



Helicopter Training and Use on US Military Installations Vietnam War Historic Context Subthemes

Project # 14-739

Background:

Although the military had helicopters prior to 1962, the war in Vietnam is known as the “Helicopter War” because of the extensive use of helicopters in the combat arenas and the important changes in technology during these years. In the United States, the buildup for the Vietnam War included construction of mission-related buildings and structures to support the war. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, requires federal agencies to inventory and evaluate their cultural resources, usually as they near 50 years of age. These structures are about to turn 50 and there is currently no existing historic context describing the development, construction, and use of Vietnam War helicopter-related facilities. A broad overview from 1962 through 1975 highlights the Vietnam-influenced construction that created facilities on many installations. This new construction augmented existing World War II-era infrastructure that was heavily utilized during the Vietnam War.



Fall of Saigon, US Embassy (Source: usnews.com)

Objective:

The purpose of this effort was to research and develop a historic context subtheme for how military helicopter use during the Vietnam War influenced construction on US military installations during this time period. The report also provides context and typology of Vietnam War (1962–1975) helicopter resources on Department of Defense (DoD) installations in the United States.

Summary of Approach:

The process included a literature review, investigation of primary and secondary sources for context, site visits to select installations, and report development. Researchers accessed primary and secondary sources at the National Archives and Records Administration, military libraries and museums, university libraries, and other sources. A number of individuals provided additional support with data requests and site visits.

Benefit:

The report provides cultural resource professionals with a standardized approach to identify property types, determine historical significance of these properties, and assess integrity, thereby greatly increasing efficiency and cost savings.



Ellyson Field, 1964 (Source: National Naval Aviation Museum)

Accomplishments:

The overarching context provides common ground for understanding the need for construction on military installations in support of the conflict in Vietnam. It also identified several thematic areas related to stateside construction in support of the war effort under which significance can be defined.

This report provides context and typology for Vietnam War (1962–1975) helicopter-related resources on DoD installations in the United States and contains an analysis of the development and use of rotary-wing aircraft during the war. Military action in Vietnam is addressed in general terms only to fortify the overall context describing the use of helicopters in the war and how their increased use affected DoD installations in the United States.

This report can be utilized to develop installation-specific contexts to support the identification and evaluation of Vietnam War helicopter-related facilities on those installations. This historic context provides military cultural resources professionals with a common understanding for determining the historical significance of Vietnam War helicopter-related facilities.

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Fort Benning, H-19 Sikorski (Source: US Army)

