

Dr. Héctor P. García

FOUNDER OF THE AMERICAN GI FORUM

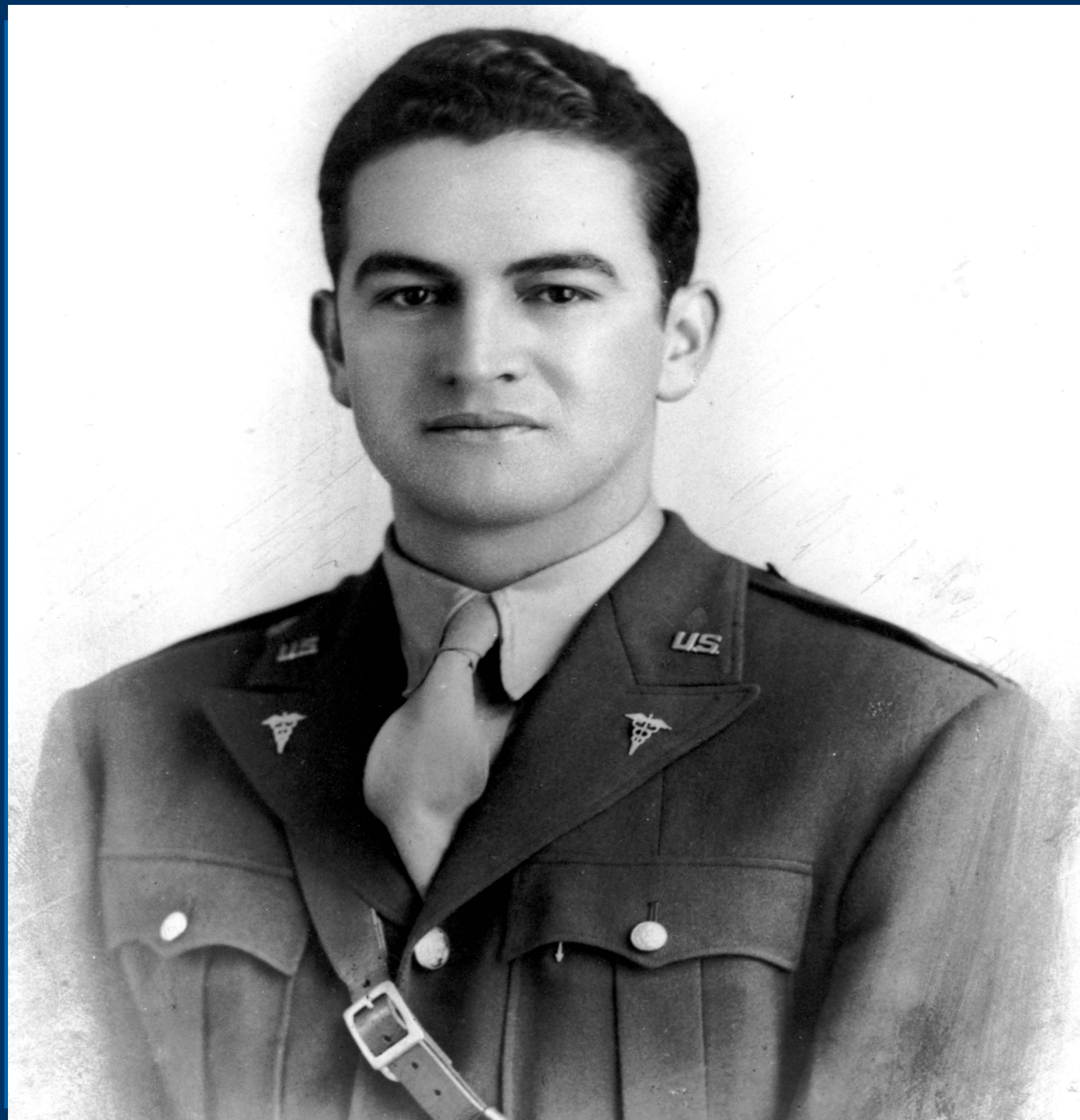


IMAGE PROVIDED BY THE MARY AND JEFF BELL LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES

BACKGROUND

Born in 1914 in Mexico, Héctor P. García immigrated to Texas with his family during the Mexican Revolution. Raised in a family that valued education and service, he excelled academically despite the discrimination faced by many Mexican Americans at the time. He earned his medical degree before serving as a major in the U.S. Army Medical Corps during World War II. His experiences caring for soldiers overseas and witnessing prejudice at home inspired a lifelong commitment to civil rights and public service.

CAREER

After the war, Dr. García established a medical practice in Corpus Christi, where he treated patients regardless of their ability to pay. In He was elected as the President of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) in 1947. In 1948, he founded the American GI Forum . The American GI Forum expanded its mission to fight for better education, healthcare, voting rights, and economic opportunity for Hispanic Americans.. García also advised several U.S. presidents on Hispanic affairs and served as a U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

IMPACT

Dr. García became one of the most influential Hispanic civil rights leaders in American history. His advocacy exposed discrimination, expanded opportunities for Mexican Americans, and strengthened protections for veterans and underserved communities. In 1984, he became the first Mexican American to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his lifetime of service to the nation.

THE JOSEPH A. UNANUE LATINO INSTITUTE

Celebrating 250 Years
OF LATINO IMPACT ON AMERICAN HISTORY

