



# TEXAS RANGER ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

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**CAPTAIN CHRIS** Cassidy, U.S. Navy SEAL/Astronaut, has the full attention of the head table and the near capacity crowd as the keynote speaker Saturday night at the Reunion Weekend. With him at the head table are (l-r) Jim and Macy Chionsini, Bill Hartman, Constance White, Dave Wilson and Tom Schleier. Cassidy was both humorous and dead serious as he recounted his days as a SEAL officer, learning from a veteran Master Chief, and his two trips to the International Space Station aboard a Russian delivery spacecraft while traveling with two Soviet cosmonauts. Cassidy is stationed at the Manned Spacecraft Center in Clear Lake, Tex.

## SEAL/Astronaut, chief fascinate crowd

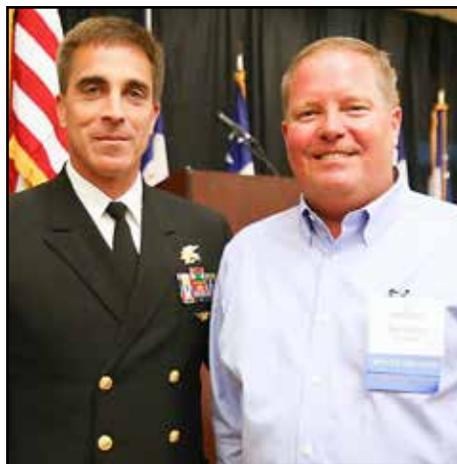
By Bill Hartman

WACO (Sp) — Retired and active Texas Rangers, benefactors, patrons, directors and guests got a double-dip of entertainment both Friday and Saturday nights during the annual Reunion Weekend celebration.

In addition to the ritual of seeing old friends and renewing acquaintances, those attending the weekend sponsored by the Texas Ranger Association Foundation, heard outstanding presentations by Ranger Chief Randy Prince Friday and keynote speaker, SEAL/Astronaut Captain Christopher Cassidy of the U.S. Navy on Saturday.

More than 500 attended the programs both nights. Prince and Cassidy rarely looked at notes and each gave detailed looks at their respective jobs.

Prince touched on virtually every



**TRAF DIRECTOR** Dave Wilson (right) presented Captain Cassidy a Kimber 1911 .45 calibre pistol as a remembrance of his visit to the Reunion Weekend. Wilson is treasurer of the Board and represents Co. E.

phase of Ranger activity, including their new assignments and a refresher on new challenges that face the departments. He particularly talked

about the partnership between active and retired Rangers and the TRAF and how the three groups work in unison to perform their mandated duties and to support each other.

Prince spoke on the importance of the legacy of the retired Rangers and how their actions and determination are examples for all active Rangers. He also thanked the TRAF for the continued support of college eligible students of Rangers and for always being available when help is needed.

In the past several years, a single retired Ranger has been highlighted. This year, the reunion committee decided to honor an entire group of Rangers, those who participated in the Branch Davidian siege of 1993.

Retired Captain David Byrnes, who was the Ranger in charge, gave a complete overview of the situation

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**TEAM HEB** represented the title sponsor, H-E-B Co. at the first annual Clay Shooting Competition in San Antonio, sponsored by TRAF and under the direction of Company F representative Tom Schleier and former Ranger Chief Hank Whitman. Representing H-E-B were (l-r) Tuleta Copeland, J.L. Cisneros, Darrell Taylor, Corey Lane, Rick Rivera (Ranger), Darrell Scott Taylor, Jason Taylor (Captain, Rangers), Joe Rodriguez (DPS), Rick Hernandez (TRAF Director), Douglas Gonzales, Tim Pirkens, Rick Walker, John Carroll and Chris Combes.

# 1st clay shoot huge success

By Lacy Jemmott  
Event Coordinator

The initial Texas Ranger Classic Sporting Clay Tournament, held at the National Shooting Complex in San Antonio late in May, was a roaring success, grossing over \$97,000 to benefit the Texas Ranger Association Foundation and the TRAF scholarship program.

Preliminary accounting showed a net profit of over \$67,000 from the first event. The shoot was under the auspices of Ranger Company F, but had volunteers and participants from nearly all the six companies, plus interested spectators and shooters from the Greater San Antonio area.

A second Texas Rangers Sporting Clays Shoot is already on the books for Saturday, Oct. 17, at the San Angelo Claybird Association under the direction of Company E directors and friends, but invitations and save the date cards are being sent to all Ranger companies, benefactors and friends.

Former Ranger Chief Hank Whitman and Company F director and new TRAF secretary Tom Schleier were co-chairmen of the San Antonio shoot.

More than 150 people attended the inaugural event. "Now that we know just how successful our shoots can be,



**TRAF CHAIRMAN** Jim Chionsini attended the clay shoot in San Antonio. He's shown with event coordinator Lacy Jemmott and Ranger Captain (Ret.) Jack Dean, who is a TRAF liaison on the board of directors.

we hope each TRAF/Ranger Company coordinates a shoot in their regions," Whitman said.

"We'd like to have all the winners from each region come back to San Antonio for a state shootout every year," he added.

