

BLW 71/5-C  
November 23, 1979

Regional Commissioner, Northern

Chief Patrol Agent, Blaine, Washington

Joel C. Hardin, Border Patrol Agent; Nomination for  
Newton-Azrak Award

ATTENTION: Regional Incentive Awards Board

Border Patrol Agent Joel C. Hardin, GS-9, Bellingham, Washington, has greatly distinguished himself, has advanced the cause of service to the community in general and has projected an image highly favorable to the Border Patrol and to the Service. He has accomplished this by unstinting application of his great expertise in the exacting and demanding field of search and rescue by means of the technique known in the Border Patrol as sign cutting; that is to say, the detection and interpretation of any physical evidence whatsoever to deduce the movement and passage of persons, animals or things.

Agent Hardin's reputation as a foremost signcutter is now well established among search and rescue organizations throughout the western United States. He has been the subject of feature articles in the Sunday magazine section of large metropolitan newspapers; he has been invited to participate as a distinguished guest in the current event program of a large city television station; he has been in demand as an acknowledged topnotch instructor in seminars and training sessions throughout the northwest, and even in the east coast, including groups composed of volunteers and law enforcement personnel; he has won the accolades of respected professionals and the gratitude of numerous citizens for his consummate skill, and corresponding success, in locating lost persons and fleeing criminals when all other methods had failed, including the usage of the fabled bloodhounds.

Ray Artie Baker is a convicted murderer who escaped from a California prison and who has been found to be associated with an offshoot of the sadly notorious "Manson Gang". On the evening of May 24, 1979, Baker shot and killed Kenneth G. Ward, a U. S. Customs Inspector (and ex-Border Patrol Agent) at the Port of Entry, Lynden, Washington. After fleeing from the scene with his female companion, Baker was pursued to an area of dense woods, brush and nettles. A large manhunt ensued and many officers and search dogs added to the confusion and difficulty of tracking an armed, dangerous and desperate murderer through heavy brush and in the dark. Trained dogs failed because of the numerous nettles. For many hours, Agent Hardin applied his unexcelled store and command of signcutting

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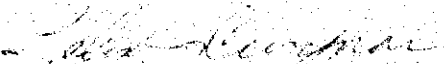
skills and continued to pursue his murderous prey. He was accompanied by two local law enforcement officers who were there as his armed escort to enable him to concentrate fully on his task. Everyone else had to be withdrawn to prevent further damage to the confusing physical evidence in the trampled search area. Shortly after dawn on May 25, Agent Hardin's command performance once again netted results and Baker and his girlfriend were both captured. A detailed account by an eyewitness, Detective David McNeill of the Bellingham, Wa., Police Department, is appended as an unbiased description and tribute to Agent Hardin's awesome talents.

The Sheriff of Whatcom County wrote on June 8, 1979, to commend Joel Hardin for his diligence and persistence in tracking Baker and added that "Words cannot express my admiration for his abilities and his determination". Likewise, Clarence L. Bingham, Regional Commissioner of the U. S. Customs Service, San Francisco, wrote to express "our sincere appreciation to your staff for their extraordinary round-the-clock efforts following the shooting of Customs Inspector Kenneth G. Ward." Additionally, an Assistant U. S. Attorney wrote our Central Office giving praise and credit to Agent Hardin for his invaluable contribution to the Baker case. The letter was partially quoted in the July-August-September issue of the INS Information Bulletin and a copy of the article is also attached for reference.

There is no doubt that the fugitive could have eluded the police if it were not for Border Patrol Agent Hardin's special skill in signcutting. His unusual competence in the line of duty and performance in law enforcement are standards for others to attempt to emulate and deserve favorable consideration of the granting of the Newton-Azrak Award.

Border Patrol Agent Hardin was born in Ontario, Oregon, and grew up in Emmett, Idaho. In 1961 he joined the Police Department of that city and he is a graduate of the Idaho Law Enforcement Academy. He joined the Border Patrol in April of 1965 and has served in Chula Vista and El Cajon, Ca. and, since October of 1972, at Bellingham, Wa. He resides in Everson, Wa. with his wife, Janet, and their four daughters.

Suggested citation: To Border Patrol Agent Joel C. Hardin, in recognition of his continued and exemplary service to the community and to the mission of law enforcement in general through the application of his special talents in search and rescue.

