A Florida Highway Patrol dog, Major, was killed when troopers stopped a truck on I-95 in St. Johns County, and the animal was called on to search for drugs. Major darted into the northbound lane and was struck by a car, troopers said.

Drug-sniffing dog killed in I-95 accident

By Andrea Bisconti
Staff writer

Canine Major, a Florida Highway Patrol dog who sniffed out about $100,000 worth of drugs during his career, was killed yesterday after being struck by a car on Interstate 95 in St. Johns County.

The accident happened during a drug search just south of Florida 210, said Leander Brown of the Highway Patrol.

"It's certainly a sad day for us," Brown said. "Naturally, we feel like we lost a rooper."

About 1:45 p.m., troopers Mike King and Mike Smith stopped a rental truck on I-95 or following too closely to the car in front of it, Brown said. The driver, Jerry Matthews, 22, of Homestead acted nervous, so the troopers asked to search the truck.

The troopers found a bag of marijuana, so Smith — who worked with and cared for the dog — brought Major into the search, Brown said.

Smith commanded the 1½-year-old German shepherd to jump into the truck, but Major had trouble getting in, Brown said. After a few more commands from the trooper, Major apparently got confused and decided to find another way into the truck, Brown said.

The dog bolted around the front of the truck and was hit by a car driving in the right northbound lane, Brown said.

Brown said the death was an accident and that no one would be charged. Ryan was charged with possession of marijuana under 14 grams. A 14-year-old girl traveling with him was not charged.

The Highway Patrol paid $2,500 to have Major imported from Germany. The dog then spent 500 hours training for tracking, obedience and searching, and another 200 hours learning to detect cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana and heroin, Brown said. Major wore a gold trooper's badge on his collar.

Since he began working with Smith in January, Major has detected about $100,000 worth of drugs hidden in vehicles on highways in Duval, Nassau and St. Johns counties. He also played a role in numerous arrests of drug traffickers, car thieves and fugitives, Brown said.
FLORIDA TRAFFIC ACCIDENT REPORT
MAIL TO: DEPT. OF HIGHWAY SAFETY & MOTORS VEHICLES
TRAFFIC ACCIDENT REPORT

DATE OF ACCIDENT: 1/12/90
TIME OF ACCIDENT: 10:20 PM
TIME OFFICER NOTIFIED: 12:22 PM
TIME OFFICER ARRIVED: 2:12 PM
INVEST. AGENCY REPORT NUMBER: 90-38-03136-20
FSMV ACCIDENT REPORT NUMBER: 13902800

COUNTY/CITY CODE: 20/00
CITY OR TOWN: St. Augustine
COUNTY: St. Johns

AT NO. 06/10 OF INTERSECTION OF County Road 210

VEHICLE TRAVELING: 1950 E 100 W ON SR-9 (1-95)

INSURANCE CO. LIABILITY OR RP: Allstate Insurance Company
039-706408 5

OWNER’S FULL NAME (Check if Driver ()): Dorothy Marie Fean
CURRENT ADDRESS (Number and Street): 350 44th Street Box 56
City and State: Sea Isle City, N.J.
ZIP Code: 08243
Date of Birth: 01-21-27

DRIVERS LICENSE NUMBER: F 2030 17874

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS: 1 Explosives 5 Corrosive Materials 7 Other
Driving Ability Questionable 1 YES 2 NO
Driving Ability Questionable 3 YES 4 NO

INSURANCE CO. LIABILITY OR RP: Allstate Insurance Company

OWNER’S FULL NAME (Check if Driver ()): Eileen C. Fean
CURRENT ADDRESS (Number and Street): Same As Driver
City and State: 114 McKinley Ave.
ZIP Code: Lansdowne, Pa. 19050

DRIVERS LICENSE NUMBER: F 2030 17874

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS: 1 Explosives 5 Corrosive Materials 7 Other
Driving Ability Questionable 1 YES 2 NO
Driving Ability Questionable 3 YES 4 NO

INSURANCE CO. LIABILITY OR RP: Allstate Insurance Company

OWNER’S FULL NAME (Check if Driver ()): Alvin J. Fean
CURRENT ADDRESS (Number and Street): Same As Driver
City and State: 114 McKinley Ave.
ZIP Code: Lansdowne, Pa. 19050

DRIVERS LICENSE NUMBER: F 2030 17874

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS: 1 Explosives 5 Corrosive Materials 7 Other
Driving Ability Questionable 1 YES 2 NO
Driving Ability Questionable 3 YES 4 NO

INSURANCE CO. LIABILITY OR RP: Allstate Insurance Company
On 11-29-90 at approximately 2:10 pm on SR-9 (I-95), 6/10 miles south of CR-210.

A Felony Team consisting of Trooper Michael D. King, ID# 913, Trooper Michael A. Smith, ID# 924 and Canine Major team designation G-2, were in the process of a vehicle drug search. This search was being conducted on the north bound emergency lane of SR-9 (I-95). During the search, Canine Major for unknown reasons bolted from his position on the east side of the suspect vehicle and ran north bound around the front of the suspect vehicle and into the path of vehicle #1. Canine Major was struck by the right front of vehicle #1 and thrown 44 feet onto the east shoulder of SR-9 (I-95).

Vehicle #1 was traveling north bound on the outside lane of SR-9 (I-95) prior to collision with Canine Major. There were no visible skid marks left by vehicle #1 prior to collision.

Canine Major died at the scene as the result of his injuries.

This incident and traffic crash was referred to:


Photographs taken by Trooper Michael D. King, ID# 913 at Sergeant T. S. Flynn request.