



# SOMOS Sentinel

The Official Publication of the Society of Military Orthopaedic Surgeons

SOMOS Sentinel, Vol XI, No. 1

July 2010

## President's Message

John "JT" Tokish, MD  
Lt Col. USAF



I am delighted with the progress we have made so far this year and thought it a good time to update the membership on some of the signature accomplishments that our membership has made:

The annual meeting planning is nearly complete. Thanks to Bob Sullivan, Program Chair, and our friends at Data Trace, we have a truly outstanding program in place. Highlights of the meeting include:

-An extremely distinguished group of moderators and guests that would rival any national orthopedic meeting, and that have close personal relationships with our society. Each contributor will share their clinical experience and perspectives with our membership.

-The Allgood Leadership Symposium, where leadership in battlefield medicine will be shared directly from the top, with guest lectures from Brigadier General Kory Cornum, (one of our own!), and Lt. General Bruce Green, the Air Force Surgeon General. We hope that you will join us for this premier discussion on leadership as a military surgeon.

-Abstracts are still being accepted and include the most competitive cohort of projects in SOMOS history. Many of these presentations will be sought for podiums at the AAOS and subspecialty meetings, as well as future publication. We welcome the fierce competition for the podium at SOMOS.

-The Commander's cup: Service bragging rights will be on the line with "broom ball," downhill racing, and NASTAR events to decide who claims the title "Kings" of Vail Mountain.



-Finally, the awards ceremony Thursday night will be a special opportunity to honor our own "best of the best" military orthopedic surgeons.

The First Annual AANA/SOMOS Advanced Shoulder Arthroscopy Course: Thanks to the collaboration of CDR Matt Provencher, SOMOS First Vice President, and Rick Ryu, AANA Immediate Past President, we are proud to announce a scholarship for an advanced shoulder arthroscopy course for SOMOS members. This course will be at the Orthopedic Learning Center in Chicago and will be staffed by masters' level AANA and SOMOS instructors. Best of all, course fees are waived (normally a \$2,000 cost)! This will be an intimate environment to polish your skills with the best arthroscopists in the world.

AAOS Disaster Management Group - SOMOS has been asked to play an active role in assisting the AAOS in developing a comprehensive response to disaster management. As SOMOS is the recognized expert in the care of disaster orthopedics in an austere environment, we are tasked with providing a training curriculum to help ready the civilian orthopedist for the austere environment.

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## President's Message Continued...

Under the leadership of Lt. Col. Tad Gerlinger, SOMOS is developing this curriculum and will establish the standard for disaster training in orthopedics for our civilian colleagues. Stay tuned for a more formal announcement in the next newsletter. Additionally, we are working toward streamline civilian/military partnerships for the rapid delivery of patient care after disaster. No mission is more convergent with that of SOMOS, and with the experience of our members, no organization is more poised to contribute than SOMOS.

SOMOS Research Collaborative - We are proud to announce that the collaborative has submitted its first competitive grant! The "Innovative Methods to Preserve Articular Cartilage after Trauma (IMPACT)" was submitted in May. The study is a prospective randomized clinical trial comparing three common treatments for chondral defects in the knee. Nine SOMOS centers are participating, making this the largest military collaborative ever undertaken. The study seeks to determine the return to duty after these procedures, and will aid in streamlining the collaborative processes.

There has never been a more exciting time to be a part of what we are building. The SOMOS mission is unique because of our charge to care for the combat athlete, our homogenous patient population, and because of the cohesiveness and integrity of our members. I look forward to sharing our progress throughout the rest of the year and am honored to be a colleague of so many of you who are dedicated to this most worthy mission!

See you in Vail,



John "JT" Tokish, MD  
SOMOS President

Submit abstracts online from  
May 1 - August 1, 2010

## 52nd SOMOS Annual Meeting December 13 - 17, 2010

Visit [www.somos.org](http://www.somos.org) for details.



