

## BACKGROUND

The Korean War provided a wake-up call reinforced the reality that small-scale warfare using aerial components like tactical bombers and fighters remained strategically important. However, military leadership also determined that such warfare should be avoided in favor of large-scale attacks. Given this, Department of Defense (DoD) planners sought to shift military strategy away from conventional warfare and toward massive retaliation and air defense—a strategy known as New Look—that shaped the military and aviation strategy on the eve of the Vietnam War. During this time, technological innovation was also maintained as a cornerstone of aircraft training and development.

Pilots flew a myriad of aircraft for the Vietnam war effort. Missions involving aircraft included defending villages and outposts, attacking enemy troops and convoys, escorting road convoys and bombing strikes, dropping flares for attacking fighters, flying armed reconnaissance, search and rescue, transporting troops and equipment, refueling, interdicting the movement of enemy forces and supplies, directing air strikes and bombing runs, spraying defoliants, and psychological warfare.

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**Ranch Hand Aircraft Spreading Defoliant**

*Source:* Record Group 342, National Archives



**Three F-4D Phantom II Aircraft from the *USS Midway* and three Corsair II Aircraft from the *USS America* (CVA 66) Drop Bombs**

*Source:* General Color Photographic File of the Department of Navy, 1958 - 1981, Record Group 428, National Archives

## Vietnam War: Pilot and Air Support Training on U.S. Military Installations Historic Context Subtheme

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**Navy Aircraft Aboard the *USS Kitty Hawk* Poised to Attack the Haiphong Power Plant**

*Source:* J.W. Parker. Vis-Aid Index to the General Photographic Files of the Department of the Navy, 1958 - 1981, Record Group 428, National Archives



## PURPOSE

This project contributes to the overall, broad Vietnam War context by addressing pilot and air support training. More specifically, this project addresses the use of fixed-wing aircraft and the state-side training associated with these aircraft throughout each military branch during the Vietnam War. The report then provides a framework for identifying and evaluating associated historic properties on Department of Defense (DoD) installations.

The report provides cultural resource managers and professionals with a standardized approach to identify property types, determine historical significance, and assess integrity, thereby greatly increasing efficiency and cost-savings in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act.



**An Instructor at Lowry AFB, Colorado, Explains Elements of the F-4C Offensive Fire Control System**

Source: History of Air Education and Training Command 1942-2002, Thomas A. Manning

## METHODOLOGY

Methods for completing the historic context 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 online sources. DoD installation staff provided additional information and documentation.



**Dilbert Dunker, Pensacola NAS**

Source: <http://www.navalaviationmuseum.org/history-up-close/objects-of-history/birth-dilbert-dunker>

## RESOURCE TYPES

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

- Pilot training
- Training to integrate or coordinate fixed-wing aircraft into broad military operations
- Air support training
- Development of airplane tactics and strategies
- Research and development associated with fixed-wing aircraft

## EXAMPLES OF FACILITIES

- Academic buildings that include classrooms for lectures as well as other indoor space to conduct hands-on training. For example, these spaces may include simulators, laboratories, shops, and pools.
- Outdoor training areas that include tactical instrument training courses, aerial fighting ranges and targets, bombing ranges, aircraft carrier landing deck simulators, and catapults.
- Support facilities that include structures built or renovated in response to an influx of pilot and air support personnel. These facilities include housing, headquarters and offices, recreation facilities, and flight line facilities.



**USAF Pilots Refueling In-Route to a Target in North Vietnam**

Source: Miscellaneous Vietnam Photographs, 1958 - 1974, Record Group 306, National Archives

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