

ADDENDUM TO:
NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS -
BATTLE MOUNTAIN SANITARIUM, TUBERCULOSIS HOSPITAL
(Hot Springs Veterans Administration Medical Center, Hospital)
(VA Black Hills Health Care System - Hot Springs Campus, Building
No. 12)
500 North Fifth Street
Hot Springs
Fall River County
South Dakota

HABS SD-24-J
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

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ADDENDUM TO

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(Hot Springs Veterans Administration Medical Center, Building No. 12)
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Location: 500 North 5th Street, Hot Springs, Fall River County, South Dakota

The coordinates at the original front door for Building No. 12 are 43.436957 N, -103.476665 W, and they were obtained through Google Earth in December 2014 with, it is assumed, NAD 1983. There is no restriction on the release of the locational data to the public.

Significance: The Veterans Bureau sponsored construction of a new tuberculosis hospital on the Battle Mountain Sanitarium campus in 1925-26. This modern hospital would replace the wood frame tuberculosis ward and eventually supplant the original 1907 Battle Mountain Sanitarium hospital complex as the main medical facility on site. The Sanitarium was built at a time of shifting emphasis from residential campuses to medical care for veterans. The importance of the hospitals at the NHDVS branches had been growing throughout the late nineteenth century as medical care became more sophisticated. The needs of World War I veterans with lung diseases such as tuberculosis further pushed the shift to medical care as the most prominent aspect of veterans' services. Numerous additions to the Tuberculosis Hospital, starting in 1937 and continuing the most recent addition in 1997, have turned it into the main medical/surgical facility at the Hot Springs Campus of the VA Black Hills Health Care System.

Description: The Tuberculosis Hospital has a Tudor Revival look to its exterior, with rusticated stone walls and areas of half-timber decoration on the upper floors. The asymmetrical elevation varies from five stories at the center to flanking four story sections of unequal width to three story side wings. A variety of hipped tile roof forms, cross gables and a roof-top pergola further accents the asymmetry of the elevation. The 1937-38 addition is more symmetrical, with a rectangular footprint. It is constructed of reinforced concrete and includes a few minimalist Tudor Revival decorative details at the entrance and the pavilion tower at the center of the flat roof. Later additions are attached to the rear and have the utilitarian appearance of mid/late twentieth century health care facilities. These additions have reoriented the main entrance of the hospital.

History: See overview historical context HABS No. SD-24 for additional information on the Battle Mountain Sanitarium and the NHDVS, as well as a list of individual building reports.

The great influx of new veterans after World War I, mostly young men with acute medical or psychiatric conditions, tested the capacity of the entire federal veterans' benefits system. At this time the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS) and the Bureau of Pensions were the two federal entities serving veterans. There was a growing realization that meeting new demands for more sophisticated medical care would require substantial reorganization. Colonel R. C. Humber addressed these issues in his Inspector General report for 1919. In his view, the current “perfunctory and routine manner” of medical care in the NHDVS hospitals would not suffice to treat the ailments of the newer veterans.¹ Changes in the needs of veteran patients were accompanied by major advances in medical treatment over the previous twenty years, including an increase in surgical treatment and other specialties. Battle Mountain was already ahead of this trend, with its emphasis on acute medical care and up-to-date facilities. It faced increased demand in the post-World War I years.

The need for specialized tuberculosis facilities was most pressing. Humber criticized the treatment of several hundred members with tuberculosis, mostly young World War veterans, scattered in various Branches. The need to place extra restrictions on the tubercular members as a precaution against spreading infections caused resentment and was loosely enforced in the generally open environment of the Home. The free movement of tuberculosis patients at the Battle Mountain Sanitarium was seen as a problem. In the 1918 *Inspection Report* it was noted disapprovingly that patients of all ailments mingled in the mess hall, chapel, library, and other communal facilities.² The wood-frame tuberculosis pavilion built in 1909 (Figure 1) was continually full and Battle Mountain personnel struggled to keep up with demand.

