

Andrew Madden

Andrew Madden was born in November 1920 in Durham. After he left school, Andrew had a number of jobs before he found work as a carpet weaver. He also found time to join the Church Lads Brigade and Boys Brigade.

In January 1939, Andrew Madden joined his local Territorial Army unit – 8th Battalion DLI – at Gilesgate in Durham. When the Second World War began, a new 11th Battalion DLI was formed and 4454710 Private Madden was transferred to this new battalion.

In April 1940, 11 DLI was sent to France to join the British Expeditionary Force. At first the battalion, neither fully equipped nor trained, was used to build air strips near Abbeville but when the Germans invaded in May 1940, 11 DLI was thrown into the battle. In the confused fighting, Andrew Madden was taken prisoner.

Andrew Madden spent the next five years in German prisoner of war camps. He made several unsuccessful escape attempts, including one at Danzig, but was always recaptured. In January 1945, the prisoners in Poland and eastern Germany were marched west away from the advancing Russian forces. Again he escaped but was recaptured by the Waffen SS. Finally Andrew Madden was freed and flown back home.

Andrew Madden was demobilised from the Army in 1946 and returned to his work in the carpet factory. He finally retired in 1985 and died in September 2003.

Andre Madden was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1997 at his home in Gilesgate, Durham City.