

Reservist gets his recognition

Unpaid and unsung hero appreciated at last

TASNIM LANGRY

TACKLING crime on a daily basis is a passion that runs back for generations in the Danikas family of Greece. Yesterday, one of them, who is now a fully-fledged South African citizen, received a commendation for his "exceptional courage and enterprise" in fighting crime in Durban as a police reservist.

Aristadis Danikas, 32, was commended by the police in appreciation of the role he has played as a reserve constable.

Assistant Commissioner Pat Brown said it was an honour to present Danikas with a certificate of appreciation, because, as a civilian, his dedication, courage and enterprise in combating crime were exceptional.

His dedication was so intense that he employed someone to take care of his business while he helped tackle crime during the day on some of Durban's most infamous streets. Second-hand dealers beware, Danikas doesn't take too kindly to buying and re-selling stolen computer merchandise.

Provincial head of the Serious Violent Crime Unit Dir Johan Booyens said if more businessmen adopted his no-nonsense attitude towards the buying and re-selling of stolen items, there wouldn't be a market for stolen second-hand goods, and crime would decrease.

Danikas's track record is impressive for a volunteer - this year



PICTURE: S'BU MFEKA

DIRECTORS Mulder van Eyk (left) and Eddie Kennedy (right) congratulate Aristadis Danikas for his work as a police reservist. Danikas was honoured by police management and was described by police as being "an outstanding person with exceptional courage"

alone, he has made 27 successful arrests - including for armed robbery, fraud, theft, and dealing in drugs.

He has helped police seize 17 laptop computers, two firearms and several types of drugs, including the rave drug Ecstasy and the most notorious drug in the province, Mandrax.

Receiving commendations is not new for the Danikas family, who reside in Greece. A few years ago, Takis Danikas, 36, Danikas's

brother, was commended for his bravery after a terrorist attack in Athens.

Provincial head of the Reserve Police in KwaZulu-Natal, Dir Eddie Kennedy, said: "Reservists are dedicated and provide good crime prevention."

"It must be said that for the past 40 years, police reservists, although unpaid, are equally dedicated in combating crime, unsung heroes who haven't been remembered, but are much appreciated."



Aris Danikas

by Amy Maas

DURBAN based businessman, Aris Danikas, is doing more than his fair share of work within the community. Danikas owns a well-known electronics store in Smith Street. An electronic gate and a bodyguard trained in martial arts guard his shop while surveillance cameras are poised to catch any potential thieves on tape.

Danikas immigrated to South Africa from Greece when he was 18 years old. His tertiary education was

completed at Natal Technikon where he studied Electronic Engineering. In Greece both his brother and grandfather are part of the police service. "It's like a tradition," he says.

As a reservist for the South African Police Service, he enforces the law more frequently than most police officers. His work within the community is completely voluntary and he uses his own resources to pursue suspects and to counter criminal activity. His dedication was commended when he was presented with an Award of Appreciation

by the National Commission on Tuesday, 1 July 2003, at the SAPS headquarters.

In the 14 years that Danikas has been a prominent businessman he has made over 70 arrests and uncovered over 80 stolen laptops. Danikas specialises in repairing laptops and says that stolen goods are easily identifiable as they are brought in without a charger. He uses a trick of the trade to trace the original owner of the laptop by "logging" onto the hardware and breaking a code which gives him access to the owners e-mail. He

sports that he even uncovered rugby star, Gary Teichman's missing laptop.

Being a reservist is not easy work as Danikas explains that he uses his own resources to track down criminal activity and in an incident two weeks ago his car was damaged. He says that the incident involved an attempted car theft by a gang. Whilst chasing the suspects in his car he was shot at four times. He gets paid no salary as a reservist as the work is completely voluntary, he explains. The woman who owned the car telephoned Danikas to thank him, "That is the only satisfaction I get out of this," he says modestly.

Danikas says that drugs and organised crime are common and often the most dangerous. The nightclubs in Durban are rife with crime and he has witnessed three drug deals in one night. He also says that a policeman who was working as a bouncer

at a certain nightclub was under the influence of alcohol and interfered with Danikas' work. He further alleges that many policemen are corrupt.

Being a reservist comes with risks of its own. Whilst investigating a drug deal in a nightclub, Danikas had a bottle thrown at his head and recieved a nasty death threat. The case came to a dead end, as no detective was willing to take the case for fear of their lives being in danger. The mysterious disappearance of the

police docket also raised a few eyebrows. "That's what happens, police are obviously being paid (by the criminals) to obstruct justice," claims Danikas.

