



## **Dennis Cuddy** **(Served as Dennis Melia)** **1887 – 1914**

Dennis was born at Bradford Road, Dewsbury on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1887. His birth name was registered in Dewsbury as *Denis Melia* on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1887. He was baptised as *Dennis O'Melia* at Our Lady and St. Paulinus Church, Westtown on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1888 when his date of birth was given as 24<sup>th</sup> June 1887. His mother was Ann Melia (born around 1859 and died in Bradford in 1928). Both his first name and surname have variances on a number of documents and records, along with his mother and siblings.

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 2<sup>nd</sup> April as *Denis Melia*, serving as a Private in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Royal Fusiliers on the island of Mauritius.

At the outbreak of war, he was sent to the Western Front on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1914 serving as Private L/14607 Dennis Melia in the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Fusiliers. He was killed in action near Ypres on 11<sup>th</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 11<sup>th</sup> [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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 (recorded as *Denis Cuddy*) 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

