

George James Hill
Captain, Medical Corps, U.S. Navy Reserve (retired)

George James Hill was born at Cedar Rapids, Linn County, Iowa, on October 7, 1932. He was the elder son of Gerald L. Hill and Essie Mae (Thompson) Hill. After graduating from Sac City, Iowa, High School, he attended Yale University.

As a freshman in college in May 1950, he enlisted as a corporal in the Platoon Leaders Class (PLC) of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. He completed Basic Training at Quantico, Virginia, in the summer of 1950 and Officer Training at Quantico in the summer of 1951. He was Honorably Discharged in June 1952. His awards included the Rifle Expert Badge (2 awards), and qualification with several other weapons. His active duty in 1950 and 1951 qualified him for the first award of the National Defense Service Medal (NDSM).

After graduating from Yale, he attended the Harvard Medical School, from which he graduated in 1957. In 1960, he enlisted as a Senior Assistant Surgeon (0-3, now Lieutenant) in the U.S. Public Health Service. He served on active duty from June 1961 until August 1963 as a Clinical Associate in the Laboratory of Clinical Investigation, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) National Institutes of Health (NIH), at the Clinical Center, Bethesda, Maryland. He was assigned to develop a research project to study patients with leprosy. His project included a period of orientation at the U.S. Leprosy Hospital in Carville, Louisiana, a two-week period of work with leprosy in Mexico with an Official Passport, and his first book, *Leprosy in Five Young Men*, published in 1970 by the Colorado Associated University Press. His unit at the NIAID was placed on alert for invasion of Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. After completing his eight years of obligated military service as a physician, including two years of active duty, he transferred to the Navy Reserve as a Lieutenant Commander (0-4) in January 1968.

His nearly 25-year career in the Navy Reserve was completed with retirement as a Captain (0-6) on his sixtieth birthday, 7 October 1992. He was promoted to Commander in 1973 and to Captain in 1980. His awards include the Navy and Marine Corps Parachute Badge (1975), which was the first that was awarded to a Navy medical officer. He was also the first Navy medical officer to graduate (in 1974) from the U.S. Army Airborne School, Fort Benning, Georgia.

He received the U.S. Meritorious Service Medal in 1993 following retirement from the Navy. He is entitled to wear the Joint Meritorious Unit (JMU) ribbon that was awarded to the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) in 1992; the Navy Unit Citation (NUC) that was awarded to the Commander, Naval Forces Vietnam (COMNAVFORV) in 1972; the Meritorious Unit Citation (MUC) awarded to the National Naval Medical Center in 1991, and a second award of the MUC that was given in 1991 to personnel assigned to the Navy Recruiting Command. He received the second award of the NDSM for service in Vietnam in 1972 and a third award for nine months of active duty during the period of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm (the first Gulf War) in 1990-91. He is entitled to wear the Vietnam Service Ribbon with one bronze star (for the Easter Offensive); the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with ribbon attachments of a silver M (for Mobilization) and silver Hourglass (for 20+ years of service, plus mobilization); the Navy Expert Rifle Medal; Navy Expert Pistol Medal; Navy and Marine Corps Overseas Service Ribbon; Navy Recruiting Service Ribbon with bronze star device; Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation with palm and frame; and Republic of Vietnam Civic Unit Citation with palm and frame.

His other government awards include the Gold Wreath from the Navy Recruiting Command, with a gold star in lieu of a second award; the Outstanding Service Medal from the USUHS; the New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal; and the New Jersey Vietnam Service Medal. At the end of his first tour in Vietnam, he was presented with the U.S. Navy's Black Beret for crews of swift boats, and the caduceus badge of the Medical Corps of the Republic of Vietnam.

Captain Hill's assignments included command of Reserve Units in Denver, Colorado; in Reading, Penn.; Bethesda, Maryland; and Washington, D.C. Three of these units received Navy Reserve District

Best of Type Awards. He was the Staff Medical Officer for Reserve Centers in St. Louis, Missouri, and Huntington, West Virginia; for 7th Navy Reserve Construction Battalion Regiment; and for the Navy Reserve District in Philadelphia, Penn. He held Top Secret clearance for the last five and one-half years of his Navy service (in effect from 870217), when he was in Command of Navy Medical Reserve units at the Office of the Director of Navy Medicine, at the Pentagon, and at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS). While at the Pentagon, his duty included service for one year as the Reserve counterpart for the Chief of Contingency Planning for the Plans and Policy Division of Navy Medicine; and one year as the Reserve counterpart for the Chief Medical Officer of the Marine Corps. For a period of twenty-three years, he also had additional duty with the Navy Recruiting Command as a Naval Medical Liaison Officer in American medical schools.

