



It was a busy (as well as stressful, heart-breaking and exhilarating) 2015 for law enforcement. While you kept up the brave front in our towns and

cities, we at the NTOA worked hard to make your jobs safer and to professionalize your careers. Many initiatives were completed and challenges met in 2015, such as:

- We worked to curtail efforts on Capitol Hill to end the DoD 1033 Program, which is invaluable to law enforcement. We have been in direct contact with various U.S. representatives, senators, and White House, Department of Defense and Department of Justice staff on this and similar matters.

- The NTOA was awarded a Bureau of Justice Assistance grant to develop general and equipment standards for the acquisition of controlled equipment with federal resources, per Presidential Executive Order 13688. The NTOA, along with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), convened a national expert panel of stakeholders who provided input and recommendations on the standards.

- We presented workshops at the annual IACP and National Sheriffs' Association conferences about the long-awaited results of the National SWAT Study. In 2013, the NTOA hired the IACP and the University of Chicago National Opinion Research Center to develop a comprehensive national SWAT survey. In addition to the quantitative survey, there were several focus group meetings providing qualitative input and recommendations. This 65-page report will be available to our members on our website. This report, funded by the

NTOA, will provide our members a national perspective of SWAT, from training, to operational information, to community relations. Moreover, this study will provide factual information as opposed to anecdotal and sensationalized stories that are often cited in the media or in books. This report will be the baseline for future studies.

- The NTOA participated in the Mock Prison Riot 2015 in Moundsville, West Virginia. This annual event brings together more than 1,500 attendees representing national and international correctional response teams. The NTOA Corrections Section, chaired by Keith Moon, conducted several training classes at the event.

- The 2015 NTOA Tactical Response and Operations Standard was released. Committee members included five state tactical officer association representatives, a retired police chief, a deputy police chief, two representatives from the FBI and two representatives from the NTOA. After reviewing comments and input from association members and partner organizations, the standard was expanded to include a team typing matrix and a glossary. The NTOA standard continues to serve as a credible benchmark for agencies developing their tactical response capabilities.

- At our 2015 conference in Salt Lake City, the NTOA Board of Directors approved the formation of the NTOA Academy. This 2016 initiative will be in partnership with the International Academy of Public Safety (IAPS). The NTOA Academy, "*An Investment in Innovation, Education and the Future*," is a comprehensive educational program designed to prepare today's tactical officers and policing leaders for success in a high-risk, ever-changing professional environment and to effectively meet the challenges of the future. Additionally, the academy will provide state-of-the-art education opportunities leading to national certifications for operators, instructors and command staff

personnel. The NTOA Academy will also be the portal for future educational and training courses and workshops. (See article on page 52 of this issue.)

- The past year also brought us our new Director of Training and Education, Don Kester. Don has been working nonstop since assuming his duties. Under his leadership, we are expanding our training opportunities, developing new partnerships and enhancing our annual conferences. Don has already proven to be an invaluable asset to our staff.

- Finally, we would like to welcome our new Eastern Region director, Lt. Matt Hardesty of the Seminole County Sheriff's Office, who was elected in the fall 2015 Board of Directors election.

Initiatives and developments like these support the strides that law enforcement is making every day. We know that your chosen profession requires skill, determination, training and solid decision-making in order to best protect America's citizens. We will continue in 2016 to strive to create even more opportunities for your education and support, and we encourage you to step forward and be heard if you have any suggestions about how we can better serve you. ■

Be safe and God Bless,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "M. Lomax".

Mark Lomax