

## **William Virr**

William Virr was born in February 1923 in Bradford, where his father worked as a stone mason. After he left school, William, aged 14 years, began work in a local woollen mill. He also found time to join the Boys Brigade.

When the Second World War began, William Virr was working in Birmingham as an engine cleaner. In 1940 he joined the Home Guard and then in August 1941, William Virr volunteered to join the Army and was sent for his basic training to an infantry Training centre at Strensall near York. In 1942, 4899113, Private Virr was transferred to the 70<sup>th</sup> (Young Soldiers) Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry at Grimsby.

In April 1943, William Virr was sent as part of a draft to Algiers and was then posted to the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion DLI in North Africa. In September 1943, Lance Corporal Virr took part in the Salerno landings on the Italian mainland. He then fought throughout the Italian campaign rising to the rank of Sergeant.

During the assault on the Gothic Line in November 1944, William Virr was wounded in the leg and evacuated to hospital. He finally returned to 16 DLI, when it was serving in Austria at the end of the war as part of the Army of Occupation.

William Virr was demobilised from the Army in January 1946 and went back to the railway engine works.

*William Virr was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1997 at his home in Bradford.*