



Dennis Cuddy (Served as Dennis Melia) 1887 – 1914

Dennis was born in Dewsbury in 1887. His birth name was registered in Dewsbury as *Denis Melia* on 16th September 1887 and his date and place of birth given as 24th August 1887 at Bradford Road, Dewsbury. He was baptised as *Dennis O'Melia* at Our Lady and St. Paulinus Church, Westtown on 26th June 1888 when his date of birth was given as 24th June 1887. His mother was Ann O'Melia (born in 1859 and died in 1928).

Ann had three other children; Mary Ellen Melia (later known as Margaret Ann) born in Bradford* in 1890. John William Cuddy, born in Batley Carr* in 1895 and served in World War 1 (he was a prisoner of war from 1914 to 1918) and Winifred Cuddy, born in Leeds in 1897. Only Winifred has a registered birth record*. No marriage record has been found for Ann and she has not been found on the 1891 Census and neither have her two eldest children.

On the 1901 Census the family are living in Spring Street, Leeds under the surname Cuddy; Ann is recorded as the head and her status as married. On the 1911 census Ann Cuddy and her two youngest children are living at 86, George Street, Bradford, Margaret having married in 1903 to a Michael Keenan at Our Lady and St. Paulinus Church, her father is named as "*John Melia*".

Dennis was recorded on the 1911 census taken on 2nd April as *Denis Melia*, serving as a Private in the 3rd Battalion Royal Fusiliers on the island of Mauritius.

At the outbreak of war he was sent to the Western Front on 13th August 1914 serving as Private L/14607 Dennis Melia 4th Battalion Royal Fusiliers. He was killed in action near Ypres on 11th November 1914. His remains were not identified for burial and so he is commemorated as Dennis Melia on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Dennis was awarded the 1914 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

The Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing is one of four British and Commonwealth memorials to the missing in the battlefield area of the Ypres Salient in Belgian Flanders. The memorial bears the names of 54,389 officers and men from United Kingdom and Commonwealth Forces (except New Zealand and Newfoundland) who fell in the Ypres Salient before 16th August 1917 and who have no known grave.

An excerpt from the book by H.C. O'Neill O.B.E. "The Royal Fusiliers in the Great War" states that on the 11th [November] came the last attempt of the Germans to cut through to the coast. "*The men were warned that this was to be a key battle in the War and that the Kaiser himself had arrived to command his troops. The morning dawned grey and misty and about 6.30 am a terrible shelling began 'the most severe I have ever seen (Captain G O'Donel, Adjutant) it continued for two and a half hours. The front trenches were knocked to pieces, and many of the men were killed or buried. Routley in command, tried to send back a report of the plight of his men but it was impossible to live in such a bombardment. At 1.00 pm the remains of the Royal Fusiliers were very much disorganised and scattered. In the evening only O'Donel and 2nd Lieutenant Maclean, with 50 men could be collected*". In the first four months of the Great War the Royal Fusiliers were twice wiped out losing some 1,900 NCO's and men and over 50 officers killed, wounded, sick or missing.

Dennis is also commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and on the War Memorial in Our Lady and St. Paulinus Church.

In Memory of

Private

Dennis Melia

L/14607, 4th Bn., Royal Fusiliers who died on 11 November 1914

Remembered with Honour

Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

