

**CORPORAL WILLIAM JAMES “NORMAN” LESLIE – (1888 – 1972)**  
**Regimental # 101212**



**Norman Leslie** left Queensborough Ontario to get away from “milking cows” and found work in Manitoba. However as his brother Ed had filed a homestead application by proxy for him on NW 25 71 4 W6 in an area east of Grande Prairie, he came west in October of 1912 by means of the Edson Trail. He was accompanied by his brothers Ed and Bruce and his father Thomas and others. Norman’s mother, Margaret, arrived at a later date.

A large two-story log home was built on Norman’s property and his parents, Thomas and Margaret, moved into it as well. As so many Leslie’s had filed for land in such close proximity to each other, the area became known as the “Glen of the Leslie’s” which was later shortened to Glen Leslie. It was here in 1914 that the first post office was established as well as the first of many church services. As the home was located on the trail that ran from the Bezanson Townsite to Grande Prairie, it became a stopping place for travelers.

In November 1914, a meeting was held at the Leslie home to discuss the possibility of constructing a church on SW6 72 3 W6 – a 10-acre plot for which Reverend Alexander Forbes and Thomas Leslie had applied and received a church grant for. The Church was built by volunteer labour except for one paid carpenter hired to oversee the project. The Church opened for the first Church service on October 31, 1915.

In September 1915, Norman answered the call of duty and enlisted in the army in Edmonton. His unit was the 66<sup>th</sup> Battalion. He sailed on the S.S. Olympic and arrived in England on May 7, 1916. He was transferred to the 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Machine Gun Company. On January 4, 1917 while serving in France Norman suffered a gun-shot wound to the right hand and the left thigh where the bullet ended up being lodged. He was admitted to the No. 11 General Camiers Hospital, a British Hospital in France, where the bullet was removed. Such hospitals were large facilities often centered in some pre-war buildings such as seaside hotels. Once he had recovered, he returned to active duty. Norman was discharged on demobilization on April 5, 1919 and returned home to Glen Leslie where he again became active in the farming industry. Norman received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

In 1920 when his parents decided to return to Ontario, Norman took over the postmaster duties. In January 1923, he married Gladys Bryenton. The couple resided in Glen Leslie until 1930 when they moved to Dimsdale to operate a store and post office. They had two children, Jean and Keith. In 1935, Norman became the manager of the Massey-Harris Agency in Beaverlodge while Gladys managed the store in Dimsdale. In 1936, he became the manager of the Alberta Wheat Pool Elevator.

Norman Leslie

With the onset of WWII, Norman became a member of the Veterans Guard of Canada. It was initially formed in the early days of WWII as a defense force in case of an attack on Canadian soil and was mainly comprised of WWI veterans. Once the war ended, Norman returned to Dimsdale and operated the store until 1968 when they sold and retired to Grande Prairie. Norman was honoured as a Life Member of the Legion and also helped establish the Corps of Commissionaires. Norman passed away in 1972 and Gladys in 1983.

### **Reference**

Smoky River to Grande Prairie History Book

Glen Leslie History Book

Pioneers of the Peace History Book