

## George Bernard Denny

**Private George Denny**  
**33rd Battalion, AIF**  
**Service Number: 1817**

**Born:** 1896, Ipswich England

**Died:** 8 June 1917, Messines, Belgium

Denny was born in Ipswich England in 1896, the son of Alfred and Lina Denny. He attended Ufford Elementary School in Suffolk before migrating to Australia with a relative in 1912 at age 16. His parents and siblings also migrated soon afterwards. The Denny family settled at 'Riverleigh', Castlereagh. Before enlistment, Denny worked as a wood and coal yard carter. On enlistment, a public farewell was given to Denny and Richard Baker (alias Voller) by the residents of Richmond where both soldiers were presented with a wristlet watch. Baker, who had been a foster child of the Denny family died on 9 October 1917.

Denny went into camp at Armidale and was allocated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reinforcements. He sailed with the 33rd Battalion aboard the *Port Sydney* on 4 September 1916. From late 1916 to early 1917 Denny was hospitalised a number of times with illness. After training in Egypt, he was sent to the Australian sector in Northern France on 10 April 1917. The 33rd Battalion was sent to the Ypres Sector of Belgium in mid-1917 to take part in its first major battle, the Battle of Messines, launched on 7 June. Denny was killed in action by a shell the next day.

Denny's body was buried near where he fell in the battalion cemetery in Ploegsteert Wood. He was described as a fearless, reliable and hardworking soldier, – one who always performed his duties willingly and cheerfully.

In the *Nepean Times* report of his death on 14 July 1917, the report stated his father called Denny 'the mainstay of the home'. His family were well represented in the war effort. Alfred Denny had no less than fifteen English nephews serving.

After George's death, Corporal Woodhill, from Richmond, wrote to George's mother. In this letter, published in the *Nepean Times* on 29 September 1917, Woodhill wrote – 'Poor George, he was the finest mate I had, and it overcomes me to think he has been taken away from me. Pte A E Chapman, who wrote and told me fully how he was killed, and he wrote to Mr Denny so, in case the letter has gone astray, I will give you an extract from his letter to me. The letter goes on to say: "I suppose you will have heard about your old pal George being shot. He and I (Pte A E Chapman) were together ever since we left England. We were bombers in the big push..." I can't write any more now, Mrs Denny, I feel too upset, and I know how you feel; so may these few lines help to comfort you and the family in your solemn hours'.

### Memorial Details:

- Toronto Avenue Cemetery Warneton, Belgium
- War Memorial, Castlereagh

### Sources:

- [National Archives Australia](#): B2455, DENNY G
- Australian War Memorial First World War Nominal Roll
- [Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour](#)

- Penrith City Library Biography files

**TROVE:**

- [Nepean Times 14 July 1917, pg. 3, Col. 2](#)
- [Nepean Times 29 September 1917, pg. 1, Col. 3](#)
- [Windsor and Richmond Gazette, 5 October 1917, pg. 2, Col. 3](#)