



# Retired Generals First to Fight for the Right

by Jane Bromley

If everything goes according to plans, the 30,000+ veterans in Lubbock and the South Plains can look forward to a brand-new facility devoted to caring for their health. Lubbock has had an outpatient VA clinic for many years, and it has done its best to serve area veterans. However, the current location is hard to find, and it isn't equipped to treat many of the health issues veterans face.

Many problems require more skilled care, and that means a trip to Amarillo, where the facility is larger. In addition, if any issue requires more specialized treatment, veterans are often sent to Albuquerque.

For an aging veteran, traveling to Amarillo requires a full day, which often creates a hardship on the family. For young veterans who are in school or have jobs, it is even harder to find a day or more to make the trip to Amarillo or Albuquerque.

Thanks to the vision of Dr. Bernhard Mitemeyer, the VA has approved a 94,000 sq. ft. "Super Clinic". It will triple the size of the existing building, which is located inconveniently far away from



Lubbock's medical district. Dr. Mitemeyer is a 3-Star General (ret.) and former Surgeon General of the Army who has worked in the VA Clinic, treating fellow veterans, and he knew we could do better. He recruited his friends, Major General (ret.) Walt Huffman, Major General (ret.) Edgar Murphy, and Brigadier General (ret.) Gary Harber.

Their mission was to obtain approval for a "more robust" VA clinic for Lubbock. A committee of 20 like-minded citizens came together. Phil Price, an Army veteran himself, developed a formal proposal in 2011. The Texas Tech Board of Regents granted land at virtually no cost. The location is ideal, directly across from Texas Tech University

Health Science Center.

Not only will this ensure "better access to specialty, diagnostic, and emergency care," it will "improve medical education for TTUHSC students by providing a wider and more diverse patient base."

When it is completed sometime in 2020, veterans will have access to primary care, mental healthcare, physical therapy, dermatology, podiatry, orthopedics, dental, special care services and more. A particular emphasis will be placed on PTSD, and mental and behavioral health.

In addition to the effort of Phil Price and the rest of the committee, the generals are all quick to express their

appreciation for a large group of men and women without whose help the clinic would not be a possibility. These include Congressmen Mac Thornberry and Randy Neugebauer and Senator John Cornyn who helped push the project through the U.S. House and Senate. Congressman Neugebauer was especially instrumental in convincing Jeff Miller (R-Florida) Chair of the House VA Committee to come to Lubbock to examine the situation firsthand.

Andrew Welch, Regional VA Health Director in Amarillo, was the one who ultimately made the proposal to Congress. In 2013, 'H.R. 3521 - Department of Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Lease Authorization Act' approved funding for the project. Veteran Affairs Secretary Eric Shinsecki got behind it, thanks in part to the connections Gen. Huffman had made while serving as JAG (the U.S. Army's senior attorney).

Chancellor Robert Duncan, Chancellor Kent Hance, TTUHSC President Dr. Tedd Mitchell, his legislative liaison Ryan Henry and Texas Tech University Vice Chancellor for Facilities Michael Molina all played instrumental roles championing the proposal and seeing it through to fruition. Sen. Charles Perry and Rep. John Frullo introduced bills in Austin to have the land transfer approved.

The four generals who formed the steering committee eight years ago are anticipating the prize at the end of this race. But that doesn't mean the end of their collaboration. Dr. Mitemeyer and his colleagues are already regrouping to begin new projects to ensure the best possible



care and respect for South Plains veterans. They are showing us it is possible to accomplish something worthwhile if you are passionate and persistent.

Senior Link shares the passion of caring for those who have served us. We look forward to joining the generals in their next project. They, along with their recruits,

are leading the way in turning good ideas into concrete realities. It's not just a line from the lyrics of the Army anthem. It's a motto we can all live by: "first to fight for the right."

*(See pages 16 & 17 for ideas you and your family might adopt to help honor those who have honored us with their service.)*

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Lt. General Dr. Bernhard  
T. Mitemeyer

## A Lifetime of Service to His Adopted Country

**B**ernhard was born Oct. 30, 1930 in Paramaribo, Surinam, South America. His parents Jan and Hanna were there as

missionaries from Holland. They arrived in 1926 and served there for 42 years. However, during WWII, his father went to be a chaplain for the Dutch Army in Indonesia from 1942 to 1945. Bernie, his two brothers and his mom came to the United States in 1944 and lived in Nazareth, PA

where Bernie and his two brothers learned English. In early 1946, their father came to the U.S., and he and his

wife planned to return to their Moravian mission work in Surinam. The plan was for Bernie and his brothers to go to Holland and live with family members there to insure appropriate further education. However, a church family in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania volunteered to "adopt" the three boys so they could remain in the United States, which they very much wanted to do. So Bernie was able to graduate from high school there in 1948. He then went to Moravian College in Bethlehem, PA as a pre-med student and graduated in 1952. Afterwards, he earned his M.D. degree from Temple University School in 1956.

