

# SPIRIT ONLINE

Vol. 1, Issue 11

VA Connecticut Healthcare System

June 18, 2003

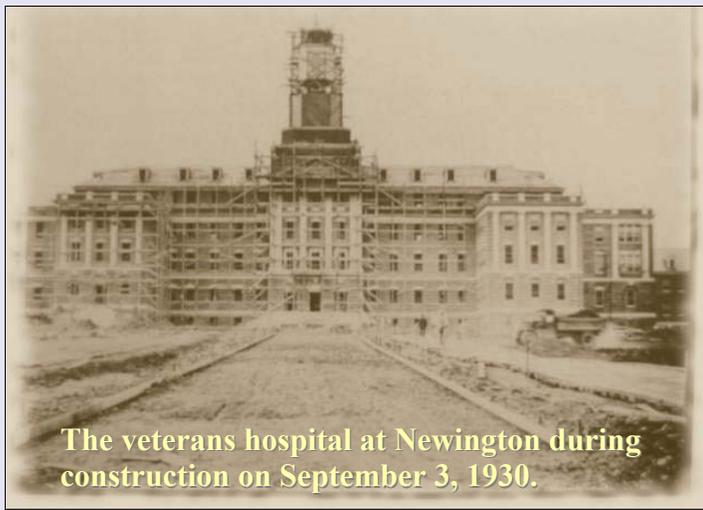
## The Beginning -

### *- The Early History of the Newington Campus -*

It was an era of fountain pens, Underwood typewriters, ash trays and wall mounted fans. It was a time between the two "great" wars. Herbert Hoover was president and the world was on the cusp of the "great depression" when three parcels of land totaling 199 acres in the town of Newington, Conn. was purchased for \$64,000 (\$321/acre). This was to be the site of a new veterans hospital in Southern New England. The year was 1929.

Construction of the \$1 million, 250 bed hospital began February 18, 1930, when the first spade of earth was dug by Major J. Thomas Bannigan, the first administrator of the facility. While construction was still in progress, a staff of doctors, nurses and other support personnel was assembled and on duty on May 14, 1931 when the hospital opened its door to receive more than 200 veterans of World War I. Michael J. Grieco of Meriden was the first veteran admitted. He enlisted in 1917 and served as an Army private.

The formal dedication ceremony of what was the most up-to-date and best equipped veterans hospital in the United States was held July 12, 1931.



The veterans hospital at Newington during construction on September 3, 1930.

(see more vintage photos on page 2)

## In this Issue:

Newington  
Vintage Photos 2

Employees of the  
Month 3

Special Recognition  
Awards 3

In the NEWS 4

## Upcoming Events:

### Employee Town Meetings

#### West Haven

Monday, June 23

Donaldson A

8:30 - 9:30 a.m.

3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday, June 24

Midnight - 1:00 a.m.

