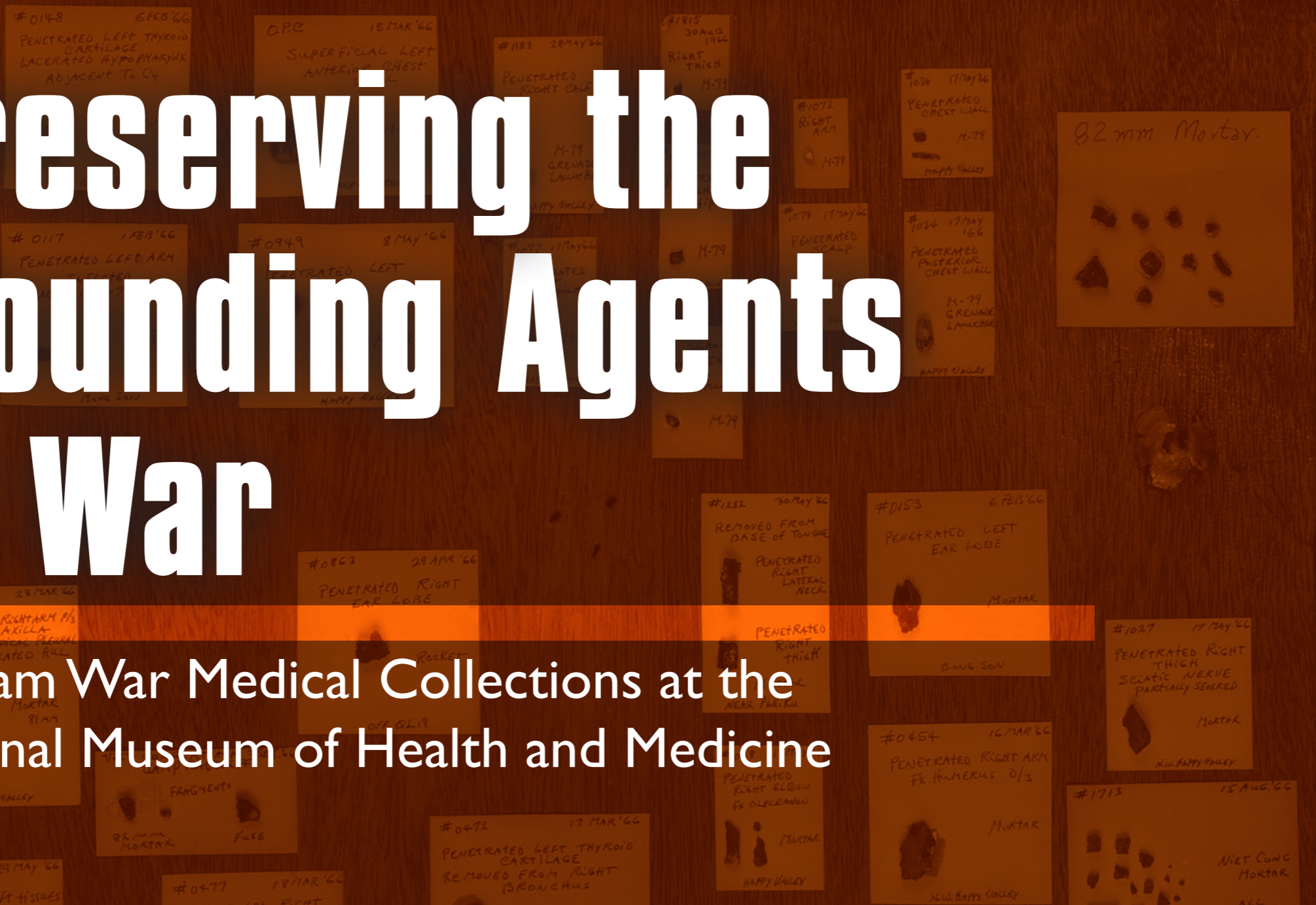


# Preserving the Wounding Agents of War

Vietnam War Medical Collections at the National Museum of Health and Medicine





In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War, the National Museum of Health and Medicine is showcasing its historical and archival collections related to the role of American military medicine during the conflict.



