

James Watts

James Watts was born in May 1923 at South Hetton, County Durham, where his father worked as an insurance clerk. James left school when he was 14 years old and first found work as an errand boy.

When the Second World War began, James Watts was living in Sunderland and he was a Fire Watcher during the Blitz. James Watts volunteered for the Army and was sent for his basic training to the Infantry Training Centre at Brancepeth Castle in December 1941. After he finished this training, James Watts was posted to the 70th (Young Soldiers) Battalion DLI at School Aycliffe in County Durham. He was soon promoted to Corporal. 70 DLI then moved to Barnard Castle and became a Demonstration Battalion at the Battle School.

In August 1943, James Watts sailed as part of draft to North Africa. He was then sent to join the 2nd Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers in Italy and he continued to serve with this battalion until the end of the war, when he moved north to Austria with the Army of Occupation.

In 1946 James Watts returned home and was demobilised from the Army.

James Watts was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1997 at his home in Barnard Castle.