

# TEXSAR

# DISPATCH



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

**April 2026**

**In this month's issue**

**2...From the CEO:** Celebrating our members' outstanding work

**3...News and Announcements:** Highlights and good news

**4...Spotlight on Supporter:** SwellPro helping our drone program

**4...Development Corner:** "I made that possible?" Yes, you did.

**5...MPU Update:** "Trained to Respond. Committed to Bring Them Home."

**6...Partner Perspective:** Galveston Bay Foundation

**7...Insights on Service:** The DNA of TEXSAR

**8-9...Gallery**

**Back Cover...Key Links:** Follow us and stay engaged

April is National Volunteer Month. TEXSAR's dedicated volunteers, including K9s and Mounted, epitomize selfless service. Thank you to all TEXSAR volunteers.

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## From the CEO



April is National Volunteer Month. TEXSAR could not serve in the various capacities that it does if not for our member volunteers. Their level of training and tremendous commitment of time, energy and personal resources differentiates them from many types of volunteers.

The role of volunteers in improving our communities is essential. While we salute and honor the approximately 700 volunteers who comprise TEXSAR, we honor volunteers from all organizations for their generosity of time and talent to make the world a better place. Thank you, everyone.

Our [annual report](#) for 2025 is now available for review. I encourage you to do so. It reveals in facts, figures and stories the incredible year that TEXSAR experienced, including, of course, our response to the July floods. Reviewing the document provides a powerful perspective on the importance of volunteers, as well as for those who support their work, including family members, donors and those who invest their time, energy and resources in TEXSAR's future.

One way that people support TEXSAR is by having fun with us. On March 28, our 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Memorial Clay Shoot was held at Hog Heaven Sporting Club in Dripping Springs. We had a sold-out event. It was great to meet and mingle with those who comprise the TEXSAR family – members, donors, staff and friends. It is not too early to put September 19, 2026 on your calendar; that is our next Search Party, our premier fund-raising event.

Thank you, again, to all volunteers and their families and friends who make their work possible.

- Justin McInnis

# News and Announcements

## National Volunteer Month

April is National Volunteer Month. TEXSAR's lifeblood is the members who selflessly commit their time and talent in service to others. In 2025, their volunteer hours were valued at \$2.4 million. To the agencies our members serve, to the families who were provided answers by the work of our members, and to the communities assisted...the value was priceless. Thanks also to the families and friends whose support strengthens, empowers, and encourages our volunteers as they take on the challenging work of serving thousands.



## Phoenix LiDAR Systems Collaborates on Proof-of-Concept tests

TEXSAR is working on a proof-of-concept, using a Phoenix LiDAR RECON-XT system for UAV-based aerial search operations. More details and information can be found at the company's LinkedIn [post](#) about the collaboration.

## 2025 Annual Report: We could not have done it without you

TEXSAR had a challenging year, outpacing all expectations and goals in terms of the number of missions, the level of support received, the number of agencies served and the increase in membership. While the July floods in Central Texas played a significant role in what became a transformative year for TEXSAR, our members served across Texas and beyond in a wide variety of missions ranging from imminent need to decades-old cold cases. None of this would be possible with the dedication of our members and the support of our sponsors and donors, as well as the privilege of serving requesting agencies and critical infrastructure partners. The successes of 2025 become the responsibilities of 2026 to continue earning the trust of our partners and supporters every day. It is our pleasure to share this [annual report](#) with you.



## Spotlight on Supporters



As TEXSAR's technological developments capture the attention of many, new supporters step up to help continue the progress. Progress with TEXSAR means progress for the search-and-rescue community because lessons learned here and tools developed are offered to the community at no charge.

TEXSAR's drone capabilities have grown dramatically with the expansion of its UAV fleet, as well as the continued development of its Automated Drone Image Analysis Tool ([ADIAT](#)).

A new supporter of this wave of technological improvements is SwellPro, a maker of waterproof drones. While their drones are well known in the fishing realm where they can take bait out further than the fisherman can cast, or get a bird's eye view of fish movements, the ability to carry lightweight cargo in wet conditions is now being tested with TEXSAR.

According to Charlie Grove, TEXSAR's volunteer Director of Technology, "As we expand our fleet of UAVs, we are constantly looking for ways to use them on our missions in creative ways that they are particularly adept at. We saw potential with water rescue situations, and SwellPro agreed to partner with us for testing the concept."

