

## **History of the Texas Medical Rangers Texas State Guard Medical Reserve Corps Tracing the Lineage for the Texas Medical Rangers**

The Medical Reserve Corps of the State of Texas is unique because it is part of the Military Forces of the State of Texas. The Texas MRC, known as the Texas Medical Rangers, addresses the need, evident since September 11, 2001, to protect our homeland, when called by the Governor of the State. They will augment federal, state, and local health authorities, in a disciplined and efficient manner, providing expertise and services of the highest quality, and will be fully integrated into disaster plans, serving their communities, and fostering the tradition of "Texans serving Texans." They will manage Alternate Treatment Facilities, serve in Medical Response Teams, staff Texas Department of State Health Services Call Centers, and assist with local breakdown/delivery of the Strategic National Stockpile.

Texas has a military history that began in the 1700s with the *Companias Volantes* (Ranging Companies) of New Spain. They were small contingents of mounted men that protected the population of its Northern provinces. The State of Coahuila-Texas was created when New Spain became the Republic of Mexico. Section Five of its constitution ordered that "In all the towns of the State there shall be established corps of civic militia and these shall constitute the military force of the same."

Texas became independent from Mexico in 1836 and one of the United States in 1845. Having a state militia was familiar to the men and women who fought for its independence since the majority came from a nation in whose revolutionary war the militias had played a most significant role, even before it had a regular army. When its constitution was written, Section Six stated that "The Governor shall be Commander-in-chief of the army and navy of this State and of the militia except when they shall be called into the service of the United States."

The State of Texas has had an organized militia since 1941 when the Texas State Guard was created to operate alongside the Texas Army and Air National Guards. The Texas Medical Rangers were organized as part of the State Guard when Governor Perry, in a January 2003, addressed a letter to Major General Wayne Marty, Adjutant General, directing the establishment of a Medical Reserve Corps and that its first unit be located at the University of Texas Health Science Center-San Antonio. The Adjutant General activated the unit in February 2003. An inaugural ceremony was held in March 2003 with Major General Harold Timboe, M.D. appointed as Commander. Regional Groups have been established at San Antonio, Dallas-Fort Worth, each covering a multi-county region. A regional group for the Houston area and another for West Texas were established in April 2004 and for Central Texas in May 2004. Units are also being developed in north and central Texas.

In November, 2005, the Texas Medical Rangers moved into a new era with the Change-of-Command ceremony at Camp Mabry in Austin whereby Major General Timboe passed the Command to Brigadier General Marshall Scantlin, the former Deputy Commander. In a seamless transition, both Generals moved into expanding roles associated with the evolution of the Texas State Guard and Texas Medical Rangers.

### **FAQ's - Texas Medical Rangers**

**Q. What is the organization's formal name and status?**

**A. Texas Medical Rangers, also known as the Texas State Guard Medical Reserve Corps, are an element of the Texas Military Forces serving under the Adjutant General of the State of Texas and at the discretion of the Texas Governor. The organization is divided into the North Command (Deputy Commander, Colonel Greenstone) and South Command (Deputy Commander, Colonel Bauer).**

**Q. If I am accepted as a member of the Texas Medical Rangers, what time commitment do I incur?**

**A. Members of the Texas State Guard commit to a minimum of 4 hours of assignment-related training each month, plus a minimum of 3 days for Annual Training, often during a single long weekend. Texas Medical Rangers may count their participation in unit-approved Homeland Security (HS) courses or classes toward their minimum monthly training requirement. Members who participate in unit-approved HS exercises in their capacity as members of the Texas State Guard Medical Reserve Corps may credit their exercise hours toward their 24 hours of required Annual Training time.**

**Q. Do I receive pay for my service as a Texas Medical Ranger volunteer in the Texas State Guard?**

**A. Rangers do not receive pay for training exercises or non-emergency community service events. However, when called to active duty at the discretion of the Texas Governor, Rangers receive per diem pay and certain pre-determined expenses are reimbursed.**

