not particularly deadly, but it happens that the bike usually follows the rider into the air and then it comes back down, often on top of him. Not too many people survive such an encounter.


So how does a highside happen? What causes it and what can you do to prevent it from happening?

To begin with, a highside starts when you use so much rear brake pressure that you lock your rear wheel. That starts the rear end sliding out away from the direction the bike had been moving because all traction is lost from the rear tire and it has begun to move faster than the front tire. The automatic, and correct, driver response to this situation is to turn the front wheel in the direction of the slide. But now he can make a mistake that can cost him his life – he can release the rear brake. If you are in a situation where the rear wheel is sliding out from under you, despite having turned the front wheel in the direction of the slide, then the safest course of action is to **RIDE THE BIKE INTO THE GROUND** – do a lowside. **DO NOT** release the pressure on the rear brakes.

Always straighten the bike before you hit your brakes when in a curve! Then, if the rear wheel locks and it begins to slide, it will fishtail but there will be no centrifugal force pushing it out from under you. If the bike is moving in a straight line, particularly if the bike has any form of integrated braking, and the rear wheel brakes locks resulting in a skid, it is still possible to do a highside, but the odds of doing so are far less than when in a curve. Still, the best decision the rider can make is to Not release the rear brake if it is locked.

Keep the Wheels on the Ground and the Windshield Pointed Up – Ride Safe!

Rider Education by Charles & Martha Lewis




#26717

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Rich's Ramblings

My dad's brother, Uncle Vinne (Vincent Bassi), is my namesake. My full name is Richard Vincent Bassi. Uncle Vinne is a great guy and has always been my favorite of all my 13 aunts and uncles (9 on my dad's side and 4 on my mother's side). Everyone should have an "Uncle Vinne". He and my dad are the only ones left of all those delightful and humorous people of whom I have many rich and wonderful memories along with a few photos. Uncle Vinne lives in Sherman Oaks, California directly across the mountain from Hollywood. Between visits, we stay in touch with him daily via the telephone. The last time we were in California, not too long ago, we thought it would be fun to e-mail each other. So, we got him a computer and tried to teach him how to send and receive e-mails. However, at 87 years old, teaching him how to get into the Window's menu and the e-mail program met with as much success as I would have in learning reformed Egyptian. My cousin, Frank, who lives a block away from our uncle continued to work with him on the computer for a while. But, alas, just too much water has passed under my uncle's bridge for him to get anything but frustrated over computers.

He never married but came close a couple of times. He finally decided that his mission later in life was to care for his parents who lived with him. That mission expanded into taking care of four of his sisters and one of his brothers in their later years. They are all gone now so he belongs to all these different groups with whom he socializes. One group involves an exercise get together. Another is a meet-for-breakfast group and another is a meet-for-dinner group. Except for the exercise group, it would seem that all he needs is a Goldwing and a chapter to join. He complains that there are several women among these groups that, if they were a little younger, would probably be stalking him. But, the crutches and wheel chairs make it difficult for some of these vixens. It's about an eight-women to one-man ratio but he's still able to out run all these folks so I guess he'll be OK.

The other day, while talking to him on the phone, he mentioned that he has lost his sense of smell; hence, his sense of taste as well. The doc said that his Olfactory nerve has simply worn out and there wasn't anything that could be done. He said that it was really weird but that he would get used to it. All the aromas and tastes that bring back many of the memories of his life are the things he mentioned that he will miss the most. As I thought about that, I began to think about the many different smells and tastes in my life that triggers past memories. Every time I smell the perfume Shalamar it brings back the sweet memory of my late wife. That was what she always wore. Simmering spaghetti sauce and baking bread brings back memories of my mom and the kitchen of my childhood. The smell of natural fiber rope and twine triggers childhood memories of my dad taking me along to do some catch up work at his office while I wandered around the warehouse stacks of manila and sisal rope, which were some of the products his company offered.

