

An Ongoing Series

Who Owns Battlefield Medicine?

Bob Mabry on Being SOMA President
and Being at Black Hawk Down

Interviewed by John F. Kragh Jr.

You went from infantry to medicine. What did you keep with you?

Grounded experience. As a former enlisted Ranger, then SF medic, I'm a physician with a unique, nitty, gritty viewpoint.

Why did you go from infantryman to SF medic?

Big bonus, longest, toughest course to pass, and I heard Fort Sam had girls.

What was the most valued thing you learned at Black Hawk Down?

To question authority. Reality checks of guidelines, like C-spine immobilization under fire for gunshot wounds, liters of IV fluids in ATLS. Doctrine was wrong.

What's your vision for SOMA (Special Operations Medical Association)?

Improve survival and decrease suffering of Special Operators. SOF is at the edge, the forefront; we push the envelope in techniques and concepts. Someone needs to own battlefield medicine. Coherent data collection is needed to focus improvement efforts. We need to develop experts in battlefield care.

How do you balance life and work?

I don't.

What's up for SOMA and JSOM (Journal of Special Operations Medicine)?

Partnership. Paired uniqueness. Dovetailed work. Linked goals.

What's your vision for military medicine?

Military medicine is mostly a hospital-based, \$60+ billion per year operation. SOF is the pilot light of innovation during peacetime. While the rest of military medicine forgets the wartime lessons, we can keep thinking.

What in the future of military medicine is going to be like the past?

The recurring themes of military medicine are the recurring themes of military medicine. Look to history.

You seem to always have maxims at hand. What is your favorite?

Sacred cows make the best hamburgers.

“Bob is a big fan of *Real Housewives of New Jersey*, *Game of Thrones*, *Breaking Bad*, *Walking Dead*, & *Hell on Wheels*.”

Where do you find them?

I hear them or make them up.

What advice do you have for the young enlisted medic in SOF?

You have a great job. Master your craft. Always learn the “why.” Join SOMA. Read the JSOM.

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