*Shoot continued page 3*

**Shoot cont. from page 2...**

The first place team with a combined score of 381 went to Quintanilla Management, made up of Bill Etheridge, Steve Milam, Art Rivera and Danny Webb.

Each of the four winners received a one-of-a-kind belt buckle designed for the Texas Ranger Classic.

Second place was a tie between Team Rugeley Ferguson and Team Front Bank. Rugeley Ferguson shooters were Rugeley Ferguson, Jay Brown, Jody Johnson and Steven Mafrige. Front Bank shooters were Stephen Etheridge, John Alaniz, Chris Jaynes and Dylan Skogman.

In individual competition with a field of 27, Jay Brown won a buckle for first in the 5-stand competition with a score of 46, nudging second place winner Danny Webb, who had 45.

Bill Etheridge won best overall score with 99 points and runner-up



**RICK HERNANDEZ**, left, a TRAF director and a representative of H-E-B, the title sponsor of the first clay shooting event, talks over the day's activities with co-chairman Tom Schleier, Kevin Jordan and Rick Walker.

was Joe Brophy with 98. Each was presented a buckle.

Anissa Banks won the ladies

championship with a score of 90 to add a buckle to her collection of trophies.



**LADIES AT THE CLAY** shoot donated time and braved the heat to be sure the shoot came off on time and without many speed bumps. Some of the ladies were (back row, l-r) Stephanie Baker, Lacy Jemmott (event coordinator) and Judy Schleier. In the front (l-r) are Vicki Rodriguez, Ashley Guest and Brynn Biddle.



**HANK WHITMAN**, , retired former Chief of the Texas Rangers, served as co-chairman and chief spokesman for the Texas Ranger Classic Clay Shoot in San Antonio. He's also chairman of the Texas Ranger Museum Board . He's pictured with two of his longtime friends and retired Rangers, John Martin and Robert Hunter.



**FRANK MALINAK**, Assistant Chief of the Texas Rangers, visits with Byron Johnson, director of the Texas Ranger Museum and Texas Ranger archives, at the Texas Ranger Classic in San Antonio. More than 150 people attended the inaugural Texas Ranger Classic.



**TERRY FANT** and event coordinator Lacy Jemmott are shown at the Texas Classic in San Antonio. Fant donated Stag grips for a Colt 1911 .45 calibre pistol that was a prize at the clay shooting.



**CLAY SHOOT** co-chairman Tom Schleier had several teams participating, including one foursome consisting of Zack Coppinger, Kevin Jordan, David Walter and Constance White.



**TEAM QUINTANILLA** won the first annual competition of the TRAF clay shoot. Members include Bill Etheridge, Steve Milam, coordinator Lacy Jemmott, Danny Webb and Art Rivera.



**TOM SCHLEIER** and teammate, Kim Dickerman enjoyed the festivities at the clay shoot. Schleier represents Company F on the TRAF Board of Directors and was elected secretary of the board at the Ranger Reunion Weekend.

Chief Prince report --

# Rangers face new challenges, opportunities; New responsibilities required by legislation

By Randy Prince, Chief, Texas Rangers



Randy Prince

I appreciate the opportunity to provide an update on Ranger operations and activities as well as legislation affecting the division.

As I mentioned in my speech at the Ranger Reunion, the men and women of this division are ordinary people doing extraordinary things. And as you know, they work under intense pressure to maintain a high level of performance each and every day as shown by the success in many high profile investigations, by solving cold case murder investigations, by determining facts in a complex officer involved shooting investigations, or by negotiating the safe outcome of a South Texas prison riot.

These tasks require an individual of character who has earned respect and possesses the command presence to manage chaos. But, just as important are the investigations that receive little or no media attention, worked day-in and day-out by dedicated personnel with our local law enforcement partners.

Aside from the normal duties of being the primary criminal investigative division of the DPS, we have increased our duties within the division. The Texas Rangers have indeed returned to our roots—with a mission of keeping our border safe and secure.

Operation Drawbridge is a significant and vital part of our border security program. This operation involves a large number of motion-activated cameras strategically



**RANGER CHIEF** Randy Prince also had a spellbound audience for his State of the Rangers address Friday. The chief talked about all aspects of the department, including the continuing effort to control the Texas-Mexico border and new equipment that will aid in preventing contraband (including human trafficking) from crossing the border. Prince also discussed the legislative session and the new assignments and challenges outlined for the Rangers. "We'll get it done," the chief promised. With Prince in the photo is TRAF Chairman Jim Chionsini, who conducted his first Weekend Reunion since taking the chairmanship

positioned along the border. We have established multiple monitoring points, to include our Joint Operation Intelligence Centers and the Border Security Operation Center in Austin.

This event-driven surveillance system is a valuable asset to secure Texas and address the threats facing our border region from criminal organizations. It is a real-time intelligence tool depicting things such as number of people, presence of weapons, narcotics and human trafficking.

Customs and Border Patrol agents in South Texas are hardworking and dedicated law enforcement officers who are committed to teamwork and work in concert with the Texas Department of Public Safety for a front

line response to Drawbridge alerts.

Our department has seen significant growth over the past few years and, it has seen significant improvement thanks to the leadership of our State Legislature, DPS Commission, and directors. We all recognize them as our leaders, because at its core – leadership is not about self but about the people and inspiring positive change.