Acknowledging the failings of the current decentralized system and faced with a large increase in tubercular members, the NHDVS Board unanimously adopted a resolution in 1919 to convert the Mountain Branch in Tennessee into a tuberculosis sanitarium.³ The NHDVS also received appropriations on June 27, 1921 to build dedicated tuberculosis hospitals at the Northwestern (Milwaukee), Central (Dayton), and Marion Branches.⁴ Meanwhile Congress directed the Treasury Department, in its capacity to design and build federal structures, to establish additional facilities for the NHDVS. Immediately there was concern

¹ Inspector-General's Office, *Inspection Report – National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1919), 11.

² Inspector-General's Office, *Inspection Report – National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1918).

³ NHDVS Board of Managers, “Letter from the President,” *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1919* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1920), 6.

⁴ James A. Mattison, “The Development of the National Soldiers' Home Service,” *Modern Hospital* 20, no. 1 (January 1923): 60.

about inefficiency and duplication of effort, so the Veterans Bureau was established to oversee the various laws pertaining to World War I veterans.⁵ The Treasury Department also commissioned a group of consultants, led by tuberculosis authority Dr. William Charles White, to analyze the various federal hospital systems and make recommendations. Their report acknowledged that the National Homes would provide a capacity for and experience with domiciliary (or live-in) care that would be important going forward. It also made specific hospital expansion recommendations, including new tuberculosis hospitals for Battle Mountain and the Western Branch in Leavenworth, Kansas.⁶

In the mid-1920s the Veterans Bureau began construction of the new Tuberculosis Hospital at Battle Mountain. This new hospital reflected the changing mission of the "second generation" of veterans' hospitals to rehabilitation and outpatient care through modern medical techniques.⁷ Construction bids were opened on August 4, 1925.⁸ The architects were Madsen & Peterson of Minneapolis. This structure replaced the wood tuberculosis pavilion with a multi-story building. The block form of the new hospital followed the national trend away from the pavilion plan model used for the original sanitarium. The long structure has a rectangular footprint that angles back slightly from the center to follow the road at the east side of the original hospital complex. NHDVS Chief Surgeon B.F. Hayden described the status of the project in December 1925:

At the present time the Veterans' Bureau, in cooperation with the National Home, is building a new 159 bed tuberculosis service at this Branch. The old tuberculosis service has been torn down and temporarily the patients are being quartered in the main building. ...The new hospital which is being built is of splendid type and will give one of the finest small tuberculosis services in the country when completed.⁹

Construction of the new hospital continued into 1926 (Figure 2). A new boiler plant to handle increased demand also was built at this time. Additional staff housing including two duplexes (from standard plans - one built in 1920 and the other in 1927) and additional nurses' quarters (1926) were constructed at this time.

⁵ Suzanne Julin, "National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers – Assessment of Significance and National Historic Landmark Recommendations." (2008), 34-35. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, DC.

⁶ U.S. Treasury Department, *Report of the Consultants on Hospitalization Appointed by the Secretary of the Treasury to Provide Additional Hospital Facilities* [White Committee Report] (Washington: GPO, 1923), 22, 26.

⁷ See Trent Spurlock, Karen E. Hudson, Dean Doerrfeld and Craig A. Potts, "United States Second Generation Veterans Hospitals," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2011. National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC.

⁸ *Inspector General's Report NHDVS Fiscal Year 1925* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1926), 23.

⁹ B. F. Hayden, Chief Surgeon, NHDVS to General Wood, (5 December 1925), VACO Library.

Initially known as the Hospital Annex, the new hospital was completed by October 1926 (Figure 3). The Tuberculosis Hospital had its own mess and capacity of about 160 beds. President Calvin Coolidge visited Battle Mountain Sanitarium and its newest facility in August 1927, while he was spending the summer in the Black Hills.

By 1930 the large demand for tuberculosis treatment at Hot Springs was starting to wane and the new hospital began to be used for general medical care. Overall, the number of veterans being treated for tuberculosis in government hospitals decreased from 11,000 in 1922 to 6,000 in 1932.¹⁰ A large addition was attached to the southeast side of the Veterans Bureau hospital in 1937-38 (Figure 4). This four-story wing had a rectangular footprint and a symmetrical elevation sheathed with stucco and a few minimalist Tudor Revival decorative details. It housed a medical unit of 95 beds.¹¹ This hospital addition also included an updated surgical suite that replaced the one in the 1907 Administration Building. It appears from photographs that this operating room still had movable windows. In 1963 an updated air conditioning system was added to this space.¹² An addition in 1950 on the northeast end of the original section housed dietetic services, including a new kitchen and dining room (Figure 5). Around this time the 1907 hospital was converted into a 548-bed domiciliary providing barracks-style housing for veterans (Figure 5). Building No. 12 and its additions were a 255-bed general medical/surgical facility.

