

# Personal Stories



from World War II



Maurice Dewey  
Royal Army Service Corps

Frederick and Marjorie, were both from Southampton where they married and had their first child Maurice in 1928, followed by Brenda, Margaret, Pearl, Cyril and Kenneth born throughout the 1930s. Like a lot of children they were evacuated in 1939 because Southampton was deemed a significant target for airborne attack. Initially they went to Abbot's Ann, but were reunited with their parents who moved to Figsbury and then to Dunstable Cottage adjacent to Dunstable Crossroads. Frederick secured a job at Winterbourne Military Camp; the children were initially educated at Pitton School and then Winterslow School. The last sibling Muriel was born in 1942.

Maurice finished his education in Winterslow and took up an apprenticeship with the engineering firm Reeds in Salisbury, utilising a bike to get to work. Due to the continuing involvement of Britain in policing much of the British Empire, and occupied countries formally forming the enemy axis, conscription into the military continued. This resulted in Maurice aged 18 being enlisted into the Royal Army Service Corps, receiving initial training in northern England before a posting to Salisbury Plain. In Europe The British operated as part of the Four Power group of countries consisting of Britain, France, America and Russia to govern the post war period, which resulted in Austria being divided into four zones of control.

In November 1946 Maurice was sent to the British controlled zone in Austria which lay in the south of the country bordering Yugoslavia and Italy. The Austria - Yugoslavia border formed what Churchill referred to as "The Iron Curtain", the border between the Russian occupied European countries and free European nations. Maurice was abroad so his family did not see him for Christmas 1946 or the New Year celebrations.

Notification of his death in Austria on 12th January 1947 was received as a telegram at the Winterslow Post Office. Bill Russel was the duty postman that day and knowing the family decided that Maurice's father should be contacted at his place of work in Salisbury. Mr Dewey returned to Winterslow and broke the news to the family. Maurice had died on duty driving in a convoy towing a second vehicle. The full details were not known until a communication was received from the War office in March 1948.



'On 12th January 1947 at about 2p.m. a convoy of vehicles left Villach to proceed to Udine. In this convoy your son was driving a vehicle which was towing another vehicle. All drivers know the route, but road conditions were bad. At approximately 8p.m. near Artegna the two vehicles were found burning. The front axel of your son's vehicle was astride a low wall on a bridge over a culvert and Driver Dewey found to be dead'.

Maurice was buried with full military honours in the cemetery at Klagenfurt, Austria on 15th January 1947.

Mick Brown

Acknowledgement: Norman Thorne. Wikipedia.

Klagenfurt Cemetery