

Frederick Welsh

Frederick Welsh was born in October 1919 at Ferryhill Station in County Durham, where his father worked as a Deputy in a local colliery. Frederick left school when he was 14 years old and found work as a labourer on the colliery farm.

Frederick Welsh was conscripted into the Army in January 1940 and after basic training at the DLI's Depot at Brancepeth Castle, 4459264 Private Welsh was posted to the 9th Battalion DLI at Rugeley, where it was rebuilding after Dunkirk.

9 DLI later moved to the south coast of England on defence duties but in May 1941, after the threat of German invasion had faded, 9 DLI sailed as part of the 50th Division, to the Middle East. After a short time in Egypt, 9 DLI was sent to Cyprus and then on to Iraq.

In February 1942, 9 DLI was in North Africa at Gazala. When the German and Italian forces threatened to trap the Allied troops there, they broke out and headed east towards Alamein in Egypt. In the confused action, Frederick Welsh was wounded and taken prisoner. Frederick Welsh was first taken to a prisoner of war camp in Italy but then in September 1943, after the Italian surrender, he was taken north to a camp in Austria.

In early 1945, Frederick Welsh was marched westwards by German guards away from the advancing Russian forces. He was eventually freed by US troops and flown home to England. Back home, as his health had been badly affected by his years of imprisonment, Frederick Welsh was medically discharged from the Army in May 1945.

Frederick Welsh was interviewed for the Imperial War Museum in 1996 at his home in Ferryhill, County Durham.