Danikas fears that certain stations within Durban are simply not helpful enough. He relays a story of where he had to detain three suspects and waited three hours for the police and finally walked the suspects to the police station. On being asked why he had to arrest the suspects

Danikas said, "It is the only way to defend myself."

"The Serious and Violent Crime Unit are the only people who help me, they always produce positive results in investigations," says Danikas.

Danikas takes his job as a reservist seriously and

he is well respected for his work within the community. Crime is a battle which will always be fought and it may not always have a positive outcome. "We are losing a war against crime, crime will result in South Africa becoming just like many of the other African countries," Danikas says.

Doing his bit to fight crime

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Twee polisiebeamptes by die gevorderde toerusting wat 'n bende gebruik het om by Eerste Nasionale Bank se tak in Harding in te breek.

Foto: ARI DANIKAS

KZN-polisie stuit groot bankbende

12 verdagtes by Harding-tak vas

Dries Liebenberg

Durban. – 'n Bende wat vermoedelik vir baie inbrake by banke landwyd verantwoordelik was, is agter tralies nadat die polisie hom eergister ná 'n lang ondersoek in die vroeë oggendure in 'n bank in Harding betrap het.

Altesame 12 mans is eergister 03:00 aangekeer toe lede van die polisie se eenheid teen ernstige gewelddemisdad (EGM) hulle by Eerste Nasionale Bank se tak in Harding voorgelê het.

Ses bendelede was besig

om deur 'n dik muur van gewapende beton te breek om in die bank se kluis te kom.

Die ander ses was brandwagte op verskeie strategiese plekke in die dorp. Meer as 'n uur nadat die bende by die bank ingebreek het, is die brandwagte ook aangekeer.

Dié intensiewe ondersoek duur al langer as twee maande, het dir. Johan Booysen, provinsiale EGM-bevelvoerder, gesê.

Sedert die begin van die jaar was daar al verskeie sulke inbrake by banke in KwaZulu-Natal, terwyl daar in die verlede ook groot bedrae geld tydens inbrake by

'n bank in Nelspruit en 'n veiligheidsmaatskappy se depot in Newcastle gebuit is.

■ 'n Derde verdagte is verlede Donderdagnag deur die polisie in Johannesburg aangekeer in verband met 'n groot transitorooftog by Eshowe.

Bykans R10 miljoen is vroeër vandeesdaand uit 'n SBV-geldwa naby Eshowe geroof.

Die derde verdagte word ook verbind met 'n rooftog by die Johannesburgse Lughawe in 2001 waarin sowat \$9,5 miljoen (sowat R58 miljoen) kontant, juweliersware en diamante gebuit is.

Reservist gets 'Olympic' praise

BARBARA COLE

DURBAN-BASED Greek businessman and police reservist, Ari Danikas, was praised yesterday for his "Olympic spirit".

Danikas, a sergeant with the SAPS Serious and Violent Crimes Unit, was on duty in his city electronics shop, when a stranger walked in asking for accessories for a Sony digital camera.

When he claimed his girlfriend had been given the camera by an American couple who had been visiting a Hluhluwe tourist attraction where she worked, Danikas's suspicions were immediately aroused.

After all, if she had been given the camera, why hadn't her generous benefactors also handed over the accessories, he thought to himself.

But after Danikas questioned him further, the would-be customer finally alleged that his girlfriend had stolen the camera.

And within hours of Americans, Carol and Paul Mineart, telephoning the attraction to report their camera "missing", Danikas was also calling in to report that he had recovered it in Durban.

"I can't believe it; it was all so quick. I hadn't even had time to open a case at the Hluhluwe Police Station," said an impressed Jason Joannides, representing the tourist attraction's owners.

Joannides, who is half-Greek, had never met Danikas before, but they ended up having a long chat in Greek.

However, Joannides was unable to give his new friend the Americans' forwarding address on their South African travels.

Undeterred, the persistent Danikas then turned to the American Consulate General's office in Durban, where consul Liam Humphrey promised to help track down the visitors.

And in the event that the couple cannot be reunited with their camera before they return home, Humphrey has pledged to courier it to them in America.

Humphrey complimented the enthusiastic Danikas on his "Olympic spirit". "It seems there were Greeks on every corner of this story," he said.

Police investigations are still continuing, but last night, the unsuspecting man who tried to hoodwink Danikas, was in custody.

Theft arrest ignored

A SUSPECTED housebreaker was kept in handcuffs by a Durban store owner for more than three and a half hours after police allegedly refused to collect the suspect and one even advised the owner to phone 10111 and report a robbery in progress.

The alleged housebreaker went to an electronics equipment shop in Smith Street on Friday and tried to sell a laptop computer and fax machine.