His Reserve deployments included service as a general surgeon for Naval Hospitals at Kodiak, Alaska; San Diego, California; and in Keflavik, Iceland; as a general medical officer at Twenty-Nine Palms, California, and as thoracic surgeon for Naval Hospital Pendleton, California. Deployed with the 4th Marine Division at Alloy Express, the NATO exercise in 1982, he was the Senior Medical Officer for two weeks in all of the NATO forces in North Norway. He performed consultant service for the Naval Medical Research and Development Command (NMRDC) at the Naval Medical Research Institute (NMRI), Bethesda, Maryland; at Naval Medical Research Unit (NMRU-3) in Cairo, Egypt, at the end of the Gulf War, and at NMRU-4, Lima, Peru. He was called to two periods of duty as a member of Selection Boards; one for promotions to the rank of commander, and one for promotions to captain. At the end of his first tour of duty in Vietnam in 1972, he presented a report with slides at the weekly briefing of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV), and in response he received a letter of thanks from the Commander, LGEN Frederick Weyand. At the end of his second tour, in 1973, while he was serving for two weeks as Acting Deputy Surgeon to the Pacific Fleet, he briefed the weekly conference of CINCPAC, ADM Noel Gaylor, about the medical situation in Vietnam. He mentioned that he had made a film of his performance of a thyroidectomy under acupuncture in a Chinese hospital when he was there.

His collateral duties included service as Consultant in Cold Weather Medicine to the Surgeon General, for five Surgeons General over a period of fifteen years; and as Consultant in Physical Training to the Commander of Naval Education and Training. He wrote "Prevention of Cold Casualties," (NAVMEDCOMINST 6260.12), which was published by the Naval Medical Command in February 1987 and was the official doctrine on that subject for the next fifteen years. When he joined the Navy, medical officers were expected to follow the Naval Medical Instruction entitled "Medical Intelligence Reports of Ports and Countries Visited." Although this NAVMEDCOMINT has been discontinued, but during the twenty-year period from 1972 until 1992, he wrote several classified Medical Intelligence Reports, based on observations in Vietnam, Singapore, India, Nepal, Peru, Bolivia, Turkey, the Falklands, Antarctica, Australia, East Africa, and elsewhere. He also traveled in civilian clothes during the Cold War to locations behind the Iron Curtain, as he accepted invitations to lecture on his medical research at the University of Krakow in 1985 and at the International Cancer Conferences in Budapest (1984) and Hamburg (1990). These trips included travel through Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, East Germany, and Berlin, shortly after the Berlin Wall came down but while "Checkpoint Charlie" was still in place.

Naval officers at that time were encouraged to leave their calling cards with Naval Attachés in foreign capitals, and offer their services, if they might be needed. They were also encouraged to leave their calling cards at the homes of their superiors when they arrived at a duty station, and to pay a visit to the Commanding Officer of each station upon arrival and prior to departure. This advice led to referrals and other opportunities to observe and report on medical intelligence. He was a guest of the family of the Governor of the State of Jalisco, Mexico; of the Deputy Secretary of Health of Colombia, in Bogotá; of the Chairman of the Singapore Port Authority; of the President of the College of Surgeons of Bolivia; and of the President of the Philippines College of Surgeons. He was a guest of the Surgeon General of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth, England, when he represented the U.S. Navy at a conference which debriefed the medical personnel who participated in the Falklands War of 1982. Consistent with the traditions of the sea, Captain and Mrs. Hill were invited to sit at the table of the captain of a Russian icebreaker on

New Year's Eve 1994-5, while sailing across the Drake Passage between Antarctica and South America, and later in the Galapagos Islands. In uniform, he was a guest at the home of the Governor General of Bermuda, after he gave the introduction at lunch for the mayor of the capital city, Hamilton, at the Royal Yacht Club. He was invited to attend the weekly staff briefing of the Ambassador to Egypt in 1991, when he was on duty at NAMRU-3.

He gave lectures to Navy and Joint Forces groups on observations regarding cold weather issues, medical intelligence, infectious disease, and cancer at the Naval War College, Newport, R.I.; at Fort Dietrick, Maryland; in Narvik, Norway; Keflavik, Iceland; Portsmouth, England; Fort Leonard Wood, Kansas; Fever Hospital, Cairo, Egypt; and Newport News, Virginia. He was the Keynote Speaker on "Master and Commander – Surgeon and Spy" for the annual Navy Birthday Celebration at the Naval Reconnaissance Office, Chantilly, Maryland. He authored several peer-reviewed publications about Navy medicine in medical journals, including reports on specialists in Navy Medicine, medical care in Vietnam, and prevention of cold injuries – the latter was in *Proceedings* of the U.S. Naval Institute.

