

Thomas Richard Thornthwaite

Thomas Thornthwaite was born in June 1916 in Gateshead but moved to Jesmond after his mother died, as his father worked at Vickers Armstrong. After he left school, Thomas worked as a butcher's boy and other jobs until he decided in January 1933 to join the Regular Army.

After basic training at the DLI's Depot at Fenham Barracks in Newcastle upon Tyne, 4449902 Thomas Thornthwaite was posted to the 1st Battalion DLI at Catterick. In February 1935, he was sent as part of a draft to join the 2nd Battalion DLI in India. After service in the Sudan, he joined 1 DLI in 1937 and sailed for China.

When the Second World War began, 1 DLI moved from Tientsin to Hong Kong and then in January 1940 to Egypt. Thomas Thornthwaite served with the battalion in Egypt and Syria, seeing action against the Vichy French, and then in October 1941 moved to Tobruk.

After serving with 1 DLI on Malta, Thomas Thornthwaite was sent home to England in late 1943 as he had been overseas since 1935. He then was posted to the DLI's Depot at Brancepeth.

In early 1944, Thomas Thornthwaite was posted to the 8th Battalion DLI, then training for D-Day. He landed in Normandy on 6 June 1944 and was injured by mortar bomb blast near Tilly sur Seulles.

In 1946, Thomas Thornthwaite was demobilised from the Army and was granted a pension.

Thomas Thornthwaite was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1989 at his home in West Denton, Newcastle upon Tyne.