

A History of Exemplifying Leadership



The Texas A&M University purpose statement reads, "To develop leaders of character dedicated to serving the greater good" and is defined by six core values: excellence, integrity, leadership, loyalty, respect and selfless service. Leadership is perhaps the core value most noted of Texas A&M students and graduates.

Texas A&M was founded in 1876, and until the 1960s, participation in the Corps of Cadets was mandatory. Veterinary sciences were taught as part of animal husbandry courses almost from the founding, although the School of Veterinary Medicine (as it was then known) was not formally established until 1916, the same year as the establishment of the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps. The inaugural veterinary class of 13 students soon had the opportunity to serve "the greater good" in the World War I; only four graduated in 1920. It is not known how many A&M students served in the Veterinary Corps in World War I or later.

In 1963, *The Southwestern Veterinarian*, the journal published by the Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), printed an article by A.G. Kemler titled, "Veterinary Medicine in Texas 1944-1963," which attempted to analyze the career paths of Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine graduates. Kemler's data was based on information from the college, probably as declared by graduates upon leaving school. Over the 20-year period, 78 out of the total 1,136 graduates planned to go into military service, 7 percent of the total, with the numbers lowest immediately following World War II. It is interesting to see the numbers rise at the end of the period; in the years 1961 to 1963, 22 percent of the graduates went into military service.

Exemplifying military leadership from the College of Veterinary Medicine are the four graduates who rose to

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become chiefs of the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps. Three of them served consecutive terms. Charles V.L. Elia, DVM '43, was brigadier general from 1972 to 1976; Thomas G. Murnane, DVM '47, served from 1976 to 1980; and from 1980 to 1985, Frank A. Ramsey, DVM '54, was the chief of the Veterinary Corps. The fourth was Michael B. Cates, DVM '80, who was chief from 2004 to 2008.

This link between the College of Veterinary Medicine and the Army Veterinary Corps made the purchase of the John N. Case Jr. Veterinary Corps Collection in 2014 a natural extension of the historical veterinary medicine collection at the Medical Sciences Library at Texas A&M. The collection, which primarily spans the 20th century, is an exceptional assemblage that includes items from 50 countries. Almost half of the items in the collection are from the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth nations. The United States is represented by almost 700 items, followed by Germany, France, Italy and Russia. These items include books, documents, postcards, badges, buttons, patches, uniforms, instruments and equipment. The items range in size from tiny gorget buttons to large chests used to transport medical supplies. The collection is not limited to veterinary corps artifacts but includes militaria related to military working animals and animal care and use, such as farriery, pigeon and cavalry items.

A total of 2,630 items are in the museum collection, and this does not include individual documents in document sets or the books in the collection. Some of the equipment includes blankets, pigeon vest, large circular pigeon parachute drop cage, various chests, riding crop from the Camel Corps,

edged weapons, saddle, helmets, pouches, veterinarian saddlebags, horse grooming equipment, spurs, equine gas mask with hoses and canister holsters and a wooden neck cradle.



Dr. Murnane's
Veterinary Corps hat

The Medical Sciences Library recently received a donation from the family of the late Dr. Murnane including Dr. Murnane's uniforms, flags, papers and memorabilia. This generous gift establishes a direct link between the Case Veterinary Corps Collection and the College of Veterinary Medicine's heritage of leadership in the U.S. Veterinary Corps.

The Southwestern Veterinarian, published from May 1948 through 1988, exemplified student leadership at the College of Veterinary Medicine. Although a student publication, it was no mere newsletter but a professional journal published on glossy paper. The first issue's editorial ended with "Not strictly a student publication but a journal by the practitioner for the practitioner... This is your publication, Doctor!" By the end of 1950, it had 800 subscribers in 35 states. The journal was an invaluable resource when writing chapters for *Celebrating CVM 100 Years 1916-2016: Serving Every Texan Every Day*.

The Medical Sciences Library would like to digitize *The Southwestern Veterinarian* to make this historical content publicly accessible. We have a complete run of the journal, but our copies are tightly bound and difficult to scan for digitization. If anyone has journal issues they would like to donate for this purpose, please contact the library. **TV**

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