

## Honoring Our Founder, Preparing for the Future



We release this issue of *The Tactical Edge* with gratitude and pride. As our cover reflects, this edition is dedicated to the memory of NTOA founder John Kolman, whose vision, leadership and unwavering commit-

ment to officer safety helped shape not only our organization, but the tactical profession itself.

More than four decades ago, John recognized the need for a national organization dedicated to sharing knowledge, improving training and advancing professionalism among tactical teams. From that vision grew the NTOA, which today serves thousands of members worldwide. His influence can be seen in every training course we deliver, every conference we host, and every article published in these pages.

I encourage you to read a special tribute on page 22 by John's longtime friend and colleague Phil Hansen. Phil shares personal reflections on the man, leader and visionary whose influence continues to shape the tactical profession. While John's passing marks the end of an era, his legacy continues through the work of the NTOA and the dedication of the officers who strive daily to uphold the standards he championed.

This edition reflects that commitment to excellence. Inside, you will find thought-provoking articles, lessons learned and practical information designed to help officers and teams meet the challenges of an increasingly complex operational environment. As always, our goal is to provide relevant and actionable content that enhances readiness and improves outcomes in the field.

I also want to encourage you to take advantage of the educational and networking opportunities available through our upcoming conferences. Our 43rd Annual Law Enforcement Operations Conference and Trade Show in Nashville promises to be one of our most dynamic events yet, featuring outstanding instructors, incident debriefs, legal updates and an expansive trade show showcasing the latest equipment and technology. Later this year, we will gather in Chandler, Arizona, for the Crisis Negotiations Conference, bringing together negotiators, commanders, mental health professionals and tactical personnel to share best practices and advance the profession. These training events represent the very spirit of the NTOA that John Kolman envisioned — a place where professionals come together to learn from one another, challenge themselves and return home better prepared to serve their communities.

Additionally, watch for new classes being developed by our outstanding training cadre. Many of these are practical courses designed to fill existing gaps in training and take important topics to a higher level of excellence. Their continued innovation ensures that NTOA members have access to the most current, relevant and effective training available.

Thank you for your continued support of the NTOA and for your commitment to professionalism, training and service. I hope to see you at our upcoming conferences.

Stay safe and stay prepared.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Thor Eells'.

Thor Eells  
Executive Director