

NTOA COMMAND COLLEGE STUDENT PROFILE

MASTER SERGEANT GLENN GORDON UNITED STATES AIR FORCE GLOBAL STRIKE COMMAND, MINOT AIR FORCE BASE (ND)



Glenn Gordon has been an NTOA member since 2015. He has served in the U.S. Air Force since 1995 and is the tactics and training non-commissioned officer in charge of the 791st Missile Security Forces Squadron at Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota. He is responsible for training nearly 200 security forces personnel who protect \$3.3 billion in U.S. Strategic Command assets located in 8,500 square miles. Gordon holds a bachelor of arts in intelligence studies/special operations and low-intensity conflict and is completing his master of arts in homeland security/counter-terrorism, both from American Military University.

Q: YOU HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE IN SEVERAL SPECIALIZED ASSIGNMENTS AND WORK FOR A VARIETY OF LEADERS. WHAT CONSISTENT TRAITS DO YOU SEE IN GOOD LEADERS?

A: As a young non-commissioned officer posted at a joint assignment, I had the opportunity to serve alongside both the Army and Marine Corps. The biggest leadership takeaway was seeing how they developed ownership and accountability of not only their actions, but the actions of those around them, especially amongst the younger tiers. The concepts of belonging to and working as a team were always stressed, but a lot of my prior assignments required me to work independently. I noticed vast differences between myself and peers from other services when put in a command and control role, which forced me to become better. The same was true for the junior officers I interacted with. They would always refer to their subordinates as “my soldiers” or “my Marines.” Not to say this sense of ownership and accountability was absent in my service, but up to that point, I had never been truly introduced to it. Since adopting these traits, my mentorship and leadership style has vastly changed over the last decade.

Q: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES THAT EXIST BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR CIVILIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT TACTICAL TEAM COMMANDER PEERS?

A: Like our civilian counterparts in SWAT, military tactical teams tend to attract men and women who truly want to be there. Similarities between the two include managing effective training, dealing with the attrition of knowledgeable team members, defining and refining mission skillsets, and constant restructuring within the team, just to name a few. Like our counterparts, we find ourselves fighting for what we believe the team should be versus what a concept states on paper.

One of the major differences we face is the rotation of command taking place every few years. Each new commander has a vision of what they want the team to perform or not perform, and that's not necessarily a negative. Like any organization, many of our younger members become resistant to change and may not fully understand the commander's intent, thus "the big picture." More often than not, there are members who are reluctant to step into the role of "team lead," and opt to stay the "door kicker." Like our counterparts, the emphasis should be to ultimately train your replacement.

The more responsibility and leadership opportunities taken makes you an even greater asset to both your team and the organization overall. You have to garner and use that knowledge so you're able to speak intelligently about your mission, and potentially fight for its existence with those that may not understand what it is you truly do.

Q: YOU PREVIOUSLY LED SECURITY FORCES AND SPECIAL RESPONSE TEAM PERSONNEL. HOW DO YOU ENVISION THE NTOA COMMAND COLLEGE BENEFITING YOU IN THAT ROLE?

A: I think I have a greater opportunity to impact airmen in my new mission, being in charge of training and tactics. Previously, I only handled training for 60 airmen, which has now grown to nearly 200. The knowledge gained from the NTOA Command College definitely strengthened both my leadership and decision-making capabilities.

Moving into this new position, I look forward to enrolling in the operational leadership modules. Looking over the coursework, I can see that the new lessons stressing leadership and communications will be highly beneficial.



NTOA COMMAND COLLEGE

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Q: AS PART OF THE COMMAND COLLEGE PROGRAM, YOU WERE ASKED TO SELECT A CAPSTONE RESEARCH PROJECT. WHAT TOPIC DID YOU SELECT AND WHY?

A: The Command College provided the option to submit my own topic for approval, so I decided to focus on the growing civil unrest within the United States. From Berkeley to New York City, there is a huge misconception concerning riots versus professional agitation. Many theorize these events to be nothing more than spontaneous acts of violence, but that's not truly the case. In many instances, law enforcement officers are confronting highly trained and motivated professional agitators who are actively trying to defeat your efforts. My research focuses on anarchist behavior from as far back as the 19th century and lists common tactics that have since been modified to combat police in this current century.

My alternate focus is on the tactical team leader and his or her response during these situations. Additionally, these leaders need to realize indicators that can turn an unassuming protest into a full-blown riot, such as the breaking of windows, nudity and the starting of fires. Some of these factors actually illicit a hardwired biological response affecting human behavior.

The earlier a leader can recognize the above factors and tactics implemented against them, the less chance there may be of injury to the public and responding officers, damage to private and public property, apprehension of agitators, and swift resolution of the event.

Q: WHAT FEEDBACK WOULD YOU GIVE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY IN SIMILAR ROLES AS YOU WHO ARE CONSIDERING ENROLLING IN THE COMMAND COLLEGE?

A: I'd say go for it. Enrolling in the Command College would only make them a more well-rounded professional. I see it as an investment in yourself as well as being beneficial for those you lead. In my opinion, the military seems to have an abundance of managers and not enough leaders. There's absolutely nothing wrong with getting more education and becoming that leader your LEOs and airmen not only need, but deserve. ■



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