

Background

As with other conflicts, the Vietnam War brought advances in medical care, some of which remain standard practice in civilian medical care today.

Medical needs during the Vietnam War provided for advancements in the areas of trauma care, blood supply, repair of blood vessels to save limbs, treatment of burns, and a better understanding the effects of a range of weapons. Some treatments and techniques for the care of burns and other wounds were available for the first time in the Vietnam-theater of operations.

The combination of rapid casualty evacuation, availability of whole blood, well-established forward hospitals, advanced surgical techniques, and improved medical management resulted in greatly improved care for the wounded in Vietnam in comparison to previous conflicts.



Navy Field Medical Service Training

Source: <https://www.operationmilitarykids.org/navy-hospital-corpsman/>



SOLDIER IN COUNTRY, VIETNAM

Prolonged exposure to contaminated water caused skin disease.

Source: National Archives, November 1967



FIELD MEDICAL SERVICE SCHOOL TRAINING EXERCISE

Source: U.S. Navy Medicine, January 1977

**CLEARED
For Open Publication**

Oct 23, 2020

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Department of Defense
OFFICE OF PREPUBLICATION AND SECURITY REVIEW

Vietnam War: Medical Facilities on U.S. Military Installations Historic Context Subtheme

This project was sponsored by the Department of Defense Legacy Resource Management Program, Project 18-518



MEDICAL FIELD TRAINING, CAMP BULLIS

Source: Inventory and Evaluation of Cold War-Era Resources Fort Sam Houston and Camp Bullis, Prior, et al. 2006

"Out of human destructiveness emerge potent new strategies of protection, remediation, and self-preservation. Call it an irony of war." (Paul E. Stepanky, An Irony of War, February 11, 2012)



Purpose

Many new and major construction projects associated with Vietnam-era medical treatment, research, and training are or are approaching 50-years old. This will require evaluation of their historical significance under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). This project provides a historic context and building typology for facilities on DoD installations that supported medical treatment, research, and training during the Vietnam War, 1962-1975. The report also includes specific example of U.S.-based installations where medical treatment, research, and training were conducted during the war.

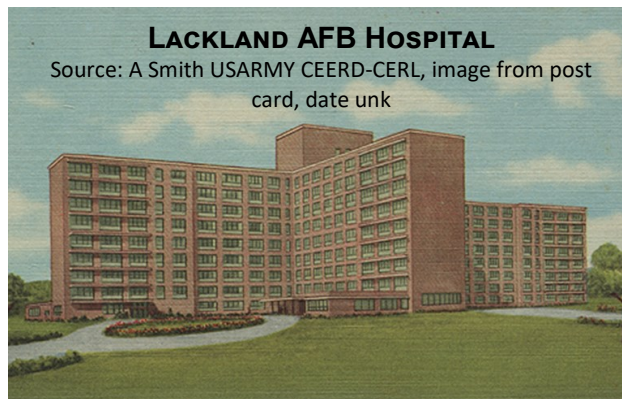
The report provides cultural resource managers and professionals with a standardized approach to identify this property types, determine historical significance of associated properties, and assess integrity, thereby greatly increasing efficiency and cost-savings in compliance with the NHPA and management.

The report can aid in developing installation-specific contexts to support the identification and evaluation of Vietnam War medical treatment, research, and training facilities on those installations.



Methodology

A literature review, investigation of sources for context, and a site visit were conducted to develop this context. Researchers accessed primary and secondary sources at the National Archives and Records Administration, military libraries and museums, university libraries, and online sources. DoD installation staff provided additional information and documentation.



Resource Types

Types of resources associated with this historic context include facilities and structures that were constructed or adapted and heavily used during 1962–1975 in support of the Vietnam War and were directly related to:

- Medical treatment facilities
- Research laboratories and facilities
- Medical Unit training facilities

Examples of Facilities:

- Hospitals
- Clinics
- Hospital ships
- Mortuaries
- Research and design laboratories
- Specialized chambers
- Classrooms and auditoriums
- Production plants and shops
- Testing laboratories
- Academic buildings and libraries
- Operating and examination rooms
- Outdoor training areas and courses
- Simulators



WATER IMMERSION LABORATORY, ARMY RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENTAL MEDICINE, NATICK, MA

Source: <https://www.usariem.army.mil/index.cfm/about/locations/natick>