

# TEXSAR DISPATCH



TEXSAR DISPATCH is dedicated to sharing the mission and passion of TEXSAR, as well as insight into its people.

**December 2025**

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From the TEXSAR family to you and yours: Have a happy holiday, Merry Christmas and time of quiet and peace.

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## From the CEO



This past year has been transformative for TEXSAR and I would love to share the exciting vision we have for the future. I look forward to sharing details in the near future.

As we wrap up 2025, it is important to pause and not get ahead of ourselves as an organization and as individuals. The holiday season is a time of reflection and appreciation, of slowing down to spend time with family and loved ones. Too often we rush through the holidays and all the busyness involved with them, and neglect to pause.

My message to you today is simple: Thank you. John F. Kennedy said, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." The commitment of everyone that is part of TEXSAR is to show our appreciation for our partners and donors, friends and community members, and colleagues in the search-and-rescue space, by our actions and not just our words. Our thanks and gratitude is shared in our work as "Texans helping Texans with service above self."

From the TEXSAR family to yours, have a joyful, Merry Christmas, happy holidays and a great New Year.

- Justin McInnis

# News and Announcements

## BeforeDuringAfter In the News

BeforeDuringAfter is TEXSAR's online resource to help small businesses prepare for and respond to disasters and emergencies. More information about the program, and its sponsors and partners can be found [here](#).

- On December 10, Justen Noakes, Executive Director of BeforeDuringAfter will present as part of Texas Rural Funders' online event titled "Investing in Resilience: How Funders and Leaders Can Plan Ahead & Support Small Businesses in Disasters." Registration information can be found [here](#).
- IBM cited BeforeDuringAfter in a case study about community resilience. More information on the case study can be found [here](#).
- BeforeDuringAfter was named the Consumer Product of the Year by the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce Business Awards!

## Gratitude book

Thank you to everyone who supported our response to the Texas Hill Country Floods in July. Thousands of people provided financial, emotional and moral support, as well as donations of equipment and supplies, and we are grateful and humbled by the outpouring of support. We share this [book of gratitude](#) as a small token of our appreciation for all who made our work possible.

## Receipts for 2025

This past year will forever be remembered in TEXSAR's development as a resource for Texas. It would not have been possible without your support during the year. It is because of that support that TEXSAR can provide its services for free.

The level of support that we received, particularly related to the July 4<sup>th</sup> floods, was humbling and extensive. We will be sending out a year-end summary in January via email or postal mail to all donors who made donations to TEXSAR in 2025.

Your support enabled us to respond to more than 240 missions, commit more than 63,000 hours in service and training with a value of more than \$2.1 million, enhance our capabilities with equipment and assets, and provide extensive support to our members to maximize their effectiveness and their safety.

If you would like your receipt emailed to you, please contact [donations@texsar.org](mailto:donations@texsar.org) with your preferred email address and phone number so we can adjust your records accordingly.



## Member Minute

*Taking a moment to get to know TEXSAR members provides you the opportunity to understand those who proudly provide “service above self as Texans helping Texans,” the TEXSAR volunteers.*



Kelly Korb came from Wisconsin to Texas via Arizona and Nevada by horse. Not exactly, but it was her lifelong love of horses that was important to her childhood, career and her post-retirement involvement with TEXSAR. She joined TEXSAR in 2024 after retiring in 2015 from a 28-year career with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department where she was a co-founder of their Mounted Unit.

Kelly entered law enforcement immediately after graduating from University of Nevada – Las Vegas with a degree in criminal justice administration. Her call to service and work were instilled in her by her father who was a U.S. Army MP stationed in Germany. A life of rigor and responsibility framed what she sought after retirement.

“I retired, but I felt the call to serve and believed that I had the skills and physical abilities to contribute. I wanted to help people and felt I still had something to offer. TEXSAR checked all the boxes by giving me an avenue to work at my own pace, yet required a high level of training. I wanted to work in an environment with professional standards and accountability because that is what I was accustomed to, and I found it with TEXSAR. I often tell my spouse that I have truly found ‘my people’.”

Her enthusiasm when talking about TEXSAR is palpable and her love of both people and horses is unmistakable.

“Horses have great senses of sight, hearing and smell. Though not like that of a K9, they are far beyond a human’s ability. They communicate when they pick up a strange scent or see something unusual or hear a noise. Horses don’t just make it easier for the responder to get around, they are partners in the work and they provide us a higher-angle view as we search for things,” she said.

It is her love of people that drives Kelly, those she works with and those she serves. She is still moved by the story of a couple she encountered after Hurricane Katrina when she was part of a patrol on the lookout for looters. The couple was looking at a slab that once had their house on it. They shared a photo of their house and then expressed their gratitude for Kelly and other volunteers who were there to help.

“Amidst their personal devastation, they were thankful to the volunteers,” Kelly said.

“I feel privileged and very fortunate to work around like-minded people, and feel blessed to be a member of TEXSAR,” Kelly said.



## Development Corner

What do you give to someone who has everything? How about a tribute gift to TEXSAR in their honor? You can make your donation [here](#). We will notify them of your tribute.

