

## **James Walter Finlay, farmer at Rainton Lieutenant, Seaforth Highlanders**

James Walter Finlay, known to many as Jim, was born at Ross Farm, Borgue in 1923. His parents were John Finlay and Jane Ovens.

His early years were spent at Ross but by 1930 the family had taken over the tenancy of Rainton Farm outside Gatehouse.

Jim has many stories of his war-time experiences, but one he enjoys telling, is about being at a farmhouse in France when the farmer's wife hid Jim in her daughter's bed after he was injured, in order to hide him from the Germans.



*The following appeared in a booklet "Kirkcudbright's People at War" compiled by Willie McKenzie and published in 1995.*



James W. Finlay, is well known as a regular correspondent in the local newspapers.

James, who lives at Rainton Farm, Gatehouse of Fleet volunteered for the services in 1942 and joined up with the KOSB after a spell in armour training where he gained a commission to the rank of Lieutenant. Later he was posted to the Seaforth Highland Division and shortly after went into action in Holland and Germany and had the misfortune to be wounded while taking part in the battle crossing the Rhine.

After surviving quite a hectic time James feels that for sheer courage the most memorable story is of the Italian campaign whose troops were tested to the extreme. Rivers with descriptive names like the Rapido and the Gorigliano had to be crossed against the determined resistance of the Germans.

James who met his wife, Mary Lou, at a Stewartry Young Farmers' meeting has a family of one son, David and five daughters, Susan, Rachel, Ruth, Elizabeth-Louise and Judith.

It is interesting to note that James has a great friend, a German, Herbert Heil who, whilst a prisoner of war at Twynholm was one who volunteered to work at James's father's farm at Ross, Borgue. They visit each other regularly on exchange visits. Heil, we are glad to say, readily volunteered to give us a brief review of his experiences as a prisoner on another page. But one thing he pointed out was how grateful he was for the many favours he received from the Finlay family during his wartime captivity spent around Kirkcudbright.