

## **Star Buy!**

At an auction sale held by Lockdales of Ipswich in January 2020, a 1914-15 Star was sold for £2,300. The recipient of the medal was Captain Duncan Lenox Martin of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Devonshire Regiment who was killed in action on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1916. He was 30 years of age.

The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Battalions of the Devonshire Regiment were part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 7<sup>th</sup> Division who were tasked to attack from the south-west side of the Albert-Mericourt Road towards Mansel Copse. Leading the attack the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion were subjected to murderous enemy machine-gun fire from the Copse and suffered very heavy casualties. Following them were two companies of the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion who were also decimated. Later in the day another company of the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, managed to occupy a part of the enemies trench in Mansel Copse. They held it the following day against a determined counter-attack and later were able to continue their advance.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> July, the Padre of the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalions buried 159 men of both battalions, including Captain Martin in a section of the former German trench. A plaque was placed over the burial site and inscribed with the words 'The Devonshires Held This Trench, The Devonshires Hold It Still'. These words are inscribed in stone on the entrance into the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery, Devonshire Trench Mametz. Captain Martin's Grave Location: Row A, Grave 1. The cemetery contains 163 burials, 10 of which are unidentified. The Wessex Branch WFA visited this cemetery during the 2012 Battle Field Tour.

## **Source**

[www.lockdales.com](http://www.lockdales.com)

[www.tokenpublishing.com](http://www.tokenpublishing.com) ~ Medal News March 2020

[www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org) ~ Commonwealth War Graves Commission

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