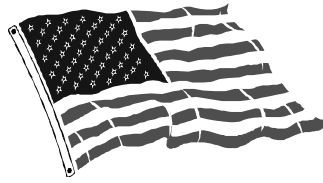


DPS Chaparral



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January 2006

Department awards first purple hearts

The Texas Department of Public Safety has awarded 17 Purple Hearts to current DPS employees. The Purple Heart recognizes the personal sacrifice and devotion to duty displayed by DPS officers who are seriously injured while performing their duties. Their courageous actions and personal sacrifice bring great credit and distinction to themselves, the DPS and the law enforcement profession. Along the way, they have faced many surgeries and long, painful rehabilitations. Many of them defied the odds by returning to active duty.



On July 20, 1972, Cpl. **Gale A. McMullen** was working as a trooper helping a Hunt County sheriff's deputy transport three prisoners from Greenville to Huntsville. In a desperate attempt to escape, one prisoner grabbed the deputy's .38-caliber revolver, fatally shooting the deputy and shooting McMullen once in the head near the right eye. The prisoners, handcuffed together, exited the car on the opposite side and continued to fire. McMullen, though seriously wounded, returned fire and held the prisoners at gunpoint until help arrived. Cpl. McMullen currently is stationed in the Tyler HP office.



On May 24, 1976, Tr. **David Russ** was working stationary radar on IH-45 in Freestone County and stopped a vehicle with front-end damage. As Tr. Russ walked up to the driver's door, the occupant shot him in the right

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DPS online: www.txdps.state.tx.us

DPS "on the air": 512-424-7777

Dear Fellow Employee,

To the left of this article, you will see a list of DPSers who have received the agency's first Purple Heart awards.

The awards acknowledge the danger inherent in law enforcement and the devotion to duty demonstrated by these employees when they were severely injured on the job.

Their stories are inspiring. Some of them were injured but continued their duties until help arrived.

Others were injured when they were going to the aid of someone else.

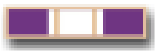
Some of them were so badly injured that they were not expected to live, let alone return to active duty and excel. And yet, here they are.

Their lives are an example to us all. Despite the odds, they have not given up. Their courage and sacrifice remind us of the dangers all law enforcement officers face every day. In this new year, we can be thankful for those who work tirelessly to keep us safe.

Thomas A. Davis Jr.

askthecolonel@txdps.state.tx.us

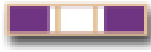
shoulder with a .357 magnum pistol, severing an artery. Tr. Russ was able to reach his patrol unit to summon assistance, giving a description of the vehicle and the weapon used. He then directed a good Samaritan on the proper first aid to administer in order to control his excessive bleeding. The suspect later gave himself up to authorities. Russ is currently a DL trooper in Tyler.



On December 26, 1986, Sgt. **Lance Coleman**, then assigned as a HP trooper stationed in Austin, made a traffic stop on a member of the Bandidos motorcycle gang. As Coleman approached the vehicle, the suspect fired six shots and struck him in the right hand, shattering all the bones. The suspect was later arrested on an attempted capital murder warrant in South Dakota. Coleman is now a Texas Ranger stationed in San Antonio.



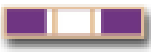
On February 12, 1988, Cpl. **James G. Haley**, CVE Amarillo, sustained massive injuries after being struck by an intoxicated driver. Cpl. Haley had stopped a commercial motor vehicle on IH-27 in Randall County. The instant the driver of the commercial vehicle exited, both he and Haley were struck. The truck driver died at the scene and Haley suffered blunt force trauma and internal injuries, including 20 fractures to one leg and more than 40 fractures to the other leg.



On October 7, 1988, Narcotics Capt. **Robert Wilkerson**, (then a Narcotics Sergeant/Investigator), was attempting to execute a search warrant with other officers at a residence located in a secluded area near the city of West in McLennan County. Capt. Wilkerson was the first to enter the residence. As he rounded a corner, a suspect fired a 9 mm pistol, striking him in the upper right arm. The suspect was fatally shot by return fire from other officers. Capt. Wilkerson is currently stationed in Waco.



On August 13, 1992, while a Narcotics sergeant, Lt. **Larry Allen** was assigned to execute a narcotics search and arrest warrant at a residence in Harris County. Lt. Allen was confronted by a suspect armed with a 12-gauge shotgun. The suspect fired one round at Allen, striking him in the upper right shoulder, chest and left wrist. He returned fire, and the suspect then attempted to flee the scene. The suspect was arrested by other officers without further gunfire. Lt. Allen is now assigned to HP in Houston.



