

Vietnam's Medical Battlefield

Gordon Paulson joined the Navy on active duty in 1961. In Vietnam, he was stationed at the Naval Hospital in Da Nang as a chaplain. While on duty, he conducted church services, visited patients, and provided counseling. For Gordon, serving during Vietnam allowed him to fulfill his purpose of helping people. However, chaplains faced many challenges. Gordon offered emotional care to people under stress, but in return, his work put stress on him. For men who were in the hospital, the presence of a minister was comforting and uplifted their spirits. During a mortar attack on the hospital one evening, Paulson recalled the work of Navy nurses and doctors on wounded men. Paulson thought these doctors to be highly skillful given the extreme circumstances they experienced in Vietnam.



Watch Gordon Paulson's oral history, as he describes his experiences working with the doctors at the Naval Hospital in Da Nang. The video is available on YouTube at: <https://tinyurl.com/GordonPaulson> or you can click directly on this QR code from your smartphone or tablet (using either a QR reader app or your phone's camera).



Questions to consider:

1. What is the importance of oral histories? Would you consider these accounts to be artifacts? Why or why not?
2. How would you compare the work of Navy doctors to chaplains in Vietnam?
3. How does Paulson describe Navy doctors at the beginning of the video?
4. How might patients feel toward Navy doctors and chaplains while in Vietnam? Why?