



# SWAT Team Structure and Leadership

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NATIONAL TACTICAL OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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[WWW.NTOA.ORG](http://WWW.NTOA.ORG)

# Warrior's Creed

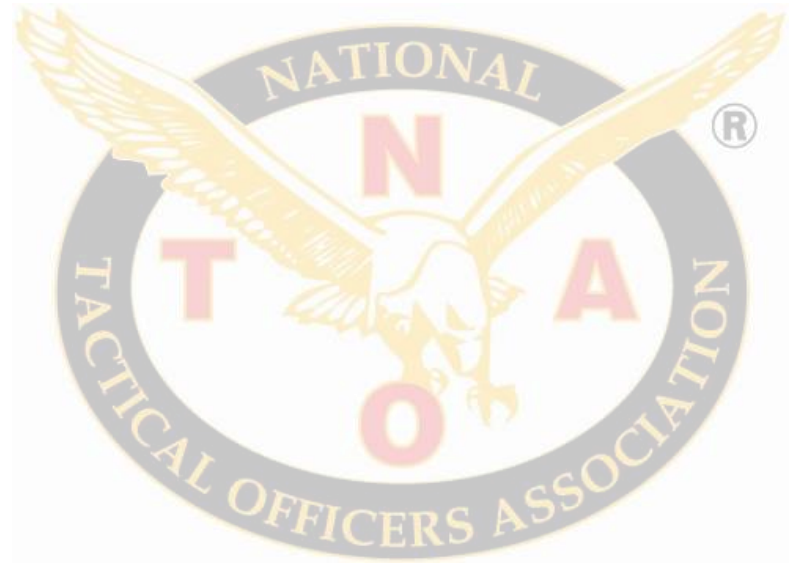
“Out of every one hundred men, ten shouldn't even be there, eighty are just targets, nine are the real fighters, and we are lucky to have them, for they make the battle. Ah, but the One, One is a Warrior, and He will bring the others back.”

*~ Heraclitus c. 500 B.C.*

# Objectives

- Understanding the mission of SWAT.
- Understanding team composition, roles, command, and control.
- Review and understand the importance of leadership during incidents, past problems, and issues that have caused failures.





## Section One

# SWAT TEAM STRUCTURE

## TEAM LEADER DEVELOPMENT



# What is SWAT?

- Regardless of the name (SWAT, ERT, SERT), it is a “**Life Saving**” resource.
- SWAT’s Mission – **To save lives!**
  - Specially selected and trained.
  - Response beyond normal capabilities of the patrol officer.



# Team Composition

- Team Commander
- **Team Leader (TL)**
- Scout or Assistant Team Leaders (ATL)
- Additional Entry Team Members (as necessary)
- Long Rifle/Observer Teams
- Containment Teams/Chemical Agent Teams



# Team Leader

- Coordinates and supervises activities of the element.
- Coordinates tactical operations of the element to include:
  - Planning, deployment, movement, entry, search and clear.
  - Is selected based upon experience, decision-making ability and leadership.
  - Not necessarily based upon rank. ***Rank doesn't equal ability.***



Training +  
Experience =

***Tactical  
Competence***





# Assistant Team Leader

- Leads/directs team and reconnoiters area to be cleared.
- Acts in capacity of team leader when needed.
- Conducts searches of designated areas.



# Assistant Team Leader

- Provides cover for team elements as necessary.
- Will assume other duties as directed by the TL.
- Is selected for agility, alertness, tenure, and ability.



# Additional Personnel

- Provides security/cover for element during movement.
- Assist with the search and clear process as necessary.
- Is selected for agility, alertness, tenure and ability.



# Containment Teams

- Prevents suspect from escaping location.
- Includes arrest team.
- Can be used to initiate diversions.
- Includes secondary entry personnel.
- Includes chemical agent teams.
- Deploy in 2 person elements (minimum).



# Long Rifle/Observer Teams

- Gathers and disseminates suspect and target location intelligence.
- Provides cover for scouting element and entry team.
- Responsible for neutralization of life-endangering threats.
- Personnel deploy as a 2 person element.