The owner, Mr Aris Danikas, who is a police reservist, told the man to return later. He checked the computer and traced the owner. The computer had been stolen from a Berea address. When the alleged thief returned to the shop the owner placed him under arrest and contacted the police, who appeared to ignore his request. The suspect was finally collected at 5.30pm. - Daily News Reporter

Police boss escapes death in robbery

THE head of the Serious Violent Crimes Unit, Director Johan Booysen, had a narrow escape today when a gunman held a gun to his face in a computer shop in Smith Street, Durban.

Booyesen had entered Tecnotronics with his daughter, Natalie, and walked into a robbery.

"As I walked towards the entrance I noticed a man standing at the door and that the shop was empty. There was no sign of the owner, Mr Aris Danikas.

Suddenly a man came running out with a gun and pointed it at my face," said Booysen.

The robber ordered Booysen and his daughter into a back room.

Booyesen then gave his own gun to Danikas, who ran after the suspect and shot him just outside the shop.

The wounded robber was arrested and police found R2 000, which he had allegedly taken from Danikas, on him. - Daily News Reporter

TV 2
28 Feb 2004

In Sclaper Identi t
on Saturday
"Deper"

pg 2

Techno-savvy
By BARBARA COLE

TECHNOLOGY coupled with
"brilliant police work", brought
yesterday down a gang of armed hijackers
Johan Nel of Westville was
recently hijacked by four armed
men at an intersection in

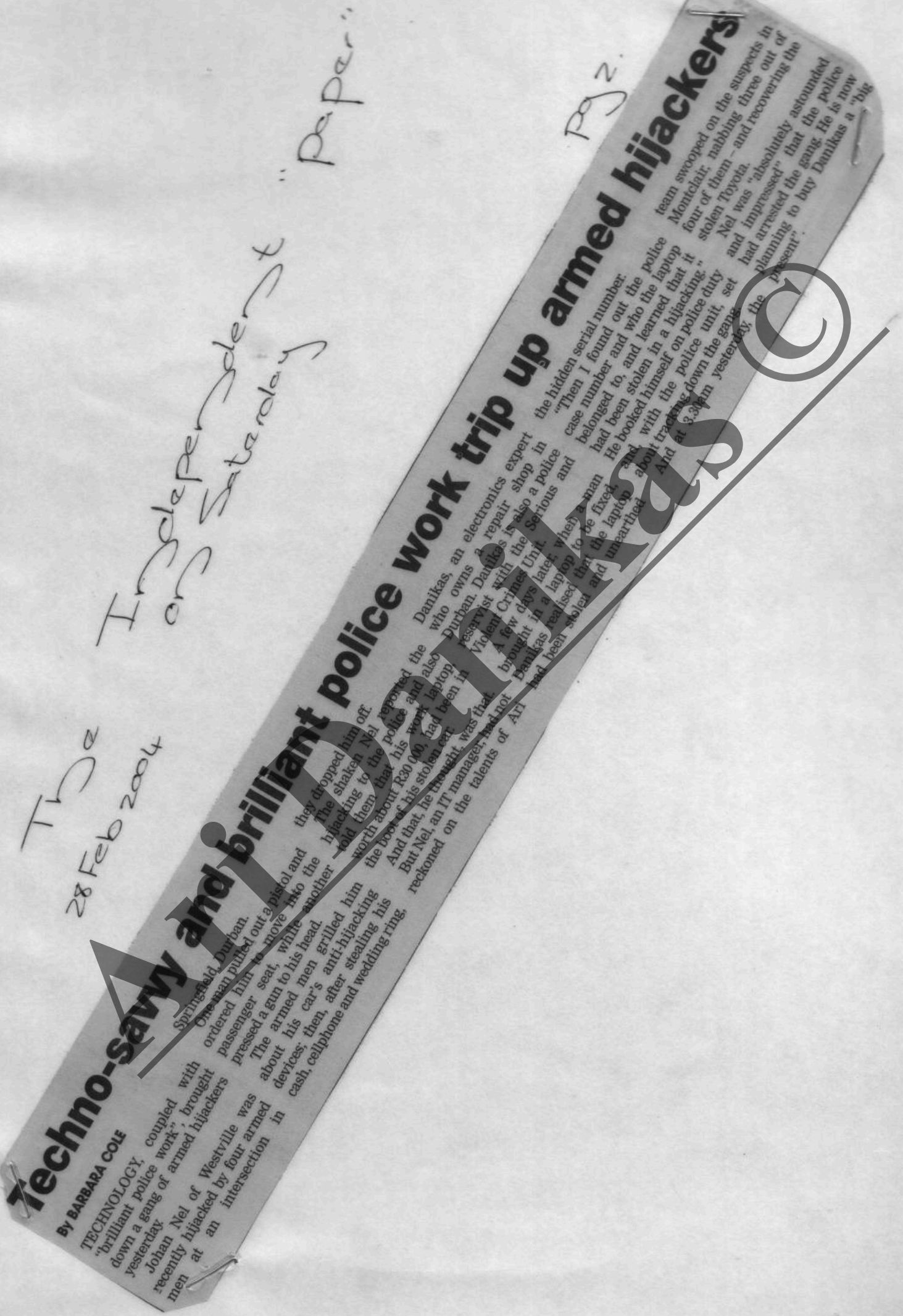
Springfield, Durban.
One man pulled out a pistol and
ordered him to move into the
passenger seat, while another
pressed a gun to his head.
The armed men grilled him
about his car's anti-hijacking
devices; then, after stealing his
cash, cellphone and wedding ring,

