

WHAT MAKES TEXAS "TEXAS"?

part 1



Retired and Hall of Fame Tex
Lt. Matt Lindeman
Photo by Carol Hu



TEXAS RANGERS

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**GEORGETOWN CAN BOAST AT LEAST ONE OF THESE LEGENDARY LAWMEN—
LT. MATT LINDEMANN. RECENTLY RETIRED FROM THE DIVISION,
AFTER 21-1/2 YEARS AS A RANGER, HE CONTINUES TO PROVIDE
EXPERTISE TO WILLIAMSON COUNTY AS AN INVESTIGATOR.**

You don't have to live in Texas to know about Texas Rangers. The great reverence given these elite, iconic law enforcement officers merely starts in Texas and reaches around the world.

This division of the Texas Department of Public Safety was founded in 1823 to investigate crimes, protect the border, and mitigate trouble in the "wild west" that pre-dated Texas' statehood and continues to capture the imagination.

MATT'S STORY

As a young man, Lt. Lindemann wanted to be a firefighter but was eager to start a career. When the chief of police in Bartlett offered to sponsor him at a law enforcement academy and carry his commission after graduation, he jumped at the opportunity. "I went to college in Killeen then went to work at the Williamson County jail. It was so much more like Mayberry then; there were about 35 employees and maybe 100 inmates. At times, I and one other officer ran the whole jail—two teenagers—I can't imagine that today."

Matt says working in a jail is great experience because handling inmates is an education on trying to keep people happy without giving them what they want. "It all comes down to treating them like human beings."

He says he met a Texas Ranger for the first time when two officers brought Henry Lee Lucas to the jail, and that

meeting was a big part of what led him to want to be a Ranger himself. "They were taking Lucas all over the country and I thought, 'Wow, these guys must be really important.'"

MAKING THE TEAM

When Matt joined the Rangers, there was a test given only once a year; they never needed to recruit. Sometimes hundreds of applicants vied for one or two positions. "More than two openings was exorbitant because once someone promotes to the Rangers, they pretty much stay until they retire."

He adds, there is no such thing as a "rookie" Ranger. While it used to be standard to have a Bachelor's degree, many have Master's and even Ph.D.s, plus at least eight years of law enforcement experience. Most applicants come into DPS as Troopers and serve again before they can apply to be a Ranger. "Modern credentials are the best in the field of law enforcement."

He says today's noble guardians remain a division of the Department of Public Safety and are authorized to work anywhere in Texas. Because the division has only 170 or so members at any given time, they limit their work to major felony crimes. Matt himself worked a kidnapping in which Rangers used modern technology, old-fashioned footwork, and, in collaboration with the FBI, found and rescued the victim without turning over ransom.

The Texas Rangers feature prominently in a new Netflix documentary about Henry Lee Lucas.

Lt. Lindemann makes a brief appearance in one episode of "The Confession Killer," as does the old Williamson County Jail on Main Street in Georgetown.



texas rangers

Rangers may participate in any criminal investigation, particularly those involving elected officials or department heads. "When someone lodges a complaint of that nature, they will call in the Texas Rangers because we are authorized at the state level and are removed from the situation. You wouldn't want a local agency investigating its own chief or

commissioner. Local law enforcement agencies also call to investigate officer-involved shootings. When an agency investigates its own, it can get dragged out or languish in the media. When the Rangers step in, we investigate, present to the grand jury, and that'd be the end of it."

TRUE LEGENDS AND POP CULTURE

Our deepest thanks to Byron Johnson of the Texas Ranger Museum in Waco for additional history and fascinating insider info.

The Texas Rangers are the oldest serving state law enforcement division in North America, and have served under five different national flags. This longevity is partially due to the group's ability to adapt into whatever the state needed as it grew and modernized. Consequently, they have been written into the 7th grade history curriculum state-wide.

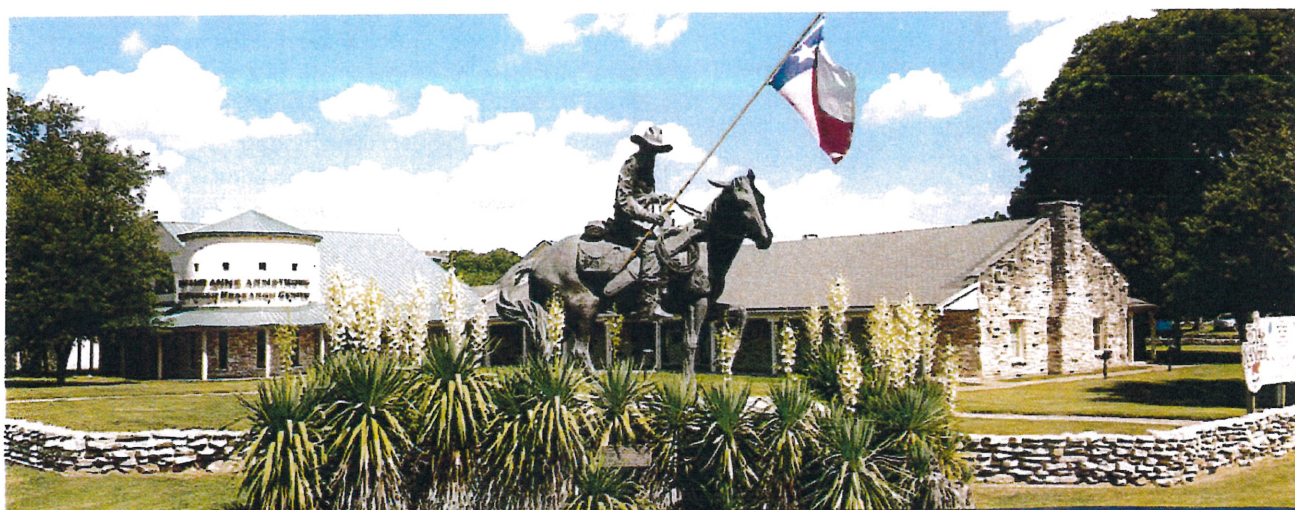
They started out as a frontier militia group, protecting settlers from raids. They fought in the War for Texas Independence, and in the 1870s, when towns became more prevalent and populated, they investigated crimes like cattle theft and murder.

When oil strikes began and as the boom hit, towns got organized. They typically called the governor and asked for some Texas Rangers immediately. Fast forward to the 1930s and the rise of organized crime. The Texas Rangers adapt-

ed from chasing people on horseback, to V-8 automobiles, including the one Bonnie and Clyde were driving when the Rangers ended their crime spree.

The Texas Rangers are also the nation's oldest entertainment franchise. Since 1933, when "The Lone Ranger" radio show was broadcast in Detroit, there have been 214 movies, seven TV shows, and they have also been the most popular comic book series in Italy since 1947. Episodes of "The Lone Ranger" television show are still aired in Moscow. Chuck Norris is an honorary Ranger, as are John Wayne, Robert Duvall, and George H.W. Bush.

The museum has hosted Russian Ambassadors, Kyrgystani bankers; and President Bush had it on speed-dial from Crawford. "There is a great reverence for these men and women," Byron says. "A young Ranger came for the annual reunion, and while he was proud of his accomplishment, he said he was really not prepared to become an icon; strangers had already begun asking him for his autograph."



**THE TEXAS RANGER MUSEUM AND HALL OF FAME IS OPEN YEAR-ROUND
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Visit the museum to wonder at the stereotypes and the reality. There is more than a day's learning about the team that has the credibility of Interpol, a two-century mix of history, and great esprit de corps that makes the Rangers the best the state has to offer.