### Vail Marriott Mountain Resort & Spa Vail, Colorado

Nestled at the base of Vail Mountain resort and conveniently located just a three-minute walk to the gondola, Vail Marriott is ideal lodging for daredevils, daydreamers or those seeking a little adventure. The natural beauty that surrounds the hotel has effortlessly been incorporated into the charm and elegance of its European Chateau feel.

Call 1-800-648-0720 or make your hotel reservations online. Reference Group Code **smssmsa** to ensure you receive the discounted meeting rate of \$149 per night.

Recommended transportation from Denver International Airport or Eagle County Airport: Colorado Mountain Express shuttle service. Reservations Required - Call 1-800-525-6363 or make your reservation online at [www.ridecme.com](http://www.ridecme.com)

Cost: \$87 per person one-way from Denver Int'l  
Cost: \$44 per person one-way from Eagle County

Visit us online at [www.somos.org](http://www.somos.org) for complete meeting details and online registration.



## 2010 SOMOS Officers

Lt Col. John (JT) Tokish, MD  
*President*

CDR Matthew Provencher, MD  
*1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President*

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## About The Sentinel

The primary mission of the *SOMOS Sentinel* is to share information with our SOMOS membership. We would like to provide a forum where information may be conveyed from our orthopaedic consultants/service advisors, SOMOS leadership, and annual meeting organizers to all our members. We encourage you to give us your input for future editions. We, the SOMOS Board, are here to serve you, our members.

Our Society's mission is to provide a forum for the interchange of medical knowledge as it relates to the practice of orthopaedic surgery in the military. This newsletter serves as an important link.

SOMOS Newsletters are sent electronically March, July and October. Please renew your membership and/or update your information (to include a current email address) online at [www.somos.org](http://www.somos.org).

## 2010 Membership Categories

**Active Members:** Active duty, reserve, retired, or honorably discharged orthopaedic surgeons in the Armed Forces of the United States of America.  
Annual Dues: \$150

**Resident Members:** Active duty, reserve, retired, or honorably discharged resident orthopaedic surgeons in the Armed Forces of the United States of America.  
Annual Dues: \$0

**Allied Members:** Orthopaedic surgeons who are active, reserve, retired or honorably discharged members of foreign military services.  
Annual Dues: \$150

**Associate Members:** Non-military orthopaedic surgeons, either active in practice or retired, who reside in the United States.  
Annual Dues: \$125

**Affiliate Members:** Military or non-military physicians (active practice or retired) and physician assistants who have demonstrated interest in the advancement of military medicine and the mission of SOMOS.  
Annual Dues: \$75

**Emeritus Members:** Upon request of the member, Emeritus Membership may be conferred by the Board of Directors upon an Active Member who has reached the age of 65 and has retired from active practice.  
Annual Dues: \$0

## Save the Dates

AANA SOMOS - A Combined Advanced Shoulder Arthroscopy Course  
October 16-18, 2010  
Chicago, IL

52nd Annual Meeting (Submit abstracts online from May 1 - August 1, 2010)  
December 13-17, 2010  
Vail, Colorado

SOMOS Member Reception at the AAOS Annual Meeting  
February 17, 2011  
San Diego, CA

Visit [www.somos.org](http://www.somos.org) for more information.

## A Note to Residents



Army Residents,

**Fellowship...**It's that time of year again. Not only are there several openings for the majority of the subspecialties, there is a new fellowship available to army applicants this year - shoulder.

The projected fellowship openings for 2012: Sports (2), Hand (3), Adult Recon (1),Foot/Ankle (1), Shoulder (1), Spine (1), Trauma (1), and Pediatrics (2).

Several subspecialties have already begun to accept applications. See your respective subspecialty websites for guidance.

You must also apply through the military website at [www.mods.army.mil/medicaleducation/](http://www.mods.army.mil/medicaleducation/). Be aware of key deadlines.

Still not sure if fellowship is right for you? Read what the AAOS has to say about it at [www.aaos.org/member/mbrsvc/fell4me.asp](http://www.aaos.org/member/mbrsvc/fell4me.asp).

