Vietnam and the Home Front: Ground Combat Training

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Abstract

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, requires federal agencies to include cultural resources in their planning efforts. The U.S. military commands have been required to identify and analyze historic Vietnam-era buildings, structures, and sites in the United States as reaching that age in order to develop a strategy for future identification and evaluation of resources as well as cost-savings throughout the process. This report outlines the Vietnam-era ground combat training infrastructure used during the Vietnam War. There were three general categories of ground combat training facilities used: ranges, courses, and training villages. Infrastructure for those areas consisted of buildings, targets, obstacles, firing lines, and roads. The key to their construction was support by the Air Force and the Navy. This project outlines the general types of ground combat training infrastructures used during the Vietnam War. This project outlines the general types of ground combat training infrastructures used during the Vietnam War.

Methodology

Very little research has been conducted on Vietnam-era ground combat training properties in the United States. The research at ground combat training facilities has been isolated. This report has not examined training sites that were used to train reserve forces, members of the Army National Guard and Army Reserve, and members of the U.S. Marine Corps who were not part of a reserve component. The purpose of producing a report that includes this type of research is to provide a context of the war that supports decision-makers in the U.S. military in their efforts that will lead to the identification and evaluation of specific Vietnam-era ground combat training facilities, resulting in informed decisions in the planning process as well as cost savings throughout the process. This project outlines the Vietnam-era ground combat training infrastructure.

Benefits

This project can be used by cultural resource managers to develop more detailed research efforts that will lead to the identification and evaluation of specific Vietnam-era ground combat training facilities at DoD installations. The historical context provides a standardized approach to determining the historical significance of Vietnam-era ground combat training facilities, resulting in informed decisions in the planning process as well as cost savings throughout the process. By providing a standardized approach to determining the historical significance of Vietnam-era ground combat training facilities, the report provides information on DoD’s ground combat training missions. Some form of ground combat training was required for nearly all U.S. military personnel deploying to Vietnam. The increased demand for ground combat training was a primary component of preparing a soldier in-theater context of the Vietnam War from 1962 through 1975. As such, ground combat training operations conducted in Vietnam are explored and comparisons are made between field operations and how training in the United States was adapted to meet the demands of the ever-changing battlefield. This project does not examine the details of Vietnam-era military training through important battles and engagements, but provides a context of the war that supports decision-makers in the U.S. military in their efforts that will lead to the identification and evaluation of specific Vietnam-era ground combat training facilities, resulting in informed decisions in the planning process as well as cost savings throughout the process.

Ground Combat Training in the United States

Training villages and courses were used as a starting point for identifying and evaluating historic Vietnam-related ground combat training facilities. Some form of ground combat training was required for nearly all U.S. military personnel deploying to Vietnam. The increased demand for ground combat training was a primary component of preparing a soldier

Courses

Courses were designed as circuits where recruits were taught how to react to a variety of conditions and obstacles. Courses provided realistic training in which soldiers learned how to maneuver, use their weapons, and react quickly and efficiently.

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Training suit with helmet and pants, 1969. Training suit with helmet and pants on the left. Training suit with helmet and pants on the left.

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