



On behalf of the Special Operations Medical Association, we'd like to invite you to the **2017 Special Operations Medical Association's Scientific Assembly (SOMSA)**. The theme of **Back to the Future: Gaining New Ground and Preserving Lessons Learned** highlights the juxtaposition of developing new knowledge and approaches to SOF medicine while not losing any lessons paid for in blood, lives, and the great personal cost of so many. Current concepts such as battlefield plasma and whole blood use are not really new at all, but a reinvigoration and refinement of previous lessons learned. Since its inception, SOF has always been involved in some degree of conflict or deployed military operations and we remain the true stewards of that priceless operational and tactical medical knowledge and lessons learned.

We have a **great schedule of speakers** in what we think will spark the interest of all levels of SOF, military, and civilian prehospital providers. Since its formation more than two decades ago, SOMA has endeavored to advance the art and science of Special Operations Medicine. During that time, we have grown from a small but dedicated group of like-minded SOF medical providers meeting in one hotel conference room in Fayetteville NC, to Tampa FL and now Charlotte NC. Although the meeting places have changed we are the premiere and most relevant international medical society in the world hosting a meeting of more than 1000 attendees from more than two dozen countries.

While we have grown, **SOMA's mission** remains the same: **To improve the capability of the SOF Medical Operator and to serve as a Combat Enabler for US Special Operations Forces**. Our program is focused on exactly that. As large combat operations wind down in Afghanistan, the resurgence of conflict in Iraq and Syria, and ongoing full spectrum operations in both Africa and the Pacific, SOF forces are facing some new and some old threats evolving around the world, both in and outside declared areas of armed conflict.

Regardless of the threat, we will certainly face the **tyranny of distance, difficult evacuations, immature theaters, and prolonged field care scenarios as challenges**. We have built this year's program around those themes and have invited nationally and internationally recognized experts to help us solve these challenges. This year we have continued representation of SOF medics to give presentations as well as participating in a SOF medic roundtable discussion during the main session. These medic vignettes are invaluable for our academic and industry colleagues as they look to help us solve real-world tactical medical problems.

Finally, if you like what we are doing, get involved. SOMA is only as great as the membership. Participate in a committee. Join a working group. Run for an office. Your voice matters. If not a member, join SOMA. This is the only professional medical association in the world for SOF Medical Operators with the only journal in the world, *The Journal of Special Operations Medicine*, which focuses solely on the profession of SOF medicine. We can only grow and improve if you get involved.

We look forward to your attendance this year in Charlotte.

Lieutenant Colonel Cord Cunningham, MD, MPH and Lieutenant Colonel Will Smith, MD, Paramedic,
SOMSA 2017 Co-chairs