



USAMRMC STRATEGIC INFORMATION PAPER NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HEALTH AND MEDICINE (NMHM)

MISSION

The National Museum of Health and Medicine, established in 1862, inspires interest in and promotes the understanding of medicine—past, present, and future—with a special emphasis on tri-service American military medicine. As a National Historic Landmark recognized for its ongoing value to the health of the military and to the nation, the Museum identifies, collects, and preserves important and unique resources to support a broad agenda of innovative exhibits, educational programs, and scientific, historical, and medical research.

BACKGROUND

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 for research in military medicine and surgery. In 1862, Surgeon General William Hammond directed medical officers in the field to collect “specimens of morbid anatomy together with projectiles and foreign bodies removed” and to forward them to the newly founded museum for study. The Museum’s first curator, John Brinton, visited mid-Atlantic battlefields and solicited contributions from doctors throughout the Union Army. During and after the war, Museum staff took pictures of wounded soldiers showing effects of gunshot wounds as well as results of amputations and other surgical procedures. The information collected was compiled into six volumes of *The Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion*, published between 1870 and 1883.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Museum staff engaged in various types of medical research. They pioneered in photomicrographic techniques, established a library and cataloging system which later formed the basis for *Index Medicus*, and led the Museum into research on infectious diseases while discovering the cause of yellow fever. They

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contributed to research on vaccinations for typhoid fever, and during World War I, Museum staff were involved in vaccinations and health education campaigns, including major efforts to combat sexually-transmissible diseases.

By World War II, research at the Museum focused increasingly on pathology; in 1946 the Museum became a division of the new Army Institute of Pathology (AIP), which became the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP) in 1949. The Museum's library was transferred to the National Library of Medicine. The Army Medical Museum became the Medical Museum of the AFIP in 1949, the Armed Forces Medical Museum in 1974, and the National Museum of Health and Medicine in 1989.

The Base Realignment and Closure Act of 2005 separated NMHM from AFIP and in 2011, NMHM relocated from Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. to the Fort Detrick-Forest Glen Annex in Silver Spring, Maryland. NMHM celebrated the 150th anniversary of its founding on May 21, 2012 with a grand opening of new exhibits at the new purpose-built facility.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q *How is NMHM funded?*

A NMHM is a joint activity of the Department of Defense and receives Defense Health Program funds.

Q *How is NMHM aligned?*

A Directive-Type Memorandum 12-001, "Department of Defense Executive Agent (DoD EA) for the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES) and the National Museum of Health and Medicine (NMHM)" designates the NMHM as a joint activity of the Department of Defense and further designates the Secretary of the Army as the Executive Agent for the NMHM; NMHM was further delegated to the U.S. Army Medical Command.

In 2011, NMHM was administratively aligned as a headquarters element of the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command at Fort Detrick.

KEY THEMES AND MESSAGES

Collections: NMHM maintains a National Historic Landmark collection of more than 25 million objects and is dedicated to preserving, collecting, and interpreting those objects, specimens, photographs and documents chronicling the history and practice of medicine over the centuries. NMHM collections represent archival materials, anatomical and pathological specimens, medical instruments and artifacts, and microscope slide-based medical research collections. The collections focus particularly on the history and practice of American medicine, military medicine, and current medical research issues.

(cont. on following)



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Q *Educational partnerships*

A Now in its 26th year, NMHM administers an annual Forensic Anthropology Course, with support from the Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine, Inc., the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System, the Maryland Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.

Q *Collaborations*

A In 2012, NMHM entered into a Collaborative Research and Development Agreement with NMHMChicago and an external software development team to develop two interactive applications in partnership with NMHM staff. NMHM staff provided subject matter expertise and access to unique museum collections as part of the agreement.

Q *Major Programs*

- A**
- **Brain Awareness Week:** Celebrating its 15th year at NMHM in 2014, Brain Awareness Week (BAW) is the NMHM's most significant annual education program. Targeting middle school students in the National Capital Region, BAW integrates hands-on activities with small-group interactions led by leading neuroscientists and brain sciences researchers. Students are encouraged to consider a career in the medical sciences, while offering them a curricular-focused, informal learning activity in a dynamic museum setting.
 - **Medical Museum Science Café:** A monthly series of informal learning engagements, this series (started in spring 2011) brings together authors, researchers, historians and others to discuss topics relevant to NMHM missions.
 - **Hands-On Education:** in 2012, NMHM initiated a 12-month series of monthly programs, linked by a common overarching theme tied to an NMHM mission. The programs generally target middle-school students, and runs once a month at NMHM in Silver Spring. In 2012, NMHM offered "Organ of the Month," during which participants interacted with natural human organ specimens, guided by expert NMHM staff. In 2013, NMHM introduced Forensic Fridays, a serialized program that will teach participants the basic disciplines involved in a scientific identification of a missing service member.

**KEY THEMES
AND MESSAGES**

(cont. from previous)

Research: NMHM holdings are a major national research resource asset sought after in the fields of neuroanatomy and neuropathology, human development, forensic anthropology, historic and contemporary medical technology, Civil War medicine and more. NMHM manages numerous research requests each year, and Museum staff utilizes collections research resources for ongoing research projects.

Engagement: NMHM programs encompass permanent exhibitions at the main NMHM exhibit galleries in Silver Spring, as well as temporary exhibits in major military installations in the National Capital Region. NMHM staff offer a renowned continuing education course in forensic anthropology.



- **Professional Activities:** NMHM staff offered numerous professional development tours, hosting command leadership and staff from several USAMRMC elements, as well as leadership and staff from major professional and specialty societies; NMHM also facilitated research for and by DoD activities and other federal agencies.

Q *Volunteering at NMHM*

- A** More than 20 volunteers support a variety of NMHM missions, including tour and outreach programs, and collections research tasks.

NMHM was awarded the Presidential Service Award for Most Volunteer Group Hours at Fort Detrick in 2012.

Q *Accessions*

- A** Since November 2011, NMHM logged 76 new accessions (individual objects of collections of objects), including: a thermal manikin from the USARIEM; a doctor’s bag from a former White House physician; a surgical kit used by a Confederate physician at the Battle of Shiloh in 1862; and experimental nerve generation scaffolding from AFIRM and TATRC.

Q *Loans: NMHM holdings on loan to other institutions, including:*

- A** Gettysburg Seminary Ridge Museum; Missouri History Museum; Canadian War Museum; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Museum of Science and Industry, Tampa; National Gallery of Art; National Museum of Civil War Medicine; Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History; St Elizabeths Hospital; St Joseph (MO) Museum; Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences; U.S. Capitol Visitor’s Center.

Q *Recent Exhibits:*

- A** NMHM hosted “WHACK’ed...and then everything was different,” an art exhibition honoring survivors of traumatic brain injuries, from March-October 2013. NMHM also collaborated with the University of Maryland’s Health Sciences and Human Services Library in Baltimore, Md., to feature WHACK’ed in Baltimore in September 2013.

NMHM continues a permanent, rotating exhibition of artifacts in the headquarters building of the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command at Fort Detrick, Md.

NMHM continues a permanent, rotating exhibition of art and photographs in the headquarters of the Defense Health Activity in Falls Church, Virginia.

Temporary exhibitions at NMHM in Silver Spring have featured the history of combating yellow fever, anatomical illustrations, and “What Can We Learn from a Brain?” which spotlighted the brain of Professor Albert Einstein and the papers of the pathologist who performed Einstein’s autopsy in 1955.