

---

**From:** March, Joseph H.  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 30, 2011 1:13 PM  
**To:** Public Relations Division  
**Subject:** Edwards receives top Legion honor

# The American Legion



*For God and country*

★ NATIONAL CONVENTION HEADQUARTERS ★ PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE  
Minneapolis Convention Center, 1301 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, South  
ROOM 200-A, LEVEL TWO  
(612)335-6900  
★ (612) 335-6903 Fax  
[www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Edwards receives top Legion honor

MINNEAPOLIS (Aug. 30, 2011) -- A champion for veterans while in Congress, former lawmaker awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

Former U.S. Rep. Chet Edwards of Texas collected his second major national award from The American Legion Tuesday during the organization's 93rd National Convention in Minneapolis. He received the Legion's Distinguished Service Medal three years after being recognized with the Legion's Public Service Award.

Both honors recognize Edwards' dedication to improve the lives of veterans and U.S. military personnel.

American Legion National Commander Jimmie Foster called Edwards "a true champion for veterans and American Legion issues ... although his district was in Waco, Texas, his legislative record benefited veterans everywhere."

As chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies, Edwards championed a \$17.7 billion increase in funding for veterans benefits and health care, the largest in VA's history.

"He also played a key role in enacting the Post-9/11 GI Bill, legislation that he publicly said would not have been passed without the American Legion." Foster concluded. "He may have left Congress, but veterans are still in his heart."

"I am deeply humbled by this award," Edwards told nearly 10,000 American Legion members and their families. "Because of my lifelong respect for you. In my book, your commitment is what's great and what's good about America."

Edwards said he accepted the award on behalf of his father, a World War II naval aviator, who taught him early to honor veterans and "that literally my life is the product of the service of veterans." He said he also accepted the award on behalf of those who have sacrificed in uniform, and their families. He recounted the story of a young military widow whose husband was killed fighting in Iraq. "She didn't want anything from me. She just asked 'Congressman, what can I do help other military widows who are grieving?'"

During his 20 years in Washington, Edwards co-chaired the House Army Caucus and served on, among others, the Budget Committee, the Veterans Affairs Committee and the Appropriations Committee. As a senior member of the latter, he was the first to allow the Legion's National Security and VA&R directors to speak on appropriations bills. He also supported legislation to pass a constitutional amendment to protect the U.S. Flag from desecration.

Edwards' first job after graduating college in 1974 was working for Rep. Olin E. Teague, who himself received the The American Legion's Distinguished Service Medal in 1970.

-30-

*Contact: Craig Roberts or Joe March, (612)335-6900 ; (202) 406-0887.*