  
FELIX J. CWYNAR,  
Chief Patrol Agent

Attachments

On 5/24/79 shortly after 8:00 P.M., Detective Burch and myself responded to an officer down call that occurred at the Lynden Port of Entry. Suspect vehicle had been chased to a point near Everson where the suspect vehicle was abandoned by one male and one female.

Detective Burch and myself were requested to go to the sandbar near Goshen and Cedarville Roads and work North along the river through the woods. Joel Hardin, U.S. Border Patrol and Deputy R. Peterson, WCSO were physically tracking the suspects south along Nooksack River through dense brush. It was learned via radio transmission that Hardin had tracked the suspects to a point where one pair of men's shoes and one pair of socks were found. Detective Burch and myself were requested to move to a closer point to intercept.

At approximately 11:30 PM myself, Detective Burch, Patrolman Moody, USBP and an uniformed police officer set up an interception line approximately 500 yards ahead of Hardin at a point between the river and Mission Road approximately one half mile north of the Central Road. According to information received by radio transmissions Hardin was tracking two persons north towards us.

Sometime later it was reported that two persons were observed moving north on the railroad tracks to the west of us with the use of a night vision scope. We began to walk out of our position. Approximately twenty to thirty minutes after departure it was reported that the female suspect was in custody and the male was observed running into dense brush off of the Roberts Road.

The area surrounding the siting was blocked off. This was an area approximately one mile wide by two miles long between the Mission, Goshen, Central and Roberts Road. This is a sparsely populated area consisting mostly of very thick underbrush and nettles. Search dogs and cover were sent in at the point of last spottings. The dogs were unable to follow the scent for very long due to the nettles burning their noses. After the dogs were brought out, Hardin, myself and Peterson were assigned to enter and for Hardin to attempt a physical track of the subject. We entered the brush on the early morning hours on 5/25/79 at the point on Roberts Rd. where Deputy Huntoon had observed suspect run into the brush. With the use of flashlights we were able to observe some physical signs.

Hardin followed a path made by the search dogs to the point told to us by the handler as being the point his dog became unable to sense because of the damage done by the nettles. Due to the darkness and the fact so many persons had been in the immediate area it was extremely hard to find any physical sign directing to the suspect.

Hardin led us to an old skid road running east to west up the side of a slope. Hardin checked both sides of the road to ascertain whether the suspect had crossed. Hardin eliminated the idea that the suspect made a crossing. Due to the location of the road and type of terrain it was felt that the suspect more than likely followed the road west up the hill.

Several checks were made of the road area. Hardin indicated that at least two persons and one dog had been on the road only a short time before us. Hardin indicated a point where one person had come out onto the road from the direction the suspect fled from and approximately 50 feet from where the dog lost scent.

At this time we were notified to stop tracking and stay in one spot as more dogs were being sent in.

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CHIEF PATRO  
BLAINE, WASH

After some time, a dog team could be heard in the area that we had just left. Brush cracking could be heard several times ahead of the dog team, and in an area that was at the top and to the southwest of the small skid road.

Shortly after daylight, we were contacted by two RCMP dog teams that had worked the side of the slope. One team indicated they were on the trail several times and had found an area where heavy scent was present and it appeared that the suspect had fallen or had layed down. The RCMP handler stated that the heavy brush and nettles made it extremely hard to track for more than a short distance.

After all personnel were removed from the area, we went back to the point the suspect was last observed after the apprehension of the female. Hardin began cutting looking for any sign left by the suspect. Approximately 20 feet into the brush Hardin pointed out a path left by one person crawling beneath underbrush. About five feet into the brush we came across a black comb left by whoever had gone through the brush. Hardin stated that the track was left sometime during the night because of the dew displacement and pointed out to us why he formed his opinion. After crawling under the brush for about 20 feet, we came out to a point where the track dogs picked up their first scent. We followed this trail as we previously had to a point about one half the way up the skid road and out onto the road. From this point we worked our way up the hill to the top of the road. No indication was noted that anyone entered the brush until the top of the road after it made a southerly bend.

