



SUPPORTING CAST

Frank Hamer, Texas Ranger

by Hans-Christian Vortisch

"One riot, one Ranger."

-- Captain William McDonald

Captain Frank A. Hamer was probably the most famous of the 20th-century Texas Rangers, that old-fashioned law enforcement agency responsible for upholding the law in Texas.

This article provides a ready-to-play *GURPS Fourth Edition* representation of the real man for a Cops, Cliffhangers, or even a late-period Old West campaign. However, it might also be useful for *Call of Cthulhu* and *d20 System* historical settings, or other historical or pulp adventures.

Francis Augustus Hamer, usually called Frank or nicknamed "Pancho," was born on March 17, 1884 in Fairview, Texas. As a youth, he worked in the blacksmithy of his father, and then started working a farm at age 16, together with his brother. They got in an argument with the landowner, during which the man shot Hamer with a shotgun. Hamer could escape, and after having recovered, the boy went straight for the landowner and killed him in a duel.

This was only the first of many shootouts. Throughout his life, Hamer took part in over 50 gunfights and killed at least 20 men and one woman -- "not including Mexicans," as they used to say in those days. It was also far from the last of his many gunshot wounds; he was injured 23 times. When Hamer died, his body was covered with dozens of bullet and knife scars, and he still had some bullets and shot pellets under his skin.

In 1901 Hamer started working as a wrangler on the ranch of Barry Ketchum (brother of Tom "Black Jack" Ketchum, p. OW102), and continued to work as a cowboy for several years, until he helped catching a horse thief in 1906. This earned him a recommendation from the local sheriff to the Rangers.

He was already an accomplished outdoorsman and expert shot with rifle and revolver. In April 1906, he joined Company C of the Texas Rangers, where these skills were much in demand and further honed. He would endlessly practice his aim, and was able to shoot a hole into a silver dollar at 15 yards with his revolver. In addition, he had also learned [Savate](#) (p. MA99) from a French martial artist, and became famous for his kicks to bring down renitent offenders.

Hamer patrolled the South Texas border until 1908, when he resigned to become marshal of Navasota, Texas. In 1911 he left that post as a special officer in Harris County, but in 1915, he rejoined the Rangers. During the troubled period of the late 1910s and early 1920s, the Rangers received much criticism for excessive force and latent racism, but also managed to bring some order to the border area that was plagued by [smuggling](#), bootlegging, and banditry.

Hamer was absolutely fearless, but also without mercy. Neither characteristic necessarily makes for a good policeman, but at the time, they were thought highly of in a man of the law. He was ambushed four times by enemies, and twice left for dead. Hamer eventually caught up with all of his ambushers; none survived.

In 1920 he left the Rangers again for a short spell as a prohibition agent. He soon returned and was made Senior Ranger Captain on January 1, 1922, commanding all Texas Rangers. Hamer moved to Austin, Texas, where he made his permanent home. He had married Gladys Johnson in 1917, and the couple had two sons, Frank Jr. and Billy. As late as the 1920s, the Texas Rangers were mainly concerned with cattle thieves, as well as smugglers

crossing the Rio Grande (the latter's trade soaring with the beginning of the prohibition, the tequileros working 1,000%-profit deals). Many of these criminals were Mexicans, which didn't improve the somewhat slanted outlook the Rangers often had towards anyone who wasn't white.

In 1928, Hamer left the Rangers and became a bounty hunter for the Texas Banker's Association. He was instrumental in exposing murderous police officers (including among the Rangers), who framed and killed innocent people in order to collect a standing reward of \$5,000 for any dead bank robber. Hamer rejoined in 1929, but finally retired from the Rangers in 1933, forestalling being sacked like all other remaining Rangers by controversial Texas Governor Miriam "Ma" Ferguson.

However, in April 1934, he took up a commission to hunt down the infamous Barrow Gang (better known as Bonnie & Clyde) as a special agent for the Texas Highway Patrol. He was paid a measly \$180 a month; asked about this, he commented that "crime doesn't pay, not even for those who fight it." Hamer picked up their [trail](#) in Texarkana, Texas, but always seemed to be a day behind the murderous pair. He traced the gangsters for 102 days through several states, until he finally ambushed them with the help of several other lawmen on a dirttrack in the backwoods of northwest Louisiana on May 23, 1934.

