

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



As we begin a new year, it is important to take a look back. Many of you have heard the phrase, “If we don’t learn from history, we are bound to repeat it.” No truer words have been spoken. It is critical to continually learn and keep abreast of current threats.

Recently, there was a bombing in New York City in which the bomber attempted to detonate a device on his body. This attempt to kill and maim innocent commuters failed, yet it serves as a reminder to us all regarding our readiness.

Many of you may recall the bombings in Europe several years ago that occurred in public transportation hubs, specifically subways. These incidents prompted discussions on how law enforcement in the United States would respond to a similar incident. Tactical and EOD integration was examined as well as use-of-force policies. Many questions were raised, and some agencies answered these questions. They made the necessary changes in their capabilities to enhance their responsiveness. Is your agency one of those that are truly prepared? What steps have you and your agency taken in these past few years to handle one of these incidents? Have you taken steps to improve? Terrorist threats, both domestic and foreign, are not going to go away and it is our responsibility to be ready.

Continual learning and self-reflection will serve us best in ensuring our readiness. By remaining abreast of current events locally, nationally and internationally, we can learn from and then work to avoid the mistakes of the past. This contemporary knowledge of existing and emerging threats can assist in developing training plans and driving policy reviews. Please take a moment and think about what is going on around us and reflect on your state of readiness.

The NTOA Tactical Response and Operations Standard (TROS) is undergoing review and being updated. A diverse panel has been formed to examine and consider all recommended changes to the standards. Many of you took the time to review the

TROS and contribute suggestions. Every proposal is being vetted and seriously considered for inclusion in the revised standard. As promised, the TROS continues to be a living document. We remain committed to adapting and improving the standards to best serve the tactical community and ensure the highest levels of professionalism in law enforcement.

In addition to the TROS assisting with our quest for high standards for our teams, individual certifications remain an important part of the NTOA. The NTOA Academy Command College continues to grow in numbers each month as members enter into a challenging certification process. The Command College continues to focus on SWAT team commanders and team leaders.

Recently, the California Tactical Officers Association (CATO) released an individual Operator Certification for California-certified and employed officers. The program is the result of several years’ hard work by CATO and significant costs, both in time and finances. This online program will be evaluated for the next several months by CATO and the NTOA. Once the program has fully demonstrated its effectiveness, the NTOA, in collaboration with CATO, will modify the program for national application and implementation. We believe this is an important investment in the tactical community and serves as a first step for operators to work toward leadership positions within their respective teams. By working from the top and bottom, we are confident that the end result will be more capable teams and safer communities.

Finally, for those tenured members of the NTOA, I would ask you to consider volunteering for a Section Chair position. The specific requirements and duties, as well as current open positions, are listed on page 10 of this issue. The notice can also be found on our website.

Thank you for your consideration and support. I wish you all a safe and successful 2018. ■

Thor Eells

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thor Eells". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Executive Director