

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



ARE WE TRAINING TO WIN?

When the NTOA was created in 1983, its primary goal was to improve training, safety and the professionalism of the tactical community. In the decades since, tools, tactics and training all have evolved and improved. Yet

our mission remains the same, to improve public safety and domestic security through training, education and tactical excellence. While I believe that the NTOA and law enforcement community have made great strides in our efforts to meet these goals, we still have room for growth.

As recent events have shown us, the standard to which the public, and certainly the media, hold us to is perfection. We are to be without fault or defect. This seems to be especially true if the event involves loss of life. Whether the incident took place in Las Vegas, Parkland or Uvalde, the pundits are quick to criticize law enforcement and question our training. This is infuriating and frustrating, especially as these pundits lack both accurate information and experience. Who are they to be passing judgment?

While I too find it easy to get angry and defensive, I also have begun to question how we define success within law enforcement training. In other words, does attendance and participation in training equate to competence or proficiency? The obvious answer is no, yet there are numerous examples where law enforcement training and performance were not equal. I recognize that there are outside factors which influence training and outcomes. I ask that we pause and objectively look at how we are training and evaluating success, both individually and collectively as a team or agency.

Over the course of my lifetime, the emphasis on winning has steadily declined. This has become a topic of debate within sports and even in classrooms. The general premise is that a focus on winning creates

stress and can be unfair. This may or may not be true. I only know that law enforcement functions in stressful environments, and when acting to save innocent lives, winning matters.

Despite some training being monotonous, repetitive or boring, are we training to win? Are we individually achieving true competency and proficiency, or are we just there to put a check in the box? Do we really believe we need the training?

These are questions that can only be answered individually, yet collectively they have a huge impact on the law enforcement profession. We each have a responsibility to demand the best from ourselves and those we work with. Our jobs are too meaningful and important to accept anything less.

REMEMBERING SID HEAL

For more than three decades, Charles "Sid" Heal has imparted his wisdom on tactical concepts and science in the pages of *The Tactical Edge*. Sadly, Sid passed away unexpectedly on May 24, but not before penning what would be his final column, which you can find on page 70 of this issue.

There are no words to adequately describe what a loss this is to the law enforcement profession and the tactical community. Sid was truly one of the greatest tactical thinkers and trainers of all time. His influence was tremendous and far reaching. Despite all of the knowledge he had of our profession, he never stopped seeking new opportunities to learn. He was the quintessential law enforcement professional and gentleman who led by example and showed us all how we should really train and prepare. Our condolences go to Sid's family and friends and all who were fortunate to know him and learn from him.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thor Eells".

Thor Eells
Executive Director