SwellPro's representative, Jenny, said, "TEXSAR is an outstanding local nonprofit search and rescue organization, and it's truly an honor that they chose SwellPro. What attracted us most is first, their nonprofit mission, which is very important to us. Second, their extensive experience in large-scale rescue operations, with strong capabilities in both land and water rescue. Lastly, their active involvement in community initiatives — they shared a number of events they plan to participate in throughout 2026, which is very impressive."

"Through this partnership, we hope to gain meaningful exposure within the local rescue market and help more people understand the unique value of SwellPro's waterproof drones in rescue scenarios. Whether in land operations, harsh weather conditions, or marine rescues, our drones are built to perform reliably," she added.

Charlie said the partnership makes practical sense. "SwellPro and TEXSAR are both playing to their strengths with this collaboration. We expect positive results, that will prove to be a benefit to both organizations, but to the search-and-rescue community, too."

Jenny added, "Compared to other organizations, TEXSAR stands out for its strong community presence, nonprofit mission, and hands-on operational experience. We believe this partnership is not only about supporting rescue efforts, but also about growing together — helping more rescue professionals discover how drone technology can enhance their capabilities."

## Development Corner

### **"I made that possible?" Yes, you did.**

The 2025 [annual report](#) is more than a documentation of what the year looked like for TEXSAR. It is a mirror for all those who helped make the work possible because of their support that enabled our professionally trained volunteers to serve as "Texans helping Texans." If you were one of those supporters, thank you. You made our work possible.

TEXSAR served across the state in a myriad of conditions for a variety of needs, ranging from the July floods that required immediate and sustained efforts, to tackling cold cases and bringing answers to families and law enforcement for people who had been lost for decades. The value of their 269 missions to individuals, families, agencies and partners is priceless.

Yes, you made all that possible. Thank you.

For more information about how to support TEXSAR, please contact [Dion.McInnis@TEXSAR.org](mailto:Dion.McInnis@TEXSAR.org).

# MPU Updates

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

## MPU Expansion & Growth

We are proud to announce a significant expansion of the Missing Persons Unit. As our mission continues to grow, so does our ability to support law enforcement and the communities we serve.

We are pleased to welcome three new (volunteer) investigators to the team:

- **Greg P.** – South Central Division
- **Scott M.** – Gulf Coast Division
- **George R.** – North Texas Division

These volunteer investigators were vetted through a formal application process, while meeting significant requirements including but not limited to 10 years or more of professional law enforcement based investigative experience. They are retired professionals, coming from federal and local agencies.

In addition, **Madeline P.** will be joining the unit as our new analyst. This addition will significantly enhance our operational capabilities and allow us to better support law enforcement agencies with investigative resources. Each of these investigators will soon be assigned cold cases, further strengthening our ability to provide meaningful, case-specific support in the near future.

## Operational Highlights

TEXSAR MPU resources were involved in **14 of the 52 missions** conducted by TEXSAR during the month of March.

### Houston Area

TEXSAR assisted local law enforcement in two separate searches: one for a missing girl with autism and another for an elderly man with dementia. TEXSAR supported both missions through to completion. We are grateful that the elderly man was able to return safely to his family. Our deepest sympathies are extended to the family and friends of

the young girl.

### West Texas

During the search for a missing man, TEXSAR provided law enforcement with Lost Person Behavior information and strategic guidance that helped lead the agency to the missing person.

### Central Texas

TEXSAR was called upon to assist in the recovery of a drowning victim. A specialized team responded and deployed side-scan sonar and drone assets to support search operations. The victim was located in approximately 40 feet of water.

### Homicide Investigators of Texas Conference – San Antonio:

TEXSAR representatives attended the conference and established valuable professional connections that will support future collaboration and mission success.

The Missing Persons Unit would like to extend its sincere appreciation to all TEXSAR volunteers. Your unwavering commitment to the mission and dedication to service are the foundation of everything we accomplish.

Your efforts continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

### Every search matters. Every life matters.

We remain committed to supporting law enforcement, advancing our capabilities, and never stopping the search.



TEXSAR members train in various skills related to missing person cases, ranging from search methods and lost person behaviors to the use of drones.

## Partner Perspective

“We are all more connected to Galveston Bay than we know,” said Elisa O’Neal, Volunteer Manager for Galveston Bay



Foundation (GBF). She said that about one-half of Texas comprises the watershed for the Greater Galveston Bay, which includes 600 square miles itself.

Similarly, TEXSAR feels connected to the entirety of Texas, and beyond. As a member of the community, TEXSAR shares the desire of many other organizations to serve for the betterment of local communities. For the past few years, TEXSAR has supported an important project of Galveston Bay Foundation: crab trap cleanup.

