



Official State Historical Center of the Texas
Rangers law enforcement agency.

**The Following Article was Originally Published in the
*Texas Ranger Dispatch Magazine***

The *Texas Ranger Dispatch* was published by the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum from 2000 to 2011. It has been superseded by this online archive of Texas Ranger history.

Managing Editors

Robert Nieman 2000-2009; (b.1947-d.2009)

Byron A. Johnson 2009-2011

Publisher & Website Administrator

Byron A. Johnson 2000-2011

Director, Texas Ranger Hall of Fame

Technical Editor, Layout, and Design

Pam S. Baird



Funded in part by grants from
the Texas Ranger Association Foundation

Copyright 2017, Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum, Waco, TX. All rights reserved. Non-profit personal and educational use only; commercial reprinting, redistribution, reposting or charge-for-access is prohibited. For further information contact: Director, Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum, PO Box 2570, Waco TX 76702-2570.



★ [Click Here for
A Complete Index
to All Back Issues](#)

★ [Dispatch Home](#)

★ [Visit our nonprofit
Museum Store!](#)

★ [Contact the Editor](#)



21st Century Shining Star:

Sgt. Morgan Miller

by **Robert Nieman**

It is with honor that the *Dispatch* presents the recipient of the First Annual Chairman's Award, Morgan Louis Miller, as our 21st Century Shining Star. How much more of an honor can anyone have than to be recognized by his professional peers for a lifetime of excellence? He was given this distinction at the Texas Ranger Association Foundation's 2003 Texas Ranger Reunion at the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum.

Morgan was born in Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas, on November 13, 1945. He and his younger brother John Loren, also born in Brownsville, were the children of Morgan E. and Vivian, both now deceased. Morgan's father died when he and his brother were fourteen and eight years old, respectively. Vivian, a schoolteacher for thirty-five years, deserves most of the credit for raising the boys. His grandfather, Louis Miller, was a ranch foreman for one of the Lykes Shipping Lines ranches in Cuba and died from gangrene after being gored by a bull.

All of Morgan's early education was in Brownsville, and he graduated from Brownsville High School in 1963. He then attended Texas Southmost College in his hometown before transferring to Victoria Junior College in Victoria.

Even though Morgan had a II-S draft status [scholastic deferment], he volunteered for the army in October 1965. After completion of basic training at Fort Polk, Louisiana, he was assigned to the artillery branch and received advanced artillery training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He was then assigned to the Headquarters Battery, 52nd Artillery Group, at Fort Sill.

In May 1966, the entire battery of 106 men was ordered to Pleiku, Vietnam, in the Central Highlands about forty miles from the Cambodian border. The journey from Oklahoma to Vietnam still remains clear in Morgan's mind. After flying from Oklahoma City to Tacoma, Washington, the fresh troops were loaded onto an old World War II transport ship, the USNS General Nelson M. Walker. Morgan remembers that the best meal he had during the sixteen-day voyage was ox tails. Everything else was powdered eggs, powdered milk, dehydrated potatoes, powdered this, dehydrated that, etc., etc.

As soon as the troops arrived at Pleiku, they constructed a tactical operations center [TOC] atop a hill called Hill Saint Barbara, so named to honor a French unit that had been overrun and wiped out in an earlier war. The unit's mission was to deploy and coordinate fire-control missions for the different artillery units (105mm, 155mm, 175mm, 8 inch, etc.) under their command. In addition, the men also performed a variety of assignments such as guard duty, patrolling outside the perimeters to call in artillery fire, manning the howitzers around the base, and of course the curse of all enlisted men—KP [kitchen patrol].

Morgan served as the battery clerk (in all other units of the army, this position is known as a company clerk). After twelve months, he could have rotated out of Vietnam, but he extended his tour of duty for several months so he could earn an early discharge and get on with his life. In July 1967, he left Vietnam as an E-5 sergeant.

When he returned from Vietnam, Morgan needed work, but jobs in the Rio Grande Valley were scarce. As he stated, "I did not have many job skills except to drive fast." He applied for employment with the Texas Department of Public Safety. Unfortunately, by the time his background investigation was completed and he was accepted into the department, all the DPS schools had already started for the year. The first school that he could enter was the following year.

