



FORT CAVAZOS

As the new name for **Fort Hood, Texas**

Fate brought **Richard E. Cavazos** into the American Century. But valor and leadership characterized his career of military service within it.

Born to a veteran of World War I, Cavazos grew up on a Texas ranch during the Great Depression and came of age during World War II. Eager to join the Army, he enrolled in the ROTC program at Texas Technical University right out of high school, and was commissioned into the Army right after graduation in 1951.

After attending the Infantry Officer Basic Course and Airborne Training, 1st Lieutenant Cavazos soon shipped to Korea, where he led a company of Puerto Rican soldiers. It was during that war's closing days that he first distinguished himself as a leader, rallying his men to make three separate charges on a well entrenched enemy position. Afterwards, he returned to the field five separate times to personally evacuate his wounded men before accepting treatment for his own injuries. Earning the Distinguished Service Cross – the nation's second highest military honor for valor – for these actions, Cavazos had previewed the career that was to follow, characterized by personal courage, commitment to his soldiers, and dedication to his mission.

As the Korean War ended and the Cold War endured, Cavazos continued to serve the nation with distinction. During the 1950s and early 1960s, he served as a student in several Army programs for officer development, rising through the ranks and enhancing his skills. A sixth generation Texan, he also returned to the ROTC program at Texas Tech for three years as a professor of Military Science. When the Vietnam War began, then-Lt. Col. Cavazos was ready to bring men into battle once more: he commanded an infantry battalion, often fighting in the field – and frequently leading from the front. In 1967, he was once again awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for rallying his men through an ambush, organizing a counterattack, and leading several maneuvers to repulse and destroy extensive enemy defenses, repeatedly exposing himself to enemy fire in the process. Throughout his career, Cavazos continued to combine personal valor with commitment to his troops and dedication to his missions, additionally earning two Legions of Merit, a Silver Star, five Bronze Stars, the Purple Heart, and many other medals and awards for exceptional service in war and peace.

Although he completed his career in peacetime, Cavazos continued to keep the soldiers under his command combat ready, striving to promote our nation's security. He served in the Army's strategic branches at the Pen-



tagon and as Defense Attaché to the Embassy in Mexico. Becoming the first Hispanic-American promoted to brigadier general in 1973 and continuing to rise throughout the decade, Cavazos commanded the 9th Infantry Division, and III Corps back in central Texas. In 1982, he became the first Hispanic-American to pin on four stars. His final assignment as head of the U.S. Army Forces Command fittingly summarized his career of service by placing him at the head of sustaining, training and deploying all the Army's deployable forces.

Never forgetting his Texas roots or his time serving there, Gen. Cavazos retired to his native state and continued to serve as a mentor to the Battle Command Training Program – an initiative to ready officers for combat leadership that Cavazos himself had started.

As a veteran of two modern wars and a longtime leader of soldiers, Gen. Richard Cavazos' service demonstrates excellence at every level. His 20th century service will inspire soldiers as they continue those traditions of excellence into the 21st.