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Visiting Historic Texas Ranger Graves with Captain Havrda San Antonio, Texas 2003

by Robert Nieman*

Sr. Capt. of the Texas Rangers C.J. Havrda at the Grave Site of Captains . Sam Walker and R.A. Gillespie

In 2003 Robert Nieman and Texas Rangers Sr. Captain C.J. Havrda visited the graves of several of the most notable 19th and 20th century Texas Rangers. They lie in San Antonio's the International Odd Fellows Cemetery, National Cemetery, Mission Park Cemetery and the Confederate States of America Cemetery.

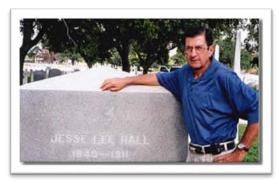




They started at the joined grave of Sam Walker at International Order of Odd Fellows Cemetery. Killed in Mexico during the US-Mexican War of 1846-48 he is perhaps best known for collaborating on the design of the Walker Colt pistol.



Nieman and Capt. Havrda next visited the adjoining National Cemetery and the final resting place of Captain Lee Hall, who succeeded Captain Leander McNelly as commander of the Special Force when he retired due to illness.

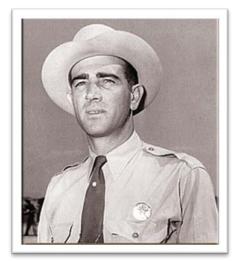


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Bobby and Capt. Havrda finished their visit at the grave of the legendary Captain Johnny Klevenhagen in the Mission Park Cemetery.

At the age of 17 Johnny
Klevenhagen he
applied to become a
motorcycle policeman
and by the age of 18, he
was a criminal
investigator in Bexar
County. He investigated the



famous 'Alligator Man' murders where it was believed that a man was feeding more than stray animals to his pet alligators.

In 1941 he finally joined the Texas Rangers, being assigned to Company A in Houston. He worked many cases including

illegal gambling, organized crime, and bringing down George Parr, the 'Duke of Duval.' Due to his experience with ballistics and fingerprints, he was promoted to Captain in 1957. Thin as a rail and a workaholic, he was described as "living off coffee and cigarettes." He suffered heart attacks in 1957 and 1958 and died at the age of 46. He was inducted into the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame in Waco, Texas.



We were disappointed that we were unable to find the graves of Rip Ford and George Baylor in the Confederate Cemetery, even though we searched through the weeds for more than an hour. The cemetery is not well maintained and many of the monuments are in ruined condition.

*Note: The late Robert "Bobby" Nieman served as volunteer editor of the *Texas Ranger Dispatch* magazine for 10 years and a Board member of the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum. Sr. Capt. Havrda is now retired and participates in retired Texas Rangers activities.