#### Newington

Monday, June 23

Red Room

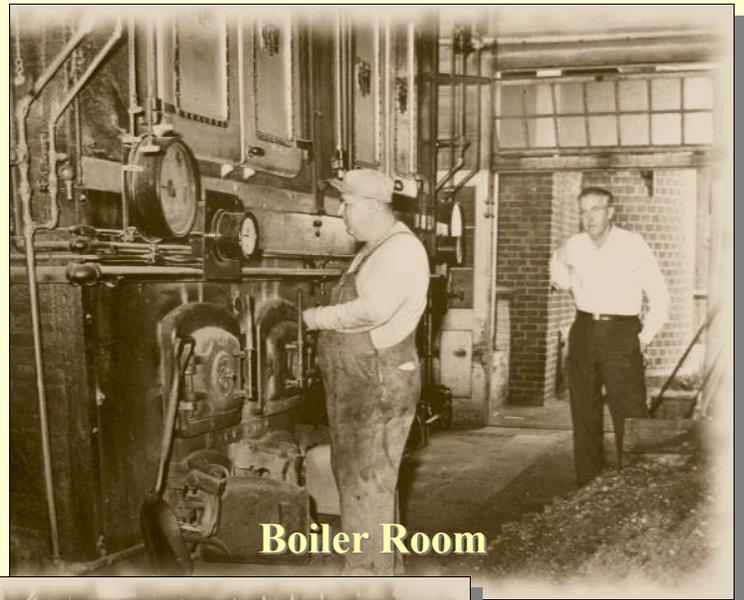
11:00 a.m. - Noon

12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

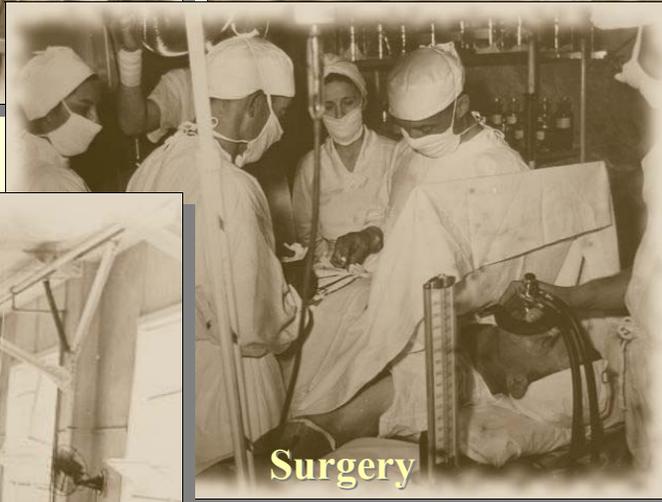
# - The Newington Campus in 1945 -



Office Assistants



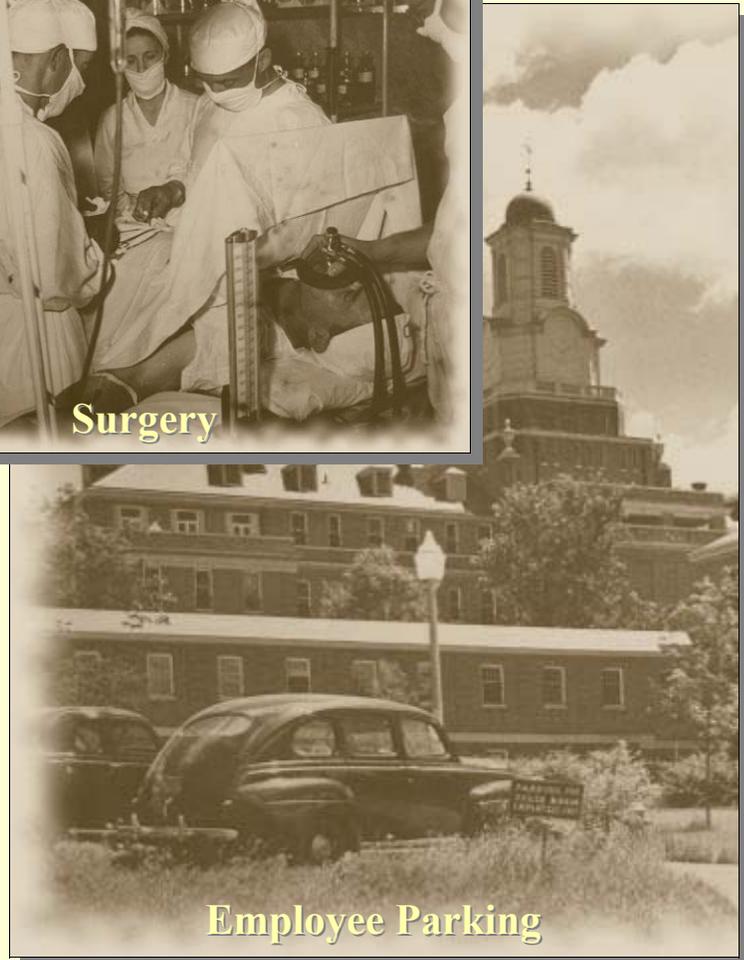
Boiler Room



Surgery



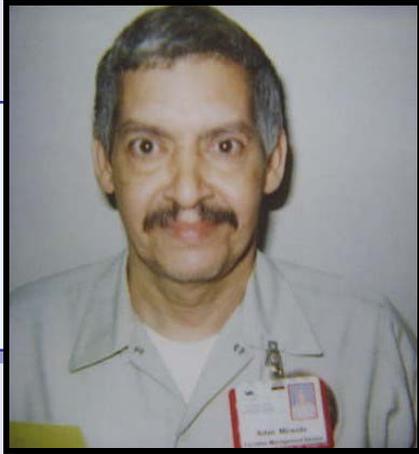
Clinical Records Department



Employee Parking

# EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to the following employees who were recently selected as Employees of the Month at the West Haven campus. To nominate a deserving co-worker, please fill out a nomination form located in the Employee of the Month box in the cafeteria.



**March**

**Adan Miranda**

Facilities Management Service



**April**

**Joyce Sadl**

Medical Service  
Pulmonary & Critical Care



**May**

**Wanda Pannell-Mitchell**

Ambulatory Care  
Firm B



**Dr. Kenneth Cohen** and **Leo Calderone** each received a plaque from director **Roger Johnson** at the Director's Staff Meeting on June 16. The plaques were awarded in recognition of their efforts to establish outpatient clinics for veterans throughout the state.

## In the NEWS...

**David Mayer**, a student volunteer at the VA Connecticut Healthcare System, West Haven campus is the recipient of a \$5,000 DAV scholarship. David is a graduating senior from Notre Dame High School in West Haven, Conn. who has volunteered in our geriatric extended care unit. David completed a project to improve the veterans lives on the geriatric unit. He has a love of music and often noticed the power of music to heal. He had an idea to create a mobile self-contained music cart. Being a Boy Scout, David decided to take this idea on as a Scout project. He designed the perfect cart and found the company that would donate it and also expanded the music repertoire with the assistance of the patients doing a survey to find out what kind of music they enjoyed. Thanks to his vision and persistence, VA Connecticut now has a fully equipped mobile music library. David is an honors student and plans to pursue a career at NASA.

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