

## **William Turnbull Rochester**

William Rochester was born in January 1913 at Seaham on the Durham coast, where his father worked as a miner. After he left school, William began work as a miner before he enlisted, aged 16, as a Regular soldier in the DLI in January 1930.

After basic training at Fenham Barracks in Newcastle upon Tyne, 4447931 Private Rochester was posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion DLI at Catterick. He later served with 2 DLI in India and the Sudan before returning home to England with the battalion in 1938.

William Rochester then returned to the DLI's Depot as a Sergeant Instructor and remained there until he was posted as a Company Sergeant Major to the newly-formed 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion DLI in 1942.

In April 1944, William Rochester was posted to the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion DLI, then in training for the invasion of France. 11 DLI landed in Normandy a few days after D-Day and at Rauray in late June 1944, Company Sergeant Major Rochester was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for his leadership of 'D' Company in the fighting after all the Company's officers had become casualties. During the battle, William Rochester was badly wounded by a mortar bomb and was evacuated to hospital in England.

After he was discharged from the Army in March 1945, Bill Rochester worked at the Royal Ordnance Factory at Birtley, until he retired in 1978. He died in 2000.

*William Rochester was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1994 at his home Birtley.*