

Sergeant John Ferguson

Royal Canadian Air Force

Family Life:

John Ferguson was born in March of 1922, to Leah and Andrew Ferguson, of Harcourt, New Brunswick. John grew up in Harcourt with his family until, at age 17, he moved to Toronto to seek new opportunities.

While in Toronto John attended Wireless School in 1939. He had aspirations of joining the Royal Canadian Air Force when he turned 18 years of age. When John returned from Europe after the war, he met Roma and the two were married in December of 1948 in Fort Erie, Ontario.

Working as a land surveyor from 1946 to 1958, John qualified to become a Real Estate Agent/Appraiser in 1958. He retired in 2017, although he maintained a keen interest in real estate transactions.

John and Roma had one son in January of 1950, Brian, who currently resides in Kemble.

Military Service:

Sergeant Ferguson enlisted on April 3, 1940, in Toronto, just three days after his 18th birthday. After completing his basic training he embarked for the United Kingdom.

Sergeant Ferguson was first assigned to a Royal Air Force bomber station in Suffolk as a Radar Operator, Direction Finder. He recalled being in a building that was bombed a week later.



Decorations:

Canadian Volunteer Service Medal
Defence Medal
War Medal 1939-1945
1939-1945 Star

Military Service:

After the bombers dropped their loads many times they would become disoriented and required assistance. Sergeant Ferguson provided homeward bound bearings for these distressed aircraft saving innumerable lives. He briefly returned to Canada to instruct others on this invaluable skill.

In 1942, Sergeant Ferguson returned to London being assigned to RCAF 420 Squadron where he continued in the same capacity. 420 Squadron was transferred to Tunisia, Africa, in anticipation of Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily, in July of 1943. Sleeping on the ground in field tents, he helped guide aircraft to and from targets in Sicily and Italy.

In October of 1943, Sergeant Ferguson returned to the United Kingdom to resume duties with 6 Group of Bomber Command. He was assigned to RAF Topcliffe in Yorkshire. As a corporal, he was put in charge of Direction Finding, with a team of six servicemen under his authority.

Sergeant Ferguson said that he does not like to recall stories from his service time regarding disabled aircraft. He lamented, "It was hard to speak with pilots over the radio knowing that they could not make it back home."

Lessons Learned:

When asked the most important lesson he learned in the air force, John said with a laugh, "Not to join up again!" At the end of the war, he remembers that his brother, a pilot, made a stop at RAF Topcliffe to meet up with him on his way to London and told him the war would be over tomorrow! Upon hearing this news, John made his way to Manchester to celebrate.