

II. OLIVE VIEW HOSPITAL

Olive View Hospital was located approximately five miles and a quarter from the epicenter of the earthquake.

The Olive View complex was owned and operated by Los Angeles County and consisted of over 30 buildings of a wide range of construction types and ages. Two masonry buildings collapsed, that had been constructed prior to the enactment of seismic codes in 1933, and yet a two-story unreinforced brick building of 1925-30 vintage sustained only moderate damage, and continued in use. An old concrete heating plant, which did not collapse, was so damaged as to be a total loss. Two single story buildings, with reinforced concrete single span moment resisting frames infilled with brick, suffered minimal damage, as did a modern laboratory built of brick and reinforced concrete frame construction.

Included in the complex were about 30 one and two-story old wood structures, almost all of which were structurally damaged and some of which were completely destroyed.

The pattern of damage to these older buildings has not been extensively studied because of the damage suffered by the more recent complex of reinforced concrete buildings, completed in 1970, and designed on the basis of the Los Angeles County Building Code, 1965, which is basically similar to the Uniform Building Code, 1964. This building group consisted of three buildings: the Medical Care Facility, which also included a warehouse, ambulance canopy, exhaust building, assembly building and walkway canopy; the Psychiatric Unit; and the Heating and Refrigeration plant.

The patients in the Medical Care Facility and the Psychiatric Unit were as follows:

Main building:	225 adults, tuberculosis & other chest problems.
3rd through 6th floors:	27 pediatric, tuberculosis
	116 general medical
	9 pediatric, non-tuberculosis
	44 rehabilitation

3rd through 6th floors: 37 surgical
(cont'd) 96 mental health
Community Mental Health
Center, 2nd floor, two
wards: 55 patients

Three people were killed at Olive View Hospital. Two patients with terminal chest disease died because their respirators stopped when power failed. An ambulance driver was killed, struck by falling concrete while leaving the building. All these deaths occurred at the main hospital.

The reaction of the mental patients has been summarized as follows (3): "In general a number of acute schizophrenic patients (but not all) did react more rationally during this emergency. Some seemed to revert back to their pathologic state within an hour or two after the crisis. In a few regression took up to two weeks, but none retained any definite noticeable improvement longer than that. Sixty percent (of the actively psychotic) showed no change during or after the quake. Several agitated patients actually became more excited. Patients with severe neuroses tended to react very rationally, efficiently helping in the evacuation. The patients who did not seem to show any change whatsoever were the severely depressed. They remained severely depressed.

It was interesting to see the behavior of the heroin addicts who were on methadone withdrawal. They tended to continue to demand medication, even immediately after the quake when they knew that the pharmacy supply of methadone withdrawal. They tended to continue to demand medication, even broken into and rifled the ward cabinet of methadone and other drugs before leaving the building. Four narcotic addicts used our inability to immediately give them medication as rationalization to disappear into the community, presumably to find heroin." (written September 1971)

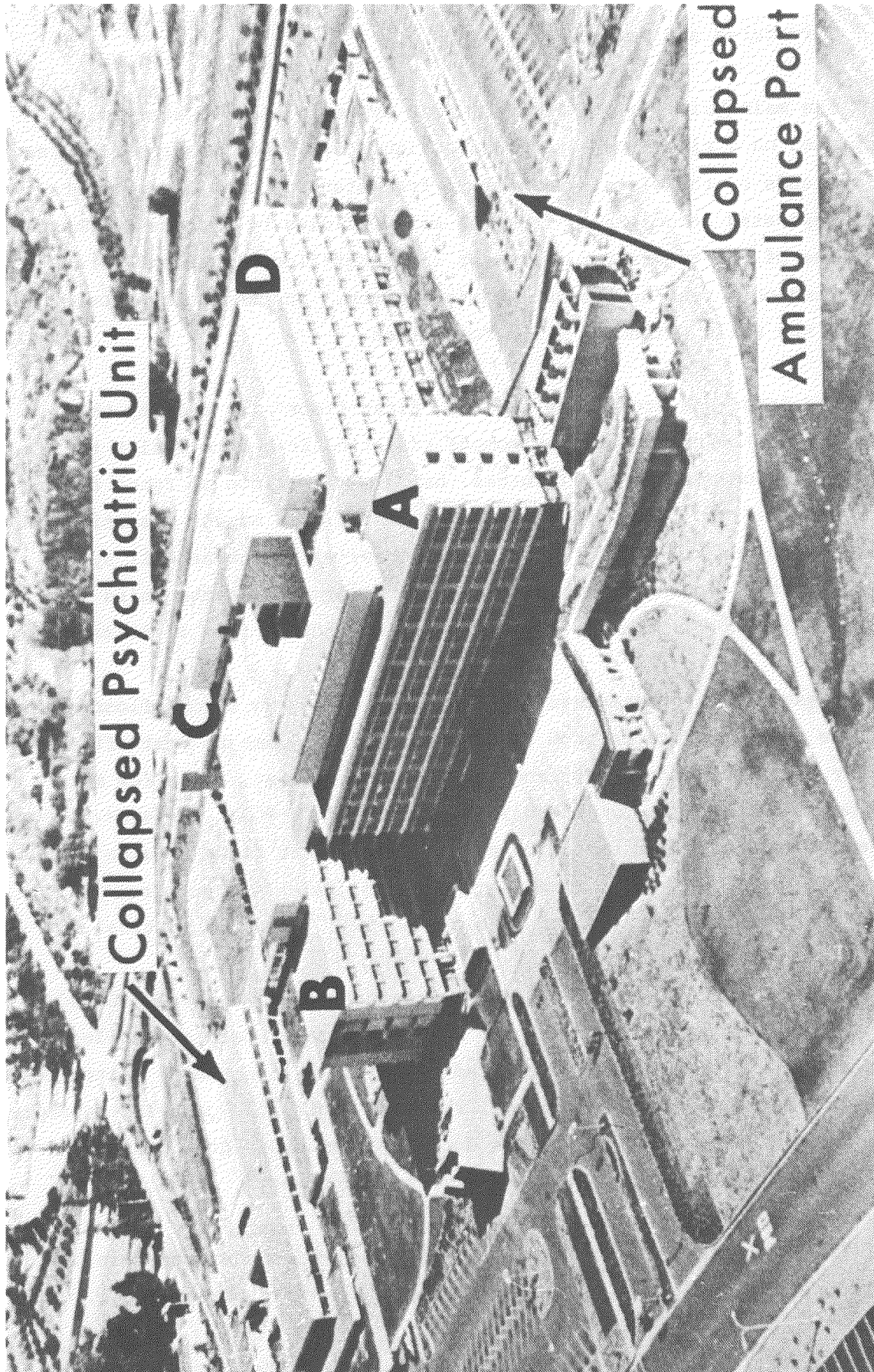


Figure 2: Main buildings, Olive View Hospital complex. Note toppled staircase towers at wings A, B, and D. (Photograph from Lew, H.S., et al, "Engineering Aspects of the 1971 San Fernando Earthquake," National Bureau of Standards, Washington, D.C., 1971.)