Go Army,

CPT Daniel J. Stinner, MD  
Army Resident Representative

Navy residents,

Welcome to a new academic year! Now is the time to apply for fellowship.

The Navy GME-2+ application is now available at [www.nmmpte.med.navy.mil/gmeapplication](http://www.nmmpte.med.navy.mil/gmeapplication).

The deadline for online submission is 17 September. Supporting documentation and application changes are due by 15 October.

Have a great year,

Jonathan Roth, M.D.  
LT MC USN  
Navy Resident Representative  
[jonathan.roth@med.navy.mil](mailto:jonathan.roth@med.navy.mil)

## SOMOS Gives Back at the AAOS Annual Meeting

Each year, on the day before the AAOS Annual Meeting, a group of volunteers has helped to build a playground as a way to give back to the communities we serve.



*LTC(P) Tad Gerlinger, COL Ed Arrington, LTC Dan White, CDR Matt Provencher, and Lt. Col. JT Tokish (from left to right) take a break from the rain.*

This year, more than a dozen SOMOS members participated in the effort. While we probably spent more time inside due to the inclement weather, the day was an overall success. The final product...the first AAOS Family Fitness and Fun Park, which contained both exercise equipment for adults and an accessible playground for children.



*MAJ Roxanne Wallace (kneeling far left), CPT Brendan Masini (center front), and MAJ Steve Lalliss (far right), team up to assemble the climbing net for the playground.*

We want to thank those who contributed their time and look forward to an even larger showing at AAOS 2011. To participate next year, send an e-mail to [daniel.stinner@amedd.army.mil](mailto:daniel.stinner@amedd.army.mil) or [brendan.masini@amedd.army.mil](mailto:brendan.masini@amedd.army.mil) for details.

Resident Representatives are an important part of the Board of Directors. If you have questions regarding any of this information or would like to contribute to the next edition of *The Sentinel*, please contact them directly.

## SOMOS in Haiti

B. Hudson Berrey, MD COL, MC, USA (RET)

When the earthquake hit Port-au-Prince, Haiti, a struggling nation was dealt a severe blow in terms of the ability of the country to meet its overwhelming medical needs. A cry for help went out to the world, and as is predictable, the United States responded as it always does. A call went out for all types of medical responders with a specific need for orthopaedic surgeons to answer the challenge for what was to become a MASCAL event on a cosmic scale.

When I moved to Jacksonville, I met George Fipp, MD, who had been going to Haiti for 20 plus years. We talked and decided to make a week in Haiti, at the Hospital Sacre' Coeur in Milot, with an attending faculty a goal for each resident in our program. As such, the orthopaedic community in Jacksonville, the University of Florida Department of Orthopaedics and Nemours and our town faculty, had experience with the country, the people and the culture. The hospital where we worked in Milot was unaffected by the earthquake. Jacksonville had a team on the ground three days after the event.

I was asked to put a team together to relieve the team there. The goal was to overlap each team by a day, to provide continuity of care and a hot-wash of what the previous team had learned, so it could be built on. To put a team together on short notice was a challenge. I utilized old email correspondence to develop a list of potential volunteers. As pediatricians were needed, I sent a request to John Pierce, the former Chief of Pediatrics at Walter Reed to help me.

The response from the military orthopaedic community was incredible. I heard from so many friends and colleagues that it was inspiring to hear that so many would be willing to do what it took to help. The "can-do" spirit still lives. While many could not go immediately, they were directed to those who schedule teams to find a time when they could help.

Our team included Dr. Bill Buckingham, (USN), Dr. Bob Stanton, (Army), Dr. Hank Chambers (Army), Dr. Tim McHenry (Army), and Mike Seese, PA-C (Army) (see picture below), as well as many non-orthopaedic types. It was a pleasure to work with these guys and once again enjoy the sense of mission and camaraderie that existed. There were no egos and everyone pitched in to do whatever needed to be done, from organizing supplies and making wound rounds, to doing yet another I&D, skin graft or amputation. It was hard work. It seemed like every patient had at least one extremity wound; many had several.



