

## **Harold Wilkinson**

Harold Wilkinson was born in May 1925 in Yorkshire, but grew up in Ferryhill. After he left school, Harold found work as an apprentice bricklayer but later moved to the munitions factory at Birtley.

Harold Wilkinson was conscripted into the Army in November 1941 and posted to the DLI's Depot at Brancepeth Castle for his basic training. After completing his basic training, Private Wilkinson was posted to the 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion DLI then at Folkestone.

In September 1942, Harold Wilkinson was sent as part of a draft to the Middle East and joined 'C' Company 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion DLI in Egypt. He first saw action at Mareth in March 1943 and was wounded by a shell blast and sent to hospital.

After recovering, Harold Wilkinson returned to 6 DLI and took part in the invasion of Sicily in July 1943 and the fierce battle that followed at Primosole Bridge. Before the end of the campaign in Sicily, however, he fell ill with malaria and was sent to hospital in North Africa.

Harold Wilkinson finally rejoined 6 DLI back home in England in December 1943, where the battalion was training for D-Day. He was then trained as a sniper. 6 DLI landed in Normandy on 6 June 1944 and Harold Wilkinson fought throughout the campaign in France and across the Albert Canal into Belgium. During the fighting at Gheel he was wounded and evacuated to a hospital in England.

After recovering, Harold Wilkinson was posted to the DLI's Depot and then to the West Yorkshire Regiment in Italy. In 1946, Harry Wilkinson was demobilised from the Army and returned home.

*Harold Wilkinson was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1993.*