

# A Hero Lost

Recently, a large, 24-1/2" by 28-1/2" framed, vintage photograph of Det. Arthur J. De Marrais as a young Patrol Officer made its way to the DEA headquarters in Tribeca.



It was found in the garage of a residence in the confines of the 120 Precinct in Staten Island by the current homeowner who had no idea how the photo had gotten there. He flagged down a radio car and gave it to the Officers. The Officers brought it to the 120 Squad, and Detectives Eric Torres and Luis Sanchez brought it to the DEA.

Det. De Marrais was appointed October 11, 1920, and while in the midst of a notable career he was killed at age 41 in the line of duty on November 7, 1937. De Marrais died five hours after being hit on the head with a metal pipe and bitten on the cheek by 37-year-old John Brown. The Detective had responded to a call from a woman named Virginia Lundy who summoned police because Brown had threatened her when she spurned his marriage proposal. When De Marrais arrived at her residence, Brown had a metal pipe and was menacing Lundy's six and seven year old children. The Detective tried to disarm Brown, but the perp struck De Marrais on the head with the pipe. De Marrais finally subdued the assailant, but while on the way to the stationhouse, the perp bit the Detective in the cheek and struggled to get free. As Brown started to flee, De Marrais fired two shots, striking Brown in the chest. Responding radio patrol took De Marrais to Brooklyn Hospital and the perp to the Kings County Prison hospital ward.

The Detective's death was a shock, because it wasn't believed that De Marrais' wounds were very serious. But complications arose while he was undergoing surgery. His official cause of death was "strangulation brought about by foreign substances in the throat," according to an autopsy report made public by then-Kings County Medical Examiner Manuel E. Marten, wrote the New



## ...and FOUND

York Times on November 9, 1937. According to the M.E.'s office, the Detective had eaten a large meal right before his 5:30 p.m. encounter with the perp. As De Marrais was coming out of surgery and the anesthesia was wearing off, his undigested food regurgitated into his throat, which choked the Detective when it got into his respiratory system.

At the time of his death, De Marrais was assigned to the 18th Division, 13th Detective District. He was promoted to third grade in 1925, and jumped to first grade in 1928. He was celebrated for a number of cases, including solving the murder of six-year-old Helen Sterler. On January 28, 1933, the *New York Times* reported that De Marrais had "long been recognized as one of the keener plainclothes men in Brooklyn." He lived and worked in the vicinity of the murder for years. The case hinged on a brightly colored mechanical pencil that had been used to lure the child to her death, and belonged to the known subject's late father. Taken from the crime scene, it was identified by the perp's mother, who was brought in for questioning. De Marrais had arrested the subject twice before in 1928 and 1929.

Also in 1929, De Marrais solved a \$100,000 jewelry robbery from the home of a man named Frank Bailey in Brooklyn. In 1934, he partnered with Louis Woelfel as the lead Detectives who solved the six-month investigation of securities thefts at five branches of Citizens Bank. The Detectives were able to trace and nab the crooks when some of the stolen bonds wound up back at the Treasury Department in Washington, DC.

De Marrais was the married father of five children, and as was the custom at the time, the newspapers reported his family lived on Patchen Avenue in Brooklyn. On November 11, 1937, approximately 2,500 people attended his funeral, including Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, Police Commissioner Lewis J. Valentine, and the Brooklyn District Attorney William F. X. Geoghan. The NYPD Pipes & Drums and a uniformed detail were among those who



## 10-13 Club Members

The DEA has a new section on its website that can accommodate listings of 10-13 Clubs. Send pertinent information (including Club name and contact, address, website, phone number, email, etc.) to Sam Katz at the DEA at [samkatz@nycdetectives.org](mailto:samkatz@nycdetectives.org)

### Central Florida FOP Lodge 176

Serves Central Florida counties of Seminole, Orange, Osceola, Lake, Volusia, Brevard, Sumter, Hernando, Pasco, and Citrus

1945 West County Road 419, Suite 1141, Oviedo, FL 32766.

[www.foplodge716.org](http://www.foplodge716.org) President, Retired Det. Mickey Alfonso

### Arizona 10-13 Club

Meets the fourth Thursday in Phoenix

Contact Retired Det. Dom Buetti at (480) 363-6910

or at [dbuetti@aol.com](mailto:dbuetti@aol.com)

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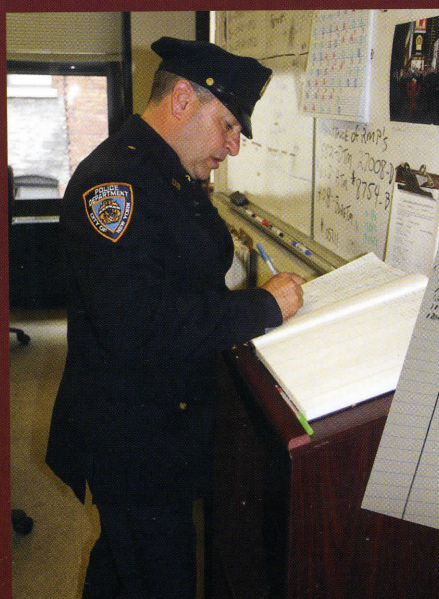
took part in a procession from the William Dunnigan & Sons Funeral Parlor to the Roman Catholic Church Our Lady of Good Counsel for his funeral mass. Det. De Marrais is interred at St. John's Cemetery in Middle Village, Queens.

On June 1, 1938, his widow, Catherine, was presented with his posthumous NYPD Medal of Honor.

The photograph that was recently discovered is most likely the one that was unveiled in 1940 at a Police Athletic League Play-ground and Youth Center named in De Marrais' memory at 278 Classon Avenue in Brooklyn. 500 people, including LaGuardia, Valentine, and members of the De Marrais family, dedicated the PAL facility, financed by "the Bommer Estate." It was noted

at the time that there was a 33% reduction in the number of cases in Children's Court. It wasn't as high a figure as Mayor La Guardia wanted, who added that police should be "a friend of the children, rather than their prosecutors." The *New York Times* reported that all heads bowed as Gerard De Marrais, the 15-year-old son of the late Detective "unveiled a large photograph of his father in the youth center building." At some point after 1953 the Youth Center closed and the photograph was removed. How it got to Staten Island may forever remain a mystery. The location on Classon Avenue is now populated with apartments. But De Marrais' photograph may soon be reunited with his family as the DEA recently located some of our deceased hero's relatives who have long been out of touch with the Union.

## DEA Board Officer Retires ...



On July 31, 2014, after more than 28 years on the force, first grade Det. Ken Cardona's friends and colleagues celebrated his career during his walk-out from the Midtown South Precinct on his last day of the job. Cardona began his law enforcement career in Transit in 1986 and earned his gold shield in 1993. After the merge in '95, he became an Alternate Delegate in '96 and a Delegate in '97. In 2000, he won election to the DEA Board as Manhattan South Trustee, and gained full-release in 2002. He was the Chairman of the DEA Board of Trustees until 2005, when he moved up to the position of Borough Director of Manhattan, The Bronx, and Headquarters. There won't be much time for leisure in Ken's "retirement:" Cardona was recently named Vice President of Global Security and Investigations of Milstein Properties, the giant New York real estate concern.