The 84th legislative session is now history. In total, 6,276 bills were filed and the DPS Office of Government Relations worked diligently with our Texas Ranger staff through some tedious and intricate proposed legislation to ensure accurate information was provided to the

Chief continued page 7

## Executive Director's report --

**Weekend overflows with heroes, stories**

By Liz Myrick, TRAF Executive Director



Liz Myrick

The 33rd Annual Reunion Weekend is in the history books, and how great it was to see everyone!

Under the capable leadership of Reunion Committee Chairman Captain Barry Caver, the reunion continues to get better each year! There were almost 500 people in attendance each night to enjoy the great food and fellowship.

Chief Randy Prince was eloquent on Friday about the time-honored traditions of the Texas Rangers that is result of and a tribute to their excellence and integrity.

As a crescendo to Saturday evening's speaker, Captain Chris Cassidy, we counted a room full of true heroes. Such epic valor in one place reminds us how remarkable and privileged we are to live in such a country.

There were more than 120 silent auction gifts donated by Texas Rangers, their families, and many other donors raising over \$20,000 that helps underwrite the reunion. The raffle at the reunion raised almost \$30,000 that also helps with reunion related expenses.

We were fortunate to have the help of many wonderful staff and volunteers without whom the reunion wouldn't happen.

The annual Captain Bill Wilson Golf Tournament was also a great success with the sky clearing and rain leaving Twin Rivers Golf Course just in time! Many thanks to Ranger Jake Burson, his wife, Brandi, Company F, and many volunteers and sponsors, the tournament raised \$35,000 for scholarships for the children of Texas Rangers.

We are looking forward to next year's reunion with plans already underway to continue making improvements to make the experience even more enjoyable.

We are excited about a new fundraising event in San Angelo on Oct. 17. It will be a competitive shooting event put on by Co. E directors, Jerry Wellborn, Dave Wilson and Chairman Jim Chionsini. We'll be putting out more information on this in the coming weeks.

With the extraordinary support of Chief Prince, and under the dedicated leadership of Chairman Chionsini the foundation is flourishing. This very capable board of directors has a combined total of over 360 years of TRAF board service

*MYRICK continued page 11*

**Company C golf outing earns \$14,000 for TRAF**

It was a beautiful day in Lubbock on April 2 when Texas Ranger Association Foundation directors Scott Egert and Ken Olson staged the Company C golf tournament.

It was another one of those safe havens for TRAF activities with Sheriff Kelly Rowe and Co. C Major Tony Bennie and others making sure everyone one had a great and safe time.

Company C's proceeds exceeded \$14,000 for the TRAF coffers, with some additional money still coming in from sponsorships. They are planning on an annual event.



**TAKING PART** in the Company C golf tournament in Lubbock in April were Richard Duncan, Bill McKay, Tom Mann, Phyllis Yeager and Jackie Peoples.

*Chief cont. from page 5...*

legislature. Here are a few bills which have a significant impact on the Ranger Division.

House Bill 11 - a lengthy bill relating to the powers and authority of the Texas Department of Public Safety, including a provision authorizing a "10-hour work day" for most commissioned personnel, establishes a "Reserve Officers Corp" within the department, funds a new multi-agency training center in the Rio Grande Valley and established a Transnational Intelligence Center to combat transnational gangs, who have infiltrated the country with no area of the state being immune from their brutal violence.

The passage of this bill provides for additional Rangers to focus on border related violence and corruption. In the near future, and in consultation with the director's office and Ranger command staff, we will develop a plan to implement the requirements of HB-11 and incorporate the additional personnel by strategic placement in response to the state's need to battle continued threats and provide effective assistance to local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.

House Bill 2053 - known as "Colton's Law," outlines assistance the department will provide to Child Protective Services in searching for unlocatable children, who are the subject of serious allegations of abuse or neglect. The bill is named after Colton Turner, a 2-year-old child, whose remains were found in Travis County in 2014, leading to the arrest of his mother and a companion.

Often, caseworkers are unable to find a child connected to a serious allegation and during this time the child's safety remains in jeopardy. In 2005, legislature authorized the "Child Safety Check Alert List," which provides an avenue for local law enforcement, through documentation, to place children who cannot be located and their families in a database which is searchable by law enforcement.

This bill causes the responsibility of these entries to be made with the Department of Public Safety's Texas Crime Information Center. As important, Colton's Law mandates additional training to educate all Texas peace officers on the application of the alert list. The Texas Crimes Against Children Center will assist in providing training and resources to law enforcement in the protection of children.

House Bill 1690 - transferred duties, changed the prosecution venue of state employees and state officers accused of certain offenses, and created the Public Integrity Unit within the Texas Rangers. Public corruption is high on the department's list of investigative priorities, as the breach of trust undermines the confidence in public officials.

In the past, a significant number of these allegations were investigated and prosecuted by the Travis County District Attorney's office. This bill places the responsibility of the investigation of public integrity offenses with the Texas Rangers, requiring the division to establish a new unit. The

Texas Ranger Division will develop a strategy and policy to implement the requirements of this bill and to ensure we remain unbiased and non-political in its application, that we always do what is right, and that our investigations will be based on truth and fact.

