Owen Wade Temple

Owen Temple was born in September 1921 in South Shields, where his father, who had served in the Royal Navy in the First World War, worked as a deep sea diver. After his father died, Owen was sent to an Army Band School in Kent. He was 8 years old.

In September 1935, Owen Temple joined the 1st Battalion DLI as a boy soldier. He was 14 years old. Two years later, he went to China with the battalion.

When the Second World War began, 1 DLI left Tientsin for Hong Kong and then moved to Egypt in January 1940. As 4451282 Private Temple was not yet 18 years old, he remained in Suez when the battalion moved to the border with Italian-held Libya. However, he rejoined 1 DLI in time for the advance against the Italian Army and then the retreat in the face of Rommel's Afrika Corps in early 1941.

Owen Temple served with 1 DLI in Syria, Tobruk, Malta and on the island of Kos in the eastern Mediterranean. When German forces invaded Kos in September 1943, Owen Wade was one of the many DLI soldiers who were taken prisoner and then sent to prisoner of war camps in Germany.

Owen Temple was finally freed by advancing US troops in 1945 and flown home to England. After time spent recovering from his ordeal, he rejoined 1 DLI and continued to serve until 1948.

After Owen Temple left the Army, he joined Durham County Fire Brigade. He died in June 2006.

Owen Temple was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1991 at his home in Great Lumley, Chester le Street.