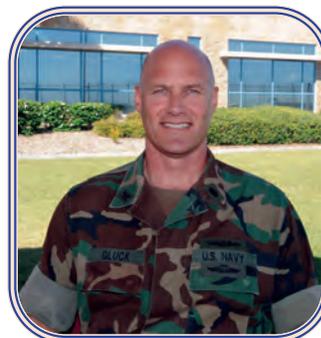


COMPONENT SURGEON

NAVSPECWARCOM



Gary Gluck, MD
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Several significant events come to mind when reflecting on the last three months in Naval Special Warfare (NSW) medicine. The most significant was the annual Special Operations Medical Association (SOMA) conference in Tampa, Florida, from December 12-15, 2009. This is an exceptional event where all of SOCOM's components come together, along with a healthy mix of military, civilian, and international experts, to share lessons learned and discuss the latest developments in Special Operations medical care. Of particular note were Admiral Olson's opening remarks that specifically mentioned the many accomplishments of Special Operations medicine and the importance of such headline programs as Tactical Combat Casualty Care, Human Performance, and Family Support as he highlighted the medical advances in support of the world's most powerful human weapons system, the U.S. Special Operator.

Activities kicked off the day before SOMA with a NSW Component Surgeon's Conference. Normally a two-day affair, we crammed a broad range of headline topics into a one-day event. Topics included the Force Medical Office mission, vision, and goals for 2010, readiness, biomedical research programs, Family Support, and Resilience Programs, and updates from our NSW Groups and the NSW Center (BUD/S). CAPT Scott Jonson, Deputy Force Medical Officer, led the NSW Tactical Athlete Program break out session to open discussions on a Force-wide database and program growth initiatives.

The NSW Combat Medic of the Year award, presented at SOMA's "Mess Night" went to SO1 John A. Pepas. SO1 Pepas was recognized as the standout amongst his peers during deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom from September 2008 to April 2009. In addition to skillfully managing a broad range of challenging medical conditions and combat casualties, SO1 Pepas was instrumental in setting up a fully capable medical clinic, providing trauma training for eighty Iraqi military personnel, and coordinating numerous joint Iraqi and SEAL missions. Likewise, as Leading Petty Officer for his Platoon, he developed plans that kept his team prepared for various combat contingencies.

The competition was tough for NSW Combat Medic of the year, with special mention going to SO1 Kiel Khan. While deployed to Operation Enduring Freedom, he provided immediate life-saving care to two team mates critically wounded while engaged with enemy forces. He provided suppressive fire while continuing treatment and successfully evacuating his wounded colleagues. In a separate action, SO1 Khan provided life-saving care to Afghanistan National Army and Coalition troops with combat injuries, all with successful outcomes.

We are honored to support these Operators who are leading the fight. It is my steadfast goal as Force Medical Officer to support our combat medics by all means within my capacity.

Another development was NSW's coordination of a memorandum of understanding with Tampa General Hospital to provide a unique and high-intensity trauma training

experience for our combat medics. Dr. Jeffrey Wilson (LCDR, USNR), a trauma surgeon and program faculty at Tampa General Hospital, will direct this exceptional training through an intensive didactic and hands on experience. With his dedication and hard work, we have formalized this Force wide training opportunity that will keep our combat medic's trauma skills finely tuned between deployments. Thanks to Tampa General Hospital leadership and Dr. Wilson!

Lastly, I want to recognize and congratulate my predecessor, CAPT Jay Sourbeer, on his selection as Executive Officer at Naval Hospital Oak Harbor, Washington State. Jay is a natural leader and I extend my best wishes to him and his family as they move to Whidbey Island.

Good luck and good hunting in the New Year!