- Q. As a Texas Medical Ranger, am I a member of the United States Armed Forces by association? Am I subject to federal mobilization?**
- A. No. Members of the Texas State Guard are NOT subject to federal mobilization and are NOT members of the U.S. Armed Forces. However, the Governor of the State of Texas may order members of the Texas State Guard to State Active Duty status, typically assigning them to locations near where they live. While on State Active Duty status, members of the Texas Medical Rangers may work side by side with a variety of people, including volunteers from the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, soldiers and airmen of the Texas National Guard, federal military units, and local civilian emergency responders.**
- Q. If I am currently in the Armed Forces Reserves or am a military retiree, may I join the Texas Medical Rangers? Would my membership impact my retirement status or pay?**
- A. Military service members currently in the active or reserve forces of the United States already have a federal military appointment and are not eligible to join the Texas Medical Rangers. Retirees of any military branch or armed service may apply for membership in the Texas Medical Rangers (TMR). If they are currently drawing retirement pay, membership in the TMR does not impact their retiree status or their federal service credit.**
- Q. Do Texas Medical Rangers wear military uniforms during training exercises and while on assignment?**
- A. Yes. The Battle Dress Uniform (BDU) is the primary uniform. Obtaining and maintaining the uniform is the members' responsibility. For people newly assigned to the Texas Medical Rangers, a reasonable amount of time will be allowed to obtain the prescribed uniform and tailor it with appropriate patches and nametags, under the supervision of the unit Command Sergeant Major or senior NCO. In most cases, depending upon the nature of your training, your unit leader may require that you wear the BDU according to Texas State Guard regulations. However, for some creditable monthly training, it may be more appropriate to dress in business casual or even casual clothing. Your unit leader will make this determination and notify you. Typically, duty performed during Annual Training requires the wearing of the BDU. Likewise, if ordered to State Active Duty, the dress standard is to wear the BDU, unless directed otherwise by the first General Officer in the Texas State Guard chain of command.**
- Q. As a member of the Texas Medical Rangers, what opportunities for service might I be involved in?**
- A1. For health professionals (practicing, retired or in health professions -student or resident status), you can become a member of an emergency medical response team that trains to provide auxiliary (i.e., "surge") assistance for public health authorities. Texas Medical Rangers in the health professions field are most likely to be assigned to alternate treatment/prophylaxis sites, NOT to operational hospitals or clinics. Possible health professions field assignments may include:**
- Administering mass prophylaxis (e.g., vaccinations or emergency medications);
  - Providing mass triage assistance, overseeing informed consent orientations, and providing basic life-preserving primary care;
  - Assisting and advising public health authorities in surveillance activities by collecting and evaluating relevant data about patient symptoms and conditions;
  - Serving as officers-in-charge or deputies for alternate treatment sites and Call Centers.
- A2. For other-than health professionals, you have many ways to serve administratively and logistically, as a highly valued member of the health support field:**
- Record keeping to track patient treatment(s) and conditions;
  - Writing copy and Web-posting for public information and training offices;
  - Arranging speakers for training sessions and managing HS exercises;
  - Serving in Call Centers to answer the public's health questions and make appropriate referrals;
  - Provide logistical assistance as a team member to breakdown, manage, escort and assist in the distribution of national pharmaceutical "push-packs";
  - Assist in site sanitation, food service, shift and transport scheduling, crowd management, workforce relief, and/or as auxiliary medical orderlies.
- Q. Will members of the Texas Medical Rangers be considered "first responders?"**
- A. Not in the traditional sense that firefighters and police officers have been so considered historically. Only the WMD Medical Response Augmentation Team will have a mission to be ready to deploy within**

24 hours, primarily to augment the State of Texas' Civil Support Team (agent detection and advisory team). Even so, this is not a "first responder" role, but more a support and auxiliary role. Keep in mind that for bioterrorism, the definition of "first responder" may evolve to include family practice physicians and other health care providers not historically referred to as "first responders." In the future there may come a time when a Texas Medical Ranger might be the first one to detect health symptoms indicative of a bioagent infection.

**Q. Will I be provided any kind of legal protection for the work I do as a Texas State Guardsman?**

- A1.** During routine monthly training and Annual Training (i.e., anytime you are NOT on State Active Duty orders), there is NO special legal protection extended to you. Therefore, it is important NOT to engage in behavior that might subject you to legal liability. Usually, in a training-only status, you will not have opportunity nor be expected to engage in activities that might generate against you a malpractice or negligence lawsuit. Training status by itself does NOT confer any legal immunity.
- A2.** When you are serving on State Active Duty orders (during the period of time stipulated in written orders or their amendments), signed by the Adjutant General of the Texas Military Forces on behalf of the Governor of Texas, you may have limited legal immunity for your actions that were duly assigned by your superiors in the Texas Military Forces, provided that such assigned work was performed in a capacity for which you were trained, certified and/or officially detailed. This means that if you have exercised reasonable care and due diligence consistent with your Texas State Guard assignment, your actions are protected by the State. Should you be threatened or suspect that you may be named in adverse legal action connected with your service while in State Active Duty status, you should immediately and subsequently record all relevant circumstances and promptly request legal assistance in writing from the Judge Advocate General's (JAG) office of the Texas State Guard.

**Q. Am I provided medical or life insurance while I serve as a member of the Texas State Guard?**

- A1.** No traditional medical insurance is provided. You should secure and/or maintain personal medical/health insurance. During monthly training and Annual Training there is no automatic medical coverage provided by the State. However, your unit may choose to secure a limited group contract for catastrophic medical expenses during Annual Training. This coverage is at-cost to members and is not automatic. So, you should exercise your normal degree of care and not engage in dangerous behavior during routine training.
- A2.** While you are on State Active Duty orders (i.e., written orders signed by the Adjutant General stipulating that you are on State Active Duty) and you suffer an injury or accident in a duty capacity, then you may be entitled to limited recovery of some expenses, provided you properly and promptly document your condition. If you suffer a physical or psychological injury while on State Active Duty orders, you should promptly have your medical condition professionally documented by a third-party physician, properly file a claim through the Texas State Guard JAG office, and make yourself available for subsequent interview and/or examination by military medical authorities designated by the Adjutant General.
- A3.** At this time there is no automatic life insurance coverage provided by the State for members of the Texas State Guard. Consequently, you should maintain in effect your current life insurance policies.

