

## **Leslie Thornton**

Leslie Thornton was born in 1916 at Haverton Hill in County Durham. His father was killed in the First World War and his step-father worked as a riveter in the shipyards. After Leslie left school, he had a number of jobs before he joined the Regular Army in June 1937.

After basic training at the DLI's Depot at Fenham barracks at Newcastle upon Tyne, 4452536 Private Thornton was posted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion DLI at Woking. Promoted to Lance Corporal, he returned as an instructor to the DLI's Depot and moved with the Depot from Fenham to Brancepeth Castle in September 1939.

In June 1940, Sergeant Thornton was posted to the Special Training Centre at Lochailort in Scotland. In August 1942, he returned to Brancepeth and the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Training Centre before joining the 70<sup>th</sup> (Young Soldiers) Battalion DLI at Westwick Camp at Barnard Castle.

In August 1943, Leslie Thornton sailed for North Africa and was then posted as a Company Sergeant Major to the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion DLI, then fighting in Italy. He also served in Palestine and Greece before returning to the Italian campaign shortly before the end of the war and was Mentioned in Despatches.

After time spent in Austria with the Army of Occupation, Leslie Thornton went back to the DLI's Depot at Brancepeth, where he stayed until 1948. After service at The Light Infantry Depot, he fought in the Korean War with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion King's Shropshire Light Infantry.

After Leslie Thornton left the Army in 1962 he worked as a school caretaker. He died in August 1999.

*Leslie Thornton was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1988 at his home in Newton Aycliffe.*