On September 20, 1992, while working as an HP trooper in Baytown, Sgt. **Odie L. Hitt** sustained catastrophic injuries during a traffic stop on IH-10, north of Baytown in Harris County. A vehicle struck the back of a Baytown Police Department officer's vehicle parked

behind the patrol car, pinning Sgt. Hitt between the two vehicles. Both his legs had multiple fractures below the knees and his left ankle was broken in several places. His current duty station is the HP office in Gilmer.



On August 23, 1994, Sgt. **Stephen Bynum**, then assigned as a HP trooper, was assisting in the capture of suspects wanted for murder and bank robbery. Several DPS personnel tried to block the road in Robertson County. As the suspects' vehicle approached the officers, one of the suspects leaned out of the window and fired upon the officers. Bynum was shot in the upper right shoulder, causing permanent damage to his shoulder muscle by the remaining scar tissue and bullet fragments. The suspects fled the scene and were later apprehended without incident. Bynum is now stationed in the Lampasas HP office.



On September 19, 1994, HP Tr. **Douglas A. Childs** stopped a speeding vehicle on IH-35 in Hill County. Unknown to Tr. Childs, the subjects had stolen the vehicle in a carjacking incident. During the traffic stop, Childs was overpowered and physically assaulted by the three subjects. He was struck repeatedly and suffered massive trauma to his head and face. The three subjects fled the scene, but were apprehended following a shoot-out with other officers. Childs works out of the HP office in Meridian.



On May 25, 1998, Tr. **Kevin Marmor**, while a HP trooper in Pearsall, sustained severe bodily injuries as a result of a traffic crash. Tr. Marmor had stopped a truck on IH-35 in Frio County and was searching the vehicle. An elderly driver became focused on the patrol lights and struck both the stopped vehicles and Marmor, throwing him approximately 30 feet through the air. Tr. Marmor's left arm was nearly severed, his right leg below the knee was shattered and two vertebrae were cracked. Marmor is currently a CVE trooper in Devine.



On October 1, 1998, Tr. **Earl "Dub" Gillum**, HP Granbury, attempted a routine traffic stop on U.S. 377 near Granbury. As Tr. Gillum approached the vehicle, the driver fired eight shots with a semiautomatic pistol, striking Gillum in the face, leg and arm. The subject fled the scene and was later killed during a shoot-out with other officers. It turned out that the suspect had outstanding warrants for aggravated robbery, aggravated assault on a peace officer and a weapon violation. Tr. Gillum suffered massive trauma to his head, face and an eye.



On November 8, 1998, Sgt. **Michael J. Smith**, while assigned as a HP trooper in Houston, was struck by a SUV driven by an intoxicated driver as he assisted a Houston police officer with a minor crash on a busy interstate highway.

Sgt. Smith ended up in a coma, sustaining multiple life-threatening injuries, including a fractured skull, as well as a broken arm, collarbone and ribs. He is currently assigned to the Training Academy in Austin.



On April 15, 2000, while assigned as a HP trooper in Cotulla, Sgt. **Sharleigh Drake** sustained serious bodily injuries as she attempted to arrest a male subject. During the arrest, Sgt. Drake was overpowered and physically assaulted by two suspects, who left her critically injured. Both subjects were later apprehended and sentenced to the penitentiary. Drake is now stationed in the DL office in Conroe.



On March 13, 2002, while a HP trooper in Plainview, Sgt. **Calvin Buxton** received severe injuries to his right leg when he was struck by a vehicle being pursued by Plainview Police Department officers. As Tr. Buxton attempted to deploy the stinger spike system, the fleeing vehicle swerved onto the shoulder of the roadway, intentionally striking him. Tr. Buxton nearly lost his right leg as a result of his injuries. His current duty station is HP Childress.



On May 2, 2002, Tr. **James D. Jones**, while working as a HP trooper, sustained life-threatening injuries from a gunshot wound while assisting officers of the Heart of Texas Auto Theft Task Force in Hamilton County. The ambush resulted in the death of a Limestone County deputy

and the wounding of a Lampasas County deputy. Doctors were able to save Tr. Jones's right arm despite massive damage from the high-powered rifle gunshot. The suspect killed himself as law enforcement personnel closed in. Jones now works as a CVE trooper; his duty station remains Goldthwaite.



On February 20, 2005, Tr. **Robert Mendez**, HP Terrell, conducted a routine traffic stop on U.S. 80 in Kaufman County. Tr. Mendez attempted to place the passenger under arrest for drug possession, but the subject ran back to his vehicle, retrieved a pistol and opened fire at Mendez's partner. Mendez then struggled with the suspect for control of the pistol, and was shot in the right bicep. Mendez and his partner finally subdued and disarmed the suspect after an extended struggle.



