

Massena Native Awarded For Bravery

By MATTHEW BRUUN
Staff Reporter

MASSENA — A former Massena resident was recently presented the highest award for valor offered by the Immigration and Naturalization Service for a death-defying act of bravery.

Senior Border Patrol Agent Michael J. Deshaies now calls Mobile, Ala., home, but the son of Mr. and Mrs. John Deshaies was on duty in Pensacola, Fla. when the incident that garnered him the coveted Newton-Azrak award occurred.

It was Feb. 18, 1993, Deshaies recalled this week from his Alabama home, and the air temperature was about 18 degrees Fahrenheit.

"That's about as cold as it gets in our area," he said. "It was rather nippy."

"It was a construction site, and there were some obvious illegal aliens and some of them fled," he continued, across a drainage canal. But one of the aliens disappeared below the surface.

"He made it about halfway across, and I could tell he wasn't going to make it," he said. "The water was very muddy. He went under, and he didn't come back up. The guy had been struggling."

Deshaies threw off his glasses, un belt and winter coat and jumped in the water and swam out to where he'd last seen the fleeing alien.



DESHAIES HONORED — Massena native and U.S. Border Patrol agent Michael Deshaies, left, was recently awarded the prestigious Newton-Azrak Award for valor after risking his life to rescue a fleeing alien. Deshaies received the award from Immigration and Naturalization Service Commissioner Doris Meissner. (Photo Provided)

"I grabbed his arm and I brought him up," he said. "He was right on the verge of being unconscious. I got him to the other side, and it wasn't a pretty sight."

"I really didn't want to jump in. But it's one of those things. It's more or less a reflex action," he added.

The fleeing alien — whom Deshaies' resuscitated after the rescue

— was incarcerated and later shipped back to Mexico.

But Deshaies' superiors recognized his actions as more than just a reflex, calling the rescue "an act of unparalleled bravery and heroism."

The commissioner of the INS recently presented Deshaies the Newton-Azrak award in Baltimore. The award is named in honor of two

young border patrol officers who were kidnapped and murdered by smugglers in 1967.

"Unselfish acts performed at risk of paying the supreme sacrifice deserve recognition of the highest order," said Jesse F. Tabor, the chief patrol agent of Deshaies' sector.

Deshaies said he was very honored by the recognition. "They gave me a heck of an award," he said. The bronze statue of a border patrol agent stands two feet in height and is prominently displayed in his home.

Deshaies admitted it's a long road from Massena to Mobile, Ala. "I joined the border patrol in March of 1983," he recalled. After being hired he was immediately sent to El Paso, Texas, where he served for five years. All the starting border patrol officers put in time along the Mexican border, he explained.

"That's where everybody starts out and that's where all the action is," he said. "Nobody really starts on those northern stations or the Gulf Coast. (El Paso) where they're needed, as opposed to say Ogdensburg or Massena. They don't have the volume."

In his current duties, Deshaies and the agents in his Mobile, Ala. office cover the whole state of Alabama and the Florida panhandle. "We have a large geographical area," he said.

"Mobile's an international sea-

port, so sometimes we get shipjammers and stowaways. And Route 10 from Texas to Florida is a major thoroughfare."

Deshaies added foreign students attending American schools lose their legal residency status when they drop out of school or have failing grades and his office also deals with those matters.

Deshaies, a 1968 graduate of Holy Family High School and a 1972 graduate of St. John Fisher College in Rochester, is married to the former Martha Brown, also of Massena.

They have a son who's now attending Auburn University. He said they get back to Massena every other year. Last summer he attended his 25th high school class reunion here.

His family has lived in Mobile, Ala. for six years now, and he said he does prefer the warm climate of his present home to the subarctic temperatures sometimes prevalent in Massena.

"When we go to visit, it's usually in the summer," he added. "We don't have any winter clothes any more."

Deshaies said he and his wife sometimes go skiing in Colorado, where they can leave after seeing their fill of snow.

"It snowed for about 15 minutes last winter," he said. "And that's all the snow I've seen."

2/20/93

Pensacola News Journal

After Bruno spent several years coaxing state officials to build the juvenile detention center, naming the building in his honor is "just the right thing to do," Kuder said.

Border agent rescues fleeing suspect

A U.S. Border Patrol agent trying to capture three men suspected of being illegal aliens in Pensacola on Thursday ended up saving the life of one of the fleeing men.

Three agents went to the Mariner Village Construction project on Blue Angel Parkway and startled three workers, who are citizens of Mexico, a Border Patrol report from the New Orleans office said.

