

NTOA COMMAND COLLEGE STUDENT PROFILE



CHIEF THOMAS CARROLL
SCRANTON (PA) POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief Thomas Carroll is a 25-year veteran of the Scranton (PA) Police Department. He has served as a patrol supervisor, special operations commander and superintendent of police. He is retired from the reserve component of the U.S. Marine Corps. Chief Carroll's 30-year career included overseas deployments in support of contingency operations consisting of combat, security and humanitarian missions.

Q: You have had an opportunity to serve in a number of assignments that involve training law enforcement officers. What qualities and skills do you think are most important for today's officers?

A: The law enforcement profession today is much different than it was just a few years ago. Any adverse interaction with a police officer is a potential flash point that can be immediately exploited by social media. As we have seen, one incident can affect the entire profession. Therefore, we need officers who think before they act yet can act decisively and with proper force if necessary. Furthermore, if we expect them to successfully navigate the complexities of law enforcement today, we need to ensure they are properly trained, educated and equipped. In addition to mastering the required tangible skills of today's officer, I would recommend an understanding of the following:

1. Ethical and tactical decision-making
2. Critical thinking
3. Emotional intelligence
4. Communication
5. Tactical science

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: I have been very fortunate to have excellent leaders in my life who significantly impacted my career and shaped my leadership style. Some of those persons rose through the ranks and became prominent names in society; the others most will never know, but their contributions were just as powerful. I have the highest respect for each, regardless of their social status. All were passionate about their work, believed in their cause and genuinely cared about the people who worked for them. They all had the uncanny ability to humanize the job while demanding operational excellence — a challenge worthy of our efforts.

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: Strong leadership is essential to maintain public trust and ensure the professional accountability and operational efficiency of the agency. Therefore, the selection of leadership should be a deliberate process. It is a priority to identify and mentor future leaders early on to ensure the succession of command is not a vulnerability for the department. We should be cultivating and challenging leaders at every level. I believe we accomplish this through consistent investments in our officers' professional development throughout their entire careers. When dedicated professionals are promoted, it instills confidence in the agency and assists with the continuity of progression. A topic of such importance should not be left to chance.

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

A: The NTOA Command College is a long-awaited resource for the law enforcement tactical community. It provides a common basis of knowledge for tactical leaders to operate more effectively. This program has many of the same characteristics of the more familiar Professional Military Education (PME) model used by the Department of Defense.

In my law enforcement experience, the common obstacles to learning were time and the scope of the subject. Learning was commonly restricted by insufficient instructional time on subjects that focused mainly on individual tactical skills. Generally, they failed to capture the complexity of decision-making and how it relates to the big picture. I found that the Command College bridged that gap by providing specialized instruction through a self-paced learning program. The reward for satisfying the academic requirements is equal to the effort the officer expends on the modules. Bottom line, the Command College is a valuable tool for the dedicated professional seeking to learn the industry standards and best practices for commanding tactical operations.

I have had the distinct privilege to interact with tactical professionals from around the country, from big and small agencies, who share the same passion for learning and share the same operational concerns. In the end, with a better understanding of tactical science, you will be more confident in your ability to conduct and more importantly, explain the complexities of high-risk tactical operations.

Q: What feedback would you give other chiefs who may be considering the Command College program for either themselves or members of their leadership team?

A: I have had a very positive experience with the Command College. It provided a quality leadership package that surpasses the norms of the commonly narrow-focused law enforcement trainings. Although designed to professionalize SWAT, this program is relevant to all facets of law enforcement operations. Having a strong emphasis on leadership, the three-phase program is a logical succession of learning that is applicable to any level of command. A shared understanding of leadership concepts and theories is a true force multiplier for any command staff. More specifically, SWAT leadership could use the Command College as an educational roadmap for their professional development and certification of team leaders and commanders.



**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!**

Visit ntoa.org/academy to learn more.