

Russell King

Russell King was born in May 1919 in Crook, County Durham, where his father worked in the local coke works. Though Russell won a place at Wolsingham Grammar School, his father could not afford to send him there and he went to the local school. When he was 14 years old, Russell left school and eventually gained an apprenticeship as a bricklayer.

In June 1940, Russell King was conscripted into the Army and reported to the DLI's Depot at Brancepeth Castle for his basic training. After training, he was promoted to a Corporal Instructor and remained at Brancepeth until he was posted to the 16th Battalion DLI.

In December 1942, 4462957 Platoon Sergeant King sailed with 16 DLI from Liverpool to North Africa to join the 1st Army's campaign in North Africa. In early March 1943, 16 DLI went into action for the first time at Sedjenane in Tunisia and the inexperienced battalion suffered many casualties.

In November 1943, Russell King was posted back home as a battle instructor with the 2nd Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment, then in training for D-Day. Sergeant King landed in Normandy with this unit and was wounded during the fighting around Caen.

After his recovery Russell King served for a time at Chester as Acting Regimental Sergeant Major before he was offered early release from the Army in 1945 because of the need for bricklayers.

Russell King was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1997 at his home Willington, County Durham.