

PRIVATE ERNEST ALEXANDER FORD

Regimental # 2129061



Ernest, born on August 1, 1891 in Ingelow, Manitoba, was the 7th oldest of William and Catherine (nee McQuarrie) Ford's ten children. In his youth, Ernie worked on the family farm and at his father's logging camp at Laurier during the winter months. After hearing about the opportunities for land ownership in Northern Alberta, Ernest, along with his brother Will and Charles Ames, traveled to Grande Prairie by train where Ernest subsequently filed on SE 15-72-3-W6 in the Bezanson area. Ernest then returned to Manitoba in July, 1916.

On January 9, 1918, Ernest was called-up for service with the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1st Depot Battalion, Manitoba Regiment. He arrived in Liverpool on March 4, 1918 where he was transferred to the 11th Reserve Battalion followed by a transfer to the 43rd Cameron Highlanders which was a reserve of the

Canadian Army Infantry. On September 6th, Ernie landed in France and was transferred to the 8th Canadian infantry Battalion (nicknamed "Little Black Devils"). On September 29, Ernest and his unit were close to the Boulon Woods near Cambria when he received a gun-shot wound to the left leg. He was invalided to a hospital in England where he spent the remainder of the war. Ernest was discharged on demobilization on February 28, 1919 at Winnipeg and received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

In March 1919, Ernest and Charles Ames returned to their homesteads near Bezanson and worked at Shortreed & Rosser's Sawmill on the Wapiti River. They returned to Manitoba in July and threshed that fall at which time they traded the old machine in on new equipment and had it shipped to Bezanson. In July of 1919, Ernest filed on SE 22-72-3-W6 by means of the Soldiers' Settlement Board. During the winter of 1919-1920, Ernest, along with the Ames brothers, set-up a sawmill at Moody's Crossing on the Smoky River and cut all the lumber they needed for their respective farms. During the summer of 1920, Ernest built a house for Will and his family. It was located in the vicinity of where Charlie Ames' (SW 15-72-3-W6) house was; however, it was moved to its permanent location (SE 15-72-3-W6) in 1924 or 1925. In 1923, Ernest and Will built a large barn.

Shortly thereafter, Ernest met Hazel Shedin who was a school teacher at the Lindsay School. Hazel had been staying with Charlie and Della Lupton. They married on December 1, 1924 with Reverend

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Forbes officiating. The young couple moved into Harry Severson's residence on NE 10-72-3-W6 – land that Ernest bought from Harry Severson in 1924. Ernie and Hazel had three children while living in Bezanson; Ronald Ernest – May 23, 1927 died April 1, 1928, Ivan Velmar – March 31, 1929 and Donna June – June 2, 1932. In 1938, Ernie moved his family to Grande Prairie and implemented a trucking business. Another son, Murray Douglas, was born in October 30, 1938. Although Ernie invented a "Rotary Grain Loader", he did not register the patent in time to receive recognition for the invention. The Ford's were also involved in an Insulation Business and also owned a Meat Market and Ford's Grocery Store (located on Richmond Avenue). They operated the store until they retired. Ernie and Hazel were both accomplished musicians – Hazel on the piano and Ernie with his violin and both played in Ford's Orchestra. Ernie also played with "Mel Rodacker and his Oldtimers" on CFGP Radio. Ernie passed away suddenly on August 29, 1975 from a heart attack and was buried at the Glen Leslie Cemetery near Bezanson. Hazel passed away in 1980 and was laid to rest beside Ernie.



Reference

Service File

Smoky to Grande Prairie History Book

South Peace Regional Archives Land Database

Wikipedia