

As soon as the alarm had sounded, a Fast Rescue Craft was launched. Its crew managed to get the boat close to the rig, but were unable to gain access to the man through the protective "Jarlan wall" which could be crossed only through a series of 1.5 metre holes. At this point, despite the two-metre sea swell, Mr Doherty, a member of the Fast Rescue Craft crew, climbed into one of the holes in the wall and attempted to throw a line to the man. When this failed, he dived into the enclosed water and managed to reach the man, who was now unconscious. He tried to swim with him to the side wall, but the water was too rough and was flowing fast from outside through the holes in the wall and he lost his grip on the man. The unconscious man drifted away from him and Mr Doherty again swam after him and tried to put a Perry Buoy (life ring) over his head. By now Mr Doherty was himself struggling. Various attempts by others to help Mr Doherty and the other man failed, and Mr Doherty then lost consciousness.

The co-pilot of a helicopter supporting the maintenance team volunteered to try to rescue the two men. He was wearing a survival suit, which afforded him some protection from the effects of the cold water, and a life jacket. Attached to a safety line, he climbed down a ladder to the surface of the water, and with the help of others was able to bring up Mr Doherty and the other man. Unfortunately, both Mr Doherty and the man he had tried to rescue were later declared dead from exposure in the bitterly cold water.

Queen's Gallantry Medal

Derek HILL. Civilian.

For his actions in the prevention of an armed robbery at a Post Office.

On the morning of Monday 7th July 1997, an armoured security van arrived at a Post Office to make a cash delivery. A security guard was delivering cash bags in security boxes to a staff office entered through a security door at one end of the service counter. The Post Office manager, Mr Hill, opened the door for the security guard each time he made a delivery. During this delivery, there were at least 20 customers waiting to be served, and four counter staff, in the Post Office.

The security guard successfully made three journeys into the office. As Mr Hill opened the security door for a fourth delivery, a man suddenly came up behind the guard from one of the counter queues. He pushed the security guard into the office and entered behind him brandishing a handgun. He then aimed the gun in the direction of members of staff and demanded that he be given the cash bags and security box.

Without hesitation, Mr Hill lunged forward and seized the gunman's arm. A violent struggle ensued as they grappled together, during which the gunman tried to take aim at Mr Hill. Mr Hill managed to force the arm that was holding the gun towards the ceiling. It was at this point that the gun fired, and the gunman threatened to shoot Mr Hill who maintained a hold on the gunman whilst the struggle continued. The gun then fired a second

time, but Mr Hill still held on and managed to punch the gunman in the stomach with his free hand. The gunman then attempted to escape and pulled away from Mr Hill towards the partially open security door. As he did so, he stumbled in the doorway and Mr Hill managed to close the door, trapping the gunman's leg as he lay with his body on the other side of the door. He had lost his grip on the gun in the fall and struggled to get free. However, staff and customers helped Mr Hill to keep the gunman trapped in the doorway until police officers arrived and arrested him.

Queen's Commendation for Bravery

Ian Paul CHURMS. Police Constable, Northamptonshire Police.

Patrick Rowan HARRIS. Detective Constable, Northamptonshire Police.

For actions during the course of an armed incident in which lives were threatened.

As a woman arrived home late one evening, she saw her ex-boyfriend standing by her front door. He began to shout aggressively at her and, when she attempted to pacify him, he punched her in the neck and threatened her with a knife. He forced her into her house with him, and took her to the kitchen where, being frightened, she called out for her daughter who was upstairs.

The daughter saw the assailant as she came down stairs and tried to escape, but he grabbed her and punched her repeatedly in the face. Then, as she attempted to reach the telephone to call the police, the assailant ripped the telephone wires from the wall. He then continued his assault on the mother, but after a struggle she and her daughter managed to escape from the house, and ran across the road to the house of Detective Constable Harris. DC Harris was aware of the potential threat of violence from the assailant, as he had previous knowledge of the harassment the women had suffered. Nevertheless, he let them into his home.

The women were very frightened, and DC Harris telephoned for the duty police. Whilst waiting for the police's arrival, and having seen the assailant leave the area, the daughter returned to her house to close the front door. She then returned for safety to the house of DC Harris, and handed him the discarded knife which she had found. A short while later, a duty police officer arrived and suggested taking a statement from the women in their own home.

At this point Constable Churms, a dog handler, also arrived and the first police officer stopped to brief him on what had occurred. The women, meanwhile, continued walking towards their home, and passed out of sight of the police officers. As they opened the front door, the assailant suddenly appeared from the side of the house armed with a rifle. The women managed to get into the house and shut the door, but the assailant smashed his way inside. He then grabbed the mother as she tried to escape from the back of the house and pointed the gun at her head. Meanwhile, the daughter ran upstairs, and