# Command & Control

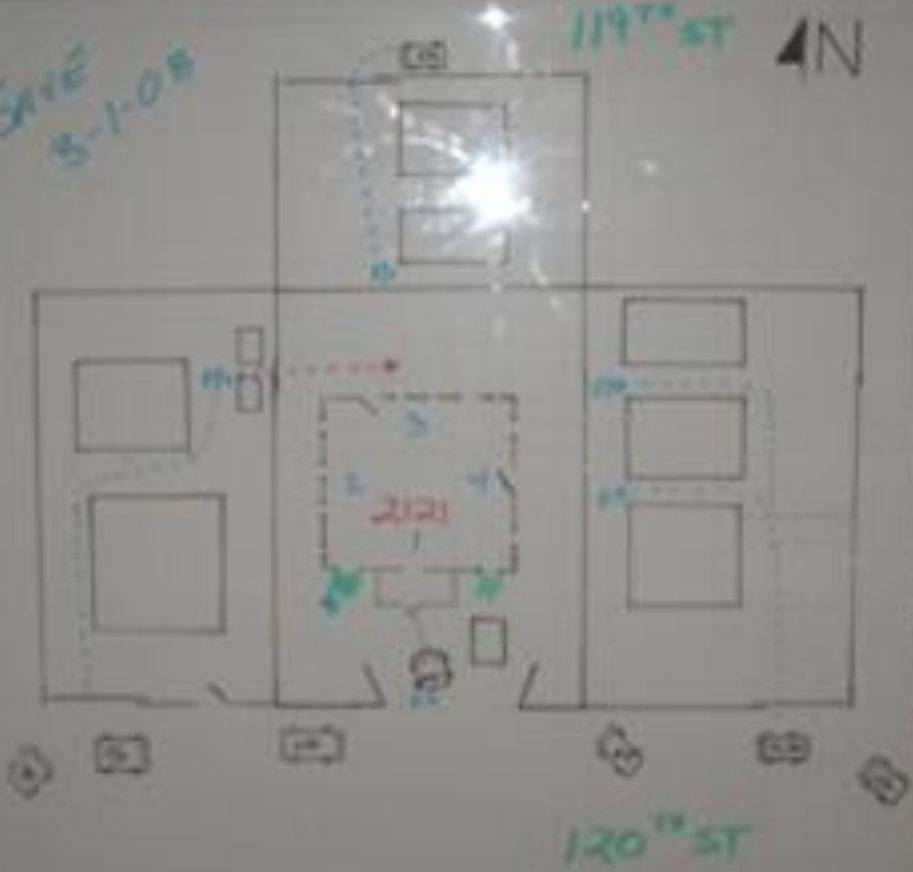
- Incident Command Post
  - Crisis management location.
- Field Command Post
  - Patrol and tactical commanders location.
- Tactical Operations Center (TOC)
  - Central point of significant tactical information.
  - TOC on the fly.



**2014-2015**

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- 2. Bathroom
- 3. Jan
- 4. Mail Room
- 5. Copy Room
- 6. Conference Room
- 7. Reception
- 8. 1st Floor Elevator
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SAVE 3-1-08



