

THE MALCHER FAMILY

Rob Forsyth

William John Eide Malcher and his wife Mary came to live in Deddington in 1910 to look for work on the railways. They had a large family from which two sons, Henry (b 1878) and Jack (b 1898), served in WWI.

HENRY MALCHER

He enlisted as a Private in The East Yorkshire Regiment. He was discharged wounded and awarded the Silver War Badge on 13 July 1915. This badge was intended to absolve the wearer of any possible charge of 'shirking' military service.

JACK MALCHER

He enlisted as a Private in The Gloucestershire Regiment in August 1916 as soon as he turned 18. He went with them to France. He was full of stories about the front - including shell holes big enough to lose a gun carriage and its horses in and keeping his food in a billy can to stop the rats stealing it. He was similarly full of stories about his posting to India on re-enlistment in the Regiment on 16 June 1919 - which was the day after he was discharged from war service. He spent some time in the Khyber Pass which was the source of many of his stories! His birth certificate, service documents and a few of the postcards that he brought home from India can be seen in the gallery on Deddington OnLine. His volunteering to re-enlist may have been because his father had returned to London after his wife died and Jack had no real home to go to. He was discharged for the second time in June 1921 when he returned to Deddington where he worked for the rest of his life in Hopcraft butchers, which subsequently became Powells.

In 1922 Jack married Mary Smith of Deddington. Mary's two brothers, John and William Smith, had served in WWI (p.49). The family lived in 'Sunnyside' on Castle Street which is still called by the same name. During WWII Jack was a member of the Royal Observer Corps and he can be seen in a photograph in the article about the ROC on page 72. Jack and Mary's daughter, Mary, married Jim Morris from King's Sutton who joined The Grenadier Guards (p.101). They had three sons who served - Bill, Denis, and Steve (in order of age).



Bill

Steve

Denis

BILL MALCHER

Bill was the same age as, and a good friend of, Bill Cowley. They both tried to sign up together while under age but were sent home until they were 17. Bill Malcher then joined the Royal Navy as a Telegraphist while Bill joined the Royal Marines.

He served on *HMS Hargood* which was a US Lend Lease destroyer employed on Atlantic convoy escort duties much of the time. His widow, Edna, says that he talked very little of his experiences but she recalls him mentioning that when Action Stations were set the Telegraphists were locked into the wireless office. He saw a lot of ships torpedoed in the Atlantic and men in the oily burning water and also had terrible memories of D-Day when *HMS Hargood* assisted with the landings on Omaha Beach; here they saw hundreds of bodies floating out to sea from the beaches.



At the end of the war he spent time at *HMS Merlin*, a Fleet Air Arm airfield at Donibristle in Fife, Scotland until he was demobbed.

In 1948 he married Edna whom he had met while dancing at the Dome in Brighton in 1944. They lived in Deddington and Bill worked for the Council. Edna became the librarian three months after the Library was opened in the presence of J R Tolkien in 1956. They moved to live in Banbury shortly after their third child was born in 1967.

DENIS MALCHER

At the outbreak of war Denis was only 13 but joined the Home Guard until he was 18 (1944) when he signed on for the Royal Army Ordnance Corps in which he served until he was demobbed in 1947. Most of his time was spent at Donnington in Shropshire but latterly he was closer to home at Bicester.

STEVE MALCHER

Steve was just too young to serve during the war like his brothers but he wanted to join the RAF so joined the Air Training Corps and the Royal Observer Corps. He then became a National Serviceman from 1946-49 serving in the RAF Regiment which was charged with defence of airfields and became a Leading Aircraftman (Ground Gunner). He was stationed in Hamburg, Germany throughout his time. He was seconded for some of the time to Berlin as an aircraft loader during the Berlin Airlift.