

LEADING AIRCRAFTMAN ORVAL ERVING NELLIS

Regimental # R222997



Orval, born on December 18, 1912 at International Falls, Minnesota, was the 2nd oldest in Lester and Stella Nellis' family of seven children. He had two sisters, Myrtle and Mayme and four brothers; Ted, Lloyd, Bill and Harry. Lester arrived in Grande Prairie and filed a homestead application on land in an area of Bezanson known as Lindsay in 1916. He worked as a painter for a period of time and then travelled back to Minnesota to arrange for his family to join him on the homestead in the spring of 1917. The Nellis' farmed until 1926 at which time they moved to Grande Prairie but eventually returned to Bezanson in 1932. Orval attended the Lindsay School and the Montrose School in Grande Prairie where he completed Grade 8. He then worked for his father on the family farm and as a painter on construction jobs.

Orval married Irene Bulford on July 15, 1940

at the Nellis family home at Bezanson.

Orval enlisted with the Royal Canadian Air Force on June 3, 1943 at Edmonton and served as an engine mechanic. When Orval was transferred to Hamilton for training, Irene and their son Wayne joined him. A daughter Shirley was born while there. However, shortly thereafter, Irene and the children moved back to Bezanson. Leading Aircraftman Orval Nellis served in Canada, received the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and was discharged at Calgary on April 7, 1945.

Once Orval returned home from the war, he successfully completed a welding course. The Nellis' worked and lived at Moon's Mill at Crooked Creek for a period of time. In 1948, Orval decided to move his family to Grande Prairie where he had found employment with Steel Industries. In 1966, they moved to Dawson Creek; however in 1974, they embarked on a new venture when they purchased the Wembley General Store. Irene and Orval had six children; Wayne, Shirley, Stanley, Donald, Philip and Gordon.

Orval passed away in 1987 and was buried at the Glen Leslie Cemetery near Bezanson.





Irene and Orval Nellis Family

Back Row

Don, Stan, Wayne, Gordon, Phillip

Front Row

Irene, Shirley, Orval

Reference

Service File

Smoky River to Grande Prairie History Book