FEED - 1 CLR

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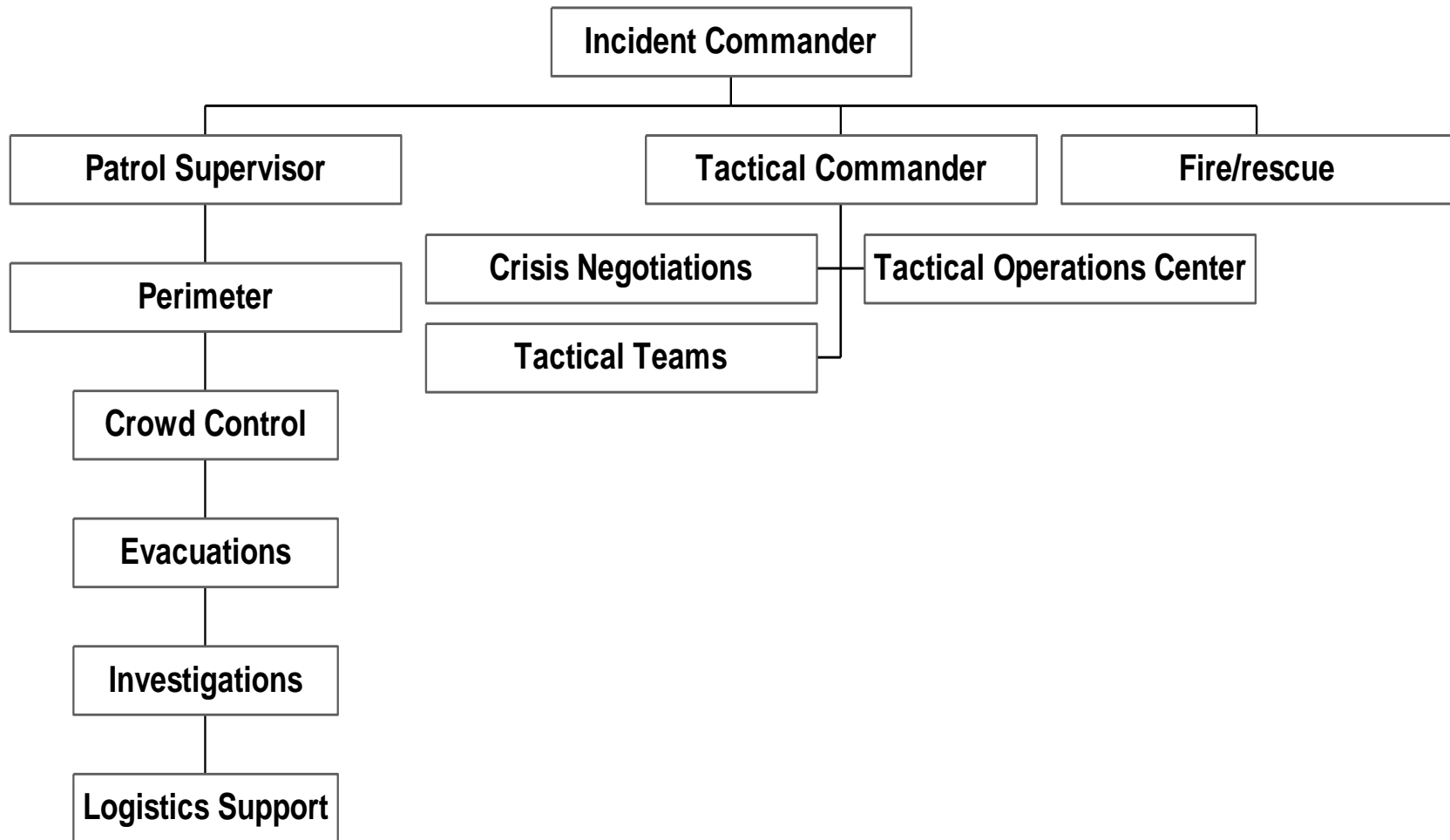
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201-45, 46, 47

SOFS

Save Floor  
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# Simplified IC Structure





# Equipment

- Good equipment doesn't make a good team.
- Good leadership and quality operators will meet operational challenges and win.



# Operator vs. Team Leader

- The operator simply attends training, says nothing, attends calls, says nothing, and goes home. Few PT, shoot, study, improve on their own. Follows to a point. Thousands in SWAT because it is relatively easy.
- The operator **leader** attends all and has input, does all the extra things to succeed, volunteers, teaches, writes, studies, motivates, leads. Follows mentors and strives to take their place.



# Followership

SWAT Commander



SWAT Supervisors



SWAT Operators



- The SWAT Commander exerts influence and leadership over the SWAT Supervisors. He also follows his superiors.
- SWAT supervisors exert influence and leadership over SWAT operators. They also follow the SWAT Commander.
- SWAT personnel influence and potentially demonstrate leadership over other personnel. They also follow the supervisors.



# TEAM LEADER

- Influence derived from interaction.
- Person to person power.
- Can exert influence in any direction.
- Influence comes from commitment, desire, ability to inspire and collaborate with followers.
- **Leaders do the right thing!**



# “Complaints Go Up”



# Operator as a Leader

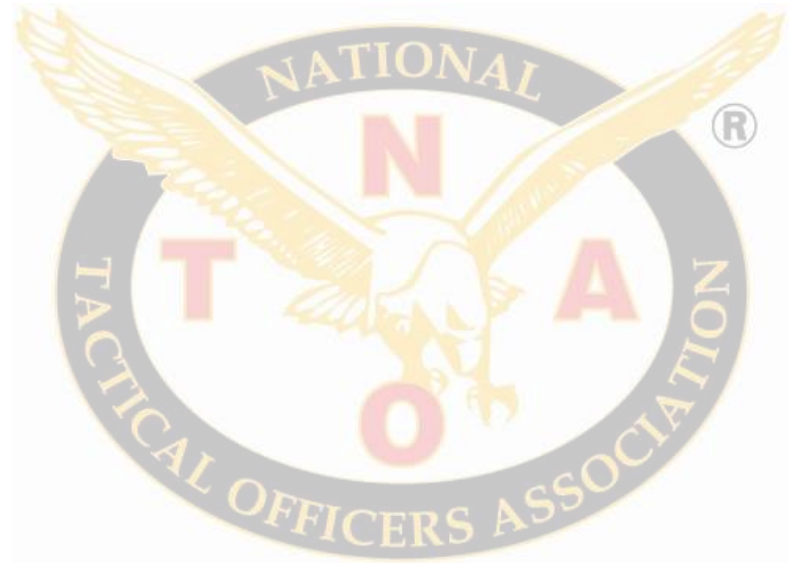
- The operator as a leader makes a positive difference.
- **Breeds success!**
- Effective mentoring and teaching.
- Success in training leads to victory in battle.



