



Wilts. Constabulary Cap Badge c1890

Sergeant Enos Molden

Enos Molden was born in Hook, Lydiard Tregoze in 1843 (possibly on the 2 January 1843, this however could be the date of his baptism). His parents were William and Elizabeth Molden (nee Tanner).

There does not appear to be a listing in the 1851 or 1861 census returns for Enos. However in 1861 his parents are recorded at Wootton Bassett Road, Lydiard Millicent with elder son Ely and younger son John.

Enos joined the Wiltshire Police Force in 1864 aged 21 years. He trained in Devizes and was transferred to other areas of Wiltshire during his police service (as can be seen in the census returns).

In 1867, stationed at Great Bedwyn, Enos was promoted and rewarded for his performance. His duties included arresting vagrants and collecting fines. With permission from the Chief Constable, he married Jane Tanner on 13/9/1874, they had three sons.

In 1871 Enos was serving in Great Bedwyn as was resident as a lodger at Church Street.

With permission of the Chief Constable Enos Molden married Jane Tanner in on the 13th September 1874 (Registered in the Cricklade Registration District)

The couple had four sons:- Charles W., Enos, Albert and Ernest.

In 1881 Enos was promoted to 2nd Class Sergeant.

In 1881 Enos was resident at The Orchard, Ogbourne St. George with wife Jane and sons Charles and Enos.

In 1886 Enos was again promoted this time to 1st Class Sergeant.

In 1891 the family were resident at Shrewton including wife Jane and children, Charles, aged 15, Enos, aged 13, Albert, aged 9 and Ernest aged 6. Enos, son of Sergeant Molden was later killed in action on 7th March 1917 whilst serving in the Wiltshire Regiment.

From 1889 to 1892 Enos Molden was registered to vote in the Parliamentary District of Shrewton.

Death of a Hero

Sergeant Enos Molden died after being fatally wounded whilst on duty on 12th April 1892 near the gates of Longleat House, near Corsley.

The incident has been widely reported but it would seem that Sergeant Molden was on the trail of an armed man, named John Gurd, who was wanted for the murder of his fiancée's uncle, Harry Richards. He had been betrothed to Florence Adams who had recently discovered that, whilst working as an attendant at the asylum where she also worked as a housemaid, John had owed money to patients and to local tradesmen. She therefore broke off their engagement just a week before their planned wedding. Gurd was distraught and vengeful as in his mind he only owed around £3 (as at 2015 this would have been around £343). He knew that Harry Richards disliked him and believed that he was the driving force behind Florence breaking off their engagement. On 9th April Gurd travelled to Melksham to confront Harry Richards, Gurd found his target in a public house and as Harry Richards walked home Gurd followed him and shot him in the back. A woman nearby witnessed everything and was able to give the police a full and clear description of the murderer.

After a massive man hunt Gurd was tracked down when he attempted to gain entry to a lock in at the White Hart Public House in Corsley, he was refused entry and the door again bolted. After a short while a shot was heard outside and the people inside the inn went to see what had happened, they found a tethered horse had been shot by Gurd who made his escape heading towards Melksham.

The police arrived from Warminster, and four officers went in pursuit of John Gurd. The four were Superintendent Perrett, Sergeant Enos Molden and two constables. It didn't take long for the officers to catch up with Gurd who taunted the Superintendent. One of the constable closed nearer to Gurd but Gurd once more pulled out his revolver. The constable managed to disarm him after a struggle but somehow Gurd once more got a hold of the gun. Gurd shot twice towards the other officers one shot hitting Sergeant Molden in the chest causing a fatal wound of which the officer died shortly afterwards.

There was outrage when it was revealed that the day after his murder Sergeant Molden was due to resume duties at Shrewton. He had served in the police force for 11 years and was due to receive a testimonial and a marble clock in appreciation from the villagers he served.

A Trust Fund was set up for the sergeant's family.



Sergeant Enos Molden was laid to rest in the churchyard of St. Denys in Warminster where around 120 of his colleagues gathered to pay their respects. The Inscription includes the words "Police Sgt. in Wilts. For 32 yrs. shot dead on Corsley Road nr. Longleat gates during arrest of John Gurd"



Appeal To Maintain Enos' Grave

A PLEA has been made for help to maintain the grave of the first policeman in Wiltshire to be murdered. Sergeant Enos Molden was the first of only three police officers in Wiltshire ever to be murdered and is buried at the Minster Church but the grave has fallen into disrepair. Councillor John Syme said: "Sgt. Molden was a local hero, he is buried in The Minster graveyard and I feel his memory should be bought to the attention of the public." Wiltshire Constabulary is investigating the possibility of maintenance and any descendants of Enos Molden can contact Cllr. John Syme on (01985) 846538.

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