

## **Joseph William Clark**

Joseph Clark was born in July 1918 at Hett Hills near Chester le Street in County Durham, where his father worked as a coal miner. After he left school, he too went to work as a miner, before he was conscripted into the British Army in 1939.

Joseph Clark first began his training at the DLI's Depot at Fenham Barracks in Newcastle but then moved with the Depot to Brancepeth Castle in September 1939. After training Private Clark was posted to "A" Company 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion DLI then in the Cotswolds, as part of the 50<sup>th</sup> (Northumbrian) Division, preparing for war. In January 1940, before the 50<sup>th</sup> Division sailed to France, it was inspected by the King.

During the British Expeditionary Force Campaign of 1940, Private Clark served as a rifleman and took part in the failed counter attack at Arras. On its return from Dunkirk, 9 DLI was first sent to the south coast of England on defence duties but, after the threat of a German invasion faded, the battalion sailed for the Middle East in May 1941.

In early 1942, in the Gazala Line, west of Tobruk in Libya, Joseph Clark was seriously wounded and had a leg amputated in a Tobruk hospital. He was then sent by hospital ship to Alexandria in Egypt and then via Haifa in Palestine to Durban. In South Africa he began his long convalescence and was fitted with an artificial leg.

Joseph Clark finally returned home by ship to Liverpool in 1944. After more time in hospital in Bradford and Sedgfield, he was finally discharged from the Army and awarded a pension.

*Joseph Clark was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1997.*