

DPS Chaparral

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November 1999

Trooper, 2 deputies killed in ambush

By Mike Cox, Chief of Media Relations

HP Trooper **Terry Wayne Miller** of Pleasanton had planned to take his daughter to the circus on Wednesday, October 13. But shortly after 8:50 the night before, Trooper Miller was cut down by semi-automatic rifle fire from a sniper laying in ambush.

Trooper Miller, 37, was hit twice after responding to a rural area of Atascosa County to back up two sheriff's deputies who had gone to a mobile home occupied by man arrested earlier in the day for family violence. Atascosa County Sheriff Tommy Williamson said the man had called the sheriff's office at 8:11 p.m. and asked that officers be sent to his residence. Fifteen minutes later—concealed in brush across from his trailer—the man opened fire on the deputies sent to the scene.



Trooper Terry Miller

When Miller arrived after the sheriff's department was unable to raise the deputies on the radio, he found deputies Thomas Monse, Jr., 31, and Mark Stephenson, 32, had been shot. Miller radioed that two officers were down and asked for help. Moments later, he, too, was dead.

Before the shooting ended, Pleasanton police officer Louis Tudyk and retired Border Patrol officer Carl Fischer had been wounded.

As other officers closed in on the sniper, he shot himself in the head with a handgun taken from one of the dead sheriff's deputies. The killer was identified as 21-year-old Jeremiah Engleton.

At 2:10 a.m. Friday, Oct. 15, Rangers arrested Kenneth Vodochodsky, 19, in rural Wilson County on three counts of capital murder and two counts of attempted capital murder in connection with the case. The complaints allege Vodochodsky took an active role in helping Engleton plan and carry out the ambush of the three officers.

Miller was buried on Saturday, Oct. 16 in Hebron Cemetery near Yoakum following funeral services at 1 p.m. at St. John Lutheran Church in Jourdanton. Survivors include his wife, Karen, and two children, Amanda, 2, and Ashley, 13.

A native of Mercedes, Miller was a graduate of Gregory-Portland High School. He had worked as an officer with the Sinton Police Department and as a deputy with the San Patricio County Sheriff's Office before joining the DPS in 1997. He had been stationed in Freer before transferring to Pleasanton in September 1998.

A memorial fund for Trooper Miller and the other two officers has been

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Dear Fellow Employee:

The DPS made it nearly five years without losing an officer to gunfire. Tragically, that ended on the night of Oct. 12 with the death of Trooper Terry Miller, the 74th DPS officer to fall in the line of duty since 1932. Some 2,000 people, including numerous out-of-state officers, attended his funeral. Trooper Miller's family and friends, this agency, and all of society, has suffered from the senseless act that led to his death.

This tragedy leads me to once again remind each of you to be careful and alert as you perform your sworn duty to protect and serve.

* * *

On Sept. 27, 141 men and women began their training for law enforcement careers with the DPS as members of recruit class A 99. Welcome to the DPS! You are part of the 117th recruit school since training of uniformed state police officers began in the 1930s.

No matter whatever future accomplishments you will enjoy, you are starting off with two built-in distinctions: You will be the last recruits to receive training in a year beginning with "19" and those of you who complete your training will be in the first class to graduate in 2000.

Beyond the fact that you happened to have begun your training in 1999, the significance of the rest of your career is up to you. Upon graduation, you will have the advantage of state-of-the-art training. But how far you progress in rank and whatever other benchmarks of success you realize are strictly up to you. Good luck!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dudley Thomas".

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

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

Awards

"I was just doing my job," said Tr. Bill **Lohman**, HP Woodville, after taking his place in DPS history by adding a Medal of Valor to his service record. Lohman became only the 18th officer to receive DPS' highest honor for his role in orchestrating a dramatic high water rescue following April flash flooding in Tyler County. Lohman's leadership and fearless actions saved at least one life and possibly more when an elderly woman's car was swept into a rain swollen creek. Tim Herrington of Port Arthur immediately jumped into the water and used his knife to cut the woman out of her seat belt. Ray Beough of Warren followed quickly, helping drag the woman on top of the car.

Tr. Lohman arrived and navigated the rising water to the car. Lewis Duke of Warren swam some rope to the car and Lohman directed him to attach the rope to a tree and swim back to the vehicle. The trooper then used the rope and a flotation device to guide the woman through the rushing water to safety. He returned to the frigid, treacherous water again to ensure the other rescuers reached dry land. For their roles in the rescues, Herrington, Beough and Duke were all honored for their bravery with Director's Awards.

Short Shots

McEathron recognized

TLE Chief **David McEathron** became only the second DPS employee to be honored with TxDOT's Luther DeBerry Award, presented

to the employee who makes the greatest contribution to transportation in the state. McEathron's work in establishing policy and specifications for video cameras in DPS vehicles was cited.

New office created

In compliance with DPS Sunset Legislation passed in the last session, the Public Safety Commission has created the Office of Audit and Inspection. The new office combines the Internal Audit Department and the Inspection and Planning Service. It will be on the Director's staff and report directly to the Commission.

Farrell A. Walker, CPA, has been appointed Director of Audit and Inspection and will oversee its operations. Chief Inspector **John Hall** will continue to supervise the inspection operation.

Cast your ballot

Nov. 2 is election day. While the Presidential election still is a year away, 17 proposed Constitutional amendments are on the ballot. Please take time to vote.

Procurement Card

By the end of the year, the Procurement Card Program will be introduced to enhance the Department's procurement and payment capabilities. This new credit card purchasing process will help provide prompt payment to vendors. For more information and details, see this month's Accounting Bulletin.

TABC pats DPS on back

The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission presented its Bert Ford Commendation Award to DPS for its involvement in such anti-teen drinking programs as Shattered Dreams, Youth Power Camps and the Opera-

tion "Fake Out," which targets fake driver licenses and ID's.

Mile Markers

CLE Promotions

Joseph John Millhouse, Cpl. V, HP Houston to Sgt./Inv., Narc. Svc. Laredo.

Retirements

Terry Wayne Garnett, Supr., FP&R Austin, 31 yrs., 3 mos., 17 days; **Daniel Brent Carter**, Supervising Criminalist, Crime Lab Austin, 30 yrs., 7 mos; **Clayton Terrel Harris**, Sgt., DL Division Austin, 21 yrs., 9 mos., 28 days; **Helen Louise Walker**, DL Tech. Austin, 12 yrs., 6 mos.; **John Michael Ener**, Tr. V, L&W Livingston, 29 yrs., 1 mo., 9 days; **Ralph Edward Billings**, Tr. V, HP Fairfield, 26 yrs., 4 mos., 5 days; **John Michael Shopland**, Radio Mech. III Austin, 6 yrs., 7 days; **Ernest Emory Stephens III**, DL Tech. Longview, 2 yrs., 2 mos.; **Charles Davis Bell**, Tr. V, L&W Brenham, 28 yrs., 11 mos., 9 days.

Deaths

Peggy A. Powell, Sec.IV, MVT Austin (March 1991 to Sept. 1999) died Sept. 23.

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set up at the Atascosa National Bank, P.O. Box 250, Pleasanton, Texas, 78064. Contributions can be made through the bank to the families of all of the officers or any of the three. For further information, the bank's telephone number is 830-281-2507.

E-mail condolences to the family can be sent to:
trooper.miller@txdps.state.tx.us.