Soon after medical school and internship, he was drafted into the Army and did his basic training at

Ft. Sam Houston, Texas. Although the young man was already a medical doctor, he volunteered for the airborne services, because the 101st and 82nd had liberated his home country of the Netherlands at the end of WWII. Of the 23 airborne volunteers, he was one of two to be assigned to the 101st Airborne Division. He was sent to Ft. Campbell, Kentucky and served first as the Battle Group Surgeon and Clearing Platoon Commander. He was then assigned as Division Surgeon at the request of General William Westmoreland. At the end of his two year tour, Bernie was going to leave the Army. When General Westmoreland

*...he volunteered for the airborne services, because the 101st and 82nd had liberated his home country of the Netherlands at the end of WWII.*

asked him why, Mitemeyer pointed out that he "was not a U.S. citizen". Westmoreland immediately arranged for him to get his citizenship so he could become a part of the regular Army. (Bernie's older brother who had just completed his sophomore year at Leigh University was drafted out of college and received his citizenship on the battlefield during the Korean War.) As a brand new American citizen, Bernie accepted an Army Urological residency which he completed in 1965. He was then assigned as Assistant Chief of Urology at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland.

In April 1968, he was deployed to Vietnam. But as a volunteer who had completed his obligatory military service, he went with a promise from the Army Surgeon General Office that he would be assigned to an Army Field Hospital. However, after arriving at Bien Hoa, he was immediately assigned (once again) to the 101st Airborne Division as the Division



Surgeon and Medical Battalion Commander which was heavily involved in combat in the northern most part of South Vietnam. Bernie noted that "it was a year of continuous warfare and action where movement was almost always by air ambulance and evacuation of the wounded was often during the heat of the battle." While in Vietnam, he received the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star Medal with a V (for Valor) with Oak Leaf Cluster



as well as other awards for his service.

After his 12-month Vietnam tour, Bernie seriously considered leaving the service. But he elected to stay in the Army and was transferred to Ft. George Meade in Maryland as the Chief of Urology, Chairman of Surgery and Chief Professional Services. "I had three jobs at once!" he recalled. In 1971 he attended the U.S. Army War College for one year, then was again assigned to Walter Reed Medical Center. This time he served as Chief of Urology, later Chief of Department of Surgery and consultant in urology to the Army Surgeon General. In July, 1977 the experienced doctor was assigned to be Commander of the U.S. Army Medical Command/ Korea Surgeon, eighth U.S. Army and Commander of the 121st hospital in Seoul, Korea. Nine months later (April 1978), he was promoted to Brigadier General and assigned as Chief Medical Corps Affairs to the Army Surgeon General. He was



then promoted to Major General and served as Commander of Walter Reed Medical Center. In October of 1981 he was promoted to Lt. General and Army Surgeon General retiring in March 1985 at which time he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

After his military service, the general was part of a group

that started Health Services in California which eventually opened up 20 HMOs, and was later sold to Traveler's Insurance. Not long afterward, Bernie was contacted by Dr. Lauro Cavazos and asked if he would like to "come to Lubbock, Texas and go to work at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center as Executive Vice President." The esteemed doctor began his career at TTUHSC in November 1986. During a 10 year period, he helped establish a division of Urology and later to the Department of Urology. He also served as Interim Medical School Dean and Interim President of the Health Sciences Center. In 2009 he returned the Urology Department which is now named in his honor, and continues to work there part-time.

While in medical school Bernie married Patricia Kuhn (1954). They raised four children: Jan, Tom, Robert and Sarah. In 1996, he married Mary Beth Smith who has two sons Brandt and Adam. Together they have eight grandchildren.

Dr. Mitemeyer remains humble and has a servant's heart, even though he holds numerous military decorations and a long list of professional rewards and honors. He remains passionate about "taking care of our veterans." He has especially enjoyed his work at the VA Clinic in Lubbock to "help care for the men and women that have served our country." \* After 63 years, Bernie is still serving his adopted country. When asked how

he would like to be remembered, he simply stated, "How fortunate I was to become an American."

**RANK**  
**Lt. General/  
Army Surgeon  
General**  
**BRANCH**  
**Army**

Read more about Dr. Mitemeyer's passion for veteran's in the article about the new VA Super Clinic on pp 6-7.



