

## ARCHIBALD "ARCHIE" ALBERT DELANEY

Regimental #M55261



Archie, born on February 24, 1914 at Blezard Valley, Nipissing District, Ontario, was the 2<sup>nd</sup> youngest in John and Alberta (McKenzie) Delaney's family of seven children. He had four sisters; Annie (died 1917), Lila, Edna, Ada and two brothers; John and Alvin. They lived on the family farm in Algoma County until John died from cardiac failure on May 27, 1918. Shortly thereafter, Alberta, who went by Bertha, answered an advertisement to become a mail-order-bride. Bertha and the children arrived in Grande Prairie on June 17, 1919. She married Isaac Benjamin Boyer the next day and the family settled on Isaac's homestead in the Kleskun Hills area. The Boyer's had four children, Clarence, Ruth, Raymond and Harry.

time

Archie and his siblings attended the one-room East Kleskun School; however, he often missed school during seeding and harvest as his step-father suffered from crippling arthritis and could no longer perform many of the strenuous farm chores. Archie eventually had to leave school permanently and found employment with local farmers to supplement the farm income. Being very industrious, he also trapped squirrels and coyotes and worked in the bush in the wintertime.

In 1940, at age 26, Archie enlisted with the Royal Canadian Army. Following basic training, Archie sailed for England where he soon became attached to the Canadian Army Headquarters, Royal Canadian Signal Corp. Shortly thereafter, the Canadian troops were transferred to Sicily where they fought their way up the island and crossed to Italy where Archie was stationed at the headquarters in Taranto, Italy. Following which, the Signal Corps were transferred to Belgium and Holland. While in Holland, Archie met a nurse, Aagtje (Alice) Renkema whom he married on November 30, 1945. Archie was discharged on demobilization and returned home to the family farm in the spring of 1946. A daughter, June Alice, was born on May 19, 1946 in Holland after Archie had sailed for home. In the fall of the same year, Alice and baby June finally arrived in Grande Prairie.



The Delaney's spent the first winter with Archie's brother, John and his wife Rose, who lived east of Kleskun Lake in a little building they moved up for that purpose. The next spring, they rented and moved to Tom Smith's farm which was located along the Teepee Creek Road. Unfortunately, Archie's mother died in November of 1946 followed by his step-father in March of

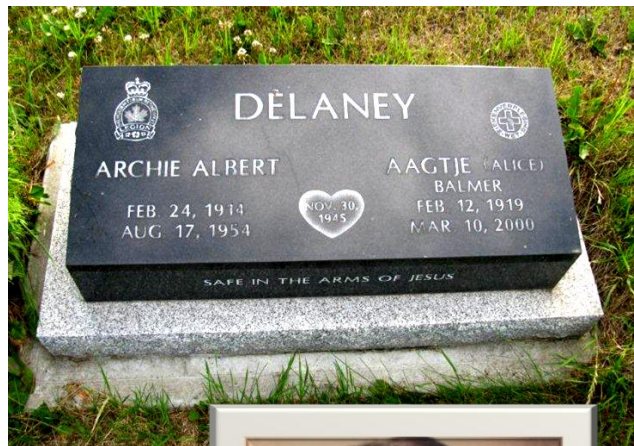
## Private Archie Delaney

1947. The summer of 1947, twins, Eveline and Irene, were born at Johanna's Maternity Hospital in Sexsmith. For a short while, the family lived in the old McCurdy house that was located slightly west of Alvin and Jessie Delaney's. The following winter, they stayed at the Boyer home which was now owned by Clarence. As Clarence worked in the bush that winter, Alice and Archie looked after Harry Boyer. Shortly thereafter, Archie purchased the SE 13-72-4-W6 by means of a loan through the VLA and the young couple started to farm on their own. A son, Ray was born in 1949 to complete the family. As Archie was an avid hunter, the family always had an ample supply of moose and deer meat for the winter. Ice was stored in huge ice blocks cut from the Kleskun Lake and insulated with wood shavings. As the road from Valleyview to Grande Prairie ran right past their home, the Delaney's would catch the bus if they needed to go town as they did not own a vehicle. Alice home-schooled June for two years and the twins for one year until a school bus route was established. It was a busy time for the Delaney's as Archie farmed in the summer and hauled logs from Norton's Mill at Sturgeon Heights during the winter months. A few years later, he purchased NW 13-72-4-W6 from Jim Storm and now had a sizeable farm to operate.

On August 11, 1954, Archie had a tractor accident on Kleskun Hill and died of his injuries six days later in the Grande Prairie Hospital. Funeral services were held at the Glen Leslie Church on Friday August 20, 1954 followed by interment in the cemetery.

As the Community was devastated at the news, the neighbors quickly formed a work-party and approximately 20 tractors arrived to harvest the crop and complete the fall work for Archie's widow. The ladies of the area took turns preparing meals and staying with Alice and the children for several weeks until all the work was done.

Alice soon realized that she would not be able to operate the farm herself and decided to move the family to Grande Prairie where she could once again engage in her chosen profession. Once the news of her decision became known, the members of the Legion with the assistance of family members and neighbors, built a house in Grande Prairie for Alice and her children and the family moved in just before Christmas 1955. Once settled in the new home, Alice had to upgrade her training to be accredited in Alberta and once completed, she continued to work as a nurse at the QEII until she retired in 1976. She married William Balmer on December 22, 1972 in Grande Prairie. Alice passed away on March 10, 2000 and was laid to rest alongside Archie at the Glen Leslie Cemetery.



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**Reference**

South Peace Regional Archives

Smoky to Grande History Book

Delaney – Boyer Family History Book

**Note:** Rank was not stipulated on any documents