



CNT Conference 2015

By Jan Dubina

The NTOA’s 15th Annual CNT Conference was held once again in Scottsdale, Arizona, on Nov. 9-12, 2015. The Scottsdale Police Department, always gracious and hospitable, hosted negotiators from across the United States and Canada and ensured the comfort of all attendees.

We were excited to present NTOA’s first-ever Crisis Negotiations Award at this year’s conference. This award honors an individual who significantly contributes to the crisis negotiations field by exemplifying in a real-life situation the skills and

techniques needed to defuse a critical incident; by instructing nationally recognized negotiation concepts; or by advancing the negotiations/tactical team concept. This year’s recipient was Constable Ryan Beerling of the Saskatoon Police Service for his exemplary work as the primary negotiator on two barricades that involved suspects actively shooting at the police. The two incidents occurred within 10 days of each other in August 2014 and resulted in the safe surrender of the suspects without harm to anyone involved.

Following an introduction from NTOA Executive Director Mark Lomax, retired NYPD Lieutenant and HNT leader Jack Cambria delivered the keynote speech, focusing on the fundamentals of negotiations. Even with a mix of new and experienced negotiators in attendance, Cambria involved everyone in the audience with lively discussions to important questions.

Monday afternoon’s session was “Understanding PTSD in Veterans,” presented by John Mundt, Ph.D., a VA psychologist who works on a daily basis with veterans. His presentation



Crisis Negotiations Award: Cst. Ryan Beerling (center) with Executive Director Mark Lomax and CNT Section Chair Jan Dubina



Officer Ben Wetzel with legal presenters Christina Retts, Kathleen Wieneke and Amy Nguyen



Keynote speaker Jack Cambria (NYPD retired) with Jan Dubina

focused on the veterans of the most recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and detailed how their traumatic experiences influence and impact the transition back to civilian life.

Sgt. Harry Drucker of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department kicked off Tuesday morning with two incident debriefs. The first presentation dealt with an armed subject who robbed a pharmacy and then barricaded himself in a cell phone business as part of his suicide plan. This incident was noteworthy in that the subject's general demeanor was often upbeat and he displayed a sense of humor. Despite apparent rapport with Drucker and the effective use of TPIs, after many hours of communication the subject took his life. This was an excellent reminder that despite our best efforts, the subject is ultimately in control of his life. Drucker's second presentation dealt with a successfully resolved bank robbery, in which a hostage was able to provide real-time ongoing intelligence via computer.

Tuesday afternoon's post-lunch presentation by Commander Thor Eells, of the Colorado Springs (CO) Police Department, provided insights and the legal basis for walking away from incidents in which a suicidal subject is barricaded in his or her

residence and no crime has been committed. This was information attendees should take back to their leadership for discussion.

Tuesday afternoon's final presentation by Capt. Barry Key and Sgt. Arthur Hayes of the Wilmington (NC) Police Department and FBI Special Agent Paul Cox dealt with a Wilmington police officer who was threatening suicide as a result of domestic issues. Their engaging presentation took us step by step through the 12-hour negotiations process, which included the effective use of two TPIs, the subject's father and a fellow officer and friend. The incident was resolved peacefully.

Wednesday began with a presentation by Fort Wayne (IN) Police Officer Victor Torres, who negotiated with an Army reservist contemplating suicide after physically assaulting his wife. This subject was heavily armed and proficient with weapons. An honest and straightforward approach, and the identification of the young daughter as a possible hook, resulted in a peaceful surrender after more than four hours. Of special note, Torres detailed an interview with the subject four years later that provided further insight into the negotiations.

The next presenter was Seattle (WA) PD Officer Larry Longley, who took the audience through his

NOMINATIONS FOR 2016 NEGOTIATIONS AWARD

The NTOA is accepting nominations for the 2016 Negotiations Award which will be presented at the annual CNT conference in Mesa, Arizona, on Oct. 24-27, 2016. This award is given to an individual who significantly contributes to the crisis negotiations field by exemplifying in a real-life situation the skills and techniques needed to defuse a critical incident; by instructing nationally recognized negotiation concepts; or by advancing the negotiations/tactical team concept.

Please submit your nominations online at ntoa.org/about/awards. The nomination deadline is Sept. 9, 2016.

negotiations with a jumper who was a molestation victim. The incident occurred on the roof of the court building the day the victim was scheduled to face the suspect and testify in open court.

Sgt. Dan Oblinger of the Wichita (KS) PD kept the post-lunch audience engaged with a look into the future



Sgt. Matt Pearson of Scottsdale PD with Sgt. Harry Drucker, LASD



Sgt. Chris Watson of Scottsdale PD with NTOA Chairman Thor Eells



Officer Tom Moyer (ret.) with Jan Dubina

of negotiations. Recent technological advances have changed how negotiators must think and act to be effective. There was also a discussion of one-, two- and three-dimensional communications as they pertain to negotiations.

Sgts. Sean Pollock and Shawn Pike, of the Winnipeg Police Service, presented an incident involving a 16-plus hour standoff with an armed man being evicted from what had been his family's home. Even with technical communication problems related to the subject's flooding of the house, the negotiators were able to build some rapport however, in the end, the subject chose to take his own life.

On the final day of the conference, Officer Tom Moyer (ret.) of the Las Vegas PD presented a barricaded hostage incident debrief. Also on Thursday, Chandler, Arizona, attorneys Amy Nguyen, Christina Retts and Kathleen Wieneke spoke on liability issues and dealing with mentally ill and suicidal subjects.

Enforcement Technology Group has been a loyal supporter of the CNT conference for many years, and they sponsored a hugely entertaining evening event for our attendees.

The 16th Annual CNT Conference will be held at the Hilton Phoenix/Mesa in Mesa, Arizona, on Oct. 24-27, 2016. Watch our website for an agenda and online registration,

coming soon. We promise, as always, to have lively and engaging presentations and to provide training that will make you a better negotiator. ■

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