they dropped him off.
The shaken Nel reported the
hijacking to the police and also
told them that his work laptop
worth about R30 000, had been in
the boot of his stolen car.
And that, he thought was that.
But Nel, an IT manager, had not
reckoned on the talents of ARI

Danikas, an electronics expert
who owns a repair shop in
Durban. Danikas is also a police
reservist with the Serious and
Violent Crimes Unit.
A few days later, when a man
brought in a laptop to be fixed,
Danikas realised that the laptop
had been stolen and unearthed

the hidden serial number.
"Then I found out the police
case number and who the laptop
belonged to, and learned that it
had been stolen in a hijacking."
He booked himself on police duty
and with the police unit, set
about tracking down the gang.
And at 3.30pm yesterday, the

team swooped on the suspects in
Montclair, nabbing three out of
four of them - and recovering the
stolen Toyota.
Nel was "absolutely astounded
and impressed" that the police
had arrested the gang. He is now
planning to buy Danikas a "big
present".



Images from the CCTV. A man comes into the computer shop to buy a charger for a stolen laptop. Photo supplied

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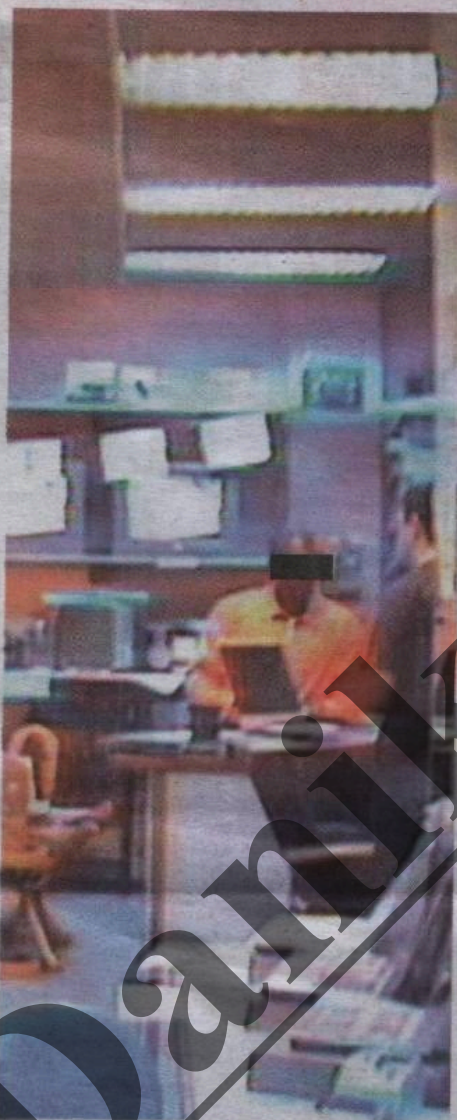
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Ari Danikas arrests the man after establishing that the laptop was stolen. Photo supplied

Stolen laptop lands man in jail

By ANIL SINGH
BUYING stolen property can be a costly business, as one man found out.

The 40-year-old Durban man brought a computer to Techno-tronic in Smith Street, Durban, to buy a charger for it.

But when the owner of the shop, Ari Danikas, a police reservist with the Durban Organised Crime Unit, saw the laptop, he realised something was wrong.

"All the programmes were wiped out but I managed to punch in some codes and retrieve some data.

"I found that the owner of the computer was involved in buying

and selling shares on the stock exchange and I found his contact details on the computer.

"I called the owner who said that his laptop was stolen in January this year. I then arrested the suspect and handed him over to the police," said Danikas.

Danikas said the man protested his innocence and first said it was his children's laptop. Then he claimed he had bought it from someone.

The suspect is helping cops track down the man he claimed sold the laptop to him.

Danikas said he had recovered numerous stolen laptops and helped arrest numerous suspects.