

YesterYears



1930's



1940's



1950's



1960's



1970's



1980's



1990's



2000's

# 75th Anniversary Celebration of the Waco VA Medical Center



1932



2007

September 14, 2007  
4800 Memorial Drive  
Waco, Texas

11 a.m.



# A Brief History of the Waco VA Medical Center

The Waco VA Medical Center began its long history of serving Veterans when it opened on May 6, 1932. At the time of the opening there were 20 buildings built in the Italian Renaissance style with a bed capacity of 308 beds for the treatment of former service men who had been honorably discharged from any war or expedition and suffered from a nervous or mental disability.

The hospital quickly grew in 1937 with the construction of five additional buildings making the bed capacity 947. With the end of World War II five additional buildings were constructed on the "outer" circle bringing the bed capacity to 2,040 patients.

In 1932 the Waco VA included a 508-acre reservation with a full time working farm. The farm had 262 acres under cultivation including a vegetable garden, fruit orchard, hay and grain crops. Farm animals including a herd of 126 pigs and a flock of 63 sheep were fed and slaughtered on the reservation producing up to 1,000 pounds of pork or lamb per week for subsistence purposes. Pigeons, rabbits, turkeys, geese, pheasant and quail were also raised on the farm. A portion of the original farm was awarded to the Waco Independent School District and was designated as Veterans Field for athletic events. This original farm land was also developed into a municipal golf course.

To process the food, the hospital had a modern "ice plant" furnishing cold storage for kitchens and bulk supplies. The "ice plant" had a capacity of manufacturing 2,400 pounds of ice daily. In addition, the hospital operated a laundry and fire department. Clinical services on the reservation included an "industrial therapy program" to help rehabilitate selected patients to their highest level of functioning. The therapy included work assignments to the grounds, farm, slaughter house, laundry, sewing and upholstery shops giving patients an opportunity to adjust to the hospital community and prepare them for life supporting skills.

In 1984, Inner Circle Drive, a loop through the ward treatment buildings, had a name change to honor Doris Miller, a native of Waco and a hero of World War II. Miller, who worked in the kitchen, manned a ship's gun to down four enemy aircraft during the raid on Pearl Harbor. A monument to Miller was erected in 1984.

The mission of the Waco VA Hospital has not changed since the early years, continuing to provide medical and psychiatric care for veterans for the past 75 years. The Waco VA has supported the needs of the veterans with psychiatric and medical rehabilitation and now offers clinical services that include treatment for psychiatric disorders, post traumatic stress disease and blind rehabilitation. The Waco VA became part of the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System in 1995 and has now been designated as the "VA Center of Excellence" for psychiatric care.

# Dr. Michael Kussman Under Secretary for Health

Retired Brig. Gen. Michael J. Kussman, M.D., was confirmed by the Senate as Under Secretary for Health for the Veterans Health Administration May 25, 2007.



As the Under Secretary for Health, Dr. Kussman leads the nation's largest integrated health care system. He previously served as Acting Under Secretary for Health and Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health.

As Under Secretary for Health, he directs a health care system with an annual budget of approximately \$32 billion, employing more than 198,000 health care professionals and support staff at more than 1,400 care sites, including hospitals, community, and facility-based clinics, nursing homes, domiciliaries, readjustment counseling centers, and various other facilities. Dr. Kussman oversees the delivery of health care to more than 5.5 million veterans. VHA is the largest provider of graduate medical education and a major contributor to medical and scientific research. More than 100,000 volunteers, 92,000 health profession trainees, and 25,000 affiliated medical faculty members are integral parts of the VHA community.

A native of Troy, N.Y., he earned undergraduate and medical degrees from Boston University, receiving his M.D. in 1968. In 1994, he earned a master's degree in management from Salve Regina University.

Dr. Kussman began his military career in 1970, serving with the 7th Infantry Division in Korea. He left active duty in 1972 to resume medical training and complete his residency at the Joslin Clinic in Boston. From 1974 to 1979, Dr. Kussman worked in private practice in Pittsfield, Mass.

In 1979, he returned to active duty at Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, serving as chief of Internal Medicine. He later served as Division Surgeon for the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii. From 1984 to 1988, Dr. Kussman served as Chief of the Department of Medicine at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. He completed his tour there as Deputy Commander for Clinical Services.

Dr. Kussman became the Army Surgeon General's chief consultant in Internal Medicine and governor for the Army Region of the American College of Physicians in 1988. He commanded Martin Army Community Hospital at Fort Benning, Ga., from March 1993 to August 1995, and later commanded the Walter Reed Health Care System in Washington, D.C., where he was promoted to brigadier general.

Following his tour at Walter Reed, Dr. Kussman served as commander of the European Regional Medical Command, Command Surgeon for U.S. Army Europe, and TRICARE lead agent for Europe. He was responsible for Army health care throughout Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

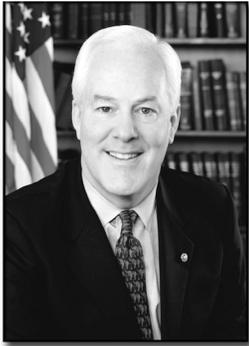
A graduate of the Army War College and an honor graduate of the Command and General Staff College, his military decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit with three oak leaf clusters, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, and the Order of Military Medical Merit.

