

**BUMED Oral History Interview Synopsis and Glossary**  
**HMC Jerrold Diederich, USN**  
**Command Chief, Naval Medical Research Center**  
**Senior Enlisted Leader, Navy Medicine Research and Development**

*Date and Location of Interview:* 20 November 2014, NMRC, Silver Spring, MD

*Interviewer:* André B. Sobocinski, BUMED Historian

**Synopsis:**

Chief Hospital Corpsman Jerrold E. Diederich was born in Aurora, Illinois and graduated from Branson High School in May 1989. He began his naval career in January 1992 at Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, Illinois.

Chief Diederich's education includes Basic Hospital Corpsman "A" school in Great Lakes Illinois; Advanced Laboratory Technician (8506) "C" School, Naval School of Health Sciences, Bethesda, Maryland; Patient Administration Course and Plans Operations Medical Intelligence Course, Navy Medicine Professional Development Center, Bethesda, Maryland; Associates of General Studies, Georgia Military College; and Bachelors of Science Computer Studies, University of Maryland University College.

In July 1992, he reported to Naval Hospital Great Lakes, Illinois. He was assigned to the Administrative Department and assisted with several critical command programs.

In March 1994, Chief Diederich reported to the Naval Ambulatory Care Center, Kings Bay, Georgia. He was assigned as the Work Center Supervisor for the Laboratory Department. During this tour he was advanced to Second Class Petty Officer.

In April 1998, he reported to the Branch Medical Clinic, La Maddalena, Italy. The sole Laboratory technician for the command he cross trained staff on basic laboratory procedures. He became a certified EMT-Basic, and successfully qualified in the Radiology, Pharmacy, and Preventative Medicine departments.

In April 2000, Chief Diederich selected orders to the Armed Services Whole Blood Processing Laboratory East, McGuire Air Force Base, New Jersey. A tri-service command, he was assigned as the Leading Petty Officer for Naval Personnel. He coordinated the shipment of blood products to New York City, Pennsylvania, and Washington DC immediately following the September 11th terrorist attacks. He led the movement of blood products in support of Noble Eagle, OEF, and OIF. He coordinated the implementation and FDA certification of the DoD Frozen Blood Program. During this tour he was advanced to First Class Petty Officer.

In May 2003, Chief Diederich returned overseas to Naval Hospital Keflavik, Iceland. He was assigned as the Leading Petty Officer for the Directorate for Administration and acting Department Head Patient Administration. During this tour he was selected as the 2004 Icelandic Sailor of the Year.

In December 2005, Chief Diederich reported to Naval Health Clinic Charleston, South Carolina. He was assigned as the Leading Petty Officer for the Laboratory Department. During this tour he was selected as the 2008 Naval Health Clinic Charleston Sailor of the Year and advanced to Chief Petty Officer. He served as the Command POMI and Leading Chief Petty Officer for Human Resources and Patient Administration.

In July 2010, Chief Diederich reported to the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, Washington, DC as the Command Chief. He led 450 Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen and civilians through the Base Realignment and Closure disestablishment of the command, the establishment of the Joint Pathology Center, and the movement of operations for the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System and the National Museum of Health and Medicine.

In October 2011, Chief Diederich accepted orders to the Naval Medical Research Center, Silver Spring, Maryland as the Command Chief and the Senior Enlisted Leader Navy Medicine Research and Development. He also serves as the Leading Chief Petty Officer for the Biological Defense Operations Department leading the Navy's only Rapid Deployable Mobile Biological Weapons Detection Laboratory.

In wake of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa (2013-2014), Chief Diederich and CDR Guillermo Pimentel travelled to Liberia in September 2014 to set up two Navy mobile Ebola laboratories for detecting the virus.

His personal awards include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (five awards), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (three awards), Navy Good Conduct Medal (six awards), and numerous unit awards.

#### **KEY ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AFRICOM—United States Africa Command (AFRICOM)

1<sup>st</sup> AML—1<sup>st</sup> Area Medical Laboratory (Army)

BDRD—Biological Defense Research Directorate, Fort Detrick, MD

BSL—Bio Safety Level

CDC—Centers for Disease Control

CG—Commanding General

DART—Disaster Assistance Response Team

DECON—Decontaminate  
ETU—Ebola Treatment Unit  
JFC—Joint Forces Command  
LIBR Lab—Liberian National Reference Laboratory  
NMRC—Naval Medical Research Center, Silver Spring, MD  
PCR—Polymerase chain reaction  
PPE—Personal protective equipment  
USAID—U.S. Agency for International Development  
USAMRIID—U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious  
Diseases  
WHO—World Health Organization

#### **KEY FIGURES**

Malac, Deborah R., U.S. Ambassador to Liberia. Malac has served in Liberia since been 2012.

Pimentel, Guillermo, Ph.D., CDR, MSC, USN—Navy Microbiologist at Biological Defense Research Directorate, Fort Detrick, MD. Pimentel made the site visit to Liberia with Diederich.

Rodriguez, David M., General, USA — Commander, United States Africa Command (AFRICOM).

Sanders, John W. III, M.D., CAPT, MC, USN: Commanding Officer, NMRC, September 2012-present.

Williams, Darryl, Major General, USA—Commander U.S. Army in Africa.

#### **GLOSSARY**

CDC—Centers for Disease Control, Atlanta, GA.

Contagion—A 2011 film starring Matt Damon about healthcare professionals, government officials and everyday people in the midst of a worldwide epidemic as the CDC works to find a cure.

Ebola—Acute infectious virus first reported in 1976 in the Democratic Republic of Congo near the Ebola River.

Ebola Laboratories, Navy Mobile—The Navy set up two mobile laboratories in Liberia. The first mobile laboratory was established in the Island Clinic (Bushrod Island) near ETU in Western Liberia and placed in operation on October 2, 2014. The Navy activated the second mobile Ebola lab on October 3, 2014 at Cuttington University, Suakoko, Bong

County, in Eastern Liberia (120 miles northeast of Monrovia). These laboratories were operational within two weeks of the Navy first receiving a request for forces.

Ebola Outbreak in Western Africa (2013-2014)— Ebola outbreak in West Africa began in December 2013. At the time of this interview it is estimated that 6,113 individuals in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone have died of Ebola (source: "Ebola Outbreak." [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov))

Glove box or glovebox—A sealed container that is designed to allow one to manipulate objects where a separate atmosphere is desired.

Operation United Assistance—DoD's overarching support in wake of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

Polymerase chain reaction (PCR)—A technique for amplifying DNA Sequences.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)—PPE is equipment worn to minimize exposure to serious workplace injuries and illnesses. These injuries and illnesses may result from contact with chemical, radiological, physical, electrical, mechanical, or other workplace hazards. Personal protective equipment may include items such as gloves, safety glasses and shoes, earplugs or muffs, hard hats, respirators, or coveralls, vests and full body suits. (Source: [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)).

United States Africa Command (AFRICOM)—One of six of the U.S. Defense Department's geographic combatant commands and is responsible to the Secretary of Defense for military relations with African nations, the African Union, and African regional security organizations. A full-spectrum combatant command, U.S. AFRICOM is responsible for all U.S. Department of Defense operations, exercises, and security cooperation on the African continent, its island nations, and surrounding waters. AFRICOM began initial operations on Oct. 1, 2007, and officially became an independent command on Oct. 1, 2008. (source: [www.africom.mil](http://www.africom.mil)).