Respectfully submitted by  
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Texas South Plains Honor Flight  
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# Major General Walter Huffman

# TJAG

by Jane Bromley



**W**e have heroes and statesmen living among us, and it may not be obvious because many of them are also humble. You have to go somewhere like Wikipedia to get the list of awards and accomplishments of Walter Burl Huffman. He doesn't offer them. In fact, he is quick to give credit to others regarding his long list of honors and achievements.

Walter, the son of Berl and Zella Huffman, was born in Biloxi, Mississippi, where his dad was stationed during WWII. Burl went on to become a popular coach at Texas Tech, so Walter graduated from Lubbock High School and eventually earned his Bachelors and Masters degrees at Texas Tech and his Doctor of Jurisprudence from the Texas

Law School. But his education was interrupted when he volunteered for active duty in the U.S. Army. It was 1968, and the Tet Offensive had just taken place in Vietnam.

After training, he was sent to Vietnam to command a Field Artillery Battery. For a year his unit engaged in intense combat and countless rocket attacks. Part of their mission was to assist the Vietnamese army in defeating the enemy in Laos. It was extremely challenging because of the uncertain political climate in Washington. But the young officer said of that experience: "The proudest achievement of my career...is that every man for whom I was responsible came back alive."

In 1971 Huffman was reassigned to Fort Hood. He was disappointed in the policies that surrounded the Vietnam Conflict, and felt that lawyers were in the best position to make changes. That year, Capt. Huffman was one of 15 selected to attend law

school courtesy of the U.S. Army.

His 33-year army career took him from Texas Tech Law School to Fort Ord, California; from Army JAG school to Germany; from the Pentagon back to Germany. He was deployed in 1991 to Desert Storm where he was Gen. Fred Franks' legal counsel. Following that war, he became Gen.

*"The proudest achievement of my career...is that every man for whom I was responsible came back alive."*

Schwartzkopf's legal counsel at Central Command, where he later oversaw the humanitarian intervention in Somalia. In 1997 Major General Huffman was

promoted to The JAG (TJAG) the senior attorney of the United States Army.

He was 35th to hold the office since 1775, when the position was created by General George



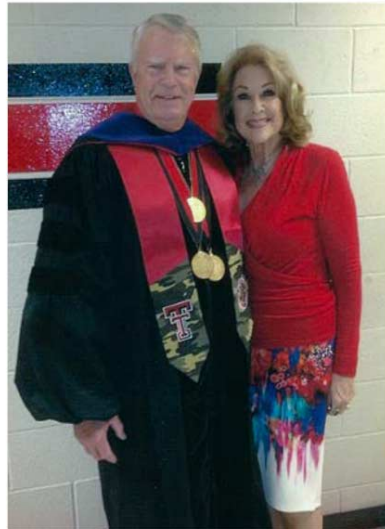


**RANK** ★ ★  
**Major General**

**BRANCH**  
**Army**

Washington. In a letter to the Continental Congress the President wrote, "I would humbly propose that some provision should be made for a judge advocate... [and that he should receive] captain's pay--an allowance (in my opinion) scarcely adequate to the service."

After the four-year term as TJAG ended, he returned to Lubbock to become dean of the Texas Tech Law School. He is now Dean Emeritus, but before his term expired, he says he "promoted" himself to the teaching faculty which he thoroughly enjoys.



the bureaucratic red tape. The four generals and their team overcame great hurdles to get to this point.

But Walter B. Huffman isn't the kind of guy to rest on his laurels for long. He is already preparing to regroup with his fellow generals and colleagues. The Dean Emeritus and the rest of the team are leading the charge to improve the quality of care for their fellow veterans. They wouldn't admit it, but that's why we recognize all of them as heroes and statesmen.

Walt was married for 46 years to Anne Robison Huffman. She passed away in 2011. They raised 3 children, Burl, Becky and Ross (deceased). A few years later another love story unfolded. At his 50th LHS reunion, Walter found a girl who had been his high school sweetheart a lifetime ago. He married Kathy White in 2013. She is well known to many members of First Baptist Church because her parents were the celebrated "Mom and Pop" White. The former model is lovely inside and out. She doesn't mind saying that Anne is the one who deserves the credit for supporting her husband during the stressful Army years. Together Walt and Kathy have eight grandchildren.