His posse consisted of Officer Murray Gault from the Texas Highway Patrol (also a former Ranger), Dallas County Deputies Bob Alcorn and Ted Hinton (the only two lawmen who knew Bonnie & Clyde by sight), as well as the local officers Sheriff Henderson Jordan from Iverson County and Deputy Prentiss Oakley from Bienville Parish. They set up a camouflaged ambush site opposite a decoy truck on a sideroad in the vicinity of Plain Dealing, Louisiana, and waited more than seven hours in the bushes until the pair drove up in a stolen Ford V8 around 9:10 a.m. Accounts differ whether the outlaws got so much as a call to surrender (at least Hamer, Alcorn, and Hinton had a previous record of shooting first, asking later), but in any case the six officers ventilated the outlaws' car with 167 shots (emptying their shoulder arms and their side arms, and possibly even reloading) before they could do anything. It was instant "death for Bonnie and Clyde."

"I hate to bust the cap on a woman, especially when she was sitting down, however if it wouldn't have been her, it would have been us."

-- Captain Frank Hamer

Hamer became nationally famous overnight and received a citation medal from Congress. During the late 1930s and 1940s Hamer worked for various private companies as a strike-breaker and riot-control agent. He retired in 1949, and died at home on July 10, 1955.

Captain Frank A. Hamer

290 points

6'3", 230 lbs. (SM 0).

ST 13 [30]; DX 13 [60]; IQ 12 [40]; HT 12 [20].

Dmg 1d/2d-1; BL 34 lbs.; HP 12 [0]; Will 14 [4]; Per 12 [0]; FP 12 [0].

Basic Speed 5.75 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0]; Dodge 9*; Parry 9* (Karate).

Social Background

TL 6 [0].

CF 1930s USA [0].

Languages

English (Native) [0].

Advantages

Combat Reflexes [15]

Danger Sense [15]

Fearlessness 5 [10]

Fit [5]

Gunslinger [25]

Weird War

Captain Hamer was a capable law enforcement officer -- but he also thought of himself as a true warrior. In late 1939, he wrote a letter to King George VI of England, offering him his services. He boldly proposed to come to the British Isles with 49 hand-picked ex-Texas Rangers, to defend Britain against the Germans. This troop would probably have included his brothers Estelle, Harrison, and Flavus, all former Rangers like himself.

The King later thanked him kindly for the offer, but the

Hard to Kill 5 [10]
 Legal Enforcement Powers [10]
 Police Rank 3 (Captain, Texas Rangers) [15]
 Reputation (Crimefighter, +2 from honest people/-2 from criminals) [0]
 Status 1 [free from Rank]

Disadvantages

Addiction (Tobacco) [-5]
 Bloodlust [-10]
 Callous [-5]
 Code of Honor (Police) [0]
 Enemies [0 -- they mostly ended up dead]
 Honesty [-10]
 Sense of Duty (Texas) [-10]

Quirks

Careful [-1]
 Chauvinistic [-1]
 Quiet [-1]

Skills

Administration-11 (IQ-1) [1]
 Animal Handling (Equines)-12 (IQ+0) [2]
 Area Knowledge (Texas)-13 (IQ+1) [2]
 Camouflage-11 (IQ-1) [1]
 Criminology/TL6-12 (IQ+0) [2]
 Detect Lies-11 (Per-1) [2]
 Driving/TL6 (Automobile)-13 (DX+0) [2]
 Farming/TL6-11 (IQ-1) [1]
 Fast-Draw (Pistol)-16 (DX+2) [4]*
 Forensics/TL6-10 (IQ-1) [2]
 Guns/TL6 (Machine Gun)-14 (DX+1) [2]
 Guns/TL6 (Pistol)-17 (DX+4) [12]
 Guns/TL6 (Rifle)-15 (DX+2) [4]
 Guns/TL6 (Shotgun)-14 (DX+1) [2]
 Guns/TL6 (SMG)-13 (DX+0) [1]
 Interrogation-12 (IQ+0) [2]
 Intimidation-13 (Will-1) [1]
 Karate-11 (DX-2) [1]
 Lasso-12 (DX-1) [1]
 Law (U.S. Police)-12 (IQ+0) [2]
 Leadership-13 (IQ+1) [4]
 Naturalist-11 (IQ-1) [2]
 Navigation/TL6 (Land)-11 (IQ-1) [1]
 Observation-12 (Per+0) [2]
 Packing-11 (IQ-1) [1]
 Riding (Horse)-13 (DX+0) [2]
 Shadowing-11 (IQ-1) [1]
 Smith/TL6-11 (IQ-1) [1]
 Stealth-12 (DX-1) [1]
 Streetwise-12 (IQ+0) [2]
 Survival (Desert)-12 (Per+0) [2]
 Teamster-11 (IQ-1) [1]
 Tracking-12 (Per+0) [2]

U.S. government would not hear anything of it -- at the time, the USA was still officially neutral.