The Rangers, as always, will continue to work in partnership with local prosecutors in the pursuit of public integrity investigations. The respect of a Texas Ranger is not based on a badge and a gun, but is earned through the trust and confidence of the public by continuing the dedicated service to Texas through unquestioned competence and integrity.

I would like to take a moment to thank the TRAF Board of Directors again for their unwavering commitment and selfless acts of kindness in support of the Texas Rangers—active and retired.

The Texas Ranger Association Foundation hosts the annual Ranger Reunion and provides financial support to ensure retirees and their spouses are able to attend. Unique in the law enforcement profession, the reunion provides a social setting to solidify the essential link between "active" and "retired" Rangers.

This camaraderie exposes new Rangers to the time honored traditions and the wealth of knowledge and experiences celebrated by the retirees; and in turn, retirees can learn of new forensic techniques, scientific methods and instrumentation utilized by the Rangers of today.

This Ranger Reunion, as in years past, was an opportunity for us to reflect on the history of the Rangers and to say "thank you" to the character-driven individuals who have worn the Cinco Peso star for the Great State of Texas. The foundation has our support. Until next time—God bless.



**TEXAS RANGER** Wende Wakeman of Co. D was one of the many Rangers who visited with Captain Chris Cassidy after his Saturday night presentation. Wakeman formerly was a member of Company A and has been promoted to lieutenant.

*Speakers cont. from page 2...*

there, which, by the time all lawsuits were completed, two years had passed.

During the siege and later an exchange of gunfire and a fire from inside the compound, Branch Davidian leader David Koresh as well as 82 other Branch Davidian men, women and children, and four Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearm agents were killed.

The compound outside of Waco was named Mount Carmel Center. Captain Byrnes introduced all Rangers involved in the siege who attended the reunion weekend to come to the front of the auditorium to be recognized.

Three of the college students using TRAF scholarship funds attended the reunion and gave short speeches thanking their benefactors for making their college more affordable. Each full time student who maintains the required grade average receives \$2,000 per semester.

During the 2014-15 academic year, the scholarship total awarded by TRAF was \$153,675.

Student speakers were Amanda Jo Losoya, a junior at Sam Houston State University, majoring in music education; Clark Holden Lindermann, senior at Texas A&M University, majoring in industrial distribution; and Travis Michael DeLuna, Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi, majoring in bio medical science.

Former TRAF Chairman Steve Sikes presented plaques to retiring members of the TRAF board, all five having been selected Directors Emeritus by the board.

They were E.E. "Bubba" Hudson, Gray McWhorter, Mike Lam, Tom Lacy and Danny Chandler.

Captain Cassidy had the audience both in stitches and enthralled as he recounted many humorous recollections from his younger days as a SEAL to some of his more adventurous assignments as a combat leader on the battle field and as an underwater pilot/navigator of a submersible delivery craft.

He did the same with his early days as an astronaut in training to when he made two trips to the International Space Station, once for two weeks and one for six months.



**CAPTAIN CASSIDY** was given a "challenge coin" by State Sen. Brian Birdwell following Saturday's dinner. Birdwell was stationed at the Pentagon when Islamic terrorists flew an airplane into a side of the building on 9/11/01. They are joined by Bob Stratmann, head of the Patriot Outfitters from Georgetown who take wounded soldiers from Fort Hood on weekend excursions. Cassidy joined Stratmann's team on one weekend outing. Cassidy was also on the ground in Afghanistan two weeks after the 9/11 tragedy, commanding a team of SEALs at the Pakistan/Afghan border.

Cassidy was in formal naval attire for his presentation to the Rangers and answered questions from the audience for nearly 30 minutes after his presentation.

He was made a Benefactor member of TRAF by the board of directors and was presented a Kimber model 1911 .45 caliber pistol and padded leather carrying case by new board treasurer Dave Wilson.

Cassidy was besieged by old and young, men and women at the podium after his presentation. He later changed into more casual wear and spent an additional two hours meeting Rangers and guests in the hospitality room.

TRAF Chairman Jim Chionsini was master of ceremonies for both nights' festivities.

**GRAY MCWHORTER** joined the TRAF board when the organization first began. He has elected to become a director emeritus and was presented a plaque for his long years of service. "I still plan to remain active with TRAF and hope to continue attending our functions and visiting with all my old friends," he said.



**LONGTIME TRAF** Director Vern Foreman of Odessa, Co. E, got to share some stories with keynote speaker Captain Chris Cassidy about his time as a Navy SEAL and his two trips to the International Space Station.

# Since 1989, scholarships total \$1.8 million

## More than 40 students due in fall

During the 2014-2015 academic year, the Texas Ranger Association Foundation awarded \$153,675 in scholarships to deserving children of active Texas Rangers.

Forty-three students were on scholarship in the fall 2014 semester, and 35 received a scholarship in the spring of 2015. Full time students received \$2,000 per semester.

Each is required to make a 2.0 grade point. The total average grade point from our recipients is 3.21.

The application process for the upcoming school year is underway, and, again, TRAF expects to award more than 40 scholarships for the 2015 fall semester.

Since the TRAF scholarship program began in 1989, more than 260 college bound students have received financial assistance, totaling more than \$1.8 million.