On August 9, 2005, Tr. **Steven Oliver**, HP Denton, was assisting the Denton County Sheriff's Office with a pursuit that ended at the suspect's residence. The suspect ran into the residence, returned with an assault rifle and opened fire on both officers. Tr. Oliver observed a deputy fall to the ground and believed he was shot. The trooper left cover to go to the aid of the deputy and was shot in the left leg by the suspect. The suspect later died from gunshot wounds received during the incident.



Awards

Two people received Director's Awards for their actions following a traffic crash in Bastrop county. Damon Miller, an off-duty Travis County deputy constable, saw a three-vehicle crash in his rearview mirror one evening. A speeding Chevy pickup truck lost control and traveled into oncoming traffic, where it struck a Nissan SUV, killing the Nissan's driver. The Chevy then spun around and hit a Ford Expedition, bursting into flames. The Ford was driven by Bastrop County Sheriff Richard Hernandez. Deputy Miller went to the crash scene to offer assistance. He kicked out the Ford's rear window, freeing Sheriff Hernandez and his wife. Sheriff Hernandez and Deputy Miller rushed over to the Chevy, which was in flames, and rescued the driver from the fire. Deputy Miller and Sheriff Hernandez were nominated by Tr. **B. Chris Wray**, HP Bastrop.

An Irving Police Department analyst received a Director's Award for her work on an online crime analysis discussion group. Michelle Sinsel developed the listserv, which united law enforcement crime analysts in Oklahoma and north and central Texas. The list has more than 580 members from 146 police agencies in the two states. Numerous crimes have been solved through the combined brainpower and communications between agencies made possible by the listserv. Ms. Sinsel was nominated by **Connie J. McCrary**, Criminal Intelligence Garland.

The Rockdale Memorial Company received a Director's Award for its continued support of DPS and its fallen officers. Carol, Linda and Paul Luckey of the Rockdale Memorial Company have provided monuments

to fallen DPS employees free of charge since 1999. The monuments are placed either at DPS district and regional offices or at locations where the officers were killed. Don Metcalf, who has carried on his brother's work in recognizing all DPS officers who have died in the line of duty, said he very much appreciates the company's assistance. "They have been a tremendous help," he said. Rockdale Memorial and the Luckeys were nominated by Lt. Col. **David McEathron**, Assistant Director.

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Lt. **Rogelio Escaname**, Narcotics McAllen, has been inducted into the National Criminal Justice Honor Society, Alpha Phi Sigma at the University of Texas Pan American.

Short Shots

TPEA officers announced

DPS employees have created a Texas Public Employees Association chapter. Members elected the following officers: **Jan Coffey**, president; **Michael Kelley**, vice president; **Jennifer Hall**, secretary; and **Mary Geil**, treasurer.

For more information, see the TPEA website at www.tpea.org.

GPD needs you

The Texas Highway Patrol Division is presently accepting applications for sergeant positions on the Governor Protective Detail. All commissioned department personnel not currently on disciplinary probation are eligible to apply. Applicants should have at least 24 calendar months service as a commissioned Texas peace officer when appointed to a position on the Governor Protective Detail. Contact **Capt. Dale L. Avant** at 512-936-2299 for instructions on the application process.

Mile Markers

Retirements

Ruben Molina, Sgt., Narcotics Svc. McAllen, 27 yrs., 11 mos., 23 days; **Federico Garza, Jr.**, Lt., Narcotics Svc. Corpus Christi, 24 yrs., 5 mos., 20 days; **Barbara Ann Malone**, Admin. Asst. III, Criminal Intel. Svc. McAllen, 10 yrs., 1 mo, 7 days; **Fay Lynn Smith**, Admin. Asst. I, DL Austin, 18 yrs., 4 mos., 23 days.

Deaths

Tr. **Romeo Garza**, HP Pecos (Oct. 1998-Dec. 2005), died Dec. 7.



*On the
mend...*

Best wishes for a speedy recovery from line-of-duty injuries go to:

Sgt. **Sal Abreo**, Texas Rangers Austin, injured during firearms training;

Tr. **Michael Windham Jr.**, HP Gainesville, injured during pursuit;

Tr. **Thomas Matthew McGinnis**, HP Corsicana, shot in wrist by suspect;

Tr. **Janet Martin**, HP Brownfield, injured in a traffic crash;

Tr. **Darrell J. Koleck**, HP La Grange, injured chasing suspect; and,

Tr. **Donald Ray Mills**, HP Hillsboro, injured in a traffic crash.

Good news! These troopers, who had been injured, have returned to work: Tr. **Robert Villafranca**, HP Austin; Tr. **Steven Oliver**, HP Denton (light duty); Tr. **Darryle D. Sparks**, HP Austin; Tr. **Moneion Riddick**, HP Laredo; and Tr. **Keith Preusse**, HP Austin.