

Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum

Educational Resources



Memorial: Texas Ranger Ed Gooding

Written by TRHFM Staff

The following article has been adapted from the former website of the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum.

IN MEMORIAM



Ed Gooding

July 10, 1924 – July 3, 2003

If ever a man defined the Greatest Generation, it was Ed Gooding. At 9:40 Thursday night, July 3, 2003, Ed passed from this world and joined his beloved Lena, who preceded him in death in 1995.

During his lifetime, Ed had four careers, all of which he was equally proud: cowboy, soldier in World War II, Highway Patrolman, and Texas Ranger.

Born in the South Texas town of Ingleside, San Patricio County, Ed grew up on ranches in that area and in Kimble County. He would have been happy to have always been cowboy because it was a life he truly loved. Like millions of other Americans, however, everything changed for Ed when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.



In eleven months of combat from behind his 30-caliber light machine gun, Ed fought through the deathtraps that were the hedgerows in Normandy. Another time he was later literally blown off a hill by artillery fire. He followed Patton on his race across France, and he was one of the soldiers who made the forty-eight-hour march through the freezing weather and snow that relieved the 101st Airborne at Bastogne, Belgium.

With the end of the war, Ed returned to his first love, a ranch in South Texas. He said many times that being a cowboy saved his sanity. The solitude from the back of a horse gave him time to think and clear his mind of the nightmares of the horrors of war.

In 1949, the opportunity to join the Texas Department of Public Safety presented itself. Ed had always had the greatest admiration for the law—and the money was a lot better than he was getting as a cowboy. He applied for and was accepted into the DPS. On March 1, 1949, he became a Texas Highway Patrolman stationed in Houston.

It was in Houston that Ed met and married Lena. At that time, the Highway Patrol did not allow married Troopers to remain in the city, and so Ed was transferred to nearby Baytown. For the next eight years, he served with great pride as a Highway Patrolman.

When a small boy, Ed had seen his first Texas Ranger. From the minute he joined the Highway Patrol, he knew his ultimate goal was to one day be a Ranger himself. In 1957, Ranger Captain Hardy Purvis retired as commander of Houston's Company A. The new commander, the legendary Johnny Klevenhagen, knew Ed and asked him to join his company.



Ed couldn't accept his Ranger position fast enough. For the next seven years, he was stationed in Houston. During that time, he saw enough action to have lasted most Rangers a full career.

But by 1982, Ed had seen enough. On August 31, he took his badge off for the last time. During his twenty-five years as a Ranger, he had served the citizens of Texas in Houston, Kerrville, Amarillo, and Belton—all with the great honor and tradition that the Lone Star state expects of her Rangers.

Those who knew Ed closely know of the other great passion in his life, his religion. He volunteered with total unselfishness to his church. Some of his last words as he lay dying in a Fort Worth hospital were to his preacher. He said that he was in a win-win situation: "If I get out of here, I win; if I don't, I still win."

Yes, Ed was one of the Greatest Generation, an inspiring Texas Ranger, and a great Christian. His friends will miss him greatly.

- Robert Nieman

