



12th Annual CRISIS NEGOTIATIONS CONFERENCE

By Jan Dubina

Mesa Police Department hosted the MNTOA's 12th Annual CNT Conference in October 2012. Having held several conferences in Mesa, we were confident that our hosts would be prepared to welcome our 200 attendees and speakers, and they did not disappoint! Negotiators came together from around the U.S., Canada, Singapore and Brazil for three-and-a-half days of seminars and incident debriefs.

Our keynote speaker, Gary McDougall, spoke on the dynamics of violent behavior. He examined the motivations behind such behavior and suggested techniques for negotiating, including focusing on the subjects' thoughts and feelings that triggered the violent action.

Sgt. John Linnertz, supervisor for the Major Incident Crime Scene Unit of the Syracuse, NY Police Department, did a presentation on a domestic dispute resulting from an argument over an arranged marriage. A language barrier further complicated the already exhausting 32-hour incident.

Cpl. Duane Boynton of the Vancouver, Wash. PD presented an incident that demonstrated the first-rate use of audio and video from a robot. He discussed lessons learned and demonstrated the need for a tactical liaison.

Negotiating with one of our own is certainly a unique event. Det. Jamie Connors and Gerald Brooks of the Baltimore County PD gave a riveting presentation on an incident involving a police commander from a neighboring jurisdiction who was threatening suicide. The officer's wife had committed suicide four years earlier with the officer's service weapon, and he was going through other personal problems at the time of the incident. Negotiators collected intelligence from fellow officers and friends of the subject, and also involved them in many of the techniques they used to try reach out and connect to the subject. He ultimately surrendered.

Sgt. Paul Woodward of the Escondido PD was primary negotiator in a difficult face-to-face negotiation following

a carjacking and hostage-taking incident in 2002. The hostage escaped from his car when the suspects tried to flee with him in tow. The suspects remained in the vehicle but refused to lower their windows, complicating communications. One subject raised her handgun and was shot by police; her male accomplice subsequently surrendered.

FBI Supervisor Special Agent Vince Dalfanzo negotiated from his home in Virginia during the famous 2009 incident in which Somali pirates took the captain of the Maersk Alabama hostage on a lifeboat. Negotiations ultimately broke down and the captain was rescued by U.S. Navy SEAL team snipers and U.S. Navy Special Warfare Group. Dalfanzo's presentation covered the importance of multi-agency training and teamwork, and was especially poignant knowing that the team members who had rescued the captain had perished in a helicopter crash in Afghanistan.

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Det. Jamie Connors and Det. Gerald Brooks, (ret.), Baltimore County PD



Asst. Chief Heston Silbert



Keynote Speaker Gary McDougall



Luis Robles and Officer Mark Garera



Sgt. John Linnertz, NYPD



Erika Stropka, Tucson PD



Tom Gussie, Mesa PD and Iraq War veteran Kevin Ivory



Vendor show



Vendor show

Attorney Luis Robles spoke on the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) in relation to law enforcement's response to the mentally ill. He provided instruction on the relevant portions of the ADA, how the act applies to detentions/arrests and use-of-force applications and the latest case law applying

the ADA to law enforcement encounters with the mentally ill.

Doug Bolton of the Fresno County Sheriff's Office detailed an incident involving a negotiation at night on a mountainside via voice and a vehicle PA. Lessons learned emphasized the need to be ready to negotiate in any environment.

Officer Mark Garera of the Mesa Police Department presented an incident debrief that involved a subject who killed his ex-girlfriend and her lover after a graduation party. When officers responded, the subject fired at the officers, hitting one in the arm. After two hours of negotiations, the subject surrendered.

Deb McMahan gave an instructional block on negotiating with a fellow officer. Ms. McMahan explained the difficult emotional response to negotiating with one of your own officers who is attempting suicide and recommended using a primary negotiator from a different department since the officer in crisis will be familiar with his own department's policies and tactical and negotiation personnel.

Another excellent debrief was given by Tom Gussie of the Mesa Police Department. Mr. Gussie discussed post-traumatic stress disorder and the issues that veterans face after returning home from war. After the presentation, Iraq War veteran Kevin Ivory gave a moving presentation that detailed the flashbacks and various challenges he faces on a daily basis after serving two tours in Iraq.

Erica Stropka and Corey Doggett from Tucson Police Department presented an incident in which they were able to successfully negotiate a subject out of a residence. After the incident Ericka interviewed the female subject, who vowed to turn her life around.

Thank you to our sponsor, Enforcement Technology Group, for their generous donation, and a special thanks to Mesa Police Department for once again hosting an outstanding event. And finally, thank you to all of the attendees. We look forward to seeing you at our 13th Annual CNT Conference in Mesa on Oct. 28-31, 2013. ■

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