

# Gunner of Renown



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

## Brigadier Maurice Alfred FERGUSSON, DSO, MC and Bar

(1895-1975)

Maurice Fergusson was born on 5 December 1895 at Caulfield, Melbourne, third son of Ernest Fairchild Fergusson, a bank manager from Mauritius, and his Victorian-born wife Alfritha Elizabeth, nee Turner. Educated at University High School, he worked as a jackeroo and completed compulsory military training.

He enlisted in the AIF on 24 August 1914 and sailed for Egypt in October as a gunner in the 1st Australian Field Artillery Brigade (FAB), was promoted bombardier in March 1915 and landed at Gallipoli on 25 April. While recovering from a bullet wound in September, he developed enteric fever and was hospitalized in England.

In July 1916, Fergusson was sent to the Western Front and joined the 10th FAB the next month. He was commissioned in December and promoted lieutenant in May 1917. He was wounded at Messines, Belgium, on 7 June and mentioned in dispatches. On 8 August 1918, near C erisy-Gailly, France, he saved his battery's guns and the lives of many of his men and was awarded the MC. For his actions throughout the period February to August, he was awarded a Bar to his MC. In the latter month he was accidentally injured and transferred to hospital in England. He was granted a disability pension for the injury but voluntarily surrendered it in 1922.

On 6 January 1916, at the Church of St. Edward the Confessor, Hound, Southampton, Fergusson had married Effie Hazel Skinner who accompanied him to Australia where his AIF appointment was terminated on 25 March 1919.

After the war he became a farmer, local government councilor, political aspirant for the United Australia Party, and manager of pastoral company branches in NSW and Victoria.

He rejoined the Militia in 1926 and served in the light horse. During WWII he served in the Middle East commanding the 6th Division Cavalry Regiment and the 2/17th Infantry Battalion and was awarded the DSO. Back in Australia he was promoted brigadier and commanded armoured and infantry brigades at home and in New Guinea.

Fergusson died on 27 September 1975 at Dunedoo and was buried at Moreton Bay. His wife survived him, as did four of their six sons; three had served in the AIF, including Terence who was killed in action in 1942 in Papua.

Sources: G. Long, *To Benghazi*, AWM, 1952 and *The Final Campaigns*, 1963; S. O'Leary, *To the Green Fields Beyond*, Sydney, 1975; *'What We Have-We Hold!'*, Sydney, 1990; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 August and 30 August 1946; War Diaries of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division Artillery Headquarters, 6<sup>th</sup> Division Cavalry Regiment, 2/17<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Armoured Brigade Headquarters and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Headquarters, AWM;

Department of Veteran's Affairs records, Canberra; information from Mr D. Fergusson, Epping and Mr M. Fergusson, Dunedoo, NSW.

For more information follow the link below.

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/fergusson-maurice-alfred-10169>