

Margaret McConnell's World War II

Margaret Fergusson, known as Peggy, was born at Kelton in 1922. Her parents were Robert McConnell and Agnes Singleton.

After the war ended, Peggy married John Fergusson from Gatehouse in 1949 in Kirkcudbright. The couple had four children and lived at Glenavon, Digby Street, Gatehouse of Fleet for many years.

Peggy McConnell's war experience in her own words:

"My wartime experience started in 1942, when at the age of 19, I volunteered to join the Womens Auxiliary Territorial Service known as the A.T.S. After basic training in Edinburgh I found myself with many other girls on my way by train to a camp in Blandford, Dorset where I was trained at the School of Telephony to become an Operational Telephonist. We then joined a Battery of the Royal Artillery made up of men and women and were posted to a gun site. My duties

consisted of working in a Command Post, a large concrete building built into the ground surrounded by heavy Anti-Aircraft guns. Girls, known as Spotters, Height Finders, and Predictors, worked on top of the gun post and in very cold weather wore rough fur coats and mitts sent from America. My partner and I worked down in the Command Post manning 9 field telephones dealing with weather reports and working out ballistic corrections for the guns from differing temperatures which would be set on the guns prior to a raid. It was also our job to sound the alarm in the event of a raid. This would bring out at the run, the team of officers, gunners and girls to man the guns and instruments. My job during the actual raid was to plot on the Fighting Map on the wall the position of Hostile planes entering our area, also friendly fighters sent up by the R.A.F. to combat them. My partner, meantime, would be manning the telephone to H.Q. relaying messages to the officer in charge of the Command Post.

It was a really exciting time and when our guns were given permission to fire, it could be very noisy. There would be great excitement all around when the plot of a Hostile plane was wiped from the map and we knew we had scored a hit. At the end of the raid hot, sweet tea would be issued to everyone to combat shock.