The VA Super Clinic (*story on pp 6-7*) is about to become a reality. Dr. Bernhard Mittemeyer, the instigator of the project says, "It really helped to have a lawyer on the team." Walter Huffman's expertise was crucial in navigating

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# Major General William Edgar Murphy

## A Soldier's Soldier

by Tom Couture



In the short time I have known General Murphy, I would describe him as a quietly powerful man, whose influence upon those around him is profound. His career in the U.S. Army spanned more than four decades. He commanded over 15,000 soldiers whom he led in the operation of 327 M-1 tanks, 1,000 other armored vehicles, and 100 Apache helicopters. He was responsible for the combat readiness of the 49th Armored Division of the Army National Guard of Texas. He did so while caring for his wife Ann and three children. At the same time, he operated a very successful farm implement and tractor business here in Lubbock. Besides being influential and capable, the retired general is a master at multi-tasking.

Mrs. Murphy revealed that he was often referred to as "the soldier's soldier." She disclosed that both those who served under Edgar, as well as those under whom he served, were constantly in awe of his great care and concern for others. He was known for always placing the needs and promotion of

others above his own. General Murphy expressed that being in the National Guard, or in the Army Reserve, is a totally volunteer experience. A man or woman gives his or her time on weekends and at other times to train, so they can be called out to active duty if necessary, to protect and preserve our freedom. They choose to give themselves for us, so he chose to place the reservists and their needs above himself.

One of General Murphy's enduring accomplishments is the construction of the Armed Forces Guard and Reserve Center next to the Lubbock Preston Smith International Airport. Prior to the building of the center, all of the operations of the Guard and Reserve here in Lubbock, were split up into four buildings along 4th Street. The construction of the Marsha Sharp freeway necessitated the demolition of the four existing buildings, and the Guard and Reserve were going to need new headquarters. Unifying the various divisions under one new roof would obviously result in a much more efficient operation, so Gen. Murphy set out to secure the funds and a location to construct the new center. Eventually, he was able to obtain all of the federal funding needed, giving our local Guardsmen and Reservists one location where they could carry out their monthly and annual duties and training. Securing funds from the government was no small feat, but Edgar's years of service, the



relationships he had built with senators and congressmen, and his quiet, but influential manner saw the project through. When it was completed in 1995, the Texas House and Senate issued a Concurrent Resolution, signed by the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House and the Governor, naming the new Lubbock Armed Forces Guard and Reserve Center after General Murphy. Ann noted that he is the only living general to receive the honor of having a military facility named after him. Gen Murphy's personal library of over 800 military books is housed in the center, and regarding the tank that sits outside, he says, "That was MY tank."



General Murphy, along with the other generals featured in this issue of Senior Link, has







been instrumental in acquiring the funding and location for construction of a new Veterans Administration super clinic. Located across 4th Street from TTUHSC and University Medical Center, it will make health care for veterans in the South Plains much more accessible.

When I asked General Murphy what one thing

he would like for this article to express, he answered, "All members of the armed forces are volunteers who give their time and put their lives on the line for the freedom of all Americans. However, those in the National Guard and in the Reserves must keep full time jobs and support their families while they also serve. The message is that these valued volunteers absolutely need the support of their families and

*these valued volunteers absolutely need the support of their families and their employers so that they can be able to give of their time.*

their employers so that they can be able to give of their time." Gen. Murphy added, "In my experience, the families and employers of my colleagues have, over the years provided this support and

understanding. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for all those families and employers, as well as implore them to continue that support in the future." The Major General's characteristic concern for others is evidence that he continues to be "a soldier's soldier."



**RANK**  
**Major General**

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**BRANCH**  
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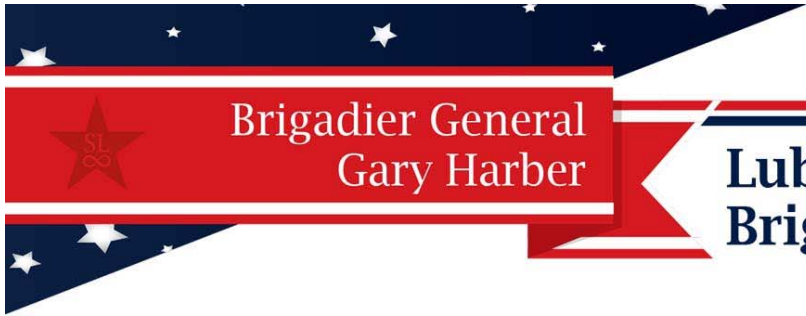
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# Brigadier General Gary Harber

## Lubbock's Southern Brigadier General



**F**ive-year old Gary Harber was noted publicly for boldness when he backed up traffic, as he rode his tricycle

down Columbia Avenue in Centerville, Tennessee, to his parent's grocery store. As he grew, he earned respect as the youngest professional photographer in Tennessee. Gary was hired by the local funeral home to take pictures of the deceased. By age 12 he established his credentials as the photographer for the Tennessean and Banner newspapers. His "press pass" allowed him to capture images for the reporter who transported him in her car.