### **Morgan Elaine Prince**

Morgan will be a freshman at Hardin Simmons University this fall where she will begin working on her major in athletic training. Morgan graduated with honors in May from Trinity Christian High School in Lubbock where she excelled as the captain of the varsity volleyball team.

Not only did her team win the 4A State TAPPS (Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools) State Tournament, but Morgan was named the MVP. She was also named 1st Team All-American Setter for private schools in the United States. She will play collegiate level volleyball at Hardin Simmons University.

Morgan participated in mission trips during the past year, and she is spending her time this summer coaching elementary and junior high girls' volleyball teams. She is the daughter of Texas Ranger Chief Randy Prince, stationed at Headquarters Company in Austin.



**Morgan Prince**



**Stephanie Diaz**

### **Stephanie Diaz**

Stephanie graduated from Our Lady of the Lake in May earning a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology with a biology and psychology double minor. She maintained high levels of academic achievement and received the honor cum laude upon graduation.

She was captain of the university womens' soccer team and named 1st Team All-Conference (Red River Athletic Conference) in 2014. She holds several team records, including game winning goals of 13.

She participated in the NAIA National Championship in 2013 and 2014. Stephanie continues to volunteer for soccer programs at the YWCA and the TOPSoccer Festival for athletes with disabilities in the San Antonio area.

Her future goal is to earn her doctorate degree in physical therapy. Stephanie is the daughter of Texas Ranger Noe Diaz, Co. A, Houston.



**RANGER YOUNGSTERS** taking part in the scholarship program are always a highlight at the Reunion Weekend. Three of them spoke about the importance of their TRAF scholarships and the help they give in helping with their college educations. Nearly 50 children of Rangers will be on TRAF scholarships when the fall 2015 semester starts. The three speaking were Travis Michael DeLuna, Amanda Jo Losoya and Clark Holden Lindermann.

## Hall of Fame and Museum report -

# Museum assures Rangers' posterity



By Byron Johnson,  
Director Texas Ranger Museum

The service of individual Texas Rangers—active, retired and those of history—is a legacy for their successors and future generations.

Monuments, names carved in stone and grave markers, are deserved honors. But they rarely capture a sense of a person for posterity. Each year thousands of persons contact the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum, knowing an ancestor may have been a Texas Ranger.

They often know they were a Ranger, but have no sense of who they really were, where they served or details of that service.

In 1976 the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame State Monument was built. It was dedicated to Rangers who made major contributions to the service or made the ultimate sacrifice under exceptional circumstances.

Visited by more than 3 million persons, the Hall of Fame has been recognized as one of the best in the USA.

As inspiring as it is, the Hall of Fame recognizes only about .003% of those who have served. Retired and active-duty Rangers, most laboring diligently in the shadows, have long wondered, "Will I be remembered?"

The most straightforward step was to first honor active duty Rangers. In the 1990s we created a wall entering the Hall of Fame to display the photograph and name of each active duty Texas Ranger.

Updated frequently, thanks to Cheryl Iselt in Austin Headquarters, it has charted careers of Rangers, some from the field to the chief's office. It remains a favorite of visitors and on the internet.

The next step was to safeguard the vanishing traces of the thousands of Rangers back to 1823. In 2006 the Armstrong family of Houston agreed to work with us to create the first dedicated law enforcement research center in the nation.

Donations came statewide and nationally from adults and children, Ranger enthusiasts, descendants, former US Presidents, corporations, bankers and historical societies.

In 2012 the Tobin and Anne Armstrong Texas Ranger Research Center opened. The oldest living Ranger, Capt. John Wood, lived to see where he would be remembered for many generations.

The Armstrong Center holds irreplaceable biographical files, historical documents, case files and rare books. We tell the Rangers that its real significance will be when the great-great-grandchildren of today's Rangers walk through the



**HALL OF FAME** and Museum chairman Hank Whitman, a retired Ranger Chief, along with Holly Williamson (Austin), Andrea Catania (Midland) and Ret. Capt. Barry Caver, board member of both the TRHFM and TRAF boards, cut the ribbon to dedicate the new Distinguished Service exhibit at the museum.

door to learn not only their names, but something of who they were.

The third part of our goal was to recognize the distinguished service of the 180-plus living retired Texas Rangers. Often they are overlooked, with emphasis on active duty Rangers or reverence for the heroic Rangers of the past.

In 2013 Staff removed an old display from the Hall of Fame to make way for distinguished service, and exhibit in memory of retired Texas Rangers.

A generous lead gift was made by the family of the late Texas Public Safety Commission Chairman Robert Holt and matched by our partners, the Texas Ranger Association Foundation. Supplemental funds were awarded by the Fiat-Chrysler Foundation.

Opening during this year's Ranger Reunion Weekend, the exhibit features a changing display of the memorabilia donated by retired Rangers over the years. Its heart is a touch-screen display that displays service histories of the retired Rangers.

Their stories can be accessed in the gallery, over the museum website, and soon the Texas Ranger Association Foundation web site. Our goal is to build a much larger version of distinguished service to be housed in a new Hall of Fame building. But in the interim, the story of the retired Texas Rangers is now being told.

