

John Thomas Jarvis

John Jarvis was born in November 1919 at Spennymoor, County Durham. His father worked at a brewery in West Auckland. When John was 14 years old, he left school and began work at the same brewery. He later became a miner.

When the Second World War began, John Jarvis was conscripted and joined the DLI at Spennymoor for his basic training. 4459606 Private Jarvis was then posted to the 6th Battalion DLI, then reforming after Dunkirk on the south coast of England near Weymouth.

After the threat of German invasion faded, 6 DLI, as part of the 50th Division, was ordered overseas and sailed for the Middle East in May 1941. John Jarvis then served in Egypt, Cyprus and Iraq.

In June 1942 during the fighting at Mersa Matruh in North Africa, John Jarvis was taken prisoner and sent to Italy to a prisoner of war camp. After the Italian surrender in September 1943, John Jarvis escaped from the camp and joined the Italian Partisan fighters until he joined the advancing Allied forces.

In 1946, Tommy Jarvis was demobilised from the Army and returned to his work as a coal miner.

John Jarvis was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1995 at his home near Bishop Auckland.