



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 It has been superseded by this online archive of Texas Ranger history.

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Funded in part by grants from
the Texas Ranger Association Foundation

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Glenn Elliott

In East Texas, two words equal law enforcement: Glenn Elliott. Jim Ray, retired Texas Ranger captain and former chief of the Department of Public Safety's Criminal Law Enforcement Division, says of him, "Glenn is one of the greatest, if not *the* greatest, field Ranger that has ever lived."

On August 26, 1987, the day of Glenn's retirement, Paul Harvey reported on his national radio program, "I don't know what you know about the Texas Rangers, but they are an elite corps of lawmen, respected at all levels of law enforcement and revered in their home state. And if you had to pick one to represent the best of the best, that one would be Ranger Glenn Elliott."

Glenn was born just south of Windom in Fannin County, Texas, on August 1, 1926. His birthplace was directly across the road from the former home of Fannin County's most famous citizen, speaker of the United States House of Representatives, Sam Rayburn, known universally as Mr. Sam. While still a youth, Glenn's family moved to his grandparents' farm just north of Windom. He lived there until he graduated from Windom High School in 1942, married his high school sweetheart Katherine, and joined the Army.

In 1944, Glenn found himself in the South Pacific as an MP. He is quick to



point out that his duty in the Military Police had nothing to do with his later career in law enforcement. He wasn't asked if he wanted to be an MP. Like millions of other soldiers, he was told what his duty would be. In September 1945, he landed in Kobe, Japan, as part of the U.S. Army's occupation force. As soon as he was discharged in 1946, he headed for Windom and his wife and daughter. Glenn and Katherine eventually had two children: Diane and Dennis.

For the next several years, Glenn worked at a tractor plant in nearby Bonham. After the plant's closure, he went to work for a local telephone company. During this time, he

attended the funeral of the mother of his former high school coach, Jim Riddle. Coach Riddle had left teaching and become a member of the Texas Highway Patrol. He encouraged Glenn to apply for entry in the Department of Public Safety. He said the department was looking for some good men—men like Glenn. Glenn followed his coach's advice and made an application to the Highway Patrol. Glenn was atop a telephone pole when he got a message to call Austin.

He had been accepted. When asked if he always wanted to be a lawman, he said he had never given it a thought one way or the other. "All I was doing was looking for a job. I've always been thankful that the opening was with the department."

On April 3, 1949, Glenn Elliott entered the Highway Patrol School at Camp Mabry in Austin. On June 1, 1949, he pinned on a badge and started his career in Longview. It would be thirty-eight years before he would take the badge off.

Glenn served as member of the Highway Patrol until his promotion to the Texas Rangers in 1961. In those years, it was highly unusual for a person being promoted to the Rangers to remain at their current duty station. Glenn was an exception to the rule, and he stayed in the Gregg-Harrison County area.

Hard work is Glenn's trademark, and it is a reputation he well deserves. He says that it doesn't matter where a Ranger is stationed, whether it is a teeming metropolitan area or a sparsely settled rural county, if a Ranger wants to work there won't be enough hours in the day.

During his career, Glenn worked a multitude of cases that covered just about every imaginable crime: murder, kidnapping, strikes, oil-field thief, bank robbery, and everything in between.

Glenn had barely pinned on his Ranger badge when he was initiated in a big way—the slant-hole business in the East Texas Oil Field in the Kilgore area. Fortunately, he had Ranger Jim Ray, from adjoining Smith County, as his mentor and guide during this trying time.

In the early 1960s, crooked oil-field operators were reworking worn-out wells and tapping into nearby producing wells. This wasn't a nickel and dime

operation; millions of dollars were involved. It was so big that, by the time it was finally brought to a successful conclusion, almost every Ranger had worked on the case. Glenn and his fellow Rangers were rewarded in that thousands of illegal wells were shut down.

In 1967, Glenn found himself in another situation that required the assistance of almost every Ranger: the Lone Star Steel strike—a strike gone mad. Glenn, Bob Mitchell, and Red Arnold headed the Ranger efforts. Month after month, the strike went on. Countless cars and trucks were shot up or blown up. Innocent families had their homes attacked and vandalized by unknown gunmen. A young teenage boy who was making a simple delivery to the steel plant was severely beaten by a striker. A bomb was planted in the plant's cafeteria, set to go off at noon when the cafeteria would have been packed. Fortunately, Glenn was able to assist in the disarming of the bomb minutes before it would have exploded. The worst incident involved a worker named Smitty Blackburn, who was shot to death while going to work. This murder still doesn't set well with Glenn because the Rangers were never able to bring this case to a successful conclusion.

In 1975, Inez Phillips was brutally murdered in her home in Gladewater, Texas. Mrs. Phillips was a kindly, elderly lady who had never harmed anyone. For two years, Glenn doggedly worked on this case. His never-say-quit attitude finally paid off when Stanley Faulder was arrested, convicted, and sentenced to death for Ms. Phillips' murder.

Unfortunately, it would be years before the Phillips murder case would be brought to a satisfactory end. For twenty-two years, Faulder twisted and delayed with every legal trick in the book. Time after time, he would receive a reprieve at the last hour. Faulder was a convicted felon from Canada who was in this country illegally. As a last desperate attempt to save his life, his lawyers claimed that the Canadian consult should have been notified when he was arrested. (Faulder's criminal record had originally been obtained from Canadian officials.) This appeal was rejected by the United States Supreme Court.

Even this didn't end the case. Former Secretary of State Madalene Allbright got involved and asked that Faulder's life be spared. Never mind that he had murdered Mrs. Phillips by crushing her head with a blunt instrument and then, claiming that he didn't want her to suffer, had slammed a butcher knife to the hilt into her chest. It seems everyone had forgotten or ignored the brutality of Faulder's act—everyone, that is, except Governor George W. Bush. He refused the appeals and in April of 1999, the execution of Stanley Faulder was carried out.

August 31, 1987, was the end of the line for Glenn. After thirty-eight years of devoted service to the citizens of the state Texas, he retired. His retirement party was attended by over 400 of his friends.

Just because Glenn retired didn't mean he slowed down any. Today he spends several days a month in Windom, where he still owns the farm where he grew up.

He has written two books. His first, *Glenn Elliott: A Ranger's Ranger*, has gone through four printings. His newest book, *Glenn Elliott: Still A Ranger's Ranger* will be available this November.

During his professional career, Glenn has had many things to be proud of.



From 1949 to 1987, he had six captains. He says that his proudest honor was that every one of those six told him, "You don't have to work as hard as you do." Yes, he did. Glenn Elliott doesn't know how to do it any other way.

- Robert Nieman

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