

09-15-2005 San Jacinto Cty TX – Denny F Gallaway Jr – LEO – Attempted Rescue River



## OFFICER DOWN MEMORIAL PAGE

REMEMBERING ALL OF LAW ENFORCEMENT'S HEROES

<http://www.odmp.org/officer/reflections/17869-sergeant-denny-f-gallaway-jr/50>



### Bio & Incident Details

**Age:** 34

**Tour:** 11 years

**Badge #** 5202

**Cause:** Drowned

**Sergeant**

**Denny F. Gallaway, Jr.**

San Jacinto County Constable's Office - Precinct 2, Texas

### **End of Watch: Thursday, September 15, 2005**

Sergeant Denny Gallaway drowned while attempting to rescue a man from the Trinity River.

The man, a U.S. Marine Corps service member who had just returned from serving in Iraq, had attempted to rescue a woman and child from the river when he too became caught in its current.

Upon arriving at the scene, Sergeant Gallaway immediately entered the water in an attempt to save the man. Both Sergeant Gallaway and the man became caught in debris and the rough currents and drowned. The woman and child were rescued.

Sergeant Gallaway had served with the San Jacinto County Constable's Office for 11 years. He is survived by his wife and three sons.

### **Gallaway was a consummate officer, dedicated family man**

<http://www.chron.com/neighborhood/article/Gallaway-was-a-consummate-officer-dedicated-9739371.php>

September 19, 2005 Howard Roden

Boe was always there for support, but he wasn't afraid to lead the way, either" said Detective Bubba Piper of the Polk County Sheriff's Department. "He was definitely a go-getter; somebody who worked tirelessly and led by example."

Gallaway, 34, was fondly and tearfully remembered as a consummate police officer and dedicated family man when he was laid to rest Monday at Garden Park Cemetery. The Cut and Shoot resident drowned in the Trinity River last Thursday while attempting to rescue a Marine on leave from Iraq.

Marine Bernardo Vasquez, 21, had jumped in the river to save his uncle, who was foundering in the Trinity's treacherous currents. A deputy sergeant with the Precinct 2 Constable's Office in San Jacinto County, Gallaway was one of four officers who responded to the 9-1-1 call. He dove into the river in attempt to find Vasquez, but neither man survived. Vasquez's uncle managed to reach safety on a sandbar.

Nearly 200 law enforcement officers from jurisdictions as far away as Temple and San Antonio came to Conroe Monday to pay their respects to Gallaway, a career policeman hailed as a "hero" by San Jacinto County Precinct 2 Constable Jerry Everitt.

"He was like one of my kids," said Everitt. "He was a special officer."

Although Gallaway had been working in San Jacinto County for less than a year, he had already been responsible for breaking up 10 methamphetamine labs in the county, said Everitt.

"He was the best narcotics officer in the state of Texas," the constable said. "He was awesome."

Funeral services were held in Livingston before Gallaway was accorded full law enforcement honors at the Garden Park Cemetery on FM 3083 in north Conroe. There were honor guards from the Texas Department of Public Safety, the Houston Police Department, and the Harris County Precinct 4.

The DPS Region II Honor Guard fired off a 21-gun salute before the ceremony was concluded by the playing of "Taps" and the haunting strains of "Amazing Grace" played on the bagpipes of officers from HPD and Harris County Precinct 4.

A Houston native, Gallaway spent nearly seven years with the Polk County Sheriff's Department before joining the Precinct 2 Constable's Office in San Jacinto County. While in Polk County, he was the guiding force behind the creation of the Special Response Team (SRT), a unit designed to fight illegal narcotics within the county.

"It if wasn't for him, we wouldn't have this team," said Lt. Andy Lowrie of the Polk County Sheriff's Narcotics Division. SRT members served as pallbearers during the burial ceremony.

Polk County Deputy Sheriff Mike Nettles agreed that Gallaway was one of the "best narcotics officers" he had encountered during his years in law enforcement. But Gallaway never lost focus on his family, he said.

"He gave 110 percent every day to his family and his job," said Nettles, noting that Gallaway had gone the extra distance to help put his wife, Angela, through nursing school.

"There wasn't anything that was more important than his family," Nettles said. "Boe was a great person."

Nettles said Gallaway paid close attention to detail and led by example in such areas as appearance and attitude.

"There was nothing too big or small for him to go in and take care of," said the deputy sheriff.

Polk County Deputy Stan Gallaway said Gallaway was someone with a lot of energy who was dedicated to his family.

"He died a hero," Gallaway said. "He had the mentality to help anyone who needed it."

Ellis "Pokey" Sammons was a Houston policeman for 30 years and has lived in the Shepherd area for the past two decades. He said Gallaway was a "fine officer" but it was his personality that often distinguished him from other officers.

"He didn't let his head blow up just because he had a pair of handcuffs and a pistol," said Sammons, who attended the burial. "He was always polite and showed people respect."

