

NTOA COMMAND COLLEGE STUDENT PROFILE



SGT. CHRIS EKLUND ORANGE COUNTY (FL) SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sgt. Chris Eklund began his career with the Orange County (FL) Sheriff's Office in 1999. He has worked in several areas of the agency, including patrol, narcotics and problem-oriented policing, and currently is assigned to the SWAT team as the training coordinator and a team leader. Eklund has been on SWAT for almost 18 years and has been full time for the last five years. He has a bachelor's degree in exercise physiology and served in the U.S Army National Guard from 1992-2002 before separating as a staff sergeant.

Q: HOW DO YOU ENVISION THE NTOA COMMAND COLLEGE BENEFITING YOU IN YOUR LEADERSHIP ROLE ON YOUR TEAM?

A: The NTOA Command College has been benefiting me in my leadership role on my team from very early stages in Module I. Going through the different types of leadership has not only helped me recognize what positive leadership models I follow, but also identified some negative traits I may have possessed. Many of the sections thus far have created better relationships with other team members and given me different avenues to explore to work with and mentor subordinates better.

Q: YOU HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE IN BOTH THE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT AND WORK FOR A VARIETY OF LEADERS. WHAT CONSISTENT TRAITS DO YOU SEE IN GOOD LEADERS?

A: Good leaders tend to exhibit very similar traits. First and foremost, competence in their field stands out and is easily recognized. There is always a tremendous difference between someone who has had training and experience in a certain area versus someone who may have recently picked up the information or knowledge. Being able to speak on a subject, give examples and answer questions from real life experience elicits trust in their decision-making abilities when faced with a crisis situation or in mission planning. They do not become overwhelmed and think outside the box when coming up with ways to solve problems.

Good leaders exhibit a sense of motivation. They are a slave to their art and exhibit qualities that let you know they are passionate about their craft. They chose their career path early on and have continued to work within that craft through leadership. They recognize that they may not have all the answers and will utilize outside sources for different ways of handling different situations.

Good leaders also have strong charisma. They use that charisma, coupled with emotional intelligence to motivate others to do what they may not normally do to accomplish the mission.

Q: YOU'VE BEEN HEAVILY INVOLVED IN YOUR STATE TACTICAL ASSOCIATION. WHAT FEEDBACK WOULD YOU GIVE OTHER STATE ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBERS WHO ARE CONSIDERING ENROLLING IN THE COMMAND COLLEGE?

A: There certainly is a great amount of work required for negotiating the Command College. That work, however, does open doors to how other subject matter experts in the tactical world understand and explain things. Many of us have a great deal of knowledge in the tactical world but oftentimes don't recognize the best way to express that knowledge. Whether you are collecting information from military leaders, executives from the business world or from those who have been in the tactical law enforcement arena for many years, all the information applies in one way or another. We should not bind ourselves by what each of our individual agencies portrays as the "right" way to do things. As tactical leaders we must continue to draw on the experience and knowledge of others and continue to add tools to our toolboxes. Through reading the texts, watching videos and attending in-house classes, there has been a tremendous amount of knowledge imparted through the Command College.

Q: YOU'VE ALREADY GRADUATED FROM MODULE I OF THE COMMAND COLLEGE AND ARE NEARLY COMPLETED WITH MODULE II. DO YOU FEEL THE COURSE WORK IS STILL RELEVANT FOR YOUR ASSIGNMENT ON SRT?

A: Yes. Module I was most closely related to my current assignment on my team. Module II has helped me continue to make sense of a lot of the knowledge and information I have gathered in the years I have been in this position. It has also given me insight into what the tactical commander considers in their position. It has helped me find some of the answers I ask myself in the field as they relate to a communication from the command post. I may be given a task to accomplish in the field and wonder what the necessity of that would be. It has helped me understand that not all requests may be coming from the commander but through them.

Q: AS A MEMBER OF A FULL-TIME COMPONENT OF A TACTICAL TEAM, HAVE YOU FOUND YOURSELF STRESSED BY ANY ADDITIONAL WORKLOAD PUT ON YOU BY YOUR ATTENDANCE AT THE COMMAND COLLEGE?

A: As I mentioned, there is a good amount of extra work associated with going through the Command College modules. Having attended college more than 20 years ago, I have definitely noticed a change in how essay papers and capstone projects are written. I did have some initial difficulty navigating the APA writing style. I was fortunate to be able to get some quality information from NTOA staff that helped me in my preparation and planning to better create the final product.

With the amount of lessons, texts and quizzes, I never found myself overwhelmed or stressed but rather found myself wanting to go on to the next lesson or quiz. I found myself enjoying the information I was gathering and continued to want to gain more rapidly. The lessons are easy to navigate and having the ability to stop and start when necessary made everything much smoother for me.



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IS RIGHT FOR YOU!**

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