

**BUMED ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**  
**Biographical Chronology**  
**CAPTAIN PAUL S. HAMMER, M.D., MC, USN**  
**Director, Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health**  
**and Traumatic Brain Injury**

Date and Location of Interview: 8 March 2012, Crystal City,  
Arlington, Virginia

Interviewers: COL Richard V.N. Ginn, USA, Ret. and Mr. André  
Sobocinski.

**SYNOPSIS**

Captain Paul Hammer, one of eight siblings, was born on 6 February 1957 at Wheeler Air Force Base, Tripoli, Libya, and grew up on Air Force bases in California, Alaska, and Ohio. He graduated high school in 1975, and enlisted in the Marine Corps. Following training in communications and electronics, he was assigned to Marine Air Support Squadrons in Beaufort, SC, and Futenma, Okinawa, and was discharged at Camp Pendleton as a sergeant in 1979. CAPT Hammer then attended the University of San Francisco, California, graduating with a B.S. in chemistry in 1983. He then entered medical school that year at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Bethesda, Maryland, graduating in 1988. In 1989 he completed an internship in psychiatry at the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, followed in 1989-1992 by a residency in psychiatry at the Naval Medical Center, San Diego.

His initial duty assignments were at Camp Pendleton, California: from 1992-1994, as staff psychiatrist at the Naval Hospital, and from 1994-1996 as Division Psychiatrist, 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division. During this period he handled his first psychiatric interventions in crisis situations that over the years totaled some 60-75 different interventions at Camp Pendleton, from tanks rolling over on people, to helicopter accidents, numerous suicides, etc.

From 1996 to, 2006 CAPT Hammer returned to San Diego as staff psychiatrist at the Medical Center. During this assignment his crisis intervention experience led to his selection as head of the Medical Center's SPRINT team, with missions that included the August 1997 crash of Korean Airlines Flight 801 in Guam; Honduras for Hurricane Mitch in November 1998; and school shootings in the San Diego area. The Mental Health Clinic at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Street Naval Station provided medical support for ships based in San Diego, and Hammer developed a program of conducting psychiatric consultations for those sailors by arranging visits to their ships. This enabled him to see these sailors in their working environment, while at the

same time adding to his considerable understanding of Marine units and the "green" Navy an in-depth familiarity with shipboard operations and the "blue" Navy. During this period he deployed to Afghanistan from October 2004 to March 2005 with the Combat Stress Team of the 1<sup>st</sup> Medical Battalion, I MEF. From 2006-2008 he was assigned as the Psychiatrist for I MEF at Camp Pendleton, and from February 2006 to February 2007 deployed to Afghanistan in that role.

CAPT Hammer's extensive background and experience in operational and combat stress led to his selection in 2008 as the first director of the Navy Center for Combat and Operational Stress Control, San Diego, California, and his current position in 2011 as Director of the National Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury.

#### **KEY WORDS**

COSC

Malcom Grow Medical Center, Andrews Air Force Base, MD.

National Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health  
and Traumatic Brain Injury

NCCOSC

OSCAR

Red Cell

SPRINT

Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS)  
Warrior Resilience Program