Dr. Kussman received the prestigious "A" designator from the Army Surgeon General, which identifies professorial rank, and the Laureate Award from the American College of Physicians/American Society of Internal Medicine, and was selected as a Master of the College. He is board certified in Internal Medicine and serves on the faculty of the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences.

# The Honorable John Cornyn

## U.S. Senator

John Cornyn was elected to the U.S. Senate in 2002. In a short period of time, he earned a national reputation as a forceful and articulate voice for Texas values. He was selected by his colleagues in December 2006 to be a member of the five-person Republican Senate leadership team—Vice Chairman of the Senate Republican Conference – the only first-term Senator in recent memory to be so honored.



Sen. Cornyn continues to take a leading role on many important issues in the Senate. He is committed to bolstering our national defense and keeping America safe from terrorism, reducing spending, securing our borders, making health care more accessible, continuing to strengthen the economy and expand job opportunities, improving educational opportunity for all Texans, and protecting the most vulnerable in our society.

Sen. Cornyn serves on the Armed Services, Judiciary, and Budget Committees. In addition, he is Vice Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Ethics. He serves as the top Republican on both the Judiciary Committee's Immigration, Refugees and Border Security Subcommittee, and the Armed Services Committee's Airland Subcommittee.

Sen. Cornyn continues to work tirelessly on behalf of Texas military personnel, veterans and their families and has played a leading role in securing our nation's borders, while working to bring about broader reforms of our broken immigration system. He stands as a dedicated defender of free markets, traditional values and individual liberty.

While in the Senate, John Cornyn has received various awards and recognitions, including the 2005 Border Texan of the Year Award, the National Child Support Enforcement Association's Children's Champion Award, the American Farm Bureau Federation's Friend of Farm Bureau Award, the Texas Association of Business's (TAB) Fighter for Free Enterprise Award, the National Federation of Independent Business's (NFIB) Guardian of Small Business Award, the National Coalition of Latino Clergy and Christian Leader's (CONLAMIC) Latino Leadership Award, and the Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce's (TAMACC) International Leadership Legislative Award, among others.

As Texas Attorney General from 1999-2002, John Cornyn directed many initiatives vital to the interests of Texas families. Cornyn served for six years as a District Court Judge in San Antonio before being elected to the Texas Supreme Court in 1990, where he served for seven years.

John Cornyn was born in Houston on February 2, 1952, and was raised in San Antonio. He is the son of John and Gale Cornyn, both native Texans. His father, a B-17 pilot in World War II, served for 31 years in the U.S. Air Force and, later, taught at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio.

A graduate of Trinity University and St. Mary's School of Law, both in San Antonio, John Cornyn also earned a Masters of Law from the University of Virginia Law School in 1995. He was named the St. Mary's Distinguished Law School Graduate in 1994 and a Trinity University Distinguished Alumnus in 2001.

Sen. Cornyn is married to Sandy, his wife of 27 years. The couple has two daughters.

# The Honorable Chet Edwards

## U.S. House of Representatives

Elected to his ninth term as the Congressman representing the 17th Congressional District of Texas in 2006, Congressman Chet Edwards proudly represents portions of North Texas, Central Texas, and the Brazos Valley in Washington. Since first elected to the United States Congress in 1990, Chet has gained seniority and influence and is now one of the few House members to serve on both the House Budget and the Appropriations Committees.



Congressman Edwards is a recognized leader for America's veterans in Congress. As Chairman of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee, he authored the \$6.7 billion increase in the 2008 VA budget passed by the House this year, the largest increase in the VA's 77-year history.

He also serves on the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee and the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee. He co-chairs the bi-partisan House Army Caucus and the USO Congressional Caucus.

During his tenure in Congress, Congressman Edwards has developed a reputation of working hard and effectively for Central Texas jobs and federal investments in Fort Hood, the Central Texas Veterans' Health Care System, the Texas A&M Medical School, Interstate 35, transportation and water resources, and university research programs at Baylor and Texas A&M Universities. Congressman Edwards' proven record of hard work, combined with his 10 years of seniority on the powerful Appropriations Committee, put him in a position to fight effectively for jobs and vital education, health, transportation, and water investments in the 17th District.

At the national level, Congressman Edwards has played a major leadership role in support of the U.S. Army, military families, veterans, and homeland defense programs. In 2006, Congressman Edwards was honored with the Award of Merit, the highest award given by the Military Coalition, which represents 36 military and veteran groups. In 2003, the Association of the U.S. Army gave Congressman Edwards its "Legislator of the Year Award." In 2005, the Military Order of the Purple Heart awarded Edwards its national "Inspirational Leadership" award, given to only one member of Congress for work on important veterans' issues.

Edwards has played a key leadership role in initiating the public/private military housing program which a Bush administration official called the "most important military housing improvement program in our nation's history."

Upon graduation from Texas A&M in 1974, Congressman Edwards received the Earl Rudder Award, given to two outstanding seniors. He then worked for 3 years for Congressman Olin E. "Tiger" Teague before earning an MBA from the Harvard Business School. In the 1980's, Congressman Edwards worked at the Trammell Crow Company in commercial real estate; he owned and was the President of Edwards Communications, a rural radio station. From 1983 to 1989, Chet served in the Texas Senate. As a member of the Senate Education Committee, he played an active role in reducing class sizes in Texas' public schools and was named one of the "Ten Outstanding Legislators" by Texas Monthly magazine.

Congressman Edwards is married to Lea Ann. The couple has two sons, J.T. (11) and Garrison (9).