Today, thanks to donors and the Texas Ranger Association Foundation, a small measure of immortality comes with a Ranger commission — we will follow you as you serve. We will honor your service when you retire, and above all you will be remembered.

# Honoring a Texas Gold Star family

Texas Ranger Nathan Mutz, Co. D, and his family were honored as a Gold Star Family by Impact A Hero, a non-profit organization based in Houston. Nathan's younger brother, Mitchel, died in November of 2006 from injuries sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle during combat operations in Baquba, during his second deployment to Iraq.



**Mitchel Mutz**

Mitchel joined the U.S. Army in August 2003. After completion of Basic Training he was assigned to the 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, as a Cavalry Scout.

He served in that role during campaigns in his first tour in Najaf and Falluja, Iraq. It was a dangerous assignment, occupying advance positions and studying the terrain for troops that would come later in force. Mutz was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart, Bronze Star and Good Conduct Medal.

"I sometimes feel that no matter how many stories I share, I will never fully be able to share with my daughters that their uncle was the greatest person I have known," said Ranger Mutz. "I hope as time goes by they will understand what Mitchel did for them and appreciate that he chose the

difficult path. Over the years since his death, I live every day trying and keep his memory alive. The greatest fear I have is that the memories of Mitchel will fade away, and that is the most difficult thought to bear."

Mitchel followed in the footsteps of his brother and father in serving others. Ranger Mutz is stationed in Laredo, and his father served as sheriff of Karnes County. Nathan and Mitchel's parents, Bobby and Dixie, attended the Impact A Hero weekend. They live in Falls City where Mitchel is buried.

The mission of Impact A Hero is to provide immediate and ongoing

support for post combat 9/11 veterans, and their families and caregivers. During its annual Impact A Hero weekend event held in May, the organization honors severely wounded veterans and a Gold Star family to be inducted into its Hall of Fame.

On hand to support the Mutz family was TRAF director Constance White, Texas Rangers Wende Wakeman, Daron Parker and Ryan Christian, and retired Texas Ranger Chief Hank Whitman. (Hank also lost his son, Travis, in 2004 as a contractor with the Department of Justice. Travis honorably served our country as a Marine, 1997-2003.)



**ATTENDING THE** Impact A Hero event honoring Texas Ranger Nathan Mutz and his family are (l-r) TRAF Co. A director Constance White, U.S. Army veteran Daniel Ebarb, Nathan with his wife Shawna and their three daughters, retired Ranger Chief Hank Whitman, Mitchel's parents, Dixie and Bobby Mutz, Ranger Wende Wakeman and Ranger Daron Parker.

*Myrick cont. from page 6...*

and experience. Many directors have served 30-plus years.

This tenure and commitment on a board is exceptional in the nonprofit industry and evidence of their commitment to the Texas Rangers.

With each passing day I happily become better

acquainted with the Rangers and their families, the directors and their families and our benefactors. Hearing their personal stories and knowing what ties us all together in this common mission is a wonderful progression.

It supports my sense of purpose and reinforces my commitment to the Texas Rangers and to the goals of the foundation.

# Former chairman has history with Rangers, TRAF

By **Bill Hartman**

While interviewing Benny Vanecek for this article, I overlooked the obvious: which do you know more about, El Paso, hamburgers, golf balls or the Texas Rangers?

All four topics have played important roles in Benny's life. He has lived in El Paso 35 years, is a former franchise-owner of eight McDonald's restaurants, owns and operates Lone Star Golf Club in El Paso and has been a member of the Texas Ranger Association Foundation 28 years.

Benny was born in Taylor and attended high school in Houston.

His father worked on the railroads and was given a special Texas Ranger commission and badge in order to maintain order and make arrests when and if disturbances occurred on rail lines or when he discovered dishonest employees.

Benny is a graduate of Texas Wesleyan, El Paso.

He is a huge supporter of the city, serving on the El Paso Chamber of Commerce, the El Paso Rotary Club, the Ronald McDonald House Board of Directors and the board of Phi Kappa Tau. He is also a longtime member of the Texas Restaurant Association.

Benny served as chairman of the Texas Ranger Association Foundation from 2005 to 2007. He continues to serve on the reunion and nominating committees.

He was invited to join TRAF in 1987 by his friend and former board member Chuck Maddox.

Asked about his favorite memory with the foundation,



**Benny Vanecek**

Benny said, "That's a tough question, but I believe it was seeing our operation work when I was chairman and watching our bank account go over the \$2 million mark."

Benny has seen the Texas Rangers through the eyes of a son, through the eyes of a proud Texan and through his long association with TRAF. He knows many of the retired Rangers by their first names.

"I'm passionate about the Rangers after seeing the history of their law enforcement practices, and their integrity is impeccable," he said.

Asked what he would tell someone considering joining the association as a benefactor, Benny said, "It's well worth your investment because we help educate the children of Rangers and we promote the museum, which in turn records and promotes the history of the Rangers.

"All you have to do is be around these young people and their senior counterparts as well to recognize this is an elite group of men and women, people you enjoy getting to know and being around in business and social situations."

Benny added, "Watching the Rangers maintain their integrity is amazing. The personnel within the department changes with new arrivals and retirements, but their steadfast practices remain."

