

## WARRANT OFFICER HOWARD SHELDON WITHERS

Regimental # M 537104 & R130569



Howard Sheldon Withers, born on November 17, 1922, was the youngest in Lawrence and Lynna (nee Howard) Withers family of two sons. He had an older brother Richard. Lawrence and three of his brothers, who were all from Monet, Missouri, came to the Peace District in 1912 to file homestead applications on land in an area of Bezanson known as Glen Leslie. Howard was raised on the family farm and attended the Somme One-Room School, Crystal Creek School, Bezanson High School and the Grande Prairie High School where he completed Grade 11. Howard enjoyed softball, gym, swimming and skating.

Howard enlisted with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edmonton regiment and served as a private from March 24, 1941 until September 1941 (Non Permanent Active Militia). On September 9, 1941, Howard enlisted with the

Royal Canadian Air Force. His training included 200 hours for a Pilots Course, 11 months as Driver Transport "C Group" and 2 years as an Air Gunner at various locations: Edmonton, Claresholm, Boundary Bay (BC), Trenton (Ontario), Toronto, Pearce Training Air Station in Edmonton, Winnipeg, Three Rivers (Quebec), and Brandon, (Manitoba). Howard embarked from Halifax for the United Kingdom on March 30, 1944 and arrived on April 7<sup>th</sup>. He served as a Tail Gunner with the 100th Squadron, 1 Group, one tour with 33 German targets. Warrant Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Howard Withers was discharged on September 27, 1945 and received the 1939-45 Star, France and Germany Star, Defence Medal, General



Service Medal and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp.



After his discharge, Howard worked one year on road construction crews and then purchased a ½ section of land and farmed with his father. In 1951, he married Mary Donahue and they lived at various locations in the Grande Prairie area until they were able to build a house on the farm in 1960. Mary and Howard had five children; Brian, Keith, Irene, Neil and Cathy. Howard was a master of all trades which came in very hand on the farm. They lived on the farm for many years and then relocated to acreage near Grande

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Prairie to retire. Howard was a long-time member of the West Smoky Legion No. 244 at Bezanson. Mary was a member of the West Smoky Ladies Auxiliary No. 244. Howard and Mary enjoyed curling, community dances, playing cards and visiting with family and friends. Howard was known as quite the fiddle player.



Howard passed away on April 8, 2013 and was buried at the Glen Leslie Cemetery. Mary continued to live on the acreage enjoying her friends and family. She passed away suddenly on May 21, 2016 and was buried at the Glen Leslie Cemetery. All the Withers' children still reside in the Grande Prairie area. Unfortunately Keith died in a farming accident on April 3, 2020.



**Reference**

Smoky River to Grande Prairie History Book

Service File

Written by Irene Withers (daughter)



Four oldest Withers' children



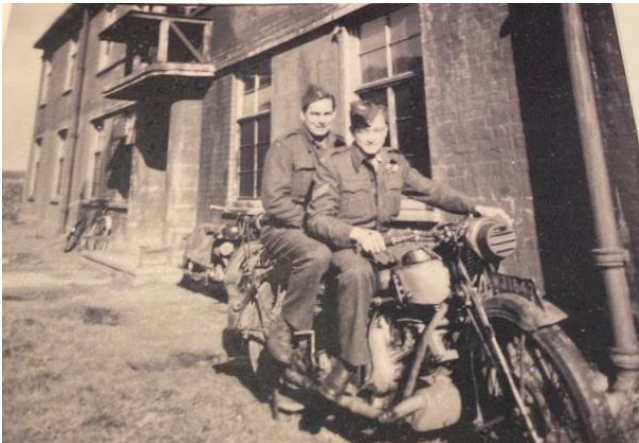
All five kids

Howard & Mary and family



Cathy Withers

Warrant Officer Howard Withers





7-7.  
George Kiddell - Shelton  
Cook - Sheffield.  
Dave Sawyer - London  
William Gosling - Toronto  
Ken Fraser - Hull.  
H. Withers - D.P.

