

VETERAN OF TWO WARS MR. J. B. POYNTER DEAD

LONG ILLNESS CONCLUDED

SON OF PIONEER FAMILY

Following a long illness throughout which he had retained in striking degree his characteristic optimism and cheerful outlook, Mr. James Benjamin Poynter, a son of a pioneer Poverty Bay settler and a veteran of both the Boer War and the Great War, passed away this morning at his residence in Stout street. The late Mr. Poynter had been receiving attention as an out-patient of the Cook Hospital for some time, and paid his last visit to that institution yesterday, meeting in the course of the outing many friends who were shocked to-day to hear of his death.

Born in Gisborne, the late Mr. Poynter was the son of the Hon. J. B. Poynter, who came to Poverty Bay in the early days of settlement, and married a member of a well-known family with extensive land interests derived from Maori connections. The Hon. J. B. Poynter survived until comparatively recent years, having died about 1922 in South Africa. His son spent practically the whole of his life in Poverty Bay, however, and at one time was a substantial land-holder and a prominent member of the farming community. He was educated in Gisborne, at the Central School, and later took a leading part in athletic sports, having been one of the district's most notable Rugby football players for many years, during which he was on more than one occasion regarded as having good prospects of New Zealand representative honours.

VETERAN OF TWO WARS

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OUTSTANDING FOOTBALLER

He had few rivals in enthusiasm for any activity which engaged his interest, and in his football days he showed the same energy and enterprise which characterised his many semi-public activities in later life.

As a volunteer, the late Mr. Poynter was a foundation member of the Wellington (East Coast) Mounted Rifles, "A" Squadron, one of the crack units of its time, and he gained commissioned rank in that squadron before the outbreak of the South African War. He was among the early volunteers for the New Zealand contingents, and went to South Africa with the Fourth Contingent, seeing extensive service on the veldt. Returning home, he resumed his farming occupation, and until the slump of the post-war years was highly successful. He continued his interest in volunteer matters, however, and was a member of the East Coast Mounted Rifles unit which participated in the welcome to the late King George V, when as Duke of Cornwall and York, he arrived at Wellington soon after the close of the South African War.

SERVICE IN GREAT WAR

When the Great War broke out in 1914, the late Mr. Poynter was enthused by the performances of the Royal Flying Corps in its infant days of active service, and he determined to secure entry into the corps if possible. Though then well beyond the average age of enlistment, he paid his own passage to England and there applied to enter the flying arm, being rejected on account of his years.

He thereupon offered his services to the N.Z.E.F., and being enlisted in London was dispatched to join the New Zealand Maori Contingent, later known as the Pioneer Battalion. Subsequently, he was transferred to the Second Wellington Infantry Battalion, and again later to the Third Wellingtons.

During his service in the Great War, Mr. Poynter was twice wounded, first at Fleurbaix in December, 1916, and later at Menin road, in the Ypres Salient, in November, 1917, where the New Zealand Division was engaged in the aftermath of the disastrous Battle of Passchendaele. On the latter occasion he was blown up, and in addition to his other injuries he suffered a wound in the throat which left a life-long effect. He was finally invalided home to New Zealand classified as permanently unfit for service, and was discharged with the rank of lieutenant.

OLD P.B. ASSOCIATIONS

In his later years, Mr. Poynter developed a keen enthusiasm for the organisation of associations to perpetuate the memory of earlier days in this district, and the part played by Poverty Bay in the various national crises of the past. He was a foundation member of a number of different bodies, from the Gisborne Central Old Pupils' Association to the Gisborne Returned Soldiers' Association, and including such organisations as the South African Veterans' Association, the Old Settlers' Association, the Territorial Association, the Volunteer Reunion Committee, and the Tairāwhiti Maori Association. All of these organisations owed much to his initial impetus, and despite his long incapacitation by illness, he had followed their activities with close interest until the day of his death.

The late Mr. Poynter was 63 years of age, and until recently was of fine physique and extremely active, while he retained his faculties at keen pitch, and maintained close touch with the interests he had cultivated in the days before his illness became advanced. He is survived by Mrs. Poynter, one son, Mr. R. G. Poynter, Petone, and three daughters, Mrs. K. Davey, Hamilton, Mrs. N. Agnew, Wairoa, and Miss J. Poynter, Gisborne. To the members of the bereaved family, the deepest sympathy of a wide circle of friends and acquaintances will be extended.

The funeral will take place on Saturday afternoon, a short service at Holy Trinity Church at 1.30 o'clock preceding the departure of the procession for the Ormond cemetery.