



As the new year begins, I want to thank you for your support and guidance in 2014. We were up against the ropes a few times, faced with unrelenting scrutiny after the incidents in Ferguson, Missouri, and Staten Island, New York. The “militarization of policing” became a hot topic of discussion on Capitol Hill and in the media, with potential attacks on the

Department of Defense’s 1033 Program. But through effective lobbying efforts, media interviews, town hall events and proactive posturing, we were able to hold off any changes to the 1033 Program and lessen the onslaught of misguided criticism that blasted those in our field.

In September, I had the honor of representing NTOA and testifying before a Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs hearing on “Oversight of Federal Programs for Equipping State and Local Law Enforcement.” In November, I again spoke on your behalf before a hearing of the House Armed Services Committee’s Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations on the implementation of the 1033 Program. Both of these hearings resulted in positioning the NTOA as the subject matter expert in tactical operations and equipment for both houses of Congress.

We have been invited to review proposed 2015 House and Senate bills regarding the 1033 Program and issues involving tactical operations. While there are many professional law enforcement associations in this country, the NTOA continues to be sought out as the leading expert in this field. Many of you have shared your concerns with me and other representatives of the NTOA and I assure you that not only have we heard you, we have shared those concerns with key stakeholders in this national discussion.

NTOA AND IACP INITIATIVES

In 2014, the NTOA partnered with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) on several initiatives. Two topics of particular importance were “Children Exposed to Violence” and “Safeguarding Children at the Time of Parental Arrest,” the latter of which was the subject of a webinar in which NTOA Board Director Major Ed Allen and I participated with IACP. In the public arena, law enforcement is often portrayed as bullies and tough guys, but you on the frontlines understand how critical it is to be level-headed and reasonable during the arrest process to protect our youngest and most innocent citizens as they stand by during that volatile time. The article, “The officer’s role in responding to traumatized children,” on page 12 of this issue, shares useful advice for situations in which children are bystanders to their guardians’ arrest.

NTOA representatives attended the 2014 IACP conference in Orlando, Florida, and presented a standing-room-only workshop called “Special Weapons and Tactics Teams: Perceptions versus Reality.” This workshop tackled some of the most challenging issues involving SWAT in 2014. The panel was comprised of Major Ed Allen of the Seminole County Sheriff’s Office, Assistant Chief Michael Hillmann of the Los Angeles Port Police, Chief Michael Foreman (ret.) of the Orange County (FL) Sheriff’s Office and myself.

Also in 2014, a national survey of SWAT teams conducted by the IACP and the University of Chicago’s National Opinion Research Center on behalf of the NTOA concluded. Several hundred agencies responded to the survey and the results are being analyzed. The survey will undoubtedly prove to be incredibly valuable to tactical law enforcement commanders, trainers and planners for years to come. The final report will be made available to our members this year.

I want to thank the great NTOA staff, dedicated directors and outstanding instructors for their professionalism and dedication in making the NTOA the premier association for not only the tactical community, but for the men and women of law enforcement. I also want to thank the state associations around the country for their commitment to providing outstanding training opportunities and benefits, and for serving as a platform for communications for their members. Moreover, kudos to the state associations for their support and their willingness to partner with the NTOA in so many of these important endeavors.

NEW DIRECTORS ELECTED

In October, NTOA members elected three new directors, one for each region. We are pleased to welcome Det. Jason Behun of Cape Coral (FL) PD as our new Eastern Region director; Chief Bart Branyon of the Kansas Department of Revenue (Alcohol Beverage Control) as Central Region director; and Sgt. Dan Murphy of Fort Collins (CO) Police Services as Western Region director. Each has a distinguished career in law enforcement and I know they look forward to working for you and addressing your concerns. (See page 7 of this issue for more information on our new board members.)

Thank you for your service to your community and your support of the NTOA. I look forward to working with you in 2015.

Be safe and God Bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Lomax". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Lomax