

# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



With an all-time record attendance of more than 740 students and 215 exhibitors, our 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Tactical Conference was, by anyone's standards, a success. The attendees were fortunate to hear excellent debriefs, including those by the Massachusetts State Police Bomb Squad on the Boston Marathon bombing, the FBI HRT and Hous-

ton County Sheriff's Office on the Alabama bunker hostage rescue of a young child, and the Gwinnett County Sheriff's Department on a firefighter rescue. Training courses were conducted by our outstanding instructors, who pushed students to excel. Our generous sponsors, as always, provided giveaways and hospitality events that were enjoyed by all.

Thanks to the Kansas City Metro SWAT team and the NTOA staff, who all worked tirelessly for many long hours this year, planning and preparing for a very complex conference. All of the attendees, as well, deserve recognition for having made it a priority to expand their knowledge and attend the conference. It was very rewarding to personally hear from many of you how much you enjoyed the training and activities. As you know, the conference is a hands-on experience that starts early in the morning and goes late into the day, as well as a time to network and catch up with old acquaintances. Please check out our conference article on page 10 of this issue, and start planning to join us in Mobile, Alabama next year!

During the conference business meeting, members in attendance voted and unanimously approved two bylaw changes regarding board of director elections. The first allows team memberships to have one vote for a director in their region; the second proposal allows individual Canadian members to vote during the elections. The team membership vote will go into effect for the 2014 elections. As per the bylaw change, each team must nominate one member and an alternate member by August 1 of the election year to cast the vote for the team. The Canadian vote went into effect during this past 2013 election.

There have been several NTOA updates since the last issue of *The Tactical Edge*. The NTOA has hired the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) to conduct

the first in-depth national study on SWAT. You are certainly aware that many in the media, ACLU and general public have criticized the tactics, equipment, training and even the mere existence of SWAT over the years. The law enforcement community, collectively, has not had the quantitative nor the qualitative evidence to refute those critics, and more importantly, to provide a clear, unbiased picture of how, when and where SWAT teams and tactical units save lives, protect property and quell violence. That is why this study is important for the present, as well as the future of law enforcement. The study will take approximately a year to complete and will necessitate the input and feedback of participating agencies. If you or your agency receives the questionnaire, please ensure that it is completed in its entirety and returned.

The NTOA recently made a significant donation to the National Law Enforcement Museum. The memorial honors the more than 19,000 U.S. law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty throughout history. It is imperative that we do not forget those who gave the ultimate sacrifice. I have friends memorialized on that wall and I know many of you do, too. So let us not forget them and the families they left behind.

The NTOA has partnered with the Below 100 Initiative (Below100.com) to reduce annual line-of-duty deaths to below 100, a number not seen since 1944. The Below 100 Initiative training targets everyday safety measures that can prevent injuries and death for police officers, including wearing seatbelts and ballistic vests, driving safely and avoiding complacency. Please look out for Below 100 training opportunities. The NTOA is excited to be part of this great initiative that has proved to increase officer safety.

As we close out 2013 and look forward to next year, I would like to thank you for your support and dedication to law enforcement, SWAT/tactical teams, your state associations and to the NTOA. Without you, we would not exist.

Be safe and God bless,

Mark Lomax  
Executive Director