

Ernest Gordon Darnell

70 Park Grove

Ernest was 21 when war broke out, but we are not sure if he volunteered or was conscripted along with other single men from March 1916. We do know that he did not qualify for the 1914-15 Star – a medal awarded to men who served in a theatre of war before 1916.

Ernest was a private in the 6th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders. This was a Territorial Battalion - full title The 6th (Morayshire) Battalion Seaforth Highlanders, 152nd (1st Highland) Brigade, 51st Highland Division. He was then attached to the Labour Corps before rejoining his previous regiment.



Daylight patrol of the 6th Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders, 51st division, 29 August 1918, searching a deserted German trench © IWM (Q7012)

The circumstances in which Ernest transferred to the Labour Corps, and then

returned to the 6th Seaforths, are not known. The Labour Corps was formed in January 1917, and was initially manned by officers and other ranks who had been medically rated below the "A1" condition needed for front line service. Many were returned wounded.

The 51st Highland Division was involved in many of the major actions from 1916 to 1918, including the 1916 and 1918 Battles of the Somme, and in 1917, the Arras Offensive, the Third Battle of Ypres, and the Cambrai Operations.

Ernest was "mentioned in despatches" in late 1918. That means his name appeared in an official report written by a superior officer and sent to the high command and describes the soldier's gallant or meritorious action in the face of the enemy. This entitled him to add to one of his medals an emblem in the form of a spray of oak leaves in bronze.

The demobilisation of the Division began in December 1918 and the service of the Division came to an end in March 1919 when the final cadres left for England.

Ernest's rank on demobilisation was Acting Lance Corporal.