

## RALPH JOHN NORTON

Regimental # M562681



Ralph, born on July 9, 1918, had four brothers; Fred, Earl, Ed and Clyde and six sisters; Laura, Ruby, Olive, Shirley, Stella and Grace. His parents, Jerome and Lillie, had left Minnesota, USA and arrived in Bezanson in March 1918. They stayed with Lillie's parents, Peter and Sophia Robideau, for the summer while they built a log home. The house had a sod roof and the family used coal-oil lamps for light. In 1927, a new two-story frame house was built. Ralph and his siblings all attended the Lindsay School.

In November 1940, Ralph enrolled in a 30-day training course with the Non-Permanent Militia at the Training Centre No. 132 in Grande Prairie.

In 1941, Ralph married Edna Boe and they had four children Ken, Carol, Beverly and Lillian.

Ralph soon found employment driving truck on the Alaska Highway following which he worked for John Dascolo's Mill before purchasing the mill and timber berth in July 1945. The mill was located at the College Camp site north of Crooked Creek. Three years later, Ralph bought a planer and set it up in the same yard. Ralph operated the mill for 15 years and then rented it to his brothers, Clyde and Earl, for two years during which time it burned. In the meantime Ralph found another berth and bought Charlie Moon's Mill. Ralph's next berth was east of Side Lake. He leased Isaac and Esau's Mill for 2-3 years following which Ralph decided it was time to venture into a new line of work. After moving to Grande Prairie, Ralph purchased the Gaiety and Capital Theatres and then built the Jan Cinema. Over the years, he farmed, ranched, raised buffalo and worked on heavy equipment. Ralph was also a partner in the development of a resort hotel in the Cayman Islands.

Ralph and Edna divorced and Ralph eventually married Pauline. He served on Town Council and was a member of the Rotary Club and the Elks Club. In his retirement he enjoyed woodworking, gardening, riding horses, traveling and visiting friends and family.

Ralph passed away on November 2, 2015 and was buried at the Glen Leslie Cemetery.



### Reference

Smoky River to Grande Prairie History Book

Bridges to the Past History Book

Obituary

Les Nellis

Written by Wanda Zenner