

William Parker Brown

William Brown was born in May 1919 in Southwick, Sunderland, where his father worked as a boiler maker in a ship yard. William left school aged 14 years and went to work as an apprentice bricklayer. He was also a keen member of the Salvation Army's 'Chums' youth group.

Immediately before the Second World War began, William Brown worked on brick air-raid shelters in Sunderland. In November 1939, he was called up and sent to the DLI's Depot at Brancepeth Castle for basic training. After training, 4458250 Private William Brown was posted to the newly-formed 14th Battalion DLI and became an instructor. He served with 14 DLI in Edinburgh and on the south coast of England near Folkestone until 1944, by which time William Brown had been promoted to Company Sergeant Major.

Just before D-Day, William Brown was posted to the 8th Battalion DLI, then in training for the invasion, as the new Company Sergeant Major of 'D' Company. 8 DLI landed on 6 June 1944 and Sergeant Brown served throughout the Normandy campaign and across France into Belgium. In September 1944, during the crossing of the Gheel Canal, William Brown was badly wounded in the stomach. After treatment in Brussels, he was evacuated to a hospital in England.

William Brown was finally discharged from the Army in May 1945 as unfit for further service and he returned to work in the building trade.

William Brown was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum.