

Malcolm Fergusson remembers

The Fergusson family

My father, **Robert Fergusson** was involved in the Inchcolm Island defences in World War 2 digging gun emplacements . In one letter to my mum in Balerno he complained that he had been stuck offshore for six days due to bad weather with 3 days rations. He was then in the Scots Guards until May 1940 when he was discharged as not fit for active service. He then came home to Balerno and joined the Auxiliary Fire Service for the next three years and the National Fire Service after that. He died from his War service in 1951. While he was not commemorated by a Commonwealth War Graves headstone since the relevant dates for service were August 1939 to 31st December 1947 and he did not qualify, the Earl Haig Scotland Trust recognised his service and so I was brought up in the Earl Haig houses at Saughton.

Uncle Tom and Uncle Dick

My **uncles Tom** (left) and **Dick** on my Mother's side Tom on left and Dick in RAF uniform pictured below) were in the 5th Division and the RAF respectively. Tom was at Dunkirk, North Africa and Italy. He survived Dunkirk and was posted to the Middle East and was in Madagascar and North Africa, Italy including Anzio, Greece and a short time in Yugoslavia. He became a policeman after the war rising to Inspector.

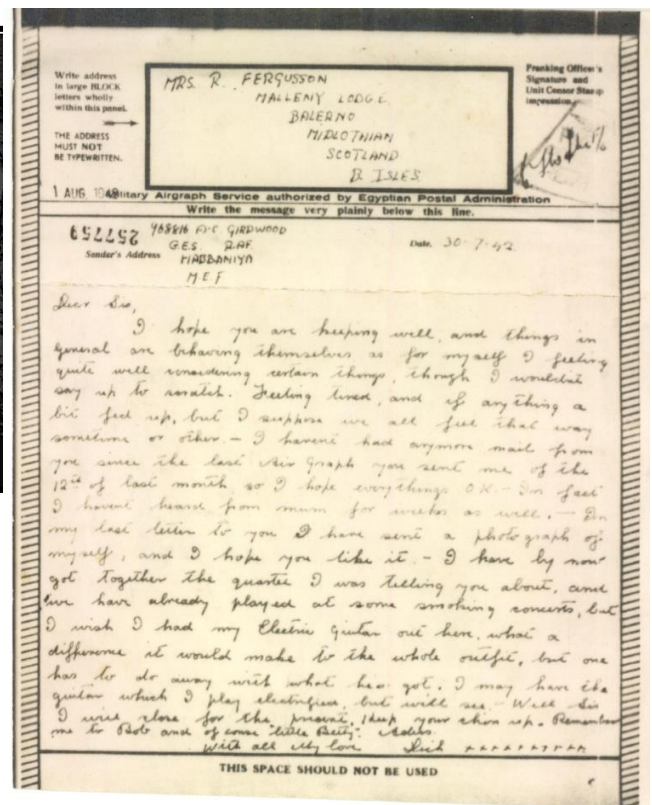
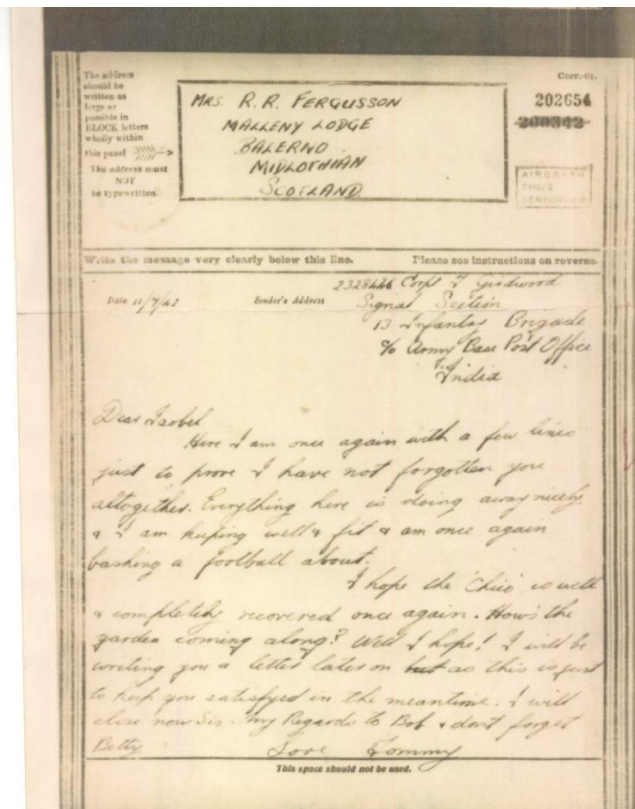


On left is a photo of Tom at Anzio, from the Edinburgh Evening News.

Tom had joined up in 1937 and been sent to France. he had been at Dunkirk and was in North Africa.



Tom kept in touch with my Mum by service letters and an example of one is below.



The Photo on right shows my Uncle Dick in his RAF uniform before he went overseas, my Sister Betty with my Grandma Girdwood and my Father outside Malleny Lodge Cottage, Balerno, in June 1942.

Uncle Richard had an eventful time in North Africa servicing Hurribombers and Spitfires with the RAF when the Greek Squadron 336 had trouble with their Ground crew who wanted to form a soviet to run the Squadron. They were arrested, and the RAF staff took over and Dick stayed with them ending up in Athens in 1945.

He and my Uncle Dick met once during the war. When crossing the Western Desert, Uncle Tom, on a motorbike, saw an RAF unit passing in the other direction and recognised my Uncle Dick, so he swung round and overtook them. They had a few minutes to greet each other and then had to go on their ways.

My other Uncle Richard had an eventful time in Africa servicing Hurribombers and Spitfires until, in late 1944, the Greek Squadron service aircrew went on strike, were arrested by their officers and put in jail and RAF personnel were drafted in to keep the planes serviced.

In 1945 he went to Athens with the Squadron, and married tmy Greek Aunt



Persa in 1945. It lasted well! On right, on their wedding day and on left in 1995.

He was an expert on Gun sights at Ferranti after the war, and died 2005; Aunt Persa died in 2007.

My Mum survived till she was 93, with all her faculties. She recalled the night the German plane crashed on Hare Hill. My



Dad was on fire watch . My sister Betty called out “what was that mummy?” to which she replied, “nothing dear” sliding deeper into the bed.

My paternal grandfather was a stonemason and builder in Lochmaben and Lockerbie and spent most of WW1 building munition factories at Gretna.

My Fergusson relatives were all involved in the services, all nine of them. On the next page is the only picture of the complete Fergusson family in existence. It was taken in 1942.

Two were in Canadian Service, my **Father** was in the Fire Service and **his sisters** in ATS, WRAF and NAFFI.



My **Uncle John** had two ships torpedoed under him but survived,

Willie was in The Perth Regiment and was CQMS in Canadian Armour. He survived and became Police Commissioner in Toronto.

The Fergusson Relatives	
Lizzie was involved with the WVS NAFFI Canteen	Irene was in the ATS.
John was in the Canadian Navy and had two ships torpedoed under him in the Atlantic - survived the War.	Margaret was a Deaconess of the Church of Scotland and was attached to the RAF.
Jesse and Grace I don't know except Grace was in the ATS	My Father Robert was in the NFS.
William born 1898 was in the Royal Engineers in WW1 and emigrated to Canada in 1923. He came back with Canadian Armoured reinforcement unit for WW2. He died in Toronto in 1975.	Jean I know nothing about.

