

## **William Cornell**

William Cornell was born in August 1921 in Sacriston, County Durham, but grew up in Ferryhill Station, where his father worked as a coal miner. When he was 14 years old, he left school and began work as an apprentice bricklayer with a local firm.

In February 1939, William Cornell joined "C" Company 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion DLI at Spennymoor, his local Territorial Army unit. When the Second World War began, 4456696 Private William Cornell was too young to serve overseas and was transferred to the newly-formed 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion DLI. He again missed the fighting in France with 10 DLI as he was recovering from an operation. When the survivors of the battalion returned from Dunkirk, Private Cornell rejoined it on the south coast of England. He did not however sail with 10 DLI to Iceland in September 1940 as he was by then a despatch rider with a Traffic Control Unit.

In 1943, William Cornell volunteered for overseas service and sailed for India to join 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion DLI at Ahmednagar, then recovering from the failure of the Arakan campaign against the Japanese. William Cornell served with the battalion throughout the fight for Kohima and then in the long advance down through Burma to Rangoon and victory.

With the end of the war in Asia, Private Cornell was allowed leave in England but then returned to India and was posted to the Duke of Wellington's Regiment.

Corney Cornell was demobilised from the Army in 1946 and returned to work in the building trade. He died in May 2003.

*William Cornell was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1994 at his home in Newton Aycliffe.*