Wound care was critical. Nurses in Haiti did little patient care and primarily passed meds. Feeding, cleaning and wound care fell to volunteers and available family. Many patients had either lost all their family or didn't know where they were. These patients were "adopted" by adjacent families, which was really heartwarming. The most difficult patients to treat were those with spinal cord injuries who developed early decubiti and needed debriding.

There were no Roto-rest beds or SCI units. We did our best. Patients with pelvis injuries had closed reductions and skeletal traction, or sometimes an external fixator.

We had three OR's and three minor procedure rooms that were converted exam rooms.

## SOMOS in Haiti Continued...

Austere but adequate was the setting. During our week, the team did about 170 cases, mostly debridements, amputations, skin grafts and the like. A good maxim was: Closed injuries stay closed and open injuries stay open. Patients with injuries fixed internally elsewhere arrived infected and needed revision. How many were fixed and did fine we never knew. It was hard to keep things clean and early on antibiotics were hard to come by, as were cultures.

A normal volunteer team to the hospital, in normal times, has about 12 members who spend a week in Milot. During our week there were over 90 volunteers, orthopaedists, anesthesiologists and CRNAs, nurses, therapists, and non-medical personnel as well. There were about 300 inpatients in the hospital when we arrived (normal census limit is 73).



The census swelled to over 400 when our week was over. With associated family there were close to 1000 individuals on site. The operation had taken over two schools and a children's nutrition center to accommodate those medically evacuated to our site. Patients arrived by many modes, by bus, truck, motorcycle, on foot and by helicopter. US Coast Guard and Navy helicopters, as well as those from other countries, participated.



A week was about as long as one could stay and remain effective. The emotional and physical intensity of the experience takes a toll. After a week, emotions started to get a bit edgy. By and large, everyone had a gratifying experience and was glad to have participated. I was proud of our orthopaedic team and everyone who went. SOMOS can be proud of its members. I also think there was rejuvenation of the spirit by many, through just being able to help their less fortunate, fellow man without worrying about billing, authorizations, budgets or the rest of the "red tape" that has taken over medicine in our lives. I encourage everyone to take advantage of the opportunity to look beyond themselves and volunteer in an under-served area.



## Military Orthopaedics in the Media

The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) has announced the winners of its 2010 MORE Award competition. In its fifth year, this program honors media efforts that further public understanding of musculoskeletal health-related issues and encourages healthy behavior in the care of bones, joints, muscles and tendons.

SOMOS would like to congratulate Online Journalism: Internet MORE Award winner Billie Young for his article *War, Orthopedics and Great Leaps Forward* featured in the June 2, 2009 edition of *Orthopedics This Week*. SOMOS and a few of its members were highlighted.

SOMOS would also like to congratulate Consumer Print Journalism: Local Newspaper MORE Award Winner Meg Jones, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, for her article, "Surgeon's Iraq Experience is Core of Military Textbook" and Broadcast Journalism: National Television MORE Award Winner Terry Sanders, American Film Foundation, for his film "Fighting for Life."

Visit [www.somos.org](http://www.somos.org) for the winning articles.

## A Note to Reservists

A few months ago I contacted all of you about the Society of Military Orthopedic Surgeons. Of those who responded, a few had been in SOMOS in the past but because of life's circumstances only one or two remain affiliated with the organization. SOMOS hopes to change that. As the Army Reserve Liaison, I am making it my mission to make all of you aware of this unique organization, to get you involved and to act as mentors to the younger physicians and officers who will follow in your footsteps.

In short, we, the Reserve 61M's are a comparatively small group. Unlike many parts of the Reserves and National Guard, we don't make up 70% of the Army's total manpower pool. There are only about 70 of us. Although we range from Captains to Colonels, most of us are either right out of Residency or Fellowship or we are in the Autumn of our civilian careers. Many have been in Active service but that number

shrinking as a few of us retire each year. Speaking with AR Medcom, fewer of our civilian colleagues are interested in joining so our core is shrinking.

