

Emergency Response Team Commander Dave Rolland, a Lieutenant with the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office, became the leader of ERT in 2009. In his 13 years as the ERT Commander he has brought an unparalleled level of enthusiasm, professionalism, and character to our team.

Like most law enforcement agencies, finding money for SWAT related training and equipment can be very challenging. Over the past 13 years, Commander Rolland has willingly and skillfully navigated, the sometimes very time enduring and time consuming, process of purchasing and acquiring tactical and safety equipment for the team. Thanks to Commander Rolland's ability to secure funding the team has progressed forward in so many ways from safety and tactical equipment to having certified medics be part of the team.

Prior to being selected as ERT Commander, Rolland began his ERT career in 2006 as an entry team member. Upon being selected in 2009 as the ERT Commander he immediately made an impact by evaluating the team itself, the equipment, and current needs. One of the first big changes and equipment needs was a specifically designed and purpose-built delivery van, as prior to his appointment, the team was driving a repurposed bread truck as a delivery van.

Over the years he has ensured that the team equipment continues to be upgraded. An example of this continued dedication to safety of the team and the community is the numerous upgrades and enhancements to our MRAP vehicle. Commander Rolland has continued to upgrade the MRAP with tactical gear such as the Draco gas head, upgraded ram, passenger rail system, night vision and thermal imaging from the cockpit, all in preparation for the safety of the team and the community we serve. In many other ways the team has also benefited greatly from Commander Rolland's vision at obtaining equipment. He has secured many items that, years ago, we thought were not possible.

Such items include PVS-14-night vision for all operators and snipers, drones, robots, suppressors and even down to the upgraded tactical vests and plates the team wears for protection. Commander Rolland has always fought for the best for his team and has been instrumental in every aspect of the team from the command team, tactical team, sniper team, drone team, negotiations team and the medics team. It is often joked about that he knows everything about this team

from what type of gear oil is found in the MRAP crank case to the proper tension of our sniper's scope mounts.

Two additional ways that has lasting legacy that will continue on with the team, long after Commander Rolland has retired is our Policy and Training. Our Emergency Response Team policy, and our training documentation are top rate. Both of these aspects have been fine tuned and updated under Commander Rolland's leadership. These two aspects of law enforcement are so important in today's litigious society. Our ongoing training documentation is kept up to date upon Commander Rolland's watchful eye.

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Our policy is extensive and continually updated as needed internally and with the changing times in law enforcement today. When team members attend training throughout the state and country, we are reminded how many other teams do not share the level of protection as we do from use of force lawsuits or public speculation based on our rigorous training and written policies leading and directing our team. Appropriate policies, operating procedures and training documentation prepare our team to meet potential use of force challenges in the future.

As Commander, Rolland has always been unselfish and dedicated to being available to be a part of ERT Operations day and night. In 13 years, Commander Rolland has only missed two ERT operations to include the monthly training days. This speaks volumes to his dedication and commitment to this team. His availability and dedication as a leader are a comfort to our team leaders and operators.

This comfort level and every aspect that Commander Rolland has brought to this team was tested and so needed during a very intense, high risk and challenging call-out in February 2021. Our team went up against a "1%" suspect who killed a police k-9, shot at officers who tried to take him into custody and shot at officers outside the residence who were trying to evacuate the surrounding homes and community. This incident tested Commander Rolland, the command team, and the team itself. The operation ended with ERT members ultimately being forced by the armed suspect to use deadly force.

This critical incident began with a call for service response to a domestic dispute the night of February 25th, 2021, by the Duluth Police Department in the City of Duluth. After initial investigation by DPD patrol officers it was determined there was a suspect, who was involved in the original call, inside the residence with a warrant.

Officers began a search for the suspect inside the residence with the use of a canine team in attempts of apprehension. While searching for the suspect the suspect fired on officers and the K-9, ultimately killing Duluth Police K-9 Luna. Duluth officers returned fire and their tactical response team was called to respond.

Over the next several hours officers attempted to resolve the situation. There was an attempt by Duluth PD's tactical team to enter and take the suspect into custody which was met with more gunfire being exchanged between law enforcement and the suspect. Eventually, the St. Louis County Sheriff's Emergency Response Team was called to assist and relieve our Duluth PD partners due to the length of time they had been working the critical incident.

This request for assistance began a significant tactical call-out for our team. This critical incident utilized a large amount tactical equipment and chemical munitions, to include the use of the MRAP for chemical munitions deployment and team safety, the use of the drone teams flying drones into the structure, ICOR robot operators and negotiators communicating with the suspect, explosive breaches to access, as well as deny access to the suspects movement.

This critical incident ultimately ended while ERT members attempted accessing a port hole, that was created through an explosive breach into a small closet where the suspect had positioned himself. The suspect crawled out of the port hole continuing to threaten officers with his short barrel shotgun and a deadly force situation was forced upon ERT members. The suspect was killed during the final confrontation.

The team leaders and operators on scene had confidence in Commander Rolland's ability that day and every day he leads his team. This exceptional leadership has been demonstrated by Commander Rolland for over 13 years to our team and to the greater SWAT community. Commander Rolland has never

been afraid to look at changes in best practices, adaptations to techniques, and adjusting procedures as necessary. He is a student of “the game”, and this has given his team great confidence in his leadership abilities, and their abilities.

Without Commander Rolland’s dedication to his leadership position, the safety of our team and community we serve would not be the same.

I would like to nominate Commander Dave Rolland for commander of the year.

Thank you,
Supervising Deputy Wade Rasch
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