In 1955 after graduating from Hickman County High School in Centerville, Gary joined the Tennessee Army National Guard. He served his beloved America for 42 years, retiring as a Brigadier General in 1997. He achieved Master Army Aviator and has more than 15,000 military and civilian flying hours. General Harber oversaw operations in America, Europe, and Central America. In Europe he served as the NATO Northern Regional Wartime Construction Manager and Commander of the 194th Engineer Brigade (Theatre Army). In Central America he commanded the nation-building efforts primarily focused on Panama, Honduras, and Costa Rica, building roads through the jungle and constructing schools, clinics, and support facilities. He

was assigned to the Pentagon on numerous occasions including as Chief, Construction Branch, Army Installations Division. He also served on the Chief of Engineers General Officer's Executive Council under Lieutenant General Henry "Hank" Hatch which advised on matters relative to Engineer Unit Requirements and Wartime missions. The Council, comprised of five General Officer Commanders, was heavily involved in Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

General Harber never lets the injuries he suffered in a helicopter crash in the '60s affect the stalwart support he demonstrates to current and past soldiers and their families. One of the ways he chooses to stay "relevant" is by being active in volunteering with veterans who are on hospice care. Welby Smith, another Vet-to-Vet hospice Volunteer says, "The general is a wonderful Christian man who serves God and others, a true American hero. He still loves and serves veteran hospice patients, and it is an honor to visit [them] with him." Gary is also a member of the Daedalians (Military Pilot Organization) and is a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) civilian flight training instructor.

General Harber wants every reader to know that the Bible is applicable to the struggles we face today. He saw himself as a "marginal Christian" until he actually read the little Bible in his flight suit pocket, while flying with another pilot years ago. He realized God was personally guiding him. The trajectory of his life changed, and he began to focus more on others.

Recently, General Bernhard Mitemmeyer initiated the concept

of a VA Super Clinic in Lubbock. Generals Walt Huffman, Edgar Murphy, and Harber combined efforts to ensure its realization.

*(See pp. 6-7 for that fascinating story.)* General Harber states that one of his motivations for assisting with the new Super Clinic was to "provide for those who have served this country and helped to make it the great and free nation that it is." General Huffman stated, "General Harber's expertise in developing federal projects has proved indispensable."

Years after retirement, Gary recalls an incident that changed his life. Gary saw a film entitled "We were Soldiers". The war film depicted how many soldiers' lives were lost. The fighting scenes triggered his personal memories of war, and as hot tears rolled down his face, he remembered the passionate, patriotic soldiers who had served with him. He felt he should have been there with them. He exited the theater with a very heavy heart. Then he vividly remembers God flooding his heart, reassuring him that their deaths were "not your fault." A large weight lifted, a yoke he did not realize he had been tied to for countless years. General Harber wants to pass that message along to other soldiers and military





“ General Mitemeyer remembers, “Brigadier General Gary Harber immediately impressed me, not only as a great man, but one who is firmly committed to the veteran population. All of the generals have lived up to exceeding the highest expectations.”

**RANK**  
**Brigadier General**  
**BRANCH**  
**Army**

leaders who may not realize the emotional baggage they still carry. He knows the Lord has released him, finally, of the burden of not being with his friends who were lost in combat. Gary’s prayer for current soldiers and leaders is for them to know that it’s not their fault that they survived and a friend did not.

and is currently serving in Army Special Operations.”

There’s another side to Gary Harber – an artistic one. He performed guitar with his brother at the Junior Grand Ole Opry in his youth, as well as absorbed the wit of his kindergarten teacher, Minnie Pearl.

introduced her dad to her next door neighbor, Carol. After getting to know the southern gentleman whom Carol describes as a “teddy bear”, the couple married 11 years ago.

Lauren, his second-born daughter says, “He has always been a great spiritual role-model.” She also shares, “He instilled in me a love of language which has been passed on to my eldest son, who speaks German, Pashto, and French,



His daughter, Cathleen, loves the memory of her delighted classmates as they rushed out to see her dad’s UH-1 “Huey” helicopter. He was requested by the school to land on the school grounds when she was in second grade. In 2002 she

Cathleen sums up the heart of her dad and all of his accomplishments with, “He has the strength of a warrior and the talent of an artist. That is a rare combination.”

*Written by Katherine McLamore, Texas South Plains Honor Flight Veterans Liaison / Committee Co-Chair / Volunteer Author for Senior Link Magazine*



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