Some of my memories I'd just as soon forget, but their association to smell or to some of the other senses is just too powerful. I'm reminded of a soft drink that I haven't seen in years called Grapette. It was a lightly carbonated or non-carbonated small bottled grape drink. It was my favorite soft drink until one fateful day that my dad took my brother and me to the circus. It was in August in Houston when there was no such thing as air conditioning. It was in a big, big canvas tent and we sat at the top where all the heat was holding a fire-from-hell convention. I was six. It wasn't long before I began to sweat like a fire hose and feel miserable. My dad went down to the concession and brought us back some ice cold drinks - Grapettes for all. It really felt good going down. I can't say the same when it came back up three minutes later. I coated the bleachers and the two folks in front of us with the recycled Grapette accompanied by various and sundry other things that had comprised my diet thus far that day. Obviously, we didn't stick around. My

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Rich's Ramblings (cont.)

dad rushed my brother and me down what seemed to be the stairs from the Tower of Babel and outside as fast as he could. Those who were seated around us probably weren't far behind. For many years after that, just the smell of any grape soda would cause my stomach to knot. Lately, I haven't had occasion to encounter any grape soft drinks; although, I have been able to drink grape flavored drinks with success for a few years now. But, I can't look at one, much less drink it, without being reminded of the time when I was six and my dad took me to the circus.

Like many of you, there are some memories I'd just soon forget and many, thank goodness, I'm sure I have. But we can never deposit enough good memories in our bank. It really comes home to roost if you've ever been to your class or some other organization's reunion to which you had or have membership - like GWRRA's X2 chapter.

When I first joined X2 I was a little envious as I listened to many of the stories that Lloyd, Walt, Buck, Steve R., Charles, Roy, Steve M. and others would tell. Now, as I have heard a few of them more than once, it's great because they just get better and better. It's also interesting how Wanda, Phoebe, Camille, Tory, Martha, Judy and other of the co-riders remember the same stories a little differently. It's funny, but I never get tired of hearing them. Now, I have a few of my own to tell and have done so. They too tend to get better and better each time they're told. It's great fun.

X2 and the GWRRA are memory machines that can crank out great deposits in our memory banks. During a ride, the sounds, smells, tastes, sights, the feel of the bike and the feel of the wind in your face, all make for good things to remember. The excellent fellowship of the chapter with our different backgrounds and experiences is the catalyst that fosters great friendships and makes for some really great memories. Those memories will return to us

time after time as our senses pick up the triggers that will withdraw from our bank those fond memories of past good times. To be there to make them is the only catch. I know we all can't be at every ride or meeting. But, on those occasions when we're not there, it is noticed with disappointment by those that are. And those who aren't there a lot, you are still missed a lot too. The chapter history is being written without you. Memory deposits are waiting to be made and other lives touched. As Steve always signs off,

"Remember Everyone, Texas Chapter X-2 is traveling the Highways and Byways of these United States of America and the only one missing is YOU!!"

X2 has a birthday coming up on March 30th. Let me encourage us all to renew our commitment to make our fourth year as a chapter the best yet by always riding safe; not taking life for granted, not sweating the small stuff, appreciating our friendships, telling our families we love them every day and adding to our memory banks by participating at the X2 chapter meetings and activities.

- Rich Bassi -

MARCH 2002

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 Dinner @ Oriental Village on Hwy 290 Just east of Hollister @ 7:00 pm	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 Chapter C Luck of the Irish Rally @ the Loews on Garth Rd in Baytown.
10 Breakfast @ The Buffalo Grill. Leave the Exxon @ 8:00 am	11	12	13	14 Monthly Chapter Meeting @ Denny's located on FM 1960 just N. of Hwy 290 @ 7:30 pm	15 Dinner @ Pallotta's on Jones Rd. just east of FM 1960 @ 7:00 pm	16
17	18	19 Bob Hinz Birthday	20	21	22	23 Chapter V2 Rally by the Lake in Victoria. Leave the Exxon @ 9:00 am
24 Breakfast @ Frankies. Leave the Exxon @ 8:00 am	25 Bill Wilson Birthday	26	27	28	29	30 Chapter X2 Birthday Party @ Bear Creek Park @ 10:00 am
31						

APRIL 2002

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5 Dinner @ Spring Hill Catfish in Tomball on Hwy 249 approx. 3 blks S. of FM 2920 @ 7:00 pm	6
7 Ride to Sommerville for Breakfast!. Leave the Exxon @ 8:00 am	8	9	10 Buck Huddle & Wanda Olinger Birthday	11 Monthly Chapter Meeting @ Denny's located on FM 1960 just N. of Hwy 290 @ 7:30 pm	12 Leave for the Lafayette Rally in Louisiana. Meet @ the Exxon @ 6:00 am	13 Lafayette Rally in Louisiana.
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 Breakfast @ Denny's. FM1960 just N. of Hwy 290 Meet there @ 9:00 am	22	23	24	25	26 Dinner @ La Hacenda on Telge just N. of Cypress North Houston @ 7:00 pm	27
28 Ride For Kids	29	30				

