

What were the ranks and timing of promotion for an enlisted man completing basic training and going to Vietnam as a medical corpsman circa 1970?

**Short answer:** An enlisted man entering the Army as a medical corpsman around 1970 typically progressed from **E-1 (Private)** in basic training to **E-2 (Private E-2)** upon completion, then to **E-3 (Private First Class)** after AIT (Advanced Individual Training) as a medic. Promotion to **E-4 (Specialist 4)** often occurred during or shortly after arrival in Vietnam, depending on performance, time-in-service, and unit needs.

## ■ Typical Rank Progression for an Army Enlisted Medical Corpsman (circa 1970)

The Army used a standardized enlisted rank structure and MOS coding system during the Vietnam era. For medical corpsmen, the MOS was usually **91A (Medical Corpsman)** or **91B (Medical Specialist)**. Rank progression followed both **time-in-service** and **time-in-grade**, but Vietnam-era operational needs often accelerated promotions.

### ■ 1. Basic Training (Boot Camp)

- **Entry Rank: E-1 (Private)**
- **Promotion:** Many recruits were advanced to **E-2 (Private E-2)** upon completing basic training, especially if they met performance and conduct standards.
- This aligns with MOS coding where **xxx10** indicates ranks **E-1 to E-3**.

### ■ 2. Advanced Individual Training (AIT) – Medical Training

- **Duration:** Typically 10–12 weeks for medical corpsman training.
- **Rank at Completion:** Most soldiers reached **E-3 (Private First Class)** by the end of AIT.
- This was common because the Army needed trained medics quickly, and the MOS structure supported advancement within the **xxx10** band (E-1 to E-3).

### ■ 3. Deployment to Vietnam

- **Initial Rank in Theater:** Usually **E-3 (PFC)**.
- **Promotion to E-4 (Specialist 4):**
  - Often occurred **within months of arrival**, sometimes even immediately upon assignment to a line unit.
  - The MOS code **xxx20** corresponded to **Specialist 4 / Corporal (E-4)**, the standard rank for a fully functioning medic in a combat unit.
- Promotions could be accelerated due to:
  - High casualty rates among medics
  - Demonstrated competence
  - Command needs in infantry companies

## ■ 4. Higher Enlisted Ranks (E-5 and above)

- **E-5 (Specialist 5 or Sergeant)** required more time-in-service and leadership roles.
- Some medics reached **E-5** during a Vietnam tour, but it was less common for first-term enlisted men.

### Context: Why Medics Advanced Quickly

Medics and corpsmen were indispensable in Vietnam, providing life-saving care under fire and supporting daily troop health. Their responsibilities often exceeded those of other junior enlisted soldiers, which contributed to faster promotions.

### Summary Table

Stage	Typical Rank	Notes
Basic Training	<b>E-1 → E-2</b>	Advancement common upon completion
AIT (Medic Training)	<b>E-3 (PFC)</b>	Standard for trained medics
Arrival in Vietnam	<b>E-3</b>	Assigned to line units
During Vietnam Tour	<b>E-4 (Spec 4)</b>	Often promoted early in tour
Later in Tour (less common)	<b>E-5</b>	Required leadership duties