During the 1980s and 90s, changes to the complex continued to be focused on upgrades and expansion of the general hospital at Hot Springs. A new clinical wing was added to in the early 1980s; A CT scan building was added in 1987. In 1996 the complex's name was changed to Hot Springs Medical Center of the VA Black Hills Health Care System. This change represented a consolidation of the VA Medical Centers at Hot Springs and at Fort Meade. A new Ambulatory Care addition including a new emergency room was added to the southeast side of the general hospital in 1997.¹³ Surgical cases requiring an overnight stay were now handled at Fort Meade.¹⁴ Today the Hot Springs is an active medical center providing care for veterans of World War II, Korea, Vietnam and more recent conflicts.

¹⁰ "Better Transportation Service Would Aid BMS," *Hot Springs Star*, 1 October 1942, clipping in Hot Springs Library; Spurlock et. al., 18.

¹¹ Clipping, B. "Spike" Fox, "Fine Facility for Veterans in S. Dakota," 24 February 1938, Battle Mountain Museum.

¹² Clipping, *Hot Springs Star*, 18 April 1963. Battle Mountain Museum.

¹³ *Battle Mountain Sanitarium, Hot Springs, South Dakota 1907-1997*, (1997) [90th Anniversary booklet]. Battle Mountain Museum.

¹⁴ *Celebrating a Century of Caring for America's Heroes - VAMC Hot Springs, South Dakota, 1907-2007*, (2007) [100th Anniversary booklet]. Battle Mountain Museum.

- Sources: *Battle Mountain Sanitarium: Branch National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers*. Omaha: Douglas Printing Company, c. 1919.
- Battle Mountain Sanitarium: A Branch of the National Soldiers Home Veterans Administration*, c. 1930.
- Celebrating a Century of Caring for America's Heroes - VAMC Hot Springs, South Dakota, 1907-2007*, (2007).
- Julin, Suzanne. “National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers – Assessment of Significance and National Historic Landmark Recommendations.” 2008. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C..
- Mattison, James A. “The Development of the National Soldiers’ Home Service,” *Modern Hospital* 20, no. 1 (January 1923): 59-61.
- U.S. Treasury Department, *Report of the Consultants on Hospitalization Appointed by the Secretary of the Treasury to Provide Additional Hospital Facilities*. Washington: GPO, 1923.

Historian: Lisa Pfueller Davidson, Ph.D., HABS Staff Historian

Project

Information: Documentation of the Tuberculosis Hospital/Building No. 12 at the Battle Mountain Sanitarium of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers was undertaken in 2013-14 by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the Heritage Documentation Programs division of the National Park Service, Richard O’Connor, Chief. The project was sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), Office of Construction and Facilities Management, Kathleen Schamel, Federal Preservation Officer. Project planning was coordinated by Catherine Lavoie, Chief, HABS; and by Douglas Pulak, Deputy Federal Preservation Officer, DVA. The field work was undertaken and the measured drawings were produced by Project Supervisor Mark Schara, AIA, HABS Architect, HABS Architects Paul Davidson, Daniel De Sousa, and Ryan Pierce, Jobie Hill (University of Oregon) and Emma Greenberg (Louisiana State University). The historical reports were written by HABS Historian Lisa P. Davidson. The large format photography was undertaken in 2008 by HABS Photographer James W. Rosenthal and in 2013 by HABS Contract Photography Renee Bieretz. Vital assistance was provided by Dena Sanford at the Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service, and by Patrick Lyke, Douglas Sprinkle, and other VA staff members at the Hot Springs Campus.

