

Robert Whiston Hawksworth

Robert Hawksworth was born in September 1920 in Hull, where his father worked on the railways. After he left his local school, where he also joined the Boy Scouts, Robert began work as an apprentice painter and decorator but soon left for a new job on the docks.

In November 1936, Robert Hawksworth joined the Regular Army and was posted as a Bandboy to the 1st Battalion DLI, at Blackdown Barracks. In November 1937, 1 DLI left Southampton for China. When the Second World War began 1 DLI was ordered to the Middle East.

In early 1941, during the actions against the Italians in Libya, 4452156 Bandsman Hawksworth acted as a stretcher bearer. Robert Hawksworth then served with his battalion in Syria, Malta and on the island of Kos in the eastern Mediterranean. In October 1943, when German forces invaded the island, Robert Hawksworth with a small group of other soldiers built a raft and escaped from the island to Turkey.

After the defeat Kos, 1 DLI was rebuilt and then sent to join the campaign in Italy. In June 1944, Robert Hawksworth was wounded in a grenade accident and sent to hospital. On his recovery, as he had spent seven years overseas, Robert Hawksworth was sent home to England, where he was posted as a Sergeant Instructor to the 6th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment.

At the end of the war, Sergeant Hawksworth returned to join 1 DLI in northern Greece. 1 DLI later served in Berlin, as part of the Army of Occupation. In 1952, Company Sergeant Hawksworth fought in Korea. He ended his Army career as an Instructor with the King's Shropshire Light Infantry and retired in 1961.

After he left the Army, Robert Hawksworth worked for a security firm until he retired in 1985. He died in June 2005.

Robert Hawksworth was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in March 1992 at his home in Hull.