

## **William Edward Bateman**

William Bateman was born in January 1913 at Tindale Crescent, near Bishop Auckland. After his father was killed in the First World War, William was raised by his grandparents. When he left school, he went to work at North Bitchburn Colliery. He was 14 years old. His brother, also a coal miner, was killed in a colliery accident.

In November 1932, William Bateman joined the Regular Army and, after his basic training at Fenham Barracks, was posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion DLI at Catterick. In December 1933, 4449764 Private Bateman was sent, as part of a draft, to join the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion DLI in India. There he joined the Signal Platoon.

After service in the Sudan, William Bateman was posted to 1 DLI and sailed for China. When the Second World War began, 1 DLI moved from Shanghai to Hong Kong and then to Egypt to defend the border with Italian-held Libya.

William Bateman served with 1 DLI during both the British Army's advances against the Italian forces and then its retreat in the face of the German Afrika Corp's offensive. Back in Egypt, 1 DLI was ordered into action in Syria against the Vichy French forces there.

In October 1941, 1 DLI moved to Tobruk before sailing for Malta to help defend the island. In October 1943, after 10 years overseas, William Bateman was sent home to England, having completed his full service entitlement abroad.

In early 1944, after months spent at the DLI's Depot at Brancepeth, William Bateman joined the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion DLI, then in training for the invasion of Normandy. He landed with the Carrier Platoon on D-Day and then fought with 9 DLI through France and Belgium and into Holland. In November 1944, when the 50<sup>th</sup> Northumbrian Division was broken up, William Bateman left 9 DLI and returned to England, joining the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion DLI at Skipton. He was finally demobilised in November 1945.

After the war, Bill Bateman worked as a Post Office telephone engineer. He died in April 2003.

*William Bateman was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1991-92 at his home in Darlington.*