Morgan still had to make a living, so he coached at an elementary school and then was a southwestern Bell Telephone Company worker in Brownsville. But on April 30, 1968, he got the call he had been waiting for and started training at the DPS Academy in Austin. He graduated on August 23 and was commissioned a Texas Highway Patrolman on August 1 of the same year.

Morgan came by his career in law enforcement honestly. His father had been a deputy sheriff and a Texas game warden until World War II. At that time, due to domestic security concerns and the lure of a much higher salary, the senior Miller took a corporate security position with the Central Power and Light Company. His new job also earned him a commission as a Special Ranger—a commission he held until his death in 1959.

As a result, Morgan has no memories of not knowing Texas Rangers. Morgan's father was born in Carrizo Springs, Dimmit County, Texas. Carrizo Springs was the headquarters of Captain Alfred Y. Allee's Ranger Company D. Mr. Miller was a lifelong friend of the legendary Ranger captain and several of his Rangers. Morgan recalls that, throughout his childhood, many Rangers visited his father at their home.

Morgan's first duty station as a Highway Patrolman was in Victoria. There he was partnered with another future Texas Ranger, Stuart Dowell.

It was also in Victoria that Morgan made an even longer-termed partnership. He met Ann Newton there and married her on June 27, 1971. Ann taught school for twenty-nine years before retiring. Her father, the Reverend Doctor John H. Newton, was the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Victoria. Doctor

Newton was also the Chaplain of the Department of Public Safety until his death on October 10, 1974.

In November 1975, Morgan was promoted to sergeant and transferred to San Antonio. A little over a year later, in January 1977, he was selected as one of the supervisors of a task force of thirty-three officers from various DPS services to work the border from Brownsville to Del Rio.

For the second time in two years, the Millers uprooted and moved from San Antonio to McAllen. It was in McAllen that Morgan first met Ronnie Brownlow, the 2003 retired Texas Ranger Chairman's Award honoree.

DPS Narcotics Service Sergeant Jim Dalrymple and Morgan were co-supervisors on the task force. Morgan says that Jim taught him more about the Department of Public Safety than anyone to date. Regretfully, Sergeant Dalrymple was killed in the line of duty in an automobile accident on June 5, 1978.

Future Texas Ranger Stan Guffey was one of the Highway Patrolmen that Morgan oversaw. It was Morgan who wrote a supervisory recommendation when Guffey entered the Ranger service. Stan was carrying a pistol that Morgan traded him when he was killed in the line of duty on January 22, 1987.

Sadly, Morgan has had to deal with the loss of too many friends and co-workers during his career. A close friend from Brownsville, David Rucker, was killed in the line of duty on September 29, 1981. Rucker had entered the DPS Academy before Morgan graduated. During the time they were both there, they had ridden back and forth between Austin and Brownsville together.

Morgan had wanted to be a Texas Ranger from the day he joined the Department of Public Safety. He has never forgotten the moment when his Highway Patrol partner Stuart Dowell made Ranger. He knew then that he too would wear that most prized of all law enforcement badges one day.

It wasn't long before Morgan's dream came true. On May 1, 1978, he "busted back" to private. This was a demotion he happily accepted in order to have the honor of wearing a Texas Ranger badge as a member of Company "D".

Morgan's first official duty station was Laredo, but he never actually served there. His captain, John Wood, allowed him to remain in McAllen with the task force until December 1978. That month, there was a vacancy in Kingsville, and Wood gave permission for the rookie to assume that station. When Ranger Bill Nelson retired in August 1979, Morgan applied for and was allowed to transfer to Victoria. He's been there for twenty-five years, still going strong, and is the most senior active Texas Ranger.

Like fellow Ranger Lewis Rigler, there is only one title Morgan is prouder of than being a Texas Ranger private,* and that title is Dad. Morgan and Ann, who have been married thirty-three years as of this writing, have one son, Morgan II. He will receive his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Texas A & M University in May 2005.