

Gordon Edward Melling

(1893 - 1976)



(30)

Gordon Edward Melling was born in 1893 at Bolton.⁽³⁾ He is shown on the 1901 census as living with his parents, William Melling a painter, Martha Melling his mother, and his sister Laura at 351 Bolton Road, Edgworth.⁽¹⁾ By 1911 he is working in the Co-op in Edgworth as a Shop Assistant.

The Co-op Edgworth ⁽¹⁰⁾



The former Edgworth Industrial Co-op shops on Bolton Road. At the end on the left was the Grocery Department, then the butcher, the Boot and Shoe and the Drapery departments

War record⁽²⁾

To date the only documentary evidence to be discovered regarding Gordon Edward Melling's Army service is a British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Index Card. The card shows Gordon E Melling, Regimental Number 36071, Private with the East Yorkshire Regiment. He received the British Army medal. It was unusual to receive only the British Medal. Most soldiers received the Victory medal as well. The criteria for the Victory medal were:

"This medal was awarded to all those who entered a theatre of war. It follows that every recipient of the Victory Medal also qualified for the British War Medal, but not the other way round. For example if a soldier served in a garrison in India he would get the BWM but not the Victory Medal."⁽¹⁷⁾

Information about Gordon's uniform may throw some light on this: ⁽¹⁶⁾

"The photograph may be of a bandsman, as the shoulder badge looks like the insignia worn by a band drummer. The jacket buttons are General Service buttons, rather than for a specific corps or regiment. It appears that the cap badge is also merely a General Service button, placed on a rosette or backing colour. The band connection would also account for his spectacles, as less than perfect eyesight would have precluded his acceptance to front-line units."

East Yorkshire Regiment⁽¹⁸⁾

The East Yorkshire Regiment was described as a Line Regiment. The majority of Infantry was made up Regiments with County or other affiliations. Most had two Battalions of the Regular Army in 1914, one was usually overseas and the other trained recruits in the UK. Most Regiments, except those in Ireland, had two or more Battalions of the Territorial Force. All raised Battalions for Lord Kitchener's New Armies and some also raised miscellaneous training and labour units during the war.

The Regiment raised 35 Battalions during the course of the First World War, and fought on the Western Front, at Gallipoli, in Macedonia and Egypt. It was awarded 21 Battle Honours and 4 VC's during the course of the war.

Family History⁽¹⁾ - 1901 Census – Melling family living at 351 Bolton Road, Edgworth.

Father William Melling	b. 1863 Edgworth
Mother Martha Melling	b. 1867 Mow Cop, Derbyshire
Gordon E Melling	b. 1893 Bolton
Laura Melling	b. 1894

1911 Census – Melling family now at 291 Bolton Road, Edgworth. Sharing accommodation with other families.

Father William, mother Martha, Gordon and Laura are now joined by 5 "boarders" from around the North West. Gertrude was a visitor. Gordon and Laura are now working as Shop Assistants at the Co-op, whereas Emily and Stanley (who is only 13) are shown as working at the Edgworth Spinning Company. The other three boarders don't appear to be working but it is unclear from the census document. Fostering children was a common practice in the area.

Emily Weir	b. 1894
Stanley Weir	b. 1898
William Green	b: 1900
Lilian Spencer	b. 1897
Doris Johnson	b. 1902
Gertrude A Baker	b. 1876

Stanley Weir also enlisted in the Royal Navy and his photo appears in The Barlow collection. Gordon Edward Melling married Clare A Maitland at Bolton in 1921. He died at Bolton in December 1976 aged 83 years.

Research: Anthony Redman, Linda Spencer

Standard references: 1, 2, 3, 10 30 plus:

16 cchmilitaria.co.uk
17 <http://www.1914-1918.net>
18 Wikipedia