

2006

Sergeant Thomas Angelo

Eastlake Police Department

Sergeant Thomas Angelo can attest to the fact that there is no such thing as a routine call, and, that at any moment, the life of a police officer can be altered forever.

On June 2, 2006, Angelo, a 19 year veteran of the Eastlake Police Department, received a radio assignment of an unwanted visitor at a residence. The caller told the dispatcher that the subject had entered her residence and that she did not know the person. She convinced the intruder to go back outside, and then called the police. Unknown to her was the fact that the male was armed, and had just fled from his own residence after a domestic violence situation, in which he had tried to run over his wife with his truck. Sergeant Angelo was dispatched and initially felt that the call probably involved an intoxicated person who had gone to the wrong house.

Angelo was the first officer on scene, and as he drove up the driveway he observed the suspect on the rear deck of the house. Before he could exit his patrol vehicle, the suspect fired at him with a 9mm handgun. Angelo instinctively put his vehicle in reverse to increase the distance between the suspect and himself, dove out of his vehicle. Just then, a bullet fired at him penetrated the windshield of his cruiser and struck the driver's headrest. Angelo returned fire, wounding the suspect, who continued shooting, striking the cruiser several more times. Angelo tactically moved to a nearby tree line as the suspect advanced toward the officer's last known position at his cruiser. Angelo contacted his dispatcher, warning other officers to stay clear of the area for their safety. The suspect began searching for Angelo, who was ordering him to stop. He continued toward the sound of Angelo's voice, forcing Angelo to fire again to stop his life threatening actions. The suspect subsequently died from his injuries.

Chief John Ruth commended the actions of Angelo stating that "Sgt. Angelo returned fire while warning responding officers (over the radio) in a calm demeanor. He was concerned for their safety and did not want them injured, or worse."

The female victim later thanked Angelo for saving her life. "My thoughts and prayers are with Sergeant Tom Angelo, and I can't thank him enough for risking his life for me."

Sergeant Thomas Angelo was awarded the Combat Cross by the Lake County Chiefs of Police, and received the Jorge Medina Blue Coats Award at their annual banquet at LaMalfa on February 7, 2007.