

# SECOND ANNUAL IRON OPERATOR CHALLENGE

By Bruce Bayley and Carl Grove

In April 27, the NTOA's correctional training cadre returned to Moundsville, West Virginia, for another session of world-class training and competition at the 2017 Mock Prison Riot. Hosted by the West Virginia Corrections Training Foundation Inc., NTOA instructors kicked off the event by conducting their industry-leading cell extraction course.

The class of 30 national and international officers, including those from the National Center for State Courts, Belize and the Winnipeg Police Service, participated in the three-day course designed to address the needs of both the correctional administrator and cell extraction team member. This training applies both intermediate and advanced tactics for the resolution of incidents in which inmates refuse to comply with lawful orders to exit their cells.

Students were introduced to the use of force associated with cell extraction, three-member compliance teams, individual team movement, chemical agent, less-lethal and equipment overviews, as well as employing crisis intervention to gain inmate compliance before force is utilized. Briefing, debriefing and completing proper cell extraction documentation were also covered. Students completed multiple force-on-force cell extractions and three-man compliance exercises.

At the end of the three-day session, course participants joined correctional special operations teams from around





Participants and instructors for the Iron Operator Challenge.

the world as they engaged in the riot's scenarios, training and vendor demonstrations. For many, however, the highlight of the first official day was the return of the NTOA Iron Operator Challenge. Building off last year's tremendous success, NTOA trainers upped the ante by constructing a course that tested not only the officers' strength and endurance, but their sheer will to succeed.

Beginning with the bench press, this year's 23 participants had to push their body weight as many times as possible. One point was earned for each complete movement. Immediately after pressing to failure, officers had 90 seconds to hand carry two water jugs 20 yards, drag or carry a 100-pound dummy an additional 20 yards, and flip a huge truck tire as often as possible down a grass course before time expired.

Participants were required to complete both carries and earned one point with each complete flip. For most observers, this would have been enough to end their day, but again, and without rest, the iron operators walked an additional 20 yards to the towel

hang where they attempted to hold themselves suspended for as long as possible. Five points were earned for every 15 seconds the officers kept their bodies off the ground. To say this was the survival of the fittest would be an understatement.

While all of the competitors made their agencies proud, four individuals rose to the top and claimed this year's prizes:

**First place:** Joe Lindsey, Utah DOC. Prizes: Benelli Nova Tactical Pump Shotgun, Voodoo Tactical backpack, NTOA accessories.

**Second place:** David Sunderland, Franklin County Prison. Prizes: Benchmade Strap Cutter knife, Voodoo Tactical backpack, NTOA accessories.

**Third place:** Marc Sarno, Onondaga County (NY) SO. Prizes: Benchmade Strap Cutter knife, Voodoo Tactical backpack, NTOA accessories.

**Fourth place:** Alexander Townes, NYC Corrections. Prizes: Voodoo Tactical backpack, NTOA accessories.

The NTOA would like to thank prize sponsors Benelli, Benchmade and

Voodoo Tactical for their generous contributions.

Congratulations to all of this year's Iron Operators. We hope to see you next year! ■

*We would like to thank FlexRight Solutions™ for donating their time and providing footage of the training to NTOA.*

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Bruce Bayley, Ph.D., CFLE**, is graduate director of the Department of Criminal Justice at Weber State University.

**Lt. Carl Grove** is a 25-year veteran of Pennsylvania Department of Corrections at SCI-Smithfield and a four-year veteran of the U.S. Marines Corp.



We want to know what you think. Email [editor@ntoa.org](mailto:editor@ntoa.org) with feedback or questions about this article.