Please also consider becoming a member of our Service Above Self monthly giving family. The two suggested donation amounts reflect TEXSAR's ability to serve in all 254 counties in Texas. You can learn more [here](#) about the program and the special thank you gift you'll receive.

DONOR LEVEL BENEFITS:	LONE STAR \$24.50 + PER MONTH	SILVER SPUR \$254 + PER MONTH
LISTED ON SAS WEB PAGE	INCLUDED	INCLUDED
LISTED IN ANNUAL REPORT	INCLUDED	INCLUDED
EXCLUSIVE DONOR GIFT: TEXSAR HAT		
EXCLUSIVE DONOR GIFT: TEXSAR DUFFEL		

Donor gifts will be shipped upon receipt of third monthly payment.

## Safety in an Unpredictable World:

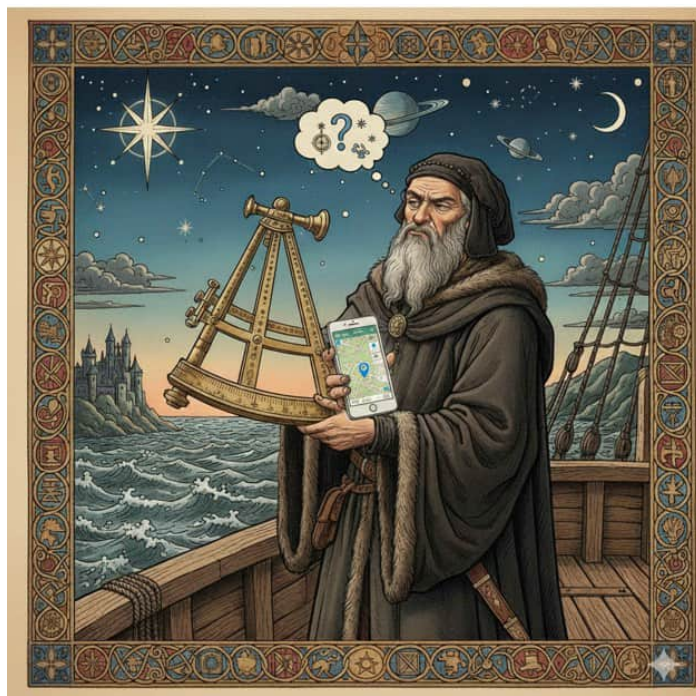
### *Navigation basics: part one*

*By Jamie Going, SAR Responder-Advanced, TEXSAR Membership Committee Chair*

In today's world, nearly every person has a device in their pocket that can think for us. We may ask it to calculate a tip at a restaurant, give us recommendations on which snake gaiters to buy, and determine which route we should take to get from A to B. The technology is incredible. Take a moment to appreciate that there are actually satellites orbiting the earth, communicating with this tiny device that we all have, which then tells us where we are and where to go. But even the greatest technologies are not without their flaws, and if we rely too heavily on them, we may find ourselves out of luck.

It's easy to wonder how on earth people navigated in a time before phones and GPS, and yet, they did it, and some of those skills are still valuable today. Compasses, for example, are around 2000 years old. Why would we use technology that old when every new version of an iPhone is out of date 5 minutes after it was released? The answer is simplicity and redundancy. Using a phone to navigate is convenient and accurate, but what happens when the battery dies? Do you have a USB battery backup? Did you remember to charge the backup? Did you bring the correct charging cable? What happens if you drop it, or if it gets wet, or if the screen cracks to the point where it's unusable? What if the app you're trying to use to navigate won't open until you update it, and you don't have enough cell reception to do so?

One of the more important land navigation skills you can practice doesn't actually involve any tools or technology at all. It's simply about being aware of your surroundings and creating a mental map in your head. There's a mountain top over to the left, and halfway between that

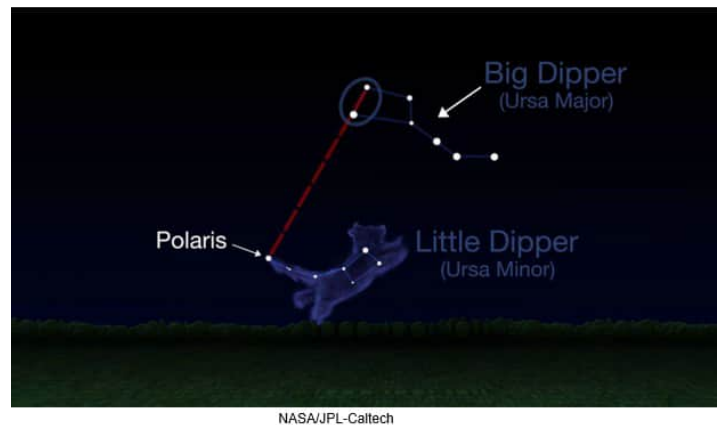




and the mountain top to the right is a dry wash. Maybe a half mile up the wash there's a trail visible that leads up to a split in the trail just above a collection of 3 large trees by themselves, and if you were to take the trail to the left it would lead you towards the mountain to the left. Remember that. Picture it in your head. Will you remember it when you reach that trail junction? If you turn around, or even turn around a few times, can you look at your surroundings and remember where things were in relation to each other? Would you remember how to do the whole thing backwards if you had to come back the same way? Whenever reaching trail junctions, it's not a bad idea to turn the way you intend to go, but then turn around and look at that intersection from the point of view you'd have when coming back. That way you know exactly what to look for so you don't miss that turn.

