

Ernest Taylor

Ernest Taylor was born in January 1920 at Hendon in Sunderland, where his father worked in a local brewery. After he left school, Ernest first worked as an errand boy but was working in a brewery in Sunderland when the Second World War began.

Ernest Taylor was conscripted into the Army in April 1940 and was posted to the DLI's Depot at Brancepeth for basic training. At the end of this training, 4461425 Private Taylor joined the 8th Battalion DLI on coastal defence duties in south west England.

In May 1941, 8 DLI, as part of the 50th Division was sent overseas to the Middle East. Over the next two years, Ernest Taylor served in Egypt, Cyprus, Iraq and in the Western Desert. At Gazala he joined the Anti-Tank Platoon.

After the Battle of Mareth in March 1943, Private Taylor fell ill and was sent to hospital in Palestine. After he recovered, he was transferred to the 1st Battalion DLI then on Malta.

In September 1943, 1 DLI was on the island of Kos in the eastern Mediterranean, when German forces recaptured the island. Ernest Taylor was one of the many Durham soldiers taken prisoner and sent to camps in Poland and Germany. In early 1945, the prisoners of war in Poland and eastern Germany were marched westwards away from the advancing Russian forces. Eventually Ernest Taylor was freed by advancing US forces and flown home to England.

Ernest Taylor was demobilised from the Army in 1946 and returned to his work in the brewery.

Ernest Taylor was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1995.