

NTOA COMMAND COLLEGE STUDENT PROFILE



LT. MICHAEL WELCH
PASADENA (TX) POLICE DEPARTMENT

Lt. Michael Welch began his law enforcement career in 1996 with the Pasadena (TX) Police Department and has served in every command within the department, including the SWAT team for seven years. A certified instructor through the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement, he currently is assigned to the Personnel and Training Division. Lt. Welch served in the U.S. Army Military Police Corps for six years and completed two combat deployments. He earned bachelor's and master's of science degrees from the University of Houston Downtown and is a graduate of the Texas Leadership Command College (class 68) and the FBI National Academy (session 267).

Q: How do you envision the NTOA Command College benefiting you in your leadership role on your team?

A: The NTOA Command College has provided a foundation for tactical leadership from which to draw. I found the information and interactions with other students beneficial. Pulling in and learning from experts from across the country allowed me to increase my leadership vision and understanding of tactical operations. I have implemented several of the lessons learned and applied many of the leadership techniques obtained during the first module. I will continue to use this education to make sure our team adapts to pressures from the current climate in which we operate.

Q: You currently hold the position of team commander with your agency's SWAT team. How do you envision the NTOA Command College benefiting you in that role?

A: This is an interesting question. Unlike military leaders who are expected to continue their education and leadership development as they move up the ranks, police leaders as a rule do not seem to have that same expectation. There is a variety of reasons for this. Sometimes training is restricted by budget or low manpower. However, most of the time, it seems leadership development is just not a priority for most agencies. The NTOA Command College is exactly what's needed for current commanders and those supervisors who will one day be commanders. The training provided through the online modules and NTOA instructors paint a picture for command-level leadership in SWAT operations. I envision the NTOA Command College education will help me not only make improved tactical decisions at a scene, but also set a more focused, long-term strategic vision for the team.

Q: As a senior leader within your organization, what role do you feel you play in identifying and mentoring the next generation of leaders?

A: I truly believe one of the (many) roles of a leader is to mentor the next generation. We should be looking for and training our replacements. As noted above, the military has an expectation of leadership development almost from the minute you arrive at basic training. In law enforcement, we tend to be bogged down in the day-to-day operations and

really don't spend the appropriate amount of time identifying and mentoring those who need to replace us. Several years ago, I initiated and am currently responsible for our department's leadership development program. Our agency is restricted by Civil Service rules on promotions; however, after promotion, I mentor and oversee their development for the first 18 months. As tactical leaders, we need to be cognizant of identifying the next team leader or supervisor. We should work on their development and challenge them to make leadership decisions.

Q: As part of the Command College program, you are asked to select a Capstone Research Project. What topic will you select and why?

A: My Module I Capstone project was the application and use of asymmetric conflict strategy in law enforcement tactical situations. The reason I chose to research this topic is that as SWAT commanders, it is easy to get honed in on the tactical situation at hand, and not step back and consider other options including non-traditional ways to resolve the problem. Throughout the years I've had the opportunity to sit through debriefs of several large-scale SWAT incidents, as well as learned from my own experiences. With the luxury of 20/20 hindsight these debriefs usually include options that could have or should have been tried. My focus was to learn from tactical leaders such as Clausewitz, Napoleon, Col. John Boyd and others, as to how their strategies could influence the safe resolution of tactical scenes.

Q: What feedback would you give other NTOA members who are considering enrolling in the Command College?

A: I would strongly encourage any SWAT team member, especially commanders, to attend the Command College. This education will benefit tactical officers even if they choose not to promote to a command position. What the Command College can provide is an increased understanding of leadership decisions, and why tasks such as training documentation and equipment maintenance are so important. This program is not easy, but nothing in life that's really worth it should be easy.



SET YOURSELF APART FROM OTHERS IN THE PROMOTIONAL PROCESS BY ENROLLING TODAY!

The NTOA Command College isn't just for aspiring leaders, it's also the perfect opportunity for experienced tactical team leaders and commanders to validate the leadership philosophies and tactical concepts that they may already know.

Through video lectures, quizzes, discussion forums and writing assignments, you'll be able to demonstrate your knowledge of tactical leadership skills. Seasoned leaders in this program often excel at the assigned tasks, as they have numerous experiences to draw from.

FIND OUT TODAY IF THE NTOA COMMAND COLLEGE IS RIGHT FOR YOU!

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