In civilian life, he frequently served as an inspector of hospital accreditations for the American College of Surgeons and for the Joint Commission, and he was asked to assist Navy hospitals in preparation for these inspections. In this capacity he served as a Consultant for Navy hospitals in Portsmouth, New Hampshire; Newport, Rhode Island; Groton, Connecticut; Bethesda, Maryland; Newport, Virginia; Jacksonville, Pensacola, and Orlando, Florida; New Orleans, Louisiana; San Diego and Oakland, California; and Bremerton, Washington. As Consultant and as speaker on his specialty of surgical oncology, he visited military hospitals around the world, including the Navy Hospital at Olongapo, Philippines, and Army hospitals at Fort Belvoir, Virginia; San Antonio, Texas; and Honolulu, Hawaii. While on active duty in the Navy, he lectured about his research at university hospitals in Tokyo, Japan; Manila, Philippines; Oslo, Norway; Portsmouth, England; Cairo, Egypt, and Reykjavik, Iceland. He was accredited as a member of the staffs of the Naval Hospitals in Philadelphia and Bethesda, Maryland. He was a consultant in physical training at Naval Training Centers, Orlando, Florida; Great Lakes, Illinois; and San Diego, California. He held four Naval Officer Billet Codes (NOBCs): General Medical Officer, General Surgeon, Thoracic Surgeon, and Staff Medical Officer.

He received the Gorgas Medal for Contributions to Preventive Medicine from the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS), and he served on the Editorial Board of its journal, *Military Medicine*. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States. He has had a long association with the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS). He was appointed as a Clinical Professor of Surgery on 16 October 1989, and after he retired, his appointment was changed to Adjunct Professor, which has been renewed annually and is still in effect in 2021. He was in charge of teaching third year students in their surgical rotations at the National Naval Medical Center during the Gulf War (September 1990 – April 1991), and during that period he served on the Executive Committee of the Department of Surgery at USUHS. On 29 March 1991, he received a Certificate of Recognition from the National Naval Medical Center for his service during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm, and on 29 April 1991, he received a "Bravo Zulu" Letter of Appreciation from The Class of 1992 of USUHS for his teaching at the Navy Hospital in Bethesda.

His retirement ceremony, when he "swallowed the anchor" from the Navy, was held on his 60th birthday, 7 October 1992, in the auditorium of the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) Bethesda (now Walter Reed Joint Medical Center). His record shows 2728 points to compute his retirement with pay. This is equivalent to 7.47 years of active duty. Following retirement, he was given Permissive Orders dated 18 May 1993 "to continue to perform on a voluntary basis the duties of a Clinical Professor of Surgery at USUHS." He continued to serve the Navy Recruiting Command, to work with USUHS students, and to lecture and introduce civilians to Navy medicine. When he returned from a three-week trip to China in 2012 that was sponsored by the Harvard Alumni Association, he compiled a report for the NMRDC in the format previously used for "Ports and Countries Visited." The report provided observations made in Beijing, Jian, Chengdu, Lhasa, Chunking, and Shanghai regarding covert and overt intelligence operations by the Chinese government. When he delivered the report, he was told that the

requirement that such reports was no longer a NAVMEDCOMINST, and that Navy medicine was no longer involved with intelligence affairs. In 2016, he took a three-week trip through the five Silk Road countries that were formerly Soviet states, along the northern border of Afghanistan. He observed and photographed China's One Belt-One Road development in this area, and it has been the subject for lectures to public audiences.

Captain Hill belongs to the following patriotic and military organizations: Corporal, Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, the Massachusetts State militia. Member, Naval Order of the United States, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Marine Corps League, Military Order of the World Wars, Association of the U.S. Navy, Navy League of the United States, Military Officers Association of America, Association of Military Surgeons of the United States, and Reserve Officers Association. He is a member of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and he was a Founder of the Descendants of Continental Colonial Officers. He received the War Service Medal from the Sons of the American Revolution and the Order of the Founders and Patriots of America, and the War Cross from the Society of Colonial Wars.



George J. Hill in 1968 was a new Lieutenant Commander in the US Navy Medical Corps Reserve, with the USMC Expert Rifle Badge. In 1974, he was at Fort Benning, Georgia, as a student at the U.S. Army Airborne School, the first Navy Medical Officer to graduate from the school. In 1989, he is shown in his last official Navy portrait in 1989. He was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal after he retired in 1992.

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