

Francis Mossman Waterston

Francis Waterston was born in May 1920 at Houghton le Spring in County Durham, where his father, an ex-Regular Army soldier, worked as a coal miner. After he left school, Francis went to work in the local colliery.

In 1938, Francis Waterston joined his local Territorial Army unit, 'D' Company 8th Battalion DLI at Houghton le Spring Drill Hall. When the Second World War 8 DLI was mobilised and 4452788 Lance Corporal Waterston moved with his battalion to the Cotswolds to train for war.

In January 1940, 8 DLI, as part of the 50th Division, was sent to France. When the German forces invaded Belgium and France in May 1940, 8 DLI was involved in the British counter attack at Arras. In the confused fighting at Warlus, Francis Waterston was taken prisoner. His brother was also captured.

Francis Waterston was held in prisoner of war and work camps in Poland until 1945, when the camps were cleared and the prisoners marched west away from the advancing Russian forces. Francis Waterston was eventually freed by US forces and flown home to England.

After he was demobilised in early 1946, Moss Waterston worked in collieries and engineering factories until he retired with ill-health in 1984. He died in 2006.

Francis Waterston was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1994-95 at his home in Carrville, Durham City.