

# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to the overwhelming success of our Law Enforcement Operations Conference and Trade Show in Kansas City, MO. A special thank you goes out to the Heartland Tactical Association for their steadfast support and dedication. I hope this event was a valuable and enriching experience for each of you and I encourage you to read our conference article on page 22 of this issue.

This year, we introduced the NTOA Hall of Honor, created to honor people worthy of the highest recognition for their contributions to the tactical community, regardless of their affiliation with the association. Our inaugural class of true legends in the SWAT community — John Kolman, Sid Heal, Ron McCarthy and Mike Hillmann — are pillars of integrity, character and vision. Their influence has helped shape SWAT into the lifesaving force it is today, and they are truly deserving of this recognition. We owe them our deepest thanks for their leadership. (Read more about this year's inductees on page 6 of this issue.)

It is essential to remember and learn from those who came before us. As the saying goes, "Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it." While often viewed as a caution, it can also inspire us to replicate the successful practices that have strengthened our profession. A sincere thank you to all who helped make this possible.

Recently, I had the privilege of attending the LAPD SWAT team's annual awards dinner. Watching past and present members come together to celebrate accomplishments and share stories was a powerful reminder of the value of learning from each other. I encourage all to fully embrace this spirit and honor the remarkable service and sacrifice within our ranks and the enduring legacy of those who came before us. Let's carry forward the lessons of the past and safeguard our future and the lives of those we are sworn to protect. Thank you for your dedication to this noble profession.

Stay safe, and Godspeed.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thor Eells". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thor Eells  
Executive Director