Hardin pointed out three entries into the brush and indicated that two of the tracks were made by more than one person and a dog. The third trail went directly up the hill through dense brush and nettles and according to Hardin was made by a single person. After about 50 feet into the brush, this single track was crossed by dog tracks and others. A path through nettles and small brush led up the hill about 150 feet to a small knoll where indication was made by Hardin that someone had layed down. Hardin pointed out imprints left by a persons knees, elbows and body. In the immediate area of this mentioned knoll, numerous paths made during the night were quite evident. Numerous human and dog tracks circled and crossed each other for about a 30-50 radius. Just down the back slope of this knoll Hardin indicated that a single subject went through a nettle patch to a large brush pile left by fallen trees and limbs. The track ended at the edge of the pile. Hardin after a few minutes of checking indicated the person retraced his path back to where it started and then headed in a westerly direction across a small ravine and up the side of another hill. This single track was crossed by human and dog tracks several hundred yards up the hill.

Hardin cut tracks for approximately 50 yards up the hill to a point where he again picked up the same track that he had previously followed. This was followed to the crest of the hill to a point where Hardin pointed out a spot where someone had been standing and turning around in one spot. It was also indicated that the subject had kneeled down on one or both knees. Hardin indicated this by the knee prints and the toes of hard sole foot wear. Prints indicated a waffle type sole, size about a nine or ten. From this point the track began north along the crest zig zagging somewhat and veering to the west towards the Mission Road. After about 50 yards Hardin made indication that the tracks were quite fresh and it appeared the subject was in stocking feet. It was evident at several points that the subject being tracked had crawled under logs and through brush. Hardin indicated that the track was very fresh and it appeared that whoever we were following was trying to confuse us and probably knew we were not too far behind. This zigzag pattern totaled about 500 feet before the track went directly down the slope going back east. The trail through the wet leaves and nettles was quite evident for approximately

200 yards down over the hill and into a semi flat area and into a swampy area. During the trek down the hill it was indicated by Hardin and evident that waffle-type soles were being worn by the tracked subject.

Once in the swampy area the track seemed to end in a very brushy area. After about five minutes of intense checking Hardin indicated to us the direction of travel and indicated the prints and steps taken by the track. It was quite evident that the subject was trying to avoid leaving a track to follow. The subject methodically took steps through the brush to a fallen tree and then used the limbs to go approximately 50 feet to the other side. The tracks then went down over a small knoll and then due north for a short distance and back to the northwest along a relatively flat area. For approximately 200 yards it was indicated by Hardin that the subject was leaving false trails and it appeared that the tracked was trying to gain time. In several spots where heavy brush was piled, it was evident the subject was trying to confuse the tracker.

The tracks went down over the hill easterly towards the Robert Rd. A trail could be defined by Hardin going down the hill, up over a small knoll and then seemed to end in a flat hard surfaced area. After a few minutes checking, Hardin found track on the opposite side of the small clearing leading again towards the Roberts Rd. Hardin pointed out indications of rolling footprints and the indentations made that the subject was moving more rapidly and that we were probably right on top of him. We hastened our pace at this time.

Vehicles could be heard moving on the Roberts Rd which is gravel covered. At a point at the edge of the brush next and above the railroad tracks which runs next to Roberts Rd, the suspect was observed by us. We got within 20 feet of the subject and identified ourselves and told the subject to freeze. At the time the subject was first observed he was in a semi crouched position, hands to the front holding the brush to the side and appeared to be looking out onto the Roberts Rd. The subject was taken from the brush and out onto the side of the tracks where he was handcuffed.

Hardin removed a 45 Cal Automatic from the waistband of the subject at the time of first physical contact. Subject was strip searched and turned over to WCSO for transportation. Subject's boots, socks, belt, small amount of Canadian money and the black comb previously found were turned over to Customs evidence keeper by myself.

*Handwritten notes:*  
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## Employees Praised

There are a number of employees at S who, from time to time, find themselves in a position of providing the cooperative effort or humanitarian vice in their communities. Frequently, these commendable acts go unnoticed except to those who are either directly involved or who are affected by the outcome. Following are a few incidents which have come to our attention, where INS employees have rendered assistance, two of which were life-saving actions.