Dr. Norman M. Rich (left) and Alan Hawk, NMHM historical collections manager, with Vietnam War-era objects Rich donated to the museum. (NMHM Photo)

While serving as the chief of surgery within the 2nd Surgical Hospital (Mobile Army) in An Khê, Vietnam, Norman M. Rich set up a small medical museum within the hospital. The collection ranges from a display board featuring bullets and fragments from explosive devices once embedded in the limbs of service members, to Vietnamese pharmaceutical kits and a collection of punji sticks.

The Hansen Collection consists of two notebooks of slides from the Vietnam War, donated by Col. James L. Hansen in 1970.



Helicopter scene of medical evacuation personnel moving wounded soldier to a stretcher prior to transport in medical helicopter, Vietnam War, ca. 1964.

Hansen 190



A wounded soldier is supported by two others as they approach a medevac helicopter in Vietnam, ca. 1966.

Hansen 278



Kenneth G. Swan, M.D., a trauma, thoracic, and vascular surgeon, was sent to Vietnam to document surgical management of combat casualties using color photography, including approximately 200 surgical cases with over 6,000 slides and photos. Swan served three tours in Vietnam, and afterwards, based on his experiences, wrote two textbooks on the treatment of gunshot wounds. Swan's collection of photographs and case studies from his 1970 tour in Vietnam is now housed in NMHM's Otis Historical Archives.



Interior of Evacuation Helicopter, Vietnam. Versatility was key in designing helicopters for transportation of the wounded during Vietnam. Typically, up to three patients could be transported at one time in the UH-1 Huey series.

Swan 044-26



A U.S. soldier of the 25th Infantry Division sustained an injury to his left shoulder when his armored personnel carrier ran over a land mine. The patient was taken to the 12th Evacuation Hospital where he was treated by Maj. Edwin Kayser. Pressure is maintained as the second surgeon applies traction to the flexed elbow on the injured side of the patient.

Swan 135-4





From the Rich Collection, featuring bullets and fragments from explosive devices once embedded in the limbs of service members who served during the Vietnam War. (NMHM Photo)







**LEFT**  
M-1 helmet damaged by  
7.62 mm gunfire from the  
Rich Collection.  
M-981.00001



**ABOVE**  
North Vietnamese Army boot  
punctured by a punji stick from the  
Rich Collection.

M-762.00112



**ABOVE**  
Combat medic bag used by SP5  
John Listman of the China Beach  
Rest and Recuperation Center,  
Da Nang, Vietnam, March 1971 to  
January 1972.

M-660.10777

The Combined Materiel Exploitation Center was responsible for the analysis and dissemination of the information acquired from captured materiel to commands in the field, as well as to policy makers in Washington, D.C. Captured materiel was cataloged, photographed, and analyzed by military intelligence. CMEC published many reports documenting Viet Cong medical activities and maintained a small museum in Saigon of captured enemy materiel. The museum's Historical Collections houses several artifacts from the Medical Materiel Section of CMEC.



**LEFT**

A display of one of 28 panels of pharmaceuticals captured by the 25th Infantry Division in the vicinity of Củ Chi, Vietnam, ca. 1966.

(NMHM Photo)



**ABOVE**

A Vietnamese pharmaceutical kit from the Combined Materiel Exploitation Center Collection.

M-660.45201



**LEFT**

Chinese aid bag used by a National Liberation Front nurse.

M-660.00465



In keeping with its mission, and in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War, NMHM continues to seek and collect documents, photographs, films, and artifacts related to the contributions of American military medicine during that conflict.



The collections held by NMHM are housed in state-of-the-art facilities.

If you would like to speak with NMHM staff about adding to these important collections, contact us through our website.

[www.medicalmuseum.health.mil](http://www.medicalmuseum.health.mil)





The National Museum of Health and Medicine was established during the Civil War as the Army Medical Museum, a center for the collection of specimens and artifacts for research related to trauma and pathology. The museum's mission to preserve and explore the impact of military medicine spans more than 160 years and includes each major U.S. armed conflict. However, military medicine does not exist in a vacuum, and it is the museum's vision to preserve, inspire, and inform the history, research, and advancement of military as well as civilian medicine through world-class collections, digital technology, and public engagement.

Visit the museum to learn about topics ranging from combat casualty care and traumatic brain injury to the history of vaccine development and techniques in forensic identification.

The museum's exhibits and programs provide forums for both informal and structured learning that connect the mission of the Department of Defense museum with the public. The museum is a component of the Defense Health Agency.



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