**Q. What kind of training will be available to members of the Texas Medical Rangers?**

- A.** TMR members within their respective Medical Response Teams located throughout the state will develop their own monthly training exercises, both team-oriented and for the benefit of all in their respective unit. Therefore each unit will be different but generally the training will focus on public health-related, medical-related, and military training relevant in a disaster response situation. In addition, training can be pursued independently through selected FEMA EMI (Emergency Management Institute) courses, available on the FEMA EMI website. Annual training for Texas Medical Rangers will also include exercise participation with emergency planning and response partner organizations. Information regarding additional training opportunities, whether privately operated or offered by organizations such as the Department of State Health Service, is actively researched and Rangers are kept apprised of certain opportunities through regular communication channels.

**Q. What is the connection between Texas Medical Rangers and DMATs (Disaster Medical Augmentation Teams)?**

- A.** DMATs are federally funded and subject to interstate deployment. DMAT members typically train for individual emergency patient treatment or field first-aid responsibilities, although some have specialized patient treatment missions. DMATs often have equipment to maintain as part of their responsibilities. As a unit, Texas Medical Rangers will not deploy outside the State of Texas because

they are a State of Texas capability and report only to the Governor through the Division of Emergency Management and the Adjutant General of Texas. The TMR mission is to support the Department of Public Health and local Metro or Regional health authorities to restore Public Health. The TMR mission is unit-based, not individual in nature. The TMR focus is to provide trained auxiliary expertise (as opposed to equipment) in a militarily-responsive structure to perform prescribed public health responsibilities, not to directly support any one hospital or clinic administrator. The focus of TMR unit training and work is regional public health within the State of Texas, targeting PREVENTION of the spread of diseases or infections, not hospital augmentation service.

**Q. Will members of the Texas Medical Rangers be required to take the smallpox vaccination?**

**A. No, so long as receiving the smallpox inoculation is considered a voluntary action by the CDC, there is generally no requirement. However, Texas Medical Rangers who train to serve as vaccinators in the Alternate Treatment Facility role and other selected TMR exercise participants may be offered the opportunity to receive the inoculation.**

**Q. What role will I be assigned if I become a member of the Texas Medical Rangers?**

**A. During your Placement Interview, available TMR roles will be presented and discussed. In addition, you will have an opportunity to express your interests given your educational and experiential background, which will help determine where you might be initially assigned. Your military rank will be determined by several factors including your expertise, prior training, education level attained, and number of years prior experience in related functional assignments. As a Texas Medical Ranger, you will train in more than one response scenario and have the opportunity for military promotion based upon excellent service, regular participation, and continuing education/training.**

**Q. Why should I join the Texas Medical Rangers?**

**A. Because TMR is an all volunteer organization; it will not be for the money. However, have you ever wondered who will help preserve or restore your community's public health if it is seriously threatened? There are simply not enough public health emergency responders and there is not enough capacity in hospital emergency rooms to serve the inevitable "surge" of patients and concerned citizens in a mass disaster situation. Who will help answer their questions? Who will administer emergency medications to them throughout the city and even in rural parts of Texas? Should a major natural or man-induced calamity contaminate the environment or threaten the population at large with biological outbreak of contagious disease or chemical/radiological effects, who will be there to help reverse the tide of despair and panic? Who will assist public health response teams that restore our way of life and protect our families and neighbors from toxic substances and deadly contagions? Are you one of those dedicated, caring individuals among us who will prepare yourself and train together with others who have a similar commitment to stand ready to preserve life and sanity, and to fend off chaos in the face of disaster?**

**Q. If you are interested in joining, what are the next steps?**

**A. Please visit our website. Throughout the website are numerous contact hyperlinks that you can use to contact a TMR representative who can then assist with the application process. After your complete application packet has been received, you will be contacted to conduct a placement interview with the adjutant (or Personnel Officer) in your area to discuss your initial rank and duty assignment. At the interview, you will have an opportunity to ask questions and to discuss assignment options. After the interview, your application packet will be sent to Texas State Guard headquarters at Camp Mabry in Austin to get your official state orders. Assuming all application requirements are met, within about a month after your packet has been received by Texas State Guard headquarters, you will be notified that orders have been received and you will be invited to attend an induction ceremony. In the meantime, as a Texas Medical Rangers applicant, you will be invited to attend training opportunities and meetings to begin getting involved in your new unit. You are invited to apply for membership as a Texas Medical Ranger!**