

SPECIAL TALK: AN INTERVIEW

An Ongoing Series

The Emergence and Evolution of the Journal of Special Operations Medicine An Interview With Publisher Michelle Landers

Interviewed by COL (Ret) Andre Pennardt, MD

What is your background, and how did you become involved with Special Operations?



Michelle Landers

My nursing background is in critical care, ER, flight nursing, and legal nurse consulting. I started my military reserve career in 1987 at an Army combat support hospital. After 3 years of fun in the summer heat at Camp Shelby, I changed services to the Air Force and went to Flight Physiology School and became a C-130 flight nurse. In 1998, I started working at United States Special Operations

Command/Headquarters (USSOCOM-HQ) in the Center for Force Structure, Resources, Requirements, and Strategic Assessments as a joint processes action officer before going to the Surgeon General's Office to become the production manager for the JSOM in 1999. I became an individual mobilization augmentee (IMA) attached to and on active orders with USSOCOM-HQ. After almost 25 years, the last 12 of which were in the USSOCOM Surgeon General's Office on active duty orders, I retired in 2011.

Who had the idea to first create the Journal of Special Operations Medicine?

The idea to create the first publication in 2000, which would be a communication tool between HQ-USSOCOM-SG and the component commands, as well as a training and education tool for SOF medicine, was that of the late Don Shipman, PA-C. I came in as the publication and production editor. When Don PCS'd 2 months later, I became the managing editor as well. The inaugural edition was published in December 2000. The journal developed as an avenue to provide a venue for the component surgeons to address their physicians and medics and to provide a place where USSOCOM could learn and share experiences that required critical medical skills. These experiences were shared through peer-reviewed articles in both research-based and vignette formats. JSOM filled the need for SOF medics from all Services

to provide a commonality that has transcended the past six decades of SOF medicine.

What were the biggest challenges in developing the JSOM (besides keeping everyone on deadline)?

The biggest challenge was that I was a nurse, not an editor or publisher! I took several classes and learned how to publish a journal. The next biggest challenge was getting the JSOM indexed in the US National Library of Medicine's PubMed. It took several years of adjusting the layout and further development to get it accepted in 2007.

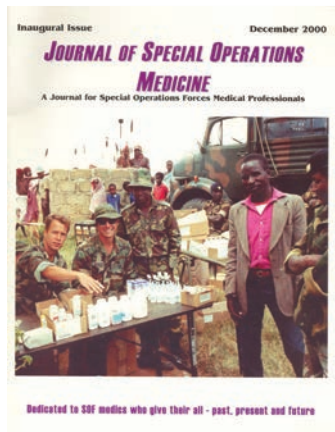
How has funding of the JSOM changed over time?

That has to have been the biggest challenge since the JSOM became privately published. During its 10 years of being a military publication, it was funded through the military, to include my salary. When I retired in 2011, there were Department of Defense-wide budget cuts, so, coupled with the realization that the JSOM may cease to exist, the command surgeon, the late COL Tom Deal, asked me to consider taking it on as a post-retirement career in order to keep this valuable tool in the hands of the SOF medical community.

So I thought about this; I knew how to produce the journal, I had been doing it for 10 years, how hard could it be to get funding? We went to the judge advocate general's office and made it official. I started Breakaway Media, LLC and off I went. Funding now comes from product advertising and print, digital, and institutional subscriptions.

How was the relationship between the JSOM and SOMA developed?

The JSOM has been a part of the Special Operations Medical Association (SOMA) since day 1. In the early years, it was provided to SOMA membership from the USSOCOM-SG.



When the *JSOM* lost this funding, I was unable to continue to provide SOMA with the *JSOM* for their membership. It took a few years, but in 2013, around the time the SOMA conference became the Special Operations Medical Association Scientific Assembly (SOMSA), then president COL Bob Mabry approached me about the *JSOM* being the official journal for SOMA. As a scientific assembly, they needed to have an academic publication. The *JSOM* continues to be published by Breakaway Media.

Did the inclusion of Tactical Emergency Medical Support (TEMS) come natural to the *JSOM*, or were there difficulties?

The inclusion of TEMS was natural and continues to grow, both domestically and internationally. It is an official forum for professional discourse on global Special Operations medicine that transcends the boundary between military and civilian medicine by bringing forth practical and sensible ideas and techniques to the provider currently operating in a tactical or law enforcement environment.

What do you see as the role of the journal between the military and civilian tactical medicine communities?

I believe our role is to assist in saving lives by providing life-saving information to both communities. Both communities practice medicine in unconventional environments and situations. Protocols may be different, but the goal is the same.



What would you consider the most rewarding part about your relationship with the *JSOM*?

The reward for me has been to be able to grow a concept into something substantial and valuable and to still have it growing 18 years later. The *JSOM* is now subscribed to in 79 countries by SOF medical providers, TEMS (both Department of Justice and special weapons and tactics [SWAT]), conventional military and civilian emergency medical services, and university and military medical libraries. In addition, the advent of social media has allowed us to expand our reach even further and communicate in real time with not only our subscribers but also an entirely new generation of Servicemembers and civilians who are coming up and pursuing careers in operational medicine and tactical casualty care. The primary goal has always been to save lives and to continue to put this information in the hands of those who need it and use it in the field. I am thankful we are able to continue to do this.

Do you have anything else you would like to share with your readers?

The *JSOM* remains the only academic peer-reviewed journal devoted to Special Operations medicine. Our goal is to aid the subscriber to be the best they can be by being armed with the most current information available. We thank you for subscribing to, advertising in, and supporting the *JSOM*. We flourish because of you and what you do.



Winter 2018
Volume 18, Edition 4

JSO M

JOURNAL of SPECIAL OPERATIONS MEDICINE™



THE JOURNAL FOR OPERATIONAL MEDICINE AND TACTICAL CASUALTY CARE



Inside this Issue:

- › Larger-Caliber Devices for Tension Hemopneumothorax Decompression
- › Pneumonitis After Smoke-Bomb Exposure in Partially Enclosed Space
- › Letter to the Editor › Guerrilla Hospital Design and Lessons Learned
- › Delivering Medical Supplies Via Drones During PFC
- › TCCC Guideline Change 18-01 › Use Your Noodle in Tourniquet Use
- › Effect of Human Performance Program on Stress Shoot Performance
- › Feasibility Study Vascular Access and REBOA Placement
- › Preparation for and Performance During High-Altitude Expeditions
- › Willingness of EMS Providers to Respond to an Active Shooter Event
- › Shooter-Experienced Blast Overpressure in .50-Caliber Rifles
- › Spearmint Extract with Rosmarinic Acid and Tactical Performance
- › Perfused-Cadaver Tourniquet Training for Military Medic › Reflexology for Chronic Pain in Military Patients
- › Abdominal Aortic Junctional Tourniquet–Torso Plate in Noncompressible Torso Hemorrhage
- › 2018 Combat Medical Care Conference Abstracts
- › Ongoing Series: Canine Medicine, Human Performance Optimization, Infectious Diseases, Injury Prevention, SOFsono Ultrasound, Special Talk, Unconventional Medicine, Book Review, TCCC Updates, and more!

*Dedicated to the
Indomitable Spirit
and Sacrifices of
the SOF Medic*

A Peer-Reviewed Journal That Brings Together the Global Interests of Special Operations' First Responders