

JESSE MARTIN

Private G/7745 8th Battalion, Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment

Died on 23rd May 1917, Age 19

Up to 2013, there have been Martins in Pirbright for at least 500 years and probably even longer. Amid all the James, Henrys and Johns, Jesse is more unusual. Although he was christened with his father's name, he was the next to youngest son of 7 children.

Father Jesse was the youngest of 7 children, born on Little Green in 1866. Linnards, a Georgian house, was acquired by the Martins in the early 1800s by marriage to the Linnard family, hence the house name. Traditionally the eldest son helped his father and became the farmer on his father's death; the younger ones either worked for him or moved away. Being the youngest, Jesse moved away to rent a cottage on Collins Green (possibly Hovers Well) from Henry Halsey after he married Jane Hawkins, a farmer's daughter from Cowshot at St Michaels on Christmas Eve 1889.

Their first son James was born here the next year and in 1891 John Randall was lodging with them to help make ends meet, as Jesse was an agricultural labourer. In 1895 the family rented part of Whites Farm from Halsey after his grandfather James moved from there to Linnards, so it was here that the young Jesse was born in 1896.



Whites Farm 1923

In 1901 at Whites there were young Jesse's parents, 2 brothers, 3 sisters and Jane's younger brother William Hawkins, who was lodging with them. Seven years later, Jesse senior's father James died and he moved back to Linnards, but by 1911 Jesse junior had left home and was described as an "Odd & End Boy (domestic)" to G H Onslow at Send Grove, Send.

He must have moved back to Pirbright before 1914, as this June 1917 Surrey Advertiser cutting explains; also some of his war service and death -

PIRBRIGHT.

PTE. MARTIN KILLED.

Official news has been received that Private Jesse Martin, aged 20, third son of Mr. and Mrs. Martin, of Leonard's House, Pirbright, was killed in action on May 23rd. Deceased joined the Kentish Yeomanry at the beginning of November, 1914, and was afterwards transferred to the Royal West Kents, going to the front at the end of November last. He was in the employ of Lady Stanley at Pirbright before joining up. Mrs. Martin has received a letter from the second-lieutenant of her son's platoon, which, after referring to Pte. Martin being struck by a bomb, says: "He was taken to the dressing station where he died soon after. His pluck and courage were admirable, and were remarked on by everybody from the commanding officer down. Although he had not been very long in my platoon he was thoroughly popular and as efficient a soldier as anyone could wish for." Deceased's elder brother, Pte. John Martin, 2nd Rifle Brigade, who was wounded in December, 1914, is now back at the front.

Jesse Martin died of wounds at an Advanced Dressing Station near Zillebeke, Ypres and is buried in the Railway Dugouts Cemetery.