Russell Henry Collins

Russell Collins was born in April 1923 in Truro, Cornwall, where his father owned a coach builders. After this business failed, the family moved in 1930 to Bodmin, where Russell went to the local school before he won a scholarship to Bodmin Grammar School. From there he went in 1940 to Essex University, where he joined the Officer Training Corps.

Russell Collins was conscripted into the Army in August 1942. After his basic training at Bodmin Barracks, he was posted to an Officer Cadet Training Unit on the Isle of Man and was commissioned in February 1943 in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.

After further training, Second Lieutenant Collins sailed for Algeria in June 1943 and joined the 16th Battalion DLI and was attached, as a Platoon Commander, to "A" Company.

In September 1943, 16 DLI took part in the invasion of the Italian mainland at Salerno, where Russell Collins was wounded. After he left hospital, he returned to 16 DLI and, in December 1943, Lieutenant Collins led an attack on Monte Camino resulting in the capture of 18 German soldiers. For his bravery in this action, he was awarded the Military Cross. Russell Collins served with 16 DLI throughout the campaign in Italy until the German surrender in 1945. He also saw action in Greece against Communist fighters.

When 16 DLI returned home in February 1946, it was disbanded and Captain Russell Collins then became Adjutant of the 2nd Battalion DCLI in Greece. He finally retired from the Army 1973 as a Lieutenant Colonel. Russell Collins died in October 2004.

Russell Collins was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1994.