Looking around you and knowing your surroundings can be an important way to eventually let someone else know where you are. Take the following challenge. At any given point throughout your day, ask yourself how you would describe your location just using common language. Use your situational awareness to keep a mental tab on what things you've seen recently. Maybe you're driving and you're roughly a mile and a half past Exit 217 on I-35 headed North, or maybe you're on the east side of the intersection of Pflugerville Parkway and Dessau. Modern 911 call centers are able to pinpoint the location of a caller just by using the data that travels through their phone and cell towers. But what if you're trying to quickly give your location to someone who doesn't have the ability to do that? Would you be able to give a better description than "I'm by the tree"? Are you able to do it quickly if there's a chance your phone may go dead, or be taken away from you?

Navigating by the stars is not completely far-fetched and doesn't have to be overly complicated. While conducting line searches at night, we have actually used certain constellations as guides, keeping us going in a back and forth direction as straight as possible. Every time we'd pivot and do a sweep of our line search, we'd find Orion's belt which is very easy to spot, and just head in that direction. We'd pivot



again, and find another constellation to keep as our target. If you did want to know where North was by the stars, you'd look for the Little Dipper, and the last star of the handle is the North star, named Polaris. The scoop of the Big Dipper also forms a line pointing you directly to the North star.

*Be sure to check the January 2026 issue for part two, Using Maps.*

## MPU Updates

*By Patrick Turck, Director of TEXSAR Missing Persons Unit*

First off, happy Thanksgiving to everybody! We've all been very busy so take this time to enjoy the day with your family and friends!

The MPU has been very busy with a couple of missing persons and some cold case homicides that we are working with the Texas Rangers. We are working on expanding our unit by adding four volunteer Investigators, one for each region, and the addition of a paid Investigator at the first of the year. These new positions will allow us to work up to six cold case homicides at a time and hopefully bring resolution to some families. We will also be able to increase our capabilities to network with law-enforcement agencies and continue to build those relationships.

On Halloween, we were deployed to Burleson County to look for a man who was missing for a little over two

weeks. Leadership did a phenomenal job in putting together a search plan and conducting the necessary follow up to gather additional details. The remains of the individual were located and he was returned to his family for proper burial. The attention to detail and professionalism of the search team was the main reason for the recovery.

The TEXSAR MPU supported Jasper County officials where a 96 year-old man wandered away from his residence. After a two day search, he was found alive in the woods, although suffering from

dehydration. The TEXSAR team was instrumental in providing on scene medical assistance, as well as facilitating the extraction from the woods to an ambulance nearly a mile away where he was reunited with his family, who were very appreciative of our efforts. Great job to all involved!

December is already shaping up to be a busy month, with three potential searches on the horizon. We're proud and grateful for the volunteers who continue to show up for every call.



*One of the distinguishing elements of TEXSAR is the level of training that members commit to. This class about Lost Person Behavior provides members with knowledge and insights that will come into play when they serve on cases involving missing persons. Members currently hold 5,200 certifications in a range of more than 145 different specialty areas. It is this commitment to training that makes TEXSAR a key partner to local, state, regional and national partners.*





*Clockwise from bottom left:*  
This re-creation of a briefing before a mission was part of our new video being produced for 2026.

TEXSAR reps enjoyed meeting new friends at the recent Helicopters for Heroes golf tournament.

Another view of the video production. Keep an eye out for the finished product!

Members pause during Swiftwater Rescue Tech training.





*Clockwise from bottom left:*  
 Wilderness Search and Rescue training is required of all members. TEXSAR representatives gathered to join the Lost Creek Dad's Club Chili Cook-off. The Club is a long-time supporter of TEXSAR. Members train in Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) operations. TEXSAR members join the Kemah Sidewalk Salute to Veterans and First Responders.





## Important Links: Stay in Touch!

[Become a Member](#)

[Donate today!](#)

[Service Above Self Monthly Donor program](#)

Social Media: [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [X](#), [YouTube](#)

[20 Years, 20 stories: TEXSAR's 20th Anniversary Celebrated Through Stories of Its Members](#)

["TEXSAR Never Stops" video](#)

**[www.TEXSAR.org](http://www.TEXSAR.org)**

**9TH ANNUAL  
TEXSAR  
MEMORIAL CLAY SHOOT**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**SATURDAY 28<sup>TH</sup>  
MARCH 2026**

**HOG HEAVEN  
DRIPPING SPRINGS, TX**

**TEXSAR**  
40 YEARS OF RESCUE  
WILDLAND FIRE • SEARCH & RESCUE • FLOOD & SNOWWATER RESCUE  
DISASTER RESPONSE & RELIEF

**MORE INFO AVAILABLE AT: [WWW.TEXSAR.ORG/CLAYSHOOT](http://WWW.TEXSAR.ORG/CLAYSHOOT)**