

## **James Wray**

James Wray was born in April 1913 at Fencehouses in County Durham, where his father was a coal miner. James left school when he was 14 years old and went to work in the local colliery.

In January 1931, James Wray joined the Regular Army and was posted to the DLI's Depot at Fenham Barracks in Newcastle upon Tyne. After completing his basic training, Private Wray was posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion DLI at Catterick, where he trained as a Bugler.

In September 1933, Private Wray was sent as part of a draft of soldiers to join the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion DLI overseas. He served with 2 DLI in India and the Sudan before returning to England in 1937. James Wray then decided to leave the Army and went back to work as a miner.

When the Second World War began, the Reservists were recalled and James Wray rejoined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion DLI, crossing to France in September 1939, as part of the British Expeditionary Force. James Wray fought on the River Dyle in May 1940 and at St Venant. He was badly wounded by a mortar bomb and was evacuated to hospital in England.

After he had recovered from his wounds, James Wray was sent to West Africa to help train Army recruits. Later he was promoted to Regimental Sergeant Major of the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion Gold Coast Regiment and from 1943 fought in India and Burma against the Japanese Army.

At the end of the Second World War, James Wray was demobilised from the Army and returned to his work as a coal miner. He died in 2002.

*James Wray was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum.*