Realistically, it is unlikely that 50 aging policemen (Hamer himself was 55 years old at the time), however capable, would have made much difference in the Battle of Britain (pp. W17, W:AKM23-24) or the threatened German invasion (pp. W17, W:IC13, and W:WW7). Nonetheless, an alternate history campaign might see larger-than-life Texas Rangers rallying the King's men around them, triumphing against Nazi hordes, and ultimately changing history . . .

He also might have joined forces with other former police men such as William [Fairbairn](#) as instructors of special ops troops.

Techniques

Back Kick-8 [2]
Kicking-10 [2]
Knee Kick-11 [1]

* +1 from Combat Reflexes

Description

Hamer was a tall, fit man, perpetually tanned and with brown hair and blue eyes. Like most rural American police officers of the early 20th century, he was always dressed in cowboy boots, dark trousers, white shirt, dark tie, and dark jacket, topped with a wide-brimmed hat and a cigarette between his lips.

For most of his career, Hamer carried an engraved .45 Colt M1873 SAA revolver with 4.75" barrel (pp. HT110, OW86, W:D71) called "Old Lucky," either in a holster on his right side, or, when he was no longer required to ride a horse, simply tucked into his waistband. When expecting a gunfight, he also took a .44 S&W Hand-Ejector revolver with 6.5" barrel for backup. His favorite longarm was a .30-30 Winchester M1894 lever-action rifle (p. HT114).

However, for the hunt on Bonnie & Clyde, he replaced the S&W revolver with a .38 Colt Super Auto pistol (pp. HT108, W:D71) and the lever-action rifle with a .35 [Remington Model 8](#) semiautomatic rifle (p. W:D72) with 20-round magazine extension (both weapons offering superior penetration against bullet-proof vests and the heavy Ford V8 sedans Clyde Barrow was partial to).

Hamer also owned many other guns. When the posse assembled in a hurry in a Louisiana hinterwald small town, three of the men could not bring their own long arms, and were outfitted from Hamer's personal rolling arsenal -- Gault got Hamer's .25 Remington Model 8 semiautomatic rifle, Alcorn his .30-30 Winchester M1894 carbine, and Hinton his .30-06 [Colt R80 Monitor](#) machine rifle (a variant of the M1918 BAR, pp. HT114, W:HS21, which was the chosen armament of the outlaws).

Hamer's Weapons

Revolvers

Guns/TL (Pistols) (DX-4 or most other Guns at -2)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl	Cost	LC
5	Colt M1873 SAA, .45 Long Colt S&W .44	2d+1 pi+	2	190/1,900	2.6/0.3	1	6(5i)	11	-2	4	\$240	3
6	Hand Ejector, .44 Special	2d+1 pi+	2	200/2,100	2.8/0.3	3	6(3i)	11	-2	4	\$310	3

Semiautomatic Pistols

Guns/TL (Pistols) (DX-4 or most other Guns at -2)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl	Cost	LC
6	Colt Super Auto, .38 Super Auto 3d-2 pi	2	180/1,900	2.8/0.4	3	9+1(3)	9	-2	3	\$300	3	

Rifles

Guns (Rifle) (DX-4 or most other Guns at -2)

TL	Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl	Cost	LC
6	Remington Model 8, .35	5d+2 pi	5	800/3,500	9.3/1.1	3	20(3i)	10†	-5	4	\$560	3

	Remington												
	Winchester												
6	M1894,	6d pi	5	900/3,700	7.2/0.3	2	5+1(3i)	10†	-5	4	\$290	3	
	.30-30												
	Winchester												

Light Machine Guns**Guns/TL (Machine Gun) (DX-4 or most other Guns at -2)**

TL	Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl	Cost	LC
	Colt R80											
6	Monitor,	7d-1 pi	5	1,000/4,200	17.8/1.6	9	20(3)	10†	-5	2	\$870	2
	.30-06											
	Springfield											

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