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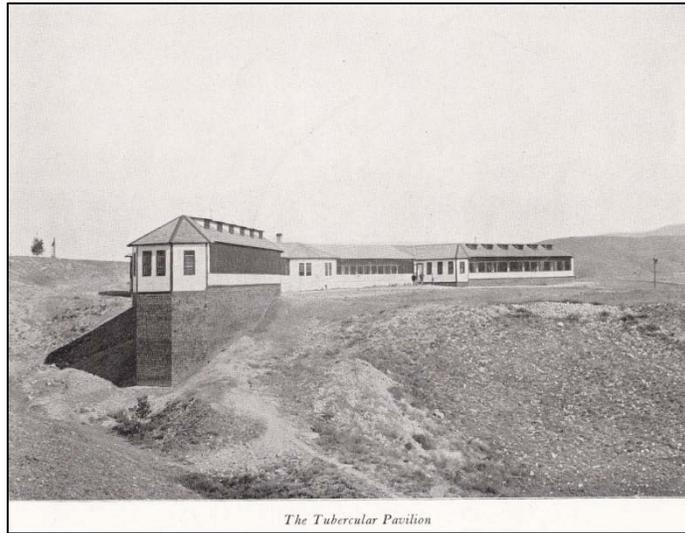


Figure 1: Tuberculosis Pavilion, built c. 1909
Source: *Battle Mountain Sanitarium: Branch National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers*.
Omaha: Douglas Printing Company, c. 1919.



Figure 2: New Tuberculosis Hospital/Hospital Annex Under Construction
View of South Wing, April 1926
Source: Battle Mountain VA Museum Collection

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Figure 3: View of Hospital Annex, c. 1930
Source: Battle Mountain VA Museum Collection



Figure 4: Addition to Hospital, 31 May 1938
Source: Battle Mountain VA Museum Collection

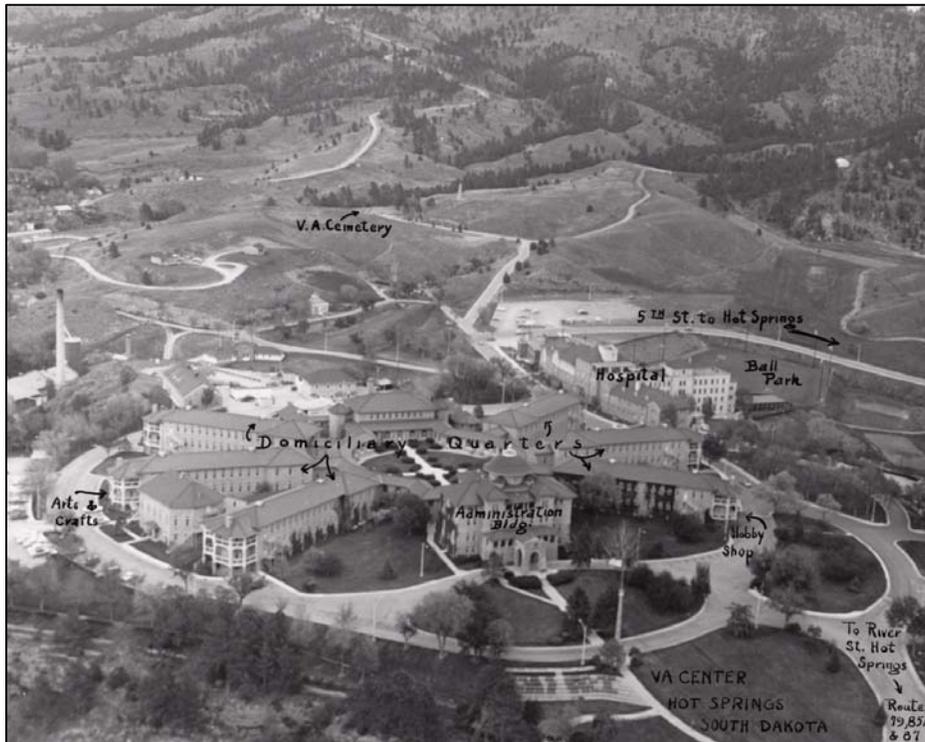


Figure 5: Aerial View of Hot Springs VA Medical Center, c. 1950
Source: Battle Mountain VA Museum Collection