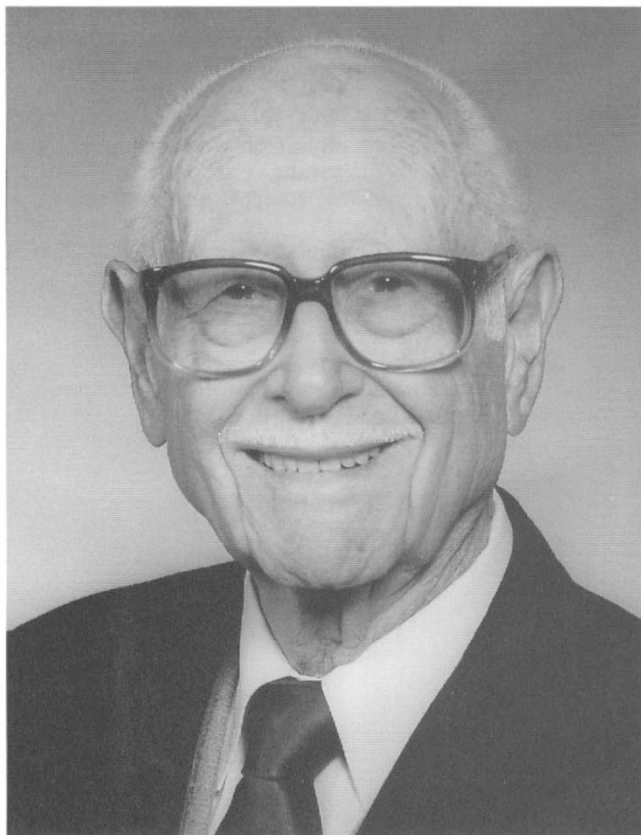




## Obituary/Medallist Notice

Dr Avrom Estin Comarr, M.D., D.A.B.U., F.A.C.S., F.I.C.S.,  
Medallist of the International Medical Society of Paraplegia 1995



Dr Comarr earned his MD in 1941 from The Chicago Medical School, in Chicago, Illinois. He served with the 3rd & 12th Armored Division of the US Army from 1942–1946, being stationed in Europe, participating in the Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland, and the Central European campaigns. He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Plaque, and the Belgian Fourregere. He retired as a Major from the Army Reserves in 1952.

Dr Comarr completed his Medical Residency at the Polyclinic in Cleveland, Ohio, (1941–1942) and at the Veterans Administration Hospitals in Van Nuys and Long Beach, CA, (1946–1950). During this time he was already being recognized for his excellent work, receiving a Citation of Merit from the American Legion, California Paralyzed Veterans Association, and the Disabled American Veterans.

In 1946 Dr Comarr started a long and productive affiliation with the Veterans Administration Hospital in Long Beach, CA. He served as Assistant Chief and Chief of the Urology Section of the Spinal Cord Injury Service from 1946–1970, and as the Chief of the Spinal Cord Injury Service from 1970–1973. He received 11 Suggestion Awards for his work to improve patient care, some examples are the multi-holed catheter, and an Improved

Nephrostomy Guide. He currently maintains a Consultant position with the VA. In 1991 the hospital dedicated a plaque in honor of Dr Comarr in appreciation of his devotion and service concerning all aspects of care for the spinal cord injured.

Dr Comarr in 1955 joined the staff at Rancho Los Amigos Medical Center in Downey, CA, and currently serves as the Medical Director for Ambulatory Care Services, as Chief for the Outpatient Section of Spinal Injuries Services, and Attending Physician of the Spinal Injury Service. He served as Chief of the Urology Service from 1955–1973. In 1989 The A Estin Comarr Spinal Injury Clinic was dedicated to Dr Comarr in appreciation of his 34 years of patient care at the facility.

He is an Emeritus Clinical Professor of Urology from the Loma Linda University and an Emeritus Professor of Surgery of the University of Southern California Schools of Medicine. He served at these schools from 1953 to 1981.

Dr Comarr was the Founding Chairman of the American Paraplegia Society in 1954, and was elected the first President in 1955, and remained an honorary member. He has received many honors from this organization, the latest being the first Distinguished Clinical Service Award in 1993. He continued to be active in this and in several other organizations.

He has been the recipient of numerous awards nationally and internationally. These include being the first recipient of the Annual Scientific Meritorious Award to a Distinguished Alumnus, in 1963 from the Alumni Association of The Chicago Medical School. He has received medical awards from Israel, Mexico and Colombia. He received the American Spinal Injury Association Lifetime Achievement Award in 1990.

Dr Comarr's contribution to medical knowledge is extensive; he has published more than 500 articles, and has presented over 2000 papers/lectures. His devotion to his profession, patients and the community is evident in his endeavors to enhance the practice of medicine and the care of the spinal cord injured patient.

All members of IMSOP congratulate Dr A Estin Comarr on the honor of being the 1995 Medallist of the International Medical Society of Paraplegia. Our colleague has attained this recognition based on his extensive contributions to the care of paraplegia patients.

Since writing this, most sadly, Estin passed away on 2 January 1996 in Long Beach, California after a short illness.

Professor Inder Perkash MD, FACS, FRCS

Professor Eltorai also gave an outline of the distinguished career and of the many honors that were bestowed on Dr A Estin Comarr, as have been provided above by Professor Perkash, and he went on to say:-

Dr Comarr was dedicated to improving the conditions of the spinal cord injured. He began at a time when



treatment of spinal cord injury was relatively new and not very successful but through his efforts the outlook for the patient became better. Dr Comarr believed in the concept of total care by one physician with other physicians being consulted as needed rather than having the patient transferred from one doctor to another. He was a pioneer and teacher not only in Urology but in other conditions related to spinal cord injury such as pressure ulcers, tenotomies, neurotomies and blocks for spasticity; especially alcohol block for severe spasticity. He was one of the first to use intermittent catheterisation in the USA and his studies dealing with sexual function in paraplegics were unique and authentic. He established a school to teach physicians about spinal cord injury and interest them in this field and his center was the first to graduate spinal cord specialists.

He was renowned throughout the world and received considerable honoraria from national and international societies and academies. These include the ASIA Lifetime

Achievement Award, The American Paraplegia Society Award, State of California Physician of the Year, Speedy of the National Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Annual Medal of the International Medical Society of Paraplegia. The Outpatient Clinic at Rancho Los Amigos Hospital and the Urology Ward in the Long Beach Veterans Affairs Medical Center are named in his honour and a library and a national award are in progress.

Dr Comarr considered his role as physician as a sacred duty and he performed with the highest standards of care and compassion. To his patients he was a doctor, a friend and a counselor. Always dignified and tactful, he was a true gentleman and a talented and caring physician.

Dr Comarr is survived by his wife Ruth Harriet of Lakewood, daughter of Cynthia Comarr Berchan and son-in-law Paul Berchan of Ventura, California. He will be sorely missed by his patients, students and colleagues.

Professor Ibrahim Eltorai MD, FICS, FACA