# TL & Commander

- This means you may have tough decisions to make – always make them for the right reasons.
- They may not always be popular. **TEAM COMES FIRST!**
- It is ***YOUR*** job to lead the team to success!





## Section Two

# SWAT LEADERSHIP

## TEAM LEADER DEVELOPMENT





# “That’s a Leader”



# Effective Leaders

- Develop their leadership skills.
- Attitude, energy and desire.
- Competence and character.



# Professionalism



# Professionalism





# Professionalism



**“DON'T  
MAKE US  
COME BACK  
TWICE”**

# Professionalism



Our community  
is ***NOT*** our  
enemy.

# Professionalism





# Professionalism





# Leadership of Your Team

- If your SWAT team has been in existence for some time, the concept has been accepted.
- Evaluate traditional methodology of tactics, equipment, training, supervision, etc.
- Are your tactics and procedures broad enough to meet new or changing tactical problems.



# Leadership of Your Team

- Are you evaluating the changes in your community?
  - Political Change
  - Racial Change
  - Inter-Departmental Politics
  - Department Goals and Projects
  - Crime Trends



# Tactics

- If you have only one way to do something (one tactic), you are heading toward failure.
- “If the only tool you have is a hammer, everything starts to look like a nail.”
  - Multiple long rifle options, weapons, tools, less lethal, and tactics.
  - Multiple entry systems and methods.



# Leadership. . .

- is the ability to influence and inspire
  - Always valuable if properly used.
  - During times of crisis, it can make all the difference in the outcome.



“Good leadership is cultivated by good leaders who recognize and encourage professional and aggressive officers who work and train hard and are given the tools to succeed.”

- Ron McCarthy



True leadership for  
Incident Command  
takes place *prior* to  
the major violent  
incident.



# Commanders and Supervisors

- Anticipate major violent incidents.
- Prepare personnel to be successful.
  - Train them.
  - Properly equipment them.
  - Effectively supervise, inspect, and test team members.
  - Build a culture of organizational pride, character, and morale.



What are some  
**pre-incident**  
factors leading to  
failure?





# Failure to Train

- Training is reduced and / or denied all together.



# Weak Leadership

- Weakened selection process for SWAT officers.
- Problem officers not removed from the team.
- SWAT leadership chosen for reasons other than competency.



# Failure to Learn

- Past and present events
- Regional partners
- Organizational arrogance
- New equipment and tactics



# Mutual Aid Failure

- Failure to test our mutual aid response capabilities
- All levels need to be involved.  
Maintenance
- Actual deployment of assets



What are some  
**post-incident**  
factors leading to  
failure?



# Post Incident Factors

- Critical questions and issues go unanswered.
- Inexperience responding to major incidents.
- Limited manpower and resources.





# Dynamic Entry

- More SWAT officers are killed each year in dynamic entry than any other SWAT tactic.
- Over-Used Dynamic Entry:
  - Founded upon the idea of hostage rescue and the goal of saving lives.
  - Too many teams only train for dynamic entry. ***Train other options!***





# Leadership Day to Day

- SWAT needs to be pre-trained and pre-authorized to take immediate action and direct action upon arrival.
  - North Hollywood Bank Robbery, Columbine H.S., etc.
  - 28% of all police shootings are orchestrated by suicidal suspects.
  - 55% of this type of shooting happens in five minutes or less.
  - Training patrol to handle the first 30 minutes is key!



# Priorities of Life

- Hostages
- Innocent citizens
- Police personnel
- Suspect



# Delegate It!



# Deadly Force

# Leadership Defined

- The ability to influence others to accomplish the mission!
  - What is our mission as a SWAT Operator or T.L.?
    - Save lives!
    - Represent SWAT, agency, LE in the most professional manner possible.
    - Mentor, assist in the improvement of the team...
    - To make others succeed...
    - Not what I know, but what I shared!



# Duties Defined

- **Administrative Leadership**
  - Day to day unit administration, unit documentation, and unit inspections.
- **Training Leadership**
  - The way to successful operations, maintaining organization, systems, and skills. Leads by example!
- **Tactical Leadership**
  - “First line of fighting leadership”



# “Attitude Reflects Leadership, Captain”



“There are no poor units, only poor commanders.”

- Napoleon





# Send Us a Leader!





# Questions?



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