The men were working for Jose Elias, a framing contractor from Orlando.

The men ran toward the woods, but the agents were in pursuit.

As Senior Agent Michael Deshaies topped a small ridge, he saw the three men swimming across a 100-foot wide drainage canal.

Two of the men made it safely across, but Heron Moreno-Ramirez, 20, bobbed several times before disappearing under water, the report said.

Deshaies dived into the canal and found Moreno, who was limp.

Moreno resumed breathing on his own and declined a medical checkup.

Moreno is being held at Harrison County Jail in Mississippi for repatriation to Mexico.

Coffman to request charges be dropped

A hearing is scheduled Thursday on a defense motion to drop five charges pending against former Santa Rosa County Sheriff Maurice Coffman.

Circuit Judge John Kuder already has been asked to drop two other charges but has not made a decision.

Coffman was indicted by an Okaloosa County grand jury in August. He faces 11 charges including racketeering, soliciting bribes, and evidence and witness tampering.

Coffman served two terms as sheriff, but did not seek re-election in 1992.

Jesse Cobb, a former top aide to Coffman, was charged with perjury, grand theft and evidence tampering.

Bridge traffic will be restricted for race

Southbound traffic on the Bob



At 8 a.m. Friday, another bit of history crashes in

CRIME

Police seek suspe

By Cindy West

News Journal correspondent

A warrant has been issued for a man identified by a teen-ager as the man who raped her in December, the Escambia County Sheriff's Department said.

Ernest Stallworth, 22, also known as Ernest Frye, is wanted on a sexual battery charge. His last known address was in the 6300 block of Mockingbird Lane, Investigator Sammy Peavy said.

IN THE incident, which occurred Dec. 5, the 14-year-old girl told authorities she was raped in an apartment on Kelly Avenue in Brent.

The incident occurred after the girl and a female friend accepted a ride with a male acquaintance and were joined a short time



Stallwo

The gi
the apa
were in

After t
getting
The girl

ELECTIONS

Dogwood Driv Voters defeat Milton's

By Larry A. Sullivan

News Journal

MILTON — A proposal to add 65 acres near Dogwood Drive to the city of Milton was approved in a special election Friday, but a similar proposal along U.S. 90 failed.

The vote ended Milton's first major annexation effort in a decade.

A judge ordered the election after irregularities occurred when 773 acres in six areas were voted on during the Nov. 3 general election.

✓Ye

✓No

✓Ye

✓No

July 20, 1994
Baltimore, Md.

Massena Native To Be Honored For On-Duty Lifesaving Deed

MASSENA — A Massena native who saved a drowning man in Florida will be honored by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service tonight.

Michael J. Deshaies, while on duty Feb. 18, 1993, as a senior border patrol agent, rescued a fleeing illegal alien from a drainage canal in Pensacola, Fla., and revived him. He will be presented the Newton-Azrak Award, the highest award for valor offered by the INS, in a special ceremony in Baltimore.

The award is named in honor of two border patrol officers who were kidnapped and later murdered by smugglers in 1967.

"Unselfish acts performed at risk of paying the supreme sacrifice deserve recognition of the highest order," said Jessee F. Tabor, chief patrol agent of the New Orleans Border Patrol sector headquarters.

Mr. Deshaies is a 1968 graduate of Holy Family High School and a 1972 graduate of St. John Fisher College, Rochester. He joined the U.S. Border Patrol in 1983 in El Paso, Texas. In 1988, he was promoted to senior patrol agent and transferred to Mobile, Ala. He is married to Martha Brown Deshaies and has a son.

He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. John L. Deshaies, Massena.

Mobile border agent earns valor award

► Man pulled illegal
alien to safety

Staff Report

Michael J. Deshaies, a senior U.S. Border Patrol agent from Mobile, was presented the Newton-Azrak Award at a special ceremony Wednesday.

It is the highest award for valor offered by the Immigration and Naturalization Services.

On Feb. 18, 1993, Deshaies

dived into the frigid waters of a drainage canal in Pensacola, Fla., to pull to safety a fleeing illegal alien who was in danger of drowning.

"Unselfish acts performed at risk of paying the supreme sacrifice deserve recognition of the highest order," said Jessee F. Tabor, chief patrol agent of the New Orleans Boarder Patrol sector headquarters.

Deshaies moved to Mobile in 1988 from El Paso, Texas. He joined the Border Patrol in 1983.