

Peter John Lewis

Peter Lewis was born in August 1918. He joined The Artists' Rifles in 1937 and in 1939 was sent for officer training and was commissioned, as a Second Lieutenant, in the Queen's Royal Regiment in London.

In 1940, Peter Lewis served with a Brigade Headquarters in France before returning home via Cherbourg. In 1942, Lieutenant Lewis was sent as part of a draft to the Middle East and joined the 8th Battalion DLI in June 1942, then at Gazala in Egypt. There, within days of arriving, he was awarded the Military Cross for leading a patrol that captured over 200 Italian soldiers.

Peter Lewis was wounded in November 1942 in the Battle of El Alamein. After recovering in hospital, he rejoined the battalion only to be wounded again in action by a mine at Mareth in March 1943.

In July 1943, 8 DLI took part in the invasion of Sicily. At Primosole Bridge, Captain Lewis, commanding 'B' Company, was again wounded and was taken prisoner by the Germans. After time in an Italian hospital, he was transferred to a prisoner of war camp. Whilst being moved by train, Peter Lewis escaped and headed north across the Alps to Switzerland, where he was interned from December 1943 until the end of the war.

Peter Lewis was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1989.