

Name: John Graham Marshall Turner
Rank: Assistant Preventive Officer
Station: Auchnacloy, Land Boundary, Northern Ireland
Date Injured: Monday 6th December 1954

A Customs Patrol was waiting on a well known route, known as "Smugglers Alley", at Favor Royal near Auchnacloy - 300 yards on the County Tyrone side of the border with County Monaghan. The members of Customs patrol were Bill Kean, PO, Doug Thompson, Peter Hoare and John Turner, APOs.

In a snowstorm at about 10.45pm, an unlighted van approached and was challenged by the Customs Patrol. 25 year-old John Turner, who had only been posted to Northern Ireland a few weeks previously, ran towards the on-coming van waving a red light as a signal to stop. The van reversed into an entrance to the forest and Customs patrol car was driven into the van blocking the driver's door. A scuffle ensued. Another of the APOs, Doug Thompson, subsequently reported that as he was sending a radio message for assistance, when he heard a shot fired and saw John Turner fall to the ground. The four occupants of the van then ran across the border leaving behind the van containing arms and ammunition.

Local Dr. S Johnston was called to the scene and found John Turner in a collapsed state, suffering from shock and with evidence of internal bleeding but able to inform the Doctor that he had been shot. He was taken to South Tyrone Hospital in Dungannon, the Doctor stopping the vehicle twice on the way to administer injections to keep him alive. A bullet was found 2 inches below his heart and lodged near the base of his spine. After blood transfusions, and once he was able to be moved, he was eventually transferred to the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast where he had four operations and the bullet was successfully removed - although he never fully regained full mobility.

Two brothers, Daniel O'Kane and Patrick O'Kane, farmers and livestock dealers from near Omagh, were charged with gun running and attempted murder but eventually the charges were dropped.

A proud Waterguard Officer to the end, John Turner went on to serve the remainder of his career in HM Customs and Excise rising to the rank of Senior Executive Officer. He died on 29th September 2005.