Only recently did we hear of the heroic actions of Sys. Acct. Loretta SHOGREN of the C.O., on the evening of May 21, 1976, when she rescued a young boy from drowning. Ms. Shogren is awarded the "Silver Lifesaving Medal" by the U.S. Coast Guard for her heroic action. The boy had been thrown overboard when he slipped and fell into about eight feet of water. Although a non-swimmer, Ms. Shogren disregarded her personal safety and immediately entered the water. She towed the youngster to some nearby rocks and administered artificial resuscitation until the rescue unit arrived. She was cited by the Coast Guard for saving the boy's

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Chula Vista Border Patrol Agents L Swofford, Clyde Bensenhoffer, Jr. and Greg Ferrones last May, rendered assistance to an injured motorist which helped save his life. A motorcyclist sustained serious injuries to his leg and arm in a collision with a light truck. The Agents managed to control serious arterial bleeding through proper application of first aid medical techniques, and are credited with saving the man's life.

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Marfa Sector Border Patrol Agents, responding to a call for assistance from the local Sheriff's department, tracked, located and apprehended an escaped murderer. BPA Dennis G. Worel, Train-

ees Terry M. Norman, Gary B. Decoq & Clyde E. Jones, and BP Pilot Louis D. Stahl were commended by Sheriff Richard D. Thompson for their actions in apprehending this dangerous criminal.

A jail break occurred at the Presidio County Jail last March, involving the escape of four prisoners, one of whom was the convicted murderer. Our Border Patrol Agents responded and immediately began a search with other local enforcement officers. While Worel, Norman, Decoq and Jones cut sign on foot, Pilot Stahl assisted by plane. The search started at about 9:00 p.m. and continued until approximately 6:30 a.m. the following morning when a suspect's tracks were discovered about 15 miles East of Marfa. The tracks turned out to be those of the escaped slayer, who was found hiding in a crevice among some large boulders. Not knowing whether the man was armed, considerable bravery was exhibited by agents Worel, Norman, Decoq and Jones, who took him into custody and delivered him to the Presidio County Sheriff.

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Assistant U.S. Attorney J. Ronald Sim, Seattle, Wash., gives credit and praise to Border Patrol Agent Joel Hardin of Bellingham for his aid in bringing about the conviction of the murderer of a U.S. Customs Inspector at Lynden, Wash. BPA Hardin testified as an expert witness in tracking at the trial.

In a letter to the Asst. Commr., Border Patrol, Mr. Sim said, "I wish to inform you that he was one of the most impressive expert witnesses it has ever been my privilege to put on the stand."

After killing a Customs Inspector at the Lynden border crossing on the evening of May 24, the suspect and a companion drove away from the port of entry and eventually abandoned their car on a farm about 15 miles away. Although dog teams were unable to pick up a trail, Agent Hardin, beginning at almost midnight, was able to track the fleeing couple.

Sim said of Hardin, "His testimony as to what the suspect did (i.e., walk, crawl, rest, panic, evade) was instrumental at trial in rebutting the defense claim of insanity, or lack of mental capacity, at the time of the event. Agent Hardin's testimony provided most of the insight that the jury gained with



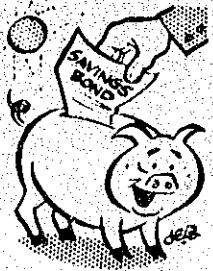
Special Recognition for Former Intell. Agent. SR Reg. Commr. Durward Powell offers congratulations and a Letter of Commendation to Crim. Inv. Gerald E. SHAEFFER (r.) for his efforts in completing a study on fraudulent documents compiled while assigned as Sector Intell. Agent at McAllen. Shaffer was also the recipient of a Letter of Commendation from Commr. Castillo.

A veteran of 21 yrs. in the Border Patrol, he is presently a Crim. Inv. stationed at Austin, Tex.

At a recent Regional Intell. Officers conference, hosted by the C.O. Intell. Unit, it was proposed to honor outstanding efforts of other Sector Intell. Agents and designated Intell. Officers. Those to be honored will be chosen for unusual efforts in either collecting, analyzing, or timely dissemination of intelligence.

### Rhymes of the Times

SAVE UP  
FOR  
A SUNNY  
DAY.  
SAVINGS  
BONDS  
ALWAYS  
PAY.  
Agent...AFPS



regard to the defendant's activities that night.

"I was impressed, and I know the judge and jury were also impressed, by the high regard in which search and rescue, as well as law enforcement, people hold Joel Hardin as a tracker", said Sim.