

## **FBI Agent Drowns Saving Distressed Swimmer**

<http://forums.officer.com/t174231/>

Special Agent Daniel "Danny" Lee Knapp  
United States Department of Justice - Federal Bureau of  
Investigation

**End of Watch: Thursday, December 29, 2011**

Special Agent Daniel Knapp drowned while attempting to rescue a distressed swimmer in the ocean at Playa Escondida, Fajardo, Puerto Rico.



Agent Knapp was on vacation at the beach with a friend when they saw the man calling for help and struggling in the water. Agent Knapp immediately entered the water in an attempt to rescue the man, but became distressed himself. The man he was attempting to rescue was pulled from the water and survived, however, Agent Knapp drowned.

Agent Knapp had served with the Federal Bureau of Investigation for six years.

Please contact the following agency to send condolences or to obtain funeral arrangements:

Director Robert Mueller  
United States Department of Justice - Federal Bureau of Investigation  
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
J. Edgar Hoover Building  
Washington, DC 20535

## **Puerto Rico FBI agent drowns in attempted rescue**

<http://www.kmov.com/story/28489070/puerto-rico-fbi-agent-drowns-in-attempted-rescue>

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) -- An FBI agent who tried to rescue a swimmer in distress has drowned at a beach in northeast Puerto Rico, authorities said Friday. Daniel Knapp, a 43-year-old agent who was based in San Juan, drowned on Thursday at Hidden Beach in the coastal city of Fajardo, the FBI said in a statement.

Friends of the swimmer had asked Knapp for help, and he was able to reach the swimmer but was later overcome by rough ocean conditions, the FBI said.

"He died a hero, saving another life," said local FBI director Joseph S. Campbell. Knapp was born in Loma Linda, California, graduated from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, and had been with the FBI for six years. He received the

2011 FBI Director's Award for Outstanding Criminal Investigation and the 2011 Attorney General's Award for Excellence in Law Enforcement.

Knapp is survived by his parents and four brothers. Some of his immediate family live in Las Vegas, where the body will be transferred for funeral arrangements. Members of Puerto Rico's police maritime unit were able to save the unidentified swimmer.

The National Weather Service issued a high surf advisory on Thursday that remains in effect, warning of waves of up to 14 feet (4 meters).

## **FBI Agent Drowns in Attempted Rescue**

[HTTP://WWW.OFFICER.COM/NEWS/10578591/FBI-AGENT-DROWNS-IN-ATTEMPTED-RESCUE](http://www.officer.com/news/10578591/fbi-agent-drowns-in-attempted-rescue)

DEC 30, 2011 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico -- An FBI agent who tried to rescue a swimmer in distress has drowned at a beach in northeast Puerto Rico, authorities said Friday.

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## **Coast Guard awards posthumous Gold Life Saving Medal to FBI Special Agent**

<http://www.uscgnews.com/go/doc/4007/2127894/Coast-Guard-awards-posthumous-Gold-Life-Saving-Medal-to-FBI-Special-Agent->

March 24, 2014

**Capt. Drew W. Pearson, commander of Sector San Juan, presented the Gold Life Saving Medal (posthumously) to the mother, Renae Richie Knapp, and brother, Michael Jay Knapp, of FBI Special Agent Daniel Lee Knapp, during a ceremony at Coast Guard Sector San Juan March 21, 2014. Special Agent Knapp lost his life while displaying extreme heroic daring during the afternoon of Dec. 29, 2011, during the rescue of a drowning 18-year-old boy at Playa Escondida (Hidden Beach) in Fajardo, Puerto Rico. Members of the Coast Guard, the FBI San Juan Field Office and multiple federal and Puerto Rico law enforcement agencies were also present during the recognition.**



**(U.S. Coast Guard photo)**

**SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico.** – Capt. Drew W. Pearson, commander of Sector San Juan, on behalf of the Commandant of the Coast Guard, Admiral Robert J. Papp, presented the Gold Lifesaving Medal (posthumously) to family members of FBI Special Agent Daniel Lee Knapp during a ceremony at Sector San Juan, Puerto Rico Friday.