Many of the virtues of Rangers overlap into Benny's character traits he values in others. "I really enjoy being around people who can motivate themselves to success. Honesty and perseverance and the attitude of never giving up also rank high in my book," he said.

Benny's record of perseverance and never giving up are carryovers from his personal life. Those traits and a constant smile are his trademarks.

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## Johnson City director joins foundation board

David Conlon, owner and vice president of Tech Con Trenching, Inc. in Johnson City was elected to the Texas Ranger Foundation board during the annual Reunion Weekend meeting.



**David Conlon**

He was recommended by Co. F Major Chance Collins.

Tech Con was started in 2001 and specializes in custom rock/dirt

trenching in the oil and gas pipelines, utilities and wind energy businesses. It started with one trencher and is now operating 17 plus several pieces of dirt equipment.

David's wife is Teresa and they live in Johnson City. Mrs. Conlon also works for Tech Con. Each has four children.

The Conlons are involved with the Blanco County Youth Stock Show, Volunteer Firefighters, Meals on Wheels, 100 Club, Blanco Fair and Rodeo, a church pantry program and both are looking forward to their service to TRAF.

The Conlons are distinguished

benefactors with TRAF, having donated \$20,000 over the last year.

### TRAF Office Connections & Newsletter

For TRAF members, directors, benefactors, donors, Rangers and retired Rangers. If you have news or photos you'd like printed in the TRAF Newsletter, please contact one of the following:

#### TRAF OFFICE – WACO

Liz Myrick, Executive Director, 254-752-1001  
104 Ranger Trail, Waco, Texas 76706

#### COMMUNICATIONS Committee

Bill Hartman, 281-342-8691  
P.O. Box 1390 Rosenberg, TX 77471  
Jim Chionsini, 325-949-4700  
3115 Loop 306 Suite 111, San Angelo, TX 76904

# Ranger retirees



**RANGERS WORKING** the Branch Davidian siege outside of Waco who attended the Weekend Reunion include, top row (l-r) Ronnie Griffith, John Billings, Brantley Foster Johnny Aycock and Jim Miller. On the bottom row (l-r) are Marshall Brown, Clayton Smith, Capt. David Byrnes, Howard Dunham, Coy Smith and George Turner.



**REPRESENTING HEADQUARTERS CO**, are (front row, l-r) Asst. Chief Jim Miller, Chief Hank Whitman, Senior Capt. Lefty Block and Col. Tommy Davis. Back row (l-r) Chief Kirby Dendy, Assist. Chief Bryant Wells and Col. Joe Milner.

# Ranger companies



*COMPANY A Rangers back for the Reunion Weekend include (top row, l-r) Jerry Clements, Kenneth Parks, Lt. David Rainwater and Ronnie McBride. On the front row (l-r) are Lt. James Gant, Capt. Dan North, Milton Wright and Haskell Taylor.*



**RANGERS FROM** *Company E attending the Reunion Weekend included (top row, l-r) Lt. Kenny Ray, David Hullum, John Billings, Bobby Grubbs and Jess Malone. Bot-tom row, l-r, are Lt. Joe Sanders, Capt. Barry Caver, Capt. Jerry Byrne and Lt. Bob Favor.*



**COMPANY B** Rangers included (top row, l-r) Ralph Wadsworth, Ronnie Griffith, Tracy Murphee, Lee Young, Brantley Foster, Lane Akin and Howard Dunham. Bottom row (l-r) are Lt. Tom Davis, Lt. Rudy Jaramillo, Capt. Richard Sweaney, Capt. James Wright, Capt. David Byrnes, Jack Morton and Steve Black.



**COMPANY C** reunion Rangers are (back row, l-r) Capt. Carl Weathers, Jackie Peoples, Lt. Jimmy Hailey and Phil Ryan. On the front, l-r) are Warren Yeager, Marshall Brown, Gary Henderson and Billy Patterson.



**COMPANY D** Rangers honored at the reunion were (top row, l-r) Marie Aldridge, Bobby Poynter and John Martin. On the front row, (l-r) are Lt. Robert Hunter, Captain Jack Dean and Coy Smith.



**MEMBERS OF CO. F** who were guests at the Reunion weekend include (top row, l-r) Ray Nutt, Ronnie Brownlow, Johnny Aycock, Rocky Warlow, Kyle Dean, Mark Alegre and Steve Foster. On the bottom (l-r) are Lt. Rocky Millican, Capt. Joe Wylie, Matt Cawthon, Clayton Smith, Bob Connell, Capt. Bob Prince and Lt. George Turner.

## Chairman's Report -

## Watching retired Rangers mingle a treat

By Jim Chionsini, TRAF Chairman



Jim Chionsini

The Texas Ranger Association Foundation's 33rd annual reunion is behind us, and I believe it was the best one yet.

By all reports, the attendance for both Friday and Saturday nights was near or at capacity, and it seems everyone had a grand time. It's great watching retired Rangers see their old comrades, many who only see each other at this event.

That's the purpose of this reunion and a primary mission of TRAF.

Weekends like these don't just happen — they are successful because of the people behind the scene working tirelessly to ensure it will be the best it can be and as pleasurable as possible for retired Rangers, TRAF benefactors and guests.

