

Texas Department of Public Safety Employs Somewear to Secure Our Borders and Eradicate Drug Smuggling in Sector Spanning Over 400 Miles



The Texas Rangers Special Operations Group (SOG), a division within the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), leads the department’s border security program with a mission to deter, detect and interdict criminal activity usually associated with drug cartels

across the Texas/Mexico border. The program provides direct support to the U.S. Border Patrol through combined operations that leverage timely intelligence and cost-effective detection technologies.

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We had 20 operators in the AOR (area of responsibility) that were working together, and the Global Hotspot allowed everyone to see exactly where we were, while not having any comms over cell or radio. I don’t know what we would do without Somewear now. It has been a night and day change in the accountability of our personnel. Why would we ever go into a hostile area and not have Somewear Global Hotspots; it’s irresponsible to not have this kind of technology. As a team leader, it makes me feel really comfortable that even if they lose their cell signal, we’ll still get their location over satellite.”

Staff Lieutenant Gary Phillips

Texas Rangers Special Operations Group

The Challenge

In the realm of public safety, communication plays a paramount role in coordinating operations and ensuring the safety of personnel. The Texas/Mexico border, characterized by its challenging terrain and lack of reliable communication infrastructure, posed a significant hurdle for maintaining real-time connectivity among operators. Traditional radios and cellular networks often proved insufficient in these conditions, risking officer safety, operational efficiency, and timely response during critical missions.

Staff Lieutenant Gary Phillips of the Texas Rangers commented, "Sanderson, TX is such a remote area that the comms we utilize, including our Motorola APX radios, often don't work at all. The operators are spread out several miles apart in mountainous, hostile terrain, and even when operators were as close as a quarter mile away, radio comms were not working."

While responding to critical incidents of a high-risk nature, such as active shooter incidents, the inability to maintain situational awareness can compromise the operation and jeopardize the life of an operator. Additionally, operating in over 110-degree heat for days at a time poses a high risk of heat exhaustion or even heat stroke, and a lack of communication could mean the difference between life or death.



The Solution

The Rangers have employed Somewear across their program to help them maintain situational awareness and reliable comms across anti-narcotics missions, active shooter response, hostage situations and other critical incidents.

When the Rangers got a callout for an armed individual who was shooting at law enforcement while hiding in a rural structure, the team needed a reliable situational awareness tool to lockdown and secure the location.

Using the Somewear ATAK (Android Tactical Awareness Kit) plugin, paired with the satellite network enabler, the Global Hotspot, the Rangers were able to create their own agile, secure communication network and track each other in real-time. The Rangers and law enforcement partners coordinated and maneuvered around the structure to successfully move in on the threat without having to rely on line-of-sight hand/arm signals.

In the rugged border region, where traditional radios often failed, operatives gained a clear visual of team members' movements, even in communication blackout areas, bolstering situational awareness and team coordination. Teams could collaborate effectively, adjust strategies on-the-fly, and execute operations with unprecedented efficiency, mitigating risks associated with poor communication.

The Results

- Coordinated and responded to illegal activity along the border within minutes
- Significant improvement in personnel accountability
- Drastically reduced the risks associated with officer isolation
- Proactive mobilization of support and resources, preventing potentially life-threatening situations