“Today we celebrate the selfless actions of a brave and true hero,” said Capt. Drew W. Pearson, commander of Sector San Juan. “Special Agent Daniel Knapp displayed the highest traditions of humanitarian service by willingly facing the overpowering force of nature and giving his life to save another from the perils of the sea.”

Renae Richie Knapp and Michael Jay Knapp, mother and brother of FBI Special Agent Daniel Knapp, were presented with the Gold Life Saving Medal in representation of Special Agent Knapp and the entire Knapp family.

Upon receiving the Gold Life Saving Medal on behalf of her son, Richie Knapp took the opportunity to express her gratitude to the Coast Guard for honoring her son. She explained that his selfless actions were a part of who he was and how he lived his life daily in the service of others without expecting any recognition in return. Richie Knapp also thanked the men and women of the Coast Guard and FBI for their service to the nation.

According to the award citation, Special Agent Knapp displayed extreme heroic daring during the afternoon of Dec. 29, 2011, during the rescue of a drowning 18-year-old boy at Playa Escondida in Fajardo, Puerto Rico.

Special Agent Knapp responded to help Hector González López and two friends who were struggling to survive and stay afloat in treacherous conditions. Escaping from strong current and heavy seas, the boy’s friends approached Knapp, who was off duty at the time, and alerted him to the distress. Without hesitation or regard for his own safety, Special Agent Knapp donned his swim fins and dove into the threatening surf despite pleas from his girlfriend not to go. He swam vigorously against the powerful waves and current until he reached González López who was losing hope and facing certain death. Special Agent Knapp took physical control of González López, placed him in a rescue hold and instructed him to conserve energy



**Renae Richie Knapp and Michael Jay Knapp, mother and brother of posthumous Gold Life Saving Medal recipient, Special Agent Daniel Lee Knapp; shoulder Hector González López, who was rescued at Playa Escondida (Hidden Beach) in Puerto Rico the afternoon of Dec. 29, 2011, during the posthumous Gold Life Saving Medal presentation to Special Agent Knapp at Coast Guard Sector San Juan March 21, 2014. Special Agent Knapp lost his life and displayed extreme heroic daring during the rescue attempt which prevented González López from drowning.  
(U.S. Coast Guard photo)**

by floating on his back. As both men battled the powerful waves, Special Agent Knapp worked to keep them afloat and attempted to escape the current. In the face of grave danger, he provided González López with swimming techniques for survival, reduced his panic and importantly, provided hope.

Moments later, Special Agent Knapp's physical grip was broken by unyielding waves. A calm and revitalized González López now had the energy to remain afloat until a Police helicopter arrived on scene and rescued him. Overcom by exhaustion, Special Agent Knapp lost consciousness before being recovered. Despite determined efforts to revive him, Special Agent Knapp perished.

As a result of his unselfish actions and valiant service, the Coast Guard posthumously bestowed Special Agent Knapp with the Gold Life Saving Medal.

"I am thankful to the Coast Guard for honoring Danny Knapp with this medal," said González López. "That day I was ready to let myself go, Danny gave me the strength and swimming tips that allowed me to survive. After learning more about who he was and the great things he did for others, I look up to him as a role model and hope to follow in his example."

The Gold Life Saving Medal is the highest decoration that may be awarded by the Commandant of the Coast Guard to both civilians and members of the armed forces. Since 1874, the U.S. Coast Guard has issued the medal less than 700 times, making it one of the rarest medals awarded and the third oldest medal still being issued by the U.S. military.

The lifesaving medals were first authorized by the 43rd Congress on June 20, 1874. The secretary of the treasury was directed to create "medals of honor," to be distinguished as "life-saving medals of the first and second class, and bestow them upon any persons who endanger their own lives while saving or attempting to save another from drowning, a shipwreck or other perils of the sea."



The lifesaving medal is issued in two grades, silver and gold. Through the years the lifesaving medals have undergone three design changes however, the lifesaving medals remain unique among U.S. decorations. They are actually struck from the precious metals, silver or gold.

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