

Ernest Galley

Ernest Galley was born in September 1919 in Hetton le Hole, County Durham, where his father, who had served in the Royal Artillery during the First World War, worked as a coal miner. Ernest left school when he was 14 years old to work in a local shop, as his father did not want him to be a miner. He later joined the Co-op and was a baker when he was conscripted into the Army in January 1940.

After his initial training at the DLI's Depot at Brancepeth Castle, 4458732 Private Galley was sent as part of a draft to France in May 1940. After landing at Cherbourg and later moving to Rouen, he was never actually attached to any unit before he was ordered to return to England.

Ernest Galley was then posted to 'A' Company 2nd Battalion DLI, reforming at Bridlington after its escape from France. In April 1942, 2 DLI was sailed for India, where it first began intensive training for jungle and combined operations. In February 1943, 2 DLI went into action against the Japanese in the Arakan but Ernest Galley missed the fighting as he was in hospital with malaria. Platoon Sergeant Galley rejoined his battalion in time for the action at Kohima.

During the fighting for Jail Hill in early May 1944, Ernest Galley was hit in the head by a bullet. After hospital treatment in India, he was evacuated to England, arriving in Liverpool in January 1945. He was then sent to Shotley Bridge Hospital for plastic surgery to his face.

Ernest Galley was demobilised from the Army in June 1945.

Ernest Galley was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1998 at his home in Hetton le Hole.