So why are we here? We have committed ourselves to service because we believe in causes grander than ourselves. It's not enough to serve our civilian communities; our calling is also to the young men and women who volunteered to defend our great nation. "If we are going to put 18 year olds in harm's way, it's only right that we answer the call as well" says it best and likely echoes your personal sentiment. To that end, most of us have been overseas at least once and many two and three times. In case no one ever said it, let me be the first, thanks for your service!

As physicians we have a dual role. We care for our patients both at home and overseas and we serve as mentors for the next generation of Surgeons. With so much wartime expertise we must take the time to interact with younger surgeons and pass on critical lessons learned and best practice techniques. Without this knowledge, follow on orthopedic surgeons may struggle to figure out what you and I already learned first hand. This saves time, preserves knowledge and enables those front line surgeons to make those critical-limb and life-saving decisions in a timely manner.

To that end, SOMOS gives us that opportunity to contribute to the general body of orthopedic knowledge in the care of wartime extremity wounds and gives residents an opportunity to present unique research with lessons applicable to military medicine. Additionally, it is a valuable forum to meet with and exchange ideas and stories with fellow Reserve officers and our Active Duty counterparts. It's a great way to meet with old friends and make new ones. Our service is never used for self glory or aggrandizement, but believe me, it does make us unique; out of thousands of our colleagues, only a handful stepped forward. Come meet kindred spirits, learn a little, give a little back, and meet the men and women of the Air Force, Army, and Navy who are ready to stand by you, shoulder to shoulder as we face the most challenging and dangerous practice of our lives: the care for our future.

Hope to hear from you soon,

Wallace (Brad) Brucker, MD COL, MC  
SOMOS Reserve Representative - Army

## News from the Front Line



CDR Matthew T. Provencher, MD MC USN is currently deployed as part of Pacific Partnership 2010 (PP10) on the USNS Mercy (TAH-19), one of the U.S. Navy's two hospital ships. PP10 is an annual mission which provides humanitarian

support throughout the Pacific Fleet Command area of responsibility. The current PP10 mission is coordinated from the USNS Mercy, and has evolved since 2004 when the USNS Mercy was summoned to assist with the Tsunami Relief Effort in Indonesia. The USNS Mercy has a 1000-bed capacity with 12 operating rooms and one interventional radiology suite. In addition, the hospital ship has full radiologic (radiographs, computed tomography, fluoroscopy) and lab capabilities, and currently has over 100 personnel onboard.



The USNS Mercy is currently in the midst of a six-nation visit between May and September 2010. Working with numerous military, partner military, government, and non-government organizations, care has been provided to over 17,000 patients, including over 400 onboard surgical procedures in both Vietnam and Cambodia. In addition to the medical portion of the humanitarian effort, the U.S. Navy Seabees from Navy Mobile Construction Battalion 11 and Amphibious Construction Battalion 1 have provided numerous construction renovations to schools, medical clinics, and health centers. The mission concludes at the end of September after visits to Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, and Palau.

## Welcome Aboard!

SOMOS would like to acknowledge and congratulate the newest members of the Board of Directors:

CDR Eric P. Hofmeister, MD  
*Secretary*

COL (Ret) Hudson Berry, MD  
*Historian - Retired Representative*

CDR Daniel Solomon, MD  
*Reserve Representative - Navy*

James A. Keeney, MD  
*AAOS BOS Health Policy Representative*

We appreciate your willingness to serve and your dedication to the mission and membership of SOMOS.

## A Message from the Editor

John Paul Rue, MD  
CDR USN

Dear SOMOS Membership,

2010 continues to be an exciting and outstanding year for SOMOS, with many achievements and milestones. As an organization, our strength is in our members, and as you can see from the articles in this edition of the Sentinel, SOMOS members continue to take the lead in many fields of Orthopaedic Surgery, positively impacting lives and improving patient care in wartime situations in Iraq and Afghanistan, in disaster areas such as Haiti, as well as in austere environments across the globe. Thank you for your service and your contributions. Please continue to send us your stories and experiences!

Best regards,

John Paul Rue, MD  
Communications Committee Chair