Elisa explained the project. “By law, crab traps in Texas bays must be removed for a designated ten-day period. During that time, derelict traps that are abandoned can be removed. They can be removed by anyone, not just through campaigns like ours,” she said. “The traps are then crushed so they can’t be used anymore. Abandoned traps are hazardous to people and boats, not to mention the fish and crabs that die in the traps.”

She said great progress has been made thanks to organizations and education. “When we first started this project, there were several hundred traps removed. Now it is about 100. Trappers are learning and we have more people who help out. It is one thing to remove traps near the shore, but it is a different challenge for those out in the water. That is where groups like TEXSAR come in with their focus on safety, willingness to serve, and excellent boat skills. I love TEXSAR!”

Other skills are valuable, too. “I was so excited when one of your members was able to provide me with a GPS map of where they found crab traps,” Elisa said.

She explained that there are possible collaborations involving other technology, such as the use of drones.

TEXSAR collaborates with Galveston Bay Foundation’s efforts in the city of Anahuac. Elisa said it is a great team effort of GBF, the city, and many volunteers. It takes a lot of time and energy because the Galveston Bay complex is the seventh-largest estuary in the country.

“I grew up in the era of the ‘Don’t Mess With Texas’ campaign, and I loved it,” Elisa said. In fact, a few days after this interview, she was leading an event of about 600 volunteers to help clean up the land and water surrounding Armand Bayou at Bay Area Park, the last unchannelized Bayou of the Houston region, as a part of the 32<sup>nd</sup> annual [Trash Bash](#) event, the largest one day cleanup of Houston and Galveston area waterways.

Protecting the environment, like the community, requires a team approach. TEXSAR is proud to partner with a variety of organizations, according to Shannon Smith, Director of Communications and Outreach. “Our members and our organizational culture are about helping when and where we can. While we may be best known for responding to emergencies or for helping with missing persons cases, we are members of the communities of which we are a part, and we appreciate the opportunity to serve. While it is good for our members and our equipment, it is more important that we can partner with great organizations like Galveston Bay Foundation and their important work.”

Justin McInnis, President and CEO of TEXSAR stated, “We have an organizational commitment to the community because it is the right thing to do. We are invited to serve alongside law enforcement and other agencies, and we are committed to assist communities in additional ways, too. That is what it means to TEXSAR to be part of communities.”

*For more information about Galveston Bay Foundation, its programs, and to join in their efforts, check out their [website](#).*

***As part of the re-branding process that is mentioned in our annual report and the January 2026 issue of TEXSAR Dispatch, various surveys, conversations and focus groups have been used to understand the culture and heart of TEXSAR. “Service” regularly appears in every phase of the process. In that spirit, we pause and reflect on some insights about service from over the years.***

*“I don’t know what our destiny will be, but one thing I do know:  
the only ones among you who will be really happy  
are those who have sought and found how to serve.”*

*Albert Schweitzer*

*“The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena,  
whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood...”*

*Theodore Roosevelt*

*“Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve.”*

*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens  
can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”*

*Margaret Mead*

*“Love has to be put into action and that action is service.”*

*Mother Theresa*



Our 9th Annual Memorial Clay Shot was a sold-out event and proved to be our most successful clay shoot ever. Thank you to all who made that success possible!

Clockwise from top left:

- Thank you, Jalen Kisner and Briggs Equipment—New Braunfels! Jalen speaks to the attendees before the fun began. Briggs Equipment was the event’s Presenting Sponsor.
- First Place Team: Spaw Glass
- TEXSAR volunteers helped manage each of the stations. Involvement with events helps TEXSAR members build camaraderie and connections with each other, which is critical when the time comes to serve on missions.
- TEXSAR Board Chairman, Andrew Tull, greets attendees.



Thank you, everyone. We hope to see you in 2027!



Clockwise from above:

- Patrick Turck, Director of Missing Persons Unit, presents at the Alamo Area Council Wide Campout in Hunt, TX.
- TEXSAR supported Buffalo Bayou Regatta event in Houston.
- TEXSAR members shared with more than 500 Scouts at the Alamo Area Council Wide Campout in Hunt, TX.
- TEXSAR members at Wilderness Search and Rescue (WSAR) training.
- TEXSAR members learn line search methods at WSAR class.



# 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](#)

["Ready for the Call" video](#)

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



THANK YOU SPONSORS, ATTENDEES, AND SUPPORTERS FOR MAKING THIS THE BEST ONE YET!