In this case, the list is long, and I hope I haven't forgotten anyone. I want to give credit to those who get little recognition for their work.

The list has to begin with Liz Myrick, TRAF's Executive Director, who not only organized all aspects of the reunion but did much of the heavy lifting as well. She's a professional and makes all our jobs much easier.

Thanks to Retired Captain Barry Caver who served as reunion committee chairman. We all know when a Ranger tells you he's on it, you can cross it off your to-do list.

Those who assisted with the registration, silent auction and checking out include volunteers Brianna Simpson, Lindsay Hatfield, Lindsay Gasche, Barbara Pratt, Patricia Wright and Susan Mercer, plus our own staffers Rebekah Cannon and Wanda Gilliam.

Others to whom we owe a great deal of gratitude are Ranger Jake Bursleson who almost single handedly



**THIS PHOTO** of Captain Chris Cassidy came during a lighter moment in his presentation when he told a story about his deployment to Afghanistan two weeks after 9/11 and his dealings with a commanding officer while both fumbled for the same paper in a dark latrine that had been burrowed into a four-holer. Barely being able to see him, Chris recalled what he was told in no certain terms, "You know what I want out of you on this mission, bring your soldiers back home safely." Sharing his humor were TRAF Chairman Jim and Macy Chionsini.

ran the golf tournament while simultaneously gathering bad guys, who congregated recently at a restaurant near Waco.

There's Captain Bob Prince and the LaSalle Corrections Co. for fine barbecue at the golf tournament, Benny Vanecek, food chairman, Jerry and Susan Welborn, chairs for the silent auction and Tom Schleier, gift committee chairman.

We can always count on Dave Wilson, who again and again miraculously shows up with a gift of appreciation at precisely the right time.

Thanks to Michelle Bennie for organizing the Ladies Gift Exchange and all board members who helped with various projects, donated and bought silent auction gifts and pitched in where needed.

Special thanks to Chief Randy Prince. He gave an inspiring update on what's happening within the Texas Rangers organization and especially on the border. It's comforting to know the Chief has our back and heads the Rangers for the Texas Department of Public Safety.

A special thanks to Navy Captain, SEAL, and U.S. astronaut Chris Cassidy for taking his time to shed light on our space program. It was inspiring and exciting to know we'll soon again be traveling to space on a U.S. delivery craft, instead of ones built in Russia.

Last I want to thank Retired Ranger Captain Richard Sweaney. He's always there for advice and direction when I stray off course. His knowledge of this organization is unprecedented, and he has a special manner of communication.

I want to also thank members of the Former Texas Ranger Association for making the trip. It's always good to see them. We all respect the Texas Rangers both active and retired for their service to the great state of Texas.

Here's a special salute to Company F and former Chief Hank Whitman and director Schleier for organizing the first Clay Shoot and providing more than \$67,000 for our scholarship fund.

Company C will hold its Clay Shoot Oct. 17 in San Angelo. More companies have additional shoots or regional fund raising events coming up on their calendars.



*Melba Molina*



*Chris Clark*



*Todd Snyder*



*Burleigh Locklar*



*Antonio Rocha*



*Billy Mims*

# Rangers announce staff changes

AUSTIN (Sp) — Two Texas Ranger retirements of two lieutenants have been announced since the last TRAF Newsletter in March, and seven promotions have been made.

The two lieutenants are Davi Duncan from Marfa (HQ) and Arthur Barrera from Edinburg (HQ).

Promotions include Melba Molina, Ranger from Co. D in McAllen to staff lieutenant, Edinburg (HQ); Chris Clark, Ranger, Co. A in Bryan to lieutenant, Co. E, Midland; Todd Snyder, lieutenant, Co. C in Lubbock to Captain, SWAT, HQ Austin; Burleigh Locklar, Ranger, Co. E in Midland to staff

lieutenant, Marfa (HQ); Antonio Rocha, new Ranger stationed in El Paso, Co. E; James Thomas (not pictured), new Ranger stationed in El Paso, Co. E; and Billy Mims, new Ranger stationed in Hondo, Co. F.

Transfers and changes involve Jose Sanchez, Co. D in Laredo to Co. D in Eagle Pass; Terry Snyder, Co. F in Devine to Co. F in Floresville; Lt. Scotty Shiver from Co. E Midland to Co. C in Lubbock; Randy Lewis, Co. E in Andrews to Co. E in Midland; and Troy Wilson, Co. F in Floresville to HQ training coordinator.

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## Company E sets its regional clay shoot Oct. 17

With the first sporting clay shoot success in May in San Antonio, directors from Company E have set the date of Oct. 17 for their clay shoot at the San Angelo Claybird Association.

Directors in charge of this shoot are Jerry Wellborn, Dave Wilson, Bennie Vanecek, Vern Foreman and

Jim Chionsini. The directors will be assisted by Joshua Tanner and Trish Aldridge. Crayton McGee is the major of Company E.

Plans are calling for a live auction, gun boards and gun prizes. The day includes morning snacks and lunch will be served.

“This will be a fun event, and we encourage you to register since we are going to limit the activity to 150 shooters,” Wellborn said.

For more about the Oct. 17 date and information and entry forms, contact Wellborn at 325-763-7859 or Wilson at 325-226-3650.