

# Remembering Mounted Inspector Jot Jones

---

By Steven W. Hooper

As we approach the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), it is only natural to reflect on what the National Customs Museum Foundation has accomplished. We are immensely proud that we were able to produce two major exhibits on the U.S. Customs Service (USCS), maintain a Facebook page that is frequently updated with historical content and have facilitated the collection and storage of historic documents and artifacts. However, one of the things that we are most proud of is the identification of former U.S. Customs officers whose line-of-duty deaths were not remembered on the CBP Wall of Honor.

This is the story of one of those deaths. The death of Mounted Inspector Jot Gunther Jones (1891-1922) somehow escaped the attention of U.S. Customs officials. Mounted Inspector Jones was like most of the mounted inspectors assigned to the Southwest Border. He was a Texas cowboy who grew up in the saddle with a six gun in his hand. Inspector Jones began his USCS career in February of 1922 during Prohibition and sadly by October of that same year, he met the fate of many other mounted inspectors. Officer Jones was slain in the line-of duty by smugglers bent on profiting from the smuggling of liquor into the United States from Mexico.

Around midnight on October 1, 1922, Mounted Inspector Jones and his partner Jess Barter, a railway special agent and holder of a special Texas Ranger commission, were investigating the smuggling of liquor from Mexico at a dance in Mercedes, Texas. As events unfolded, the suspected smugglers were able to overpower Mounted Inspector Jones and fatally wound him with his own gun.

After the murder, six suspects fled to a nearby house where they were surrounded by a posse of lawmen. Unfortunately, a young innocent female who had no connection to the desperados ran from the home and in the darkness and confusion, was killed by the officers. In the chaos that followed, the wounded suspected killer of Mounted Inspector Jones and several of his companions escaped and fled to Mexico. The suspect was later captured in Mexico and

returned to the United States for trial. But he was acquitted of the murder by a jury.

Mounted Inspector Jot Jones' death is remembered on the Officer Down Memorial Page website, the Texas Peace Officers Memorial and the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. CBP will now begin the process of adding Mounted Inspector Jones' name to the Wall of Honor.

The NCMF is enormously proud to have played a role in identifying three USCS officers whose sacrifices had not been recognized on the CBP Wall of Honor. In addition to Officer Jones, we have had the honor of identifying Mounted Inspector William "Billy" Daniels who was ambushed on June 9, 1885, near Bisbee, Arizona and Revenue Boat Officer (Inspector) Kuntz Stahlberger who died while sealing a hatch at the mouth of the Mississippi River in Louisiana on January 3, 1880.

May these three U.S. Customs Officers rest in peace along with all the other heroes remembered on the CBP Wall of Honor.

---

---

### **Primary Sources:**

"Alleged Slayer of Customs Inspector Has Been Arrested," *San Antonio Light* (San Antonio, Texas), October 4, 1922, p. 20.

Customs Officer Slain at Mercedes; His Slayers Escapes," *Austin American-Statesman* (Austin, Texas), October 2, 1922, p. 1.

"Garcia Acquitted of Murder of Jot Jones at Edinburg," *Brownsville Herald* (Brownsville, Texas), April 21, 1924, p. 1.

J. Gunther Jones, National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial website, <https://nleomf.org/fallen-heroes/j-gunther-jones/>.

Jot Gunther Jones, Find a Grave Memorial website, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/50136934/jot-gunter-jones>.

Jot Gunther Jones, Officer Down Memorial Page website, <https://www.odmp.org/officer/7243-inspector-jot-gunter-jones>.

Jot Gunther Jones, Texas Peace Officers Memorial website, <https://www.texaspeaceofficersmemorial.org/component/mtree/search?searchword=jot+jones>.

"Mercedes Customs Officer Shot Down," *The Austin American* (Austin, Texas), October 3, 1922, p. 1.

"Mexican Woman is also Reported Slain During Fighting in Mercedes," *San Antonio Evening News* (San Antonio, Texas), October 2, 1922, p. 1.

"Orders Border Men to Shoot First," *The San Antonio Light* (San Antonio, Texas), October 2, 1922, p.1.

"Slain Customs Officer Laid to Rest Here," *San Antonio Evening News* (San Antonio, Texas), October 3, 1922, p. 1.

"Two Are Killed, One Injured in a Brawl," *Fort Worth Record-Telegram* (Fort Worth, Texas), October 3, 1922, p. 3.

"Two Persons Slain in Gun Fight with Customs Inspector," *Miami District Daily News* (Miami, Florida), October 3, 1922, p. 5.

"War Between Smugglers and Customs Men Along Border Claims Another," *San Antonio Light* (San Antonio, Texas), March 7, 1923, p. 1.