

Ken Wallace remembers his father and his uncle,

Douglas and Robin Wallace



I was born in Edinburgh in 1950 and before moving to Balerno I lived in Baberton Crescent.

Both my father, Douglas Wallace and his brother, my uncle Robin, served in the RAF in WW2. My father was an engineer in ground crew and as far as I know was mostly assigned to Catalina Flying Boats¹ in Canada.

My uncle on the other hand was in the flying side and was a pilot based at some point in Singapore. He retired from the RAF when based at Lossiemouth by

which time he was a Squadron Leader and families officer. He tells of one occasion in that period when an Air Vice Marshall was visiting the Officers Mess, and my uncle recognised him as a former colleague he had not seen for many years. So my uncle gate-crashed the conversation to the horror of the other officers present, only to be greeted as a long lost friend by the AVM, and they thereafter monopolised the conversation.



My uncle also told me about one experience he had having been asked to fly solo across India. I don't know what kind of aircraft was involved but the journey involved two refuelling stops. One of those stops was at a grass runway in the middle of nowhere.

Having landed he looked for the refuelling truck but there was no-one around, far less a refuelling truck. After a short time however an ox cart hove into view; that was the refuelling truck, and the ox's horns were painted in BP colours.



WW1 German helmet as described by Ken Wallace



Imperial German WW1 Trench Fighting Mace, as described by Ken Wallace

I also remember being told about my maternal grandfather who died before I was born but who had brought from the First World war and German helmet and also some form of mace type weapon. I found them when I was about 10 years old but they were thrown out soon afterwards, perhaps for obvious reasons.

July 2018

¹ The **Consolidated PBY Catalina**, also known as the **Canso** in Canadian service, was an American flying boat, and later an amphibious aircraft of the 1930s and 1940s produced by Consolidated Aircraft. It was one of the most widely used seaplanes of World War II.

During World War II, PBYs were used in anti-submarine warfare, patrol bombing, convoy escort, search and rescue missions (especially air-sea rescue), and cargo transport. The PBY was the most numerous aircraft of its kind and the last active military PBYs were not retired from service until the 1980s. In 2014, nearly 80 years after its first flight, the aircraft continues to fly as a waterbomber (or airtanker) in aerial firefighting operations all over the world.