

# 2010

## Sergeant Robert Gonzalez

### Eastlake Police Department

As a police officer, you have trained extensively in the use of your firearm. Thousands of rounds of ammunition have poured through the various weapons that you might use as part of your job. Reality based training is done as often as possible so that your weapon(s) become an extension of your body, and their use becomes instinctive. Decisions must be made in fractions of a second, and once the trigger is pulled, there is no taking the shot back. In no other profession is it as important to be 100% right.

Sergeant Robert Gonzalez found out how important that training and decision making was during a call on October 1, 2010. Gonzalez and other Eastlake officers responded to a home where a woman told him that her husband had barricaded himself in a bedroom with a shotgun. The wife and children were evacuated to a safe location, and Sgt. Gonzalez tactically took cover in a bathroom, so that he could initiate a conversation with the man. Gonzalez believed that male to be in a room down the hall, but quickly learned that the intoxicated and depressed male was in a room directly across from the bathroom.

As he negotiated with the male, Gonzalez noted "his mood swings were rapid and unpredictable. Suddenly, the armed male opened the door, and aimed his weapon at Gonzalez. In fear of his life, Gonzalez reacted as trained, firing one shot and striking the man in the thigh. The suspect dropped his weapon and fell to the ground, and Gonzalez immediately called other officers to tend to his injuries. Ultimately, the male was charged criminally, but still apologized to the officer.

Gonzalez stated that "it was one of those situations that you just want to end peacefully. Unfortunately, it didn't turn out that way. I'm just glad the subject did not die. It's unfortunate the circumstances that brought me here tonight. But I'm very honored to receive this recognition."

Gonzalez was promoted to Lieutenant just a month before he was recognized by the Blue Coats, on February 16, 2011, as the 97th recipient of the Jorge Medina Distinguished Service Award. Gonzalez retired with the rank of Detective Lieutenant from the Eastlake Police Department in 2018, and is currently employed as a Bailiff with the Lake County Common Pleas Court.