

John Joseph Forster

Jack Forster was born in July 1917 at Longhorsley in Northumberland, where his father was a farm worker. After Jack left school he too worked on a farm until, aged 16 years, he joined a local haulage firm and trained as a lorry driver.

Jack Forster was conscripted into the Army in November 1939 and reported to the DLI Depot at Brancepeth Castle for his basic training. Private Forster was then posted as a driver to 'D' Company 6th Battalion DLI, then training for war in the Cotswolds. In January 1940, 6 DLI as part of the 50th Division left for France as part of the British Expeditionary Force. In May 1940 during the retreat to Dunkirk, Jack Forster's lorry was damaged when it was strafed by a German aeroplane. After 6 DLI returned to England, the battalion was re-formed and re-equipped and sent to the south coast on defence duties.

In May 1941, 6 DLI was ordered to the Middle East and Lance Corporal Forster drove his lorry in Cyprus, Iraq and North Africa. When the battalion was based in the Gazala Box west of Tobruk, Jack Forster took part in a number of the 'Jock Column' raids into enemy-held territory. Following the breakout from Gazala in June 1942, he was badly wounded in his legs by shrapnel, when he drove over a mine. After his recovery, Jack Forster rejoined his battalion after Alamein and was made the Commanding Officer's driver.

After the campaign in Sicily, 6 DLI was sent home to prepare for D-Day and Corporal Forster continued as the CO's driver from D-Day through, Normandy and France and into Belgium and Holland.

After he was demobilised from the Army, Jack Forster returned to work as a lorry driver.

Jack Forster was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1989-90 at his home in Skipton.