



## COLDWATER REMEMBERS WO2 HARRY C. LEATHERDALE

Harry Clifford Leatherdale was born on November 8, 1917, son of Henry Chester and Edna Leatherdale of Coldwater, Ontario. Harry was the grandson of William John Leatherdale, who, with his brother Luke Leatherdale Jr., ran the blacksmith and carriage shop in Coldwater. On February 12, 1940, Harry enlisted in Hamilton with the Royal Canadian Air Force Special Reserve. He was 22 years old and married to Eleanor Louise (Osbourne). They had a daughter, Sandra Joan. By the time of his enlisting, Harry and his family had been living in Jarvis, Ontario, for 17 years.



On his Attestation Form, Harry is described as 5 feet 8½ inches tall, with blue eyes and brown hair. He identified his religious denomination as Presbyterian, and his previous employment as service station attendant. He had no previous military experience.

During the next two years, Leading Aircraftman Leatherdale, service number R.52458, completed basic, aircrew and trade training including air gunnery at No.9 Bombing & Gunnery School in Mont-Joli, Quebec, and aero-engine mechanic and flight engineer training in Montreal and at No.3 Operational Training Unit in Patricia Bay, B.C. In May 1943, he was taken on strength by No.162 Squadron at RCAF Station Yarmouth, Nova-Scotia. Equipped with Consolidated Canso amphibious aircraft, the unit initially operated along Canada's east coast on anti-submarine patrol duties. In preparation for D-Day, the Allies' landing in Normandy, Harry's unit moved to RAF Station Wick, Scotland.

On June 13, 1944, while on an anti-submarine patrol off the coast of Ireland, Canso aircraft #9816 attacked and sank an enemy submarine. The Canso had been shot up by the crew of the submarine and was forced to land in the sea. Six of the eight members of the crew spent eight hours in a dinghy before they were rescued. Two others died in the operation, including Warrant Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (WO2) Harry Leatherdale, who had been promoted to that rank less than two weeks earlier. Harry was reported lost at sea and presumed dead. He was survived by his mother, his wife and his daughter, as well as a brother and three sisters.

For his service to his country, Warrant Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Leatherdale was entitled to the 1939-1945 Star, the Aircrew Europe Star, the Defence Medal, the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal, and the 1939-1945 British War Medal.

Warrant Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Harry Leatherdale has no known grave. He is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial (panel 254), Surrey, United Kingdom. In Canada he is commemorated on page 362 of the *Second World War Book of Remembrance*, located inside the Memorial Chamber in the Peace Tower in Ottawa.

We will remember him.