

Charles Edwin Eagles

Charles was born in November 1924 in Newcastle under Lyme. His father, who had been wounded in the First World War, died when Charles was only 6 years old and he was then raised by his mother, who worked as a cleaner to support her child.

When Charles was 14 years old, he left school and first began work in a cycle shop, before moving to work for a tyre manufacturer. Always keen on fitness, he was a member of the Health & Strength League as well as the Boy Scouts.

In 1942, Charles Eagles was conscripted and did his basic training at the Northumberland Fusiliers' Depot in Newcastle. Posted then to the Army Service Corps, he was trained as a driver before he joined the 9th Battalion DLI in late 1943. 9 DLI was then training for D-Day.

14565346 Sergeant Eagles landed with 'D' Company 9 DLI on Gold Beach on 6 June 1944. During the battalion's attack at Lingevres on 14 June, Charles Eagles was taken prisoner, but when his German captors found themselves surrounded by British troops, he acted as a mediator and brought himself and his men to safety, whilst his captors then became themselves prisoners of war. Later during the fighting in Normandy, Sergeant Eagles was wounded in his back and legs by a mine.

After hospitalisation in Britain, he was posted to a unit providing water and served in both Britain and Germany, including Berlin.

Charles Eagles was demobilised from the Army in July 1946 and set up a photography business in Durham and Sunderland.

Charles Eagles was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1998-99 at his home in Sunderland.