

BOSTON: STRENGTH IN A TIME OF TERROR



April 15, 2013, was a day of shock and sadness. As my staff and I watched the horror unfold at the Boston Marathon on breaking news, we were reminded how tenuous our sense of security and freedom can be. The Boston bombings brought back horrific memories of 9/11, and the senseless loss of life was as heartbreaking in that moment as it had been nearly 12 years before. However, over the

next few days, weeks and months, the nation came together and rallied around the people of the Boston area, and this outpouring of support was a testament to the collective fortitude and resiliency of the American people.

On behalf of the NTOA, our heartfelt sympathies and prayers go out to the victims and survivors of the Boston Marathon bombing, and to the family of 27-year-old MIT campus police officer Sean Collier, who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

The quick and thorough response of the police, fire and medical services of the Boston area saved lives and prevented further carnage. They are to be commended. Federal, state and local law enforcement authorities converged on the area and worked around the clock to identify and apprehend the suspects. The invisible but formidable walls between various law enforcement agencies and specialized units were removed in order to achieve the goals of the investigation. Together, they worked tirelessly, and the suspect was ultimately captured.

This and other recent violent incidents are a reminder of the importance and value of proper, timely and effective training, and of having the necessary equipment to ensure the safety of our officers and the public. Moreover, we saw the importance of interoperability among the various specialized law enforcement units, including SWAT, EOD, K9, TEMS, CNT and support elements in the hours following the attack.

The NTOA has been at the forefront of advocating for the integration of special units, especially SWAT and EOD. The Boston Marathon bombing was regrettably one of many recent mass killings of innocent victims where high-powered weapons and bombs or incendiary devices were used together to horrific ends. Sadly, this dangerous and deadly tactic has become a standard which will likely be used more often in the future, resulting in many lives lost and mass injuries.

How can we prepare ourselves for this possibility? How can we minimize the loss of life while ensuring the safety of the public and our law enforcement comrades? The answer lies in training, education, equipment, collaboration, and physical and mental preparedness.

I had the privilege of attending several state conferences in the past year and witnessed firsthand the commitment to the aforementioned areas. It is through these types of venues that you hone your skills and become more proficient in your duties. Moreover, training with other specialized units in your department and with nearby agencies will provide a hands-on experience that translates into effectiveness and efficiency in times of need, such as if a Boston Marathon-type bombing occurs in your jurisdiction. Continue to train and collaborate!

NTOA UPDATES

The NTOA is moving forward on several new initiatives that will benefit you. We recently launched monthly webinars with timely topics including IED threats, active shooter issues and updates, and preparing patrol officers for critical incidents. These webinars are offered at no cost to you or your agency, and in some cases can be applied toward your mandatory in-service training requirements. Since their launch, these webinars have been well-attended, and we plan to continue this educational benefit to our members.

The James Torkar Educational Scholarship, recently renamed in honor of longtime NTOA board member Capt. James Torkar (ret.), was increased from \$1,000 to \$2,500 for children of our members. As a result, the number of applications increased fivefold!

We also are offering several new benefits for you and your families, from college tuition discounts to product/equipment discounts. Take a look at our website for the latest news, benefits and training opportunities that will assist you in your professional development.

I look forward to seeing you at our 30th Annual Tactical Conference and Trade Show in Kansas City!

Be safe and God bless,

Mark Lomax