

Private James Moor Batten (51327) of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Service), Devonshire Regiment, was born on 1 March 1889 in West Blackdown and worked on his parents' farm before enlisting.

He died of his wounds in France on 13 October 1918, aged 29 and was buried in Mont Huon Cemetery, Le Treport. He was the son of James Moor Batten and his second wife, Eliza Jane (Warne) of West Blackdown.

**James Moor Batten**, born on 1 March 1889, was the eldest son of James Moor and his second wife Eliza Jane (Warne) Batten.

**James** (senior) had been born in 1847 in Bridestowe, and was the son of **Daniel** Batten (1803-1873) and his wife, **Elizabeth** (Moore?) (1808-1873). In 1841 the Batten family was living in Rickards Tenement in Lamerton by Burn Lane. **Daniel** was an agricultural labourer and, at the time, he and his wife had four children living with them, Rachel 8, Daniel 5, Elizabeth 3 and Mary who was 5 months old. Their eldest son William, aged 10, was staying with **James Moore** and his family at Wellcombe. This is likely to have been his grandparents, and the origin of the name that was carried through the family.

By 1851 the Batten family had moved to Long Ham in Bridestowe, where **Daniel** was farming 16 acres. William, now 21, was living with them, as well as Elizabeth 13, Daniel 8, **James** 5 and John 3. The family was still at Long Ham 10 years later, by which time Daniel was a carter aged 18, and **James** 15 and John 13 were agricultural servants.

Early in 1869, at the age of 22, **James** married Mary Maunder, the daughter of William and Mary Maunder of Bowden Hill. The 1871 census describes William (55) as being a farmer of 110 acres, living with his wife Mary (58) and children Ellen (19), Jane (13) and John (9). Their older daughter Mary (22) was also living there with her husband **James** (agricultural labourer) and their children Charles (2) and Ellen (4 months).

In 1871 **Daniel** and **Elizabeth Batten**, **James'** parents, were 68 and 64 respectively, and living at Burcom Farm, which was listed between Wood Park Cott and the Herring Arms, farming 50 acres. The deaths of both Daniel and Elizabeth were recorded in 1873.

The 1881 census indicated that James' family was experiencing some difficulties. **James** (35, farm labourer) was living in North Black Down with his children Ellen (10), William (9), Elizabeth I (7) and Mary L (4) and Mrs Elizabeth J Mashford (43) described as 'Housekeeper for the time.' His wife Mary (32) was living with their eldest son Charles (11) at Bowden with her family. William (65) was farming 70 acres, with his wife Mary (68) and their son William (35) and grandchildren John Maunder (19), William John Maunder (11) and Sarah Ann Maunder (6). It is likely that Mary Batten was unwell and being nursed in her family, as she died within months of the census.

*In 1881 William Maunder's farm at Bowden was described as being next to Burcombe, Longham, Broad Park Bible Christian Chapel at the end of Brentor Parish.*

In 1888 James married again: **Eliza Jane Warne**, was 30 and had been born in Mary Tavy. (See more below about the Warne family and their links with the Thomas and Skelly families). Their first child, **James Moor**, named after his father, was born on 1 March 1889. At the time of the 1891 census the family was living in Veales Tenement in West Blackdown and it was likely that they were living next door to Harry Cowling's family. **James'** father was a farm labourer aged 44, his

mother was 33, his elder half sister, Mary L was a scholar of 14, younger sister Mabel was 9 months old, whilst **James** was 2.

By 1901 James, aged 54, was a farmer in West Blackdown and his wife Eliza Jane was 43. **James Moor** (12) was the eldest of the five children living at home. Mabel was 10, Myra 9, Albert 6 and Edith 4.

James snr died on 12 March 1907 (aged 60: 62 on his gravestone) which left his widow Eliza (54) head of the household, still living in West Blackdown, in an eight roomed house, with the occupation of grazier in the 1911 census. Eldest son **James** (22) had been listed as *Assistant on farm* but this had been changed by the enumerator to *Grazier's son, working on the farm*. Mabel was 20 and Edie 14. In 1913 Mabel married Albert Doidge. An additional piece of information given by Eliza in completing the form was that she had had 6 children born alive during her marriage, one of which had subsequently died.

**James** enlisted in Tavistock and became a private (51327) in the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Services) of the Devonshire Regiment. After training he was sent to France, where the battalion fought on the Somme in 1916, in 1917 at the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line and at Arras and the third Battle of Ypres. In January 1918 they were sent to Italy where they were in action on the River Plave, but in September they returned to France for the final push into Picardy.

From 3<sup>rd</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> October the 9<sup>th</sup> Devons were part of a force that broke through the German lines at Beaufevor. There was fierce fighting and the Battalion received heavy casualties. This may be where James received the wounds that proved fatal. On 13 October 1918 at the age of 29, **James** died of wounds at Le Treport, a small seaport 25 kilometres north east of Dieppe, an important hospital centre with at least six Military Hospitals. From there the badly wounded would normally have been taken by hospital ship to England.

After his death, less than one month before the Armistice, James was buried in the Mount Huon Military Cemetery. As the original military cemetery at Le Treport filled, a new site at Mont Huon was designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield. There are now 2,128 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, 7 from World War Two and more than 200 German war graves. Albert, James' younger brother, also enlisted, served as a farrier in Mesopotamia and survived an attack on his ship in transit. He was one of only a handful from the village to survive the war. In the 1950s he was the Brentor village walking postman.

His mother received his two medals, the British War and Victory medals. She was also paid his £7 10s 0d War Gratuity and £11 5s 8d back pay owed to him.

Eliza Jane died on 30 May 1927, aged 70. The gravestones of both of James' parents can be found in Brentor cemetery, with young **James** being commemorated on his mother's gravestone, although he was buried in the Mont Huon Cemetery (Grave/Memorial Reference: VII. K. 6B.) in Le Treport.