

George Clayton (Bud) Stewart

1918-2019

George Stewart was born December 2, 1918 in Bezanson, Alberta, son of Charles and Lottie Stewart. His parents and grandparents settled in the area in 1913 following the Edson Trail after taking the train from Steelton, Ontario.

They filed for homestead rights in May, 1913 and were given land on SW 36-71- 3-W6. George had an older sister, Clara, born in 1914, a younger sister Doris, born in 1920 and a younger brother Charles (Chuck), born in 1925. They all went to the Bezanson School which was located behind the family farmland. Growing up, George was given the nickname Bud as a child.

His childhood, like that of all families in the area, was marked by the Great Depression. Shortly after the death of his mother in May of 1941, he enlisted in the Canadian army in Grande Prairie and after basic training, he went to Red Deer to learn how to drive and maintain a five ton truck. After arriving in England in March 1942, he was assigned to the 2nd Canadian Division Corps Troop Composite Company. He arrived in France in July 1944, a month after D Day, where he drove trucks loaded with ordinance, supplies and later, German POWs. His unit liberated northern France and Belgium before arriving on May 5, 1945 to liberate Holland. When VE Day occurred on May 8, 1945, he was in Oldenburg, Germany.

He returned to Grande Prairie on New Year's Eve 1945 and was discharged in January 1946. He received the 1939-1945 Star and the France and Germany Stars. He decided to take out a VLA loan and began farming on his own land on NW2-72-3W6 and SW2-72-3W6.

In the summer of 1946, Dad met Dorothy Braund, originally from the Brandon, Manitoba area. She had come up to visit Violet Nelson whom she had met while working at an air force base in Abbotsford, BC. While working in Grande Prairie, she was introduced to Violet's sister Vivian. Dorothy and Vivian went on a double date with Willis (Jimmy) Johnston and Bud Stewart. In November of that year, Bud and Dorothy were married and had two children: Eric (1950) and Gwen (1953). In 1962, he moved to Grande Prairie and started work at the North Canadian Forest Industries, a job that he kept until his retirement in 1983.

His hobbies included bowling on the company team and playing crib at the Legion.

Bud was a founding member of the West Smoky Branch #244 in 1949 and then joined Grande Prairie Branch #54 in 1962. He served in various Executive positions, organized the weekly bingo night and diligently assisted with the annual Poppy Fund drives for many years. In 1989, he was honoured by being granted a Life Membership for his willingness to help and giving so much of his time over the years. He was a volunteer worker reputed to never say no.

In 1984, he returned to France for the 40th anniversary of D Day. In 2010 he moved to Edmonton to be closer to his daughter. He passed away on March 3, 2019, three months after celebrating his 100th birthday. At the time of his death, Bud was the oldest living member of Branch 54 and in May that year, he was honoured at a memorial service at the Legion with an honour guard and speech from the Legion President.



2014 – Doris and Bud



Bezanson School 1928-29. Front Row: Bud Stewart, Doris Stewart, Dorothy Johnston, Don Stark, Willis Johnston, Tommy Stark, Milfred Patterson, Jack Moon. 2nd row: Elsie Olson, Eileen Hunter, Violet Olson, Albert Johnston, Billie Moon, Mary Stark, Edna Olson, Marion Ferris, Earl McLaughlin. 3rd row: Arnold Ferris, Clara Stewart, Elizabeth Stark, Irene Johnston, Mildred Allen, Polly Stark, Vernon Patterson, Edith Henry, Wauneita Patterson, Elmer McLaughlin.

Written by Bud Stewart's children, Eric & Gwen