In addition to his wife Angela, Gallaway is survived by three sons, Corben Gallaway, Kyle Bartee and Brett Bartee.



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[https://www.dps.texas.gov/director\\_staff/public\\_information/publications/chaparral/chap0806.pdf](https://www.dps.texas.gov/director_staff/public_information/publications/chaparral/chap0806.pdf)

August 2006

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## *Awards*

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Two Director's Citations and three Director's Awards were presented in connection with an incident at the Trinity River in San Jacinto County. Tr. **Allen Stanton**, HP Coldspring, and Tr. **Robert Willoughby**, HP Coldspring, were among the first to arrive at the scene of a drowning in progress. Bernardo Vasquez, a Marine home on leave from Iraq, had jumped into the river to aid his uncle, who apparently was caught by a whirlpool in the river. The current pushed the uncle to the riverbank, but the young Marine disappeared from sight. Deputy Constable Denny Gallaway went into the water to assist and also was caught in the whirlpool. The Marine's mother went into the river after her son and was struggling and distraught. Troopers Stanton and Willoughby went into the water and helped the woman to safety.

The two troopers, who received Director's Citations, continued to provide support for the rescue effort and Tr. Stanton reentered the water to help two other rescuers to safety. Volunteer Fire Chief Richard Anderson, Deputy Constable Chad Whitten and San Jacinto County Deputy Dennis Bagby all risked their lives during the rescue and received Director's Awards. Anderson and Whitten both braved the dangerous currents in a valiant attempt to save the deputy constable.

Bagby, meanwhile, arrived on the scene, and as others on the shore held one end of a rope, he tied the other end around his waist and dived several times unsuccessfully looking

for the deputy constable and the Marine. Sadly, both of the victims drowned. Whitten, Anderson and Bagby were all nominated by Sgt. **David Gustafson**, HP Coldspring, for their part in the rescue effort.

Last year's hurricanes Katrina and Rita presented many challenges to DPS and the staff of the Governor's Division of Emergency Management. In little more than a month, the state of Texas met the needs of more than 400,000 evacuees from Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama fleeing the destruction of Katrina, plus three million Texans who fled the Gulf Coast in advance of Rita. The massive response was coordinated through the State Operations Center under the direction of Chief **Jack Colley**, the Emergency Management State Coordinator. Chief Colley was awarded the DPS Medal of Merit for his outstanding leadership and personal commitment during the state's response to the two natural disasters.



On Nov. 2, 1979, Tr. **Claude H. Davis Jr.**, was a motorcycle trooper in Houston. As he approached 100 mph in an attempt to overtake a speeding vehicle on IH-10 in Harris County, his motorcycle developed a severe front-end wobble. The motorcycle left the roadway, flipped end-over-end and crashed into the median, where it caught fire and burned. Tr. Davis suffered numerous injuries, including severe head trauma. After four months off duty for surgery, recovery and rehabilitation, Tr. Davis was able to return to full duty. Now a senior trooper, he was awarded the Purple

## **TX Gov. Honors TX First Responders with Star of Texas Award**

<http://www.kten.com/story/5392021/tx-gov-honors-tx-first-responders-with-star-of-texas-award>

Sep 11, 2006 From news release:



AUSTIN - On the 5th anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, Gov. Rick Perry awarded the 2006 Star of Texas Award to 49 first responders for heroic sacrifice in the line of duty.

"September 11th instilled in us all a renewed sense of appreciation for all the men and women who are first upon the scene of tragedy," Perry said. "Today we pay special honor to the 49 men and women who have earned the 2006 Star of Texas Award for heroic sacrifice in the line of duty."

The Star of Texas Award was created by the Texas Legislature in 2003 to honor Texas' first responders. Awards are issued annually for each peace officer, firefighter, and emergency medical first responder who is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty.

"On behalf of 23 million Texans, I offer the salute of a people forever in your debt," Perry said. "As thousands of Texans who have had their prayers answered in their hour of need can testify, every peace officer, every fire fighter and every emergency medical team member has earned our respect and admiration."

"We will never forget the bravery of the Americans who are willing to lay down their lives to save lives," Perry said. "Today, we give thanks for the invaluable service our first responders provide, and we will celebrate the freedom, health, and security they help provide everyday we are blessed to breathe the air of freedom."

He noted that September 11th was the appropriate day to honor seriously injured and fallen first responders.

"On that darkest of days as we saw the most dreadful side of humanity, we found a light of hope in the heroic actions of America's first responders. The images of hundreds of men and women wading upstream through a river of fleeing victims to save those who could not save themselves are forever burned in our nation's conscience."

**2006 STAR OF TEXAS AWARD RECIPIENTS** ([more on site](#))

**Sergeant Denny Floyd Gallaway Jr., San Jacinto County Precinct 2 Constable's Office**

On Sept. 15, 